

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

England & Wales - Charity number 1175305

## Details

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**Other names** EDWARD CONNOR LIMITED

**Status** Registered

**Legal form** Charitable company

**Company number** [10821224](#)

**Registered** 2017-10-23

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

## Contact

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**Website** [www.edwardconnor.com](http://www.edwardconnor.com)

## Activities

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**Objects:** THE OBJECTS OF THE COMPANY ARE TO:1. ADVANCE THE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN FAITH AND IN PARTICULAR (BUT WITHOUT LIMITATION): 1.1.TO PROVIDE ADVICE, ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO CHURCHES AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHARITIES AND GROUPS WHO ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE STATEMENT OF FAITH AND WHO CONDUCT THEIR AFFAIRS CONSISTENTLY WITH IT; AND1.2.TO PROMOTE, AID AND FURTHER THE OBJECTS AND WORK OF THE FIEC, SUBJECT ALWAYS TO THE FIEC HAVING AND CONTINUING TO HAVE EXCLUSIVELY CHARITABLE OBJECTS, INCLUDING BY THE PROVISION OF COST-EFFECTIVE LEGAL ADVICE TO FIEC AFFILIATED CHURCHES; AND2.PROMOTE THE EFFECTIVE USE OF CHARITABLE RESOURCES BY THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN ADVANCING THE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN FAITH.

**Activities:** Edward Connor Solicitor seeks to achieve its objects by providing legal advice, trustee training andpractical advice services to churches, charities and organisations who are inagreement with, and conduct their affairs consistently with, the Statement of Faith. Further, an advice line is provided to all FIEC churches, providing 30 minutes of free advice on any matter.

## Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies

## Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-02-28	£1,233,627	£1,342,760	£380,494	27
2024-02-29	£1,202,970	£1,240,059	£489,627	26
2023-02-28	£1,044,912	£1,022,510	£526,716	24
2022-02-28	£944,206	£835,142	£504,314	27
2021-02-28	£750,415	£682,022	£395,250	17

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>Kevin Andrew Appleton</b>	Chair	2020-04-27
Caroline Rachael Eade		2024-11-12
DAVID MICHAEL CORNISH		2017-06-15
Gemma Louise Adam		2017-06-15
MICHAEL PETER KENDALL		2024-11-04
Pippa Frances Prangley		2022-09-07
RICHARD JAMES MCLAREN WEST		2020-04-27
Stefan Paul Cantore		2024-07-22
Yannick Toluwalase Christos-Wahab		2024-10-16

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

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# Accounts

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# Annual Report 2025

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# Details

## *Reference and administrative information*

**Trustees:**

G L Adam  
K A Appleton  
D M Cornish  
C R Eade (resigned 06.06.24)  
C R Eade (appointed 12.11.24)  
P F Prangley  
A W J Stevens (resigned 2.5.24)  
R J M West  
S J Wright (resigned 12.7.24)  
Y Cristos-Wahab (appointed 16.10.24)  
S Cantore (appointed 22.7.24)  
M Kendall (appointed 4.11.24)

**Charity number:**

1175305

**Company number:**

10821224 (England and Wales)

**Principal address:**

10 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU

**Registered office:**

41 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU

**Independent Auditors:**

The Rowleys Partnership Ltd  
Statutory Auditors  
Chartered Accountants  
Charnwood House  
Harcourt Way  
Meridian Business Park  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE19 1WP

**Bank:**

Barclays Bank UK PLC, Leicester, LE87 2BB

# Trustees' Report

## *Trustees' Report for the Year Ended 28 February 2025*

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 28 February 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (published in October 2019).



# Case Study

## *Providing Christ-centred support*

“When I started to work for Bridge Chapel in January 2020, we were two separate charities (a church, a community centre) and a small business (a cafe), and one of the first things I wanted to explore was how we could come together to be one organisation again.

I contacted Edward Connor Solicitors and had several exploratory conversations about the process where the time, effort, complexity, and cost of the process were explained. I was told not to underestimate the size of the project. That proved to be very good advice! I was guided every step of the way and always knew I could ask questions without feeling stupid.

It would not have been possible, in my opinion, to have done this process without ECS. They really understood church life, members’ meetings etc and the complex relationships between elders, pastors and staff. It was also great to be able to start and end meetings with prayer. I always felt supported and Lynda [an ECS solicitor] did a really good job of prodding me to make sure I kept things moving. She understood how easy it was for me to become distracted by a very busy church life and lots of significant changes that we were going through at the same time as the merger.

Now, we are in a much better place strategically and operationally and also big areas of non-compliance have been resolved.”

**Ian MacMichael, Bridge Chapel, Liverpool**

*“It would not have been possible, in my opinion, to have done this process without ECS.”*



# Introduction

## *How can churches and Christian organisations flourish?*



We spend a lot of time considering that question. Every new trend or change in the law causes us to pause and consider how it will impact Christian ministries. How can we help our clients manage the change through their governing documents, policies or accountability structures? How can we ensure they remain as effective as possible?

We also understand though, that these issues often feel a million miles away from the real focus of Christian ministry.

If we asked a leader of a healthy church or thriving charity, what is the biggest issue you're facing in your ministry? What are you worried about? Most church leaders will say they're concerned about the hard hearts in their congregation, about the apathy in their communities. Directors of Christian organisations will talk about their budget deficits, fundraising challenges or lack of volunteers.

They never say, unless they're in the middle of a crisis, that their biggest concern for their ministry is legal compliance. It isn't something they want to think about and it's definitely not something they want to spend resources on.

And yet, the reality of gospel ministry today is that, at some point, a church or any other Christian organisation is going to need to access legal advice.

It can be for really positive reasons like buying a property for gospel ministry or employing staff. But given that our clients are working with sinners in a fallen world, often legal advice is needed when things have gone badly wrong - because of opposition both externally and, sadly, internally.

The challenge for us at ECS is demonstrating that doing legal compliance well doesn't need to be a distraction from ministry but that instead it can help gospel work to flourish. In the secular world we operate in: we want churches and Christian organisations to be exemplar employers, places where people are safe, where leaders are held accountable for their behaviour, where money is stewarded well - they should be above repute, shining like stars in this generation.

From our conversations with our clients, we know they often feel ignorant when it comes to legal matters. They don't know what they don't know, and struggle with what questions to ask.

*“Our experience shows that, in such a heavily regulated environment with increased legal complexity, massive expectations on leaders and much greater scrutiny, getting legal compliance right is pretty essential in enabling a ministry to flourish.”*

They don't want to get anything wrong but they lack resources or capacity to get help. They feel like they're going against the flow of societal trends. They feel frustration, helplessness and overwhelmed with regulatory burden. They feel isolated.

By recruiting Christian lawyers that understand the evangelical world, our desire in ECS is to walk alongside churches and Christian organisations, reversing the feelings held about legal compliance.

Our aim is to bring clarity and education instead of ignorance; confidence instead of overwhelm; partnership where there is isolation; a way forward where church leaders feel helpless. We want Christian leaders to feel empowered and equipped to make good decisions with confidence.

In terms of the overall journey of ECS, we are still committed to our goal of growth. But like lots of charities in the current climate, sometimes we have to simply focus on survival. We want to ensure ECS is going to be here when we're needed. There are things on the horizon that are concerning; it feels like things are going to get harder for Christian churches and charities. And we want to be offering a strong and thoroughly effective distinctively Christian legal service for the long-haul providing Christ-centred legal expertise wherever it will be fruitful.

There are three areas we've focused on over this last period to ensure that:

**Governance and leadership.** We recruited Steve Wright to head up our property team and we've added some great new trustees to our board including Stefan Cantore, Mike Kendall and Yannick Christos-Wahab.

**Foundations for future growth.** Recruitment of godly specialists remains a key strategic priority for us. To help with that we've been putting in place measures to make ECS a great place to work, improving efficiencies with a new IT system, and improving processes as we seek to give the firm a strong foundation for future growth.

**Extending our reach.** We are increasing the range of biblically faithful church groups and non-church charities that we serve. Clearly, the more clients we work with, the more we achieve our vision of helping Christian ministry in the UK to flourish. But also it does help us with sustainability as we grow and gain economies of scale.

In the midst of complexity and challenge, we're pleased to highlight stories throughout this report where we have been able to walk our clients through difficulty, support them in growth and encourage them in their ministries. We are looking forward to the opportunity to help more clients become more compliant versions of themselves, equipped for further gospel work.

*“We want Christian leaders to feel empowered and equipped to make good decisions with confidence.”*

**Gemma Adam, Managing Director, March 2025.**

# Objectives and Activities

The objects of the charitable company as stated in the Articles of Association are to **advance the Evangelical Christian Faith and to promote the effective use of charitable resources by the provision of services to organisations involved in advancing the Evangelical Christian Faith.**

We do this by:

- Firstly, providing advice, assistance and support to churches and other Christian charities and groups who are in agreement with our Statement of Faith and conduct their affairs consistently with it.
- Secondly, promoting, aiding and furthering the objects and work of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), subject to the FIEC having aims and objects consistent with the Statement of Faith of the charitable company.

We are an 'Alternative Business Structure' under the Legal Services Act 2007 which enables us to offer a full breadth of legal services and SRA- regulated legal advice to Christian organisations. This advice combines legal expertise and theological insight so that our clients and beneficiaries are not only legally compliant but able to operate in accordance with their evangelical convictions. This enables them to realise their purposes more effectively and in turn, advance the Evangelical Christian faith.

## **Our Christ-centred legal expertise helps gospel work to flourish in the midst of legal complexity.**

As a charity, we're able to offer hourly rates for solicitors which are below market rates for equivalent levels of expertise and experience making Christ-centred legal expertise more accessible when needed.

We also offer model documents for sale which is a cost-effective way for Christian organisations to obtain good quality legal documentation to aid their work. We seek to share our expertise by regularly producing advice articles and guidance notes for our website and e-newsletter these highlight key legal and regulatory issues for the charitable sector we serve and indicate how Christian organisations can respond to these issues.

During the period reported an advice line was provided to all FIEC churches, providing 30 minutes of free advice on any matter, furthering the work of the FIEC and its affiliated churches. The arrangements for this were changed during the reporting period to allow FIEC to take more of the practical/administrative queries back in house, but ECS has continued to provide the free legal advice supporting this.

The trustees have considered the general guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The charitable company benefits the public by helping a significant number of charities to comply with their legal and regulatory obligations and thereby in turn achieve their purposes and public benefit.

# Case Study

## *Standing on biblical foundations*

A church client came to us in October 2024 after they received a letter from the Charity Commission. The Commission had received a complaint from the National Secular Society (NSS) in respect of one of the Charity's sermons and had opened an assessment case.

The church client had put a sermon on its website titled 'Wives submit to your own husbands'. The complaint highlighted excerpts of the sermon and pointed to Home Office statutory guidance which includes "Isolating the victim from family, friends, colleagues and professionals who may be trying to support them" as a feature of controlling or coercive behaviour". The excerpts included references to submission and authority in a marriage.

The Commission's letter required that the trustees provide a written response, including answering a list of questions, and a request for additional detail. The church trustees then received a further email to inform them that the Commission had been approached by the media in relation to the complaint and to ask for their comment.

The church contacted ECS. By this stage, the church trustees had already met and put together some notes. Their comments noted that preaching from the Word of God was consistent with their statement of faith and doctrinal positions, and that the sermon was part of a series looking at marriage. They felt that the NSS had taken individual comments out of context and that there were some inaccurate quotes that supported the NSS's own viewpoint. The trustees refuted that the sermon could/should be construed to indicate that controlling or coercive behaviour is acceptable.

ECS worked with the trustees to develop a written response, demonstrating that the Charity had looked into the matter properly and were truly seeking to be compliant with their legal obligations. ECS provided further questions for the trustees to go through with their Pastor and advised them on submitting supporting evidence to their written response. The Commission has not yet responded.

This is a reflection of our culture and the types of reputational risks that churches and church trustees may be facing in the future as they seek to remain faithful to Scripture. In this case, the church's position was bolstered by the work they had previously done on ensuring their CIO's constitution and church handbook included the ECS Basis of Faith with a paragraph on marriage, and their Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements which also included statements on marriage.

*This is a reflection of our culture and the types of reputational risks that churches and church trustees may be facing in the future.*



# Key Achievements



## *Served over 500 clients*

We served 543 clients, about half of whom, 235, we hadn't assisted previously.

## *8,000 hours of advice*

We delivered 8090 hours of advice.

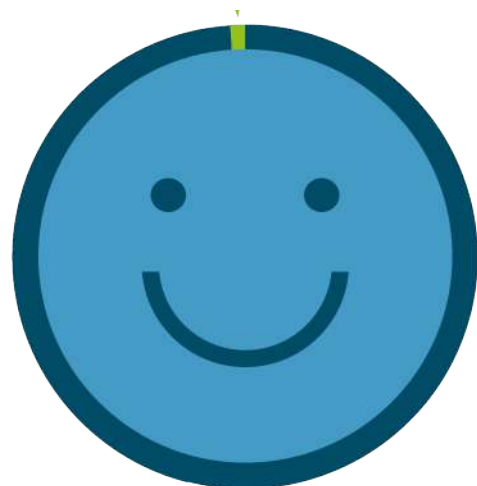


## *Demonstrated our commitment to the local church*

68% of our work was for churches, representing our commitment to the local church. And this was for a broader range of churches. Work for FIEC churches remained a significant proportion - 57% - but a smaller proportion of a bigger pie.

## *Had zero client complaints*

Client satisfaction was high with a net promoter score consistently between 9 and 10. Complaints on fewer than 0.5% of the work undertaken, all of which were from non-client third parties (3 complaints / 644 matters).



# Achievements and Performance

## *Governance and leadership*

**A key strategic priority this year has been to develop exemplary leadership.**

### **Building the trustee board**

We have been pleased over recent months to recruit new trustees to our board: Stefan Cantore, Mike Kendall and Yannick Christos-Wahab who have strengthened our experience and expertise at board level. The board took some time away in October 2024 to invest in relationships with one another and to look ahead, and we completed some trustee training in our January 2025 meeting.

### **Developing our team**

Steve Wright stepped down from our board earlier this year, and we've been delighted that he's joined us as Head of Property, providing forward-thinking leadership to this team. He has recently recruited a part-time member of staff to that team, expanding our depth and capability.



Stefan Cantore is a senior university teacher in organisation development (OD) and management learning at the University of Sheffield Management School. He has published books and articles on co-designing services in complex systems with a focus on developing effective leadership behaviours. He is also an Elder at Wycliffe Independent Church.

Mike Kendall is married to Debs and they have three children. He is the Pastor of St Neots Evangelical Church and serves as Vice-Chair on the FIEC Trust Board. Mike is involved with the East Anglia Gospel Partnership and enjoys running in his spare time.



Yannick Christos-Wahab is an elder at Stockwell Baptist Church. He is from Nigeria and was born and raised in London. He is happily married to Kiitan and is the father of Kharis and Yohannah. He also enjoys sports, reading, and talking to people.

Steve Wright joined the property team in 2024, after serving as a Trustee from 2022 to 2024. Steve trained with global law firm Dentons and qualified into their Planning & Public Law team in 2003. He moved in-house, to the John Lewis Partnership, in 2007. In 2016 Steve and his family moved to Switzerland where he served as an elder at an international church near Geneva. They returned to the UK, where Steve worked for Eden Baptist Church in Cambridge, and served as an elder, before returning to the property world in 2024.



We have been delighted to appoint a new Compliance Officer for Legal Practice, which the SRA has approved, as well as making further internal staff changes to ensure compliance support capacity. We continue to ensure that we deliver compliance excellence balanced with cost-effective operational efficiency, with updates to our complaints and conflicts policies and procedures.

We've also been pleased to welcome a new solicitor into the charities team.

### **Maintaining standards**

We are delighted to report that in our employee survey that once again our staff reported that they are proud to work at ECS and feel confident recommending us to churches and Christian organisations. We were also pleased that staff felt able to raise issues that we will look to resolve, such as making sure all staff feel appreciated and valued, providing sufficient admin support while protecting our staff's workload, and how to address the shortcomings of remote working. Our Nottingham 'hub', created last year in addition to our main office, has enabled more staff to meet and work in-person when desired.

*“I am proud to work at ECS, the opportunity for a great work/life balance is unmatched in my experience.”*

## *Foundations for future growth*

**Recruitment of godly specialists remains a key strategic priority therefore we have been putting in place measures to make ECS a great place to work.**

### **Continued IT improvements**

We have continued investment into our IT systems to increase the quantity, quality and productivity of the work we're doing. That includes client facing systems and documents. In particular, we have standardised a number of our internal model documents, principally in the CIO workflow, helping us move towards a more consistent visual appearance and behaviour of the documents we produce. We have introduced new internal reporting which make monitoring performance and other figures, more straightforward.

We have maintained our regular training sessions on IT systems and templates, both on the fee-earner and support sides. These have helped improve our efficiency and productivity.

### **Building our support teams**

We have created a new role, Legal Support Team Manager, and enabled a newly recruited member of staff to develop effective structures and systems for legal support. We recruited a further two legal support team members in early 2025 to ensure that our fee earners and clients receive the support that they need. We have also increased another staff member's capacity and responsibility

for supporting HR, compliance, and office/facilities management. Recognising that as we continue to grow, having consistent and streamlined HR processes will be important to facilitate both team changes, and handling of day-to-day practicalities.

## *Extending our reach*

**We are increasing the range of biblically faithful church groups and non-church charities that we serve.**

### **Strategic communications**

We recruited a Head of Communications to drive forward our comms, to connect with and effectively reach clients, potential clients and recruits, and helping us improve our internal communications.

We have been working on re-branding and re-wording our mission, vision and aims and developing a client focused communications strategy to increase both our recruitment and prospective client reach. From there, we have been developing a strategic approach to business development, so that as each team considers prospects, they can develop the best messaging, approach and resources to mean that business development work is as effective and time efficient as possible.

We have placed adverts and editorials in church and charity magazines