

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175066

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED
CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2024

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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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
R Flatley
R Gill
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 2024

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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 2024

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

SVI services are available to our 341 members, carers and associates who have an interest in sight loss issues. It is not necessary for people to be members of SVI to receive a service. Anyone living in the Sandwell area who is experiencing sight loss issues or who has someone close to them who is struggling with their sight can receive a service from SVI. We have responded to the following sight loss enquiries via telephone support, home visits and group sessions this financial year:

- Information and advice support, face-to-face, over the phone and electronically – 1,076
- Health, wellbeing and peer support total attendances this year – 2,402

Volunteer hours given to SVI this year – 5,526.

Sandwell has approximately 896 open registered people as sight impaired with the Local Authority. According to RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind) 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 encourages 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.

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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.

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.

We are developing our SEE (Support Empowerment and Experience) programme to promote and encourage better mental health for people living with sight loss.

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. This year we have organised a riverboat trip on the Trent, daytrips to Weston-Super-Mare and Bourton-on-the-Water. For our more adventurous members we have supported them on a trip to Alton Towers. Closer to home activities have included a BBQ karaoke night, meals out and themed events like a 1940's afternoon tea.

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. In partnership with Midland Mencap we have offered accessible cycling, something that most of our members thought they would never be able to participate in again. This year we also organised an introduction to VI archery with the support of Archery GB and British Blind Sports. We hope to be able to take the cycling and archery sessions further in the coming year.

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.

In partnership with visually impaired photographer Karren Visser and Sandwell Talking News editor Ray Gormley we have been working on a reminiscence project that asked a group of blind and visually impaired people to reflect on their lived experiences of growing up with sight loss. Other arts and culture

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

activities included the development of a series of podcasts on the theme of visual impairment and an Audio Described touch tour of the Shakespeare Collection held at Birmingham City Library.

Access to new technology

The ability to use new technology has become essential for everyday living. 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.

To support members to overcome these barriers, we have obtained funding from Thomas Pocklington Trust to engage a digital consultant who is working with us for one day a week, to assist blind and visually impaired people to increase their IT skills. The consultant has provided group and one-to-one sessions on a range of smart devices as well as assisting people to get better use of IT in the home.

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 hold tea and toast sessions for people to informally meet experts from local providers who talk on a range of topical subjects. Members' open meetings and our annual forum provide a larger platform for guest speakers and exhibition stands and displays. We invite guest speakers and representatives from local and national organisations to share information about their services. Our 2023 annual forum had 100 people in attendance. Our monthly tea and toast sessions have around 30 people.

Fundraising and awareness events

Our funds are mostly raised through grant programmes, however, we are currently re-establishing our public fundraising profile, which was put on hold during Covid and is not yet fully reinstated.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves Policy

The Statement of Financial Activities shows a gross income of £86,303 and expenditure of £89,481. 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

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT *(continued)*

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

peers in Sandwell. We have two part-time staff seconded from Sandwell MBC. 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 continued to directly employ a part time Enablement and Engagement Worker. We have also this year recruited a Volunteer's Coordinator, who is employed on a part time, one year contract. In March 2024, we recruited an Advocacy and Information Coordinator who will now take the lead on our advocacy and guidance service. 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:

To increase our one-to-one advocacy, information and guidance support and trial further counselling and listening support programmes. Our newly recruited Advocacy and Information Coordinator will enable us to offer dedicated help to those who need it most.

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.

Thanks to funding from the Esmée Fairbairn EPIC programme, we 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.

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.

Seek on-going funding to offer specialist IT support and provision. This will empower visually impaired people and our staff to make better use of access technology. Our existing digital consultant role has already assisted us to build on our digital provision and we now have an equipped accessible IT suite.

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.

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.

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 2024

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

J S Pye FCCA retires as independent examiner at the Annual General Meeting.
Kate Wright FCCA of Fortuna Accountants has been appointed as successor.

Principal address:

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

Signed by order of the Trustees



A D Averis

21 October 2024

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

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

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024 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

21 October 2024

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

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

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Investment income	3	157	—	157	18
Incoming resources from charitable activities - grants receivable					
	4	4,469	74,197	78,666	76,806
Other incoming resources	5	5,424	2,056	7,480	3,120
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		10,050	76,253	86,303	79,944
Less: RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Charitable activities	6	(14,517)	(74,964)	(89,481)	(64,315)
Governance costs	7	—	—	—	—
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		(14,517)	(74,964)	(89,481)	(64,315)
NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR		(4,467)	1,289	(3,178)	15,629
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		30,026	33,372	63,398	47,769
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		25,559	34,661	60,220	63,398

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

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO
BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets		-	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>60,220</u>	<u>63,398</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>60,220</u>	<u>63,398</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>60,220</u>	<u>63,398</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>60,220</u>	<u>63,398</u>
FUNDS			
Restricted income funds	9	34,661	33,372
Unrestricted income funds	10	<u>25,559</u>	<u>30,026</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>60,220</u>	<u>63,398</u>

These financial statements were approved by the members of the Trustee Board and authorised for issue on 21 October 2024 and are signed on their behalf by:

A D Averis
Trustee



SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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 2024

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 2024	Total funds 2023
	£	£	£
Interest received	<u>157</u>	<u>157</u>	<u>18</u>

4. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - GRANTS RECEIVABLE

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Sandwell MBC staff funding	-	31,567	31,567	31,567
Sandwell MBC core funding	-	6,400	6,400	6,400
Other grants	-	35,941	35,941	37,041
Donations	4,469	289	4,758	1,798
	<u>4,469</u>	<u>74,197</u>	<u>78,666</u>	<u>76,806</u>

5. OTHER INCOMING RESOURCES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Miscellaneous income	<u>5,424</u>	<u>2,056</u>	<u>7,480</u>	<u>3,120</u>

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

6. COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES BY FUND TYPE

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Travel expenses	105	1,032	1,137	991
Postage	-	9	9	-
Stationery	-	537	537	366
Transcription	100	80	180	365
Volunteers expenses	4	1,231	1,235	729
Printing	-	348	348	204
Insurance	-	1,196	1,196	566
Room Hire	-	293	293	310
Telephone/broadband	-	179	179	-
Website	-	546	546	540
Equipment	257	8,006	8,263	5,970
Marketing	36	-	36	-
General expenses	275	301	576	849
Services	4,558	10,458	15,016	10,465
Rent	-	4,667	4,667	4,667
Staff costs	9,698	18,665	28,363	11,393
Seconded staff costs	-	26,900	26,900	26,900
Movement between funds	(516)	516	-	-
	<u>14,517</u>	<u>74,694</u>	<u>89,481</u>	<u>64,315</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:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	26,409	11,393
Social security costs	1,458	-
Other pension costs	496	-
	<u>28,363</u>	<u>11,393</u>

Particulars of employees:

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

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Administrative staff	<u>2</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 2024

9. RESTRICTED INCOME FUNDS

	Balance at 1 Apr 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Movement between funds £	Balance at 31 Mar 2024 £
SMBC Grant – seconded staff	-	31,568	31,568	-	-
Transport fund	89	-	53	-	36
Active at 60	1,398	1,258	1,104	-	1,552
Core fund	9,852	6,495	9,831	-	6,516
Housing service group	92	-	-	-	92
Tipton tree of lights	1,099	695	1,199	-	595
Family support group	100	-	-	-100	-
Young person's fund	400	-	-	100	500
Harry Payne TFA project	330	-	-	-	330
SCVO Vision 2030	30	-	30	-	-
Sandwell MBC					
Community Partnership Innovation	1,216	-	-	-	1,216
SCVO Vision 2030 Vaccine Support Community Grant	2,872	-	4	-	2,868
Creative Black Country					
Unseen Memories Project	-	2,607	2,102	-180	325
Esme Fairbairn Volunteer Coordinator grant – SCVO	12,682	14,765	14,086	-25	13,336
Black Country Tours – Podcast Project	-	500	132	-	368
Awards for All – Enablement worker fund	537	-	537	-	-
Wates – Family enterprise socialise family support	1,950	257	1,759	-	448
Thomas Pocklington – Digital Empowerment Grant	-	2,365	2,655	-	(290)
SMBC – Healthy Lifestyle grant Shape up your summer	725	-	453	-272	-
SMBC – Better Mental Health	-	493	454	-39	-
SMBC – MH & W Support Programme	-	9,610	2,755	-	6,855
SMBC – Digital Fund	-	5,640	5,726	-	(86)
	<u>33,372</u>	<u>76,253</u>	<u>74,448</u>	<u>-516</u>	<u>34,661</u>

SANDWELL VISUALLY IMPAIRED CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

10. UNRESTRICTED INCOME FUNDS

	Balance at 1 Apr 2023	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Movement between funds	Balance at 31 Mar 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
General funds	4,328	-	456	205	4,077
Annual Forum	412	805	752	-	465
Eye health Promotion Visual Impairment	1,571	40	-	-1,000	611
Training	1,050	-	-	-	1,050
Community Involvement Fund	496	-	-	-	496
IT Tech	499	-	418	-	81
Exit strategy	3,200	-	-	-	3,200
Health and Wellbeing projects	1,520	244	749	311	1,326
Funeral donations	1,872	1,528	-	-3,000	400
CENTRO Transcription fund	875	188	100	-	963
Marketing	858	-	-	-	858
Salary contingency fund	9,449	2,694	9,902	4,000	6,241
Cassies three peak challenge	1,023	-	-	-	1,023
Men's group	414	-	-	-	414
Demonstration Equipment Fund	590	-	-	-	590
SocialEyes Fund	1,555	2,209	2,138	-	1,626
Virtual Raffle	50	-	50	-	-
Women's group	264	165	228	-	201
Belinda Kaur Marathon	-	1,937	-	-	1,937
	<u>30,026</u>	<u>9,810</u>	<u>14,793</u>	<u>516</u>	<u>25,559</u>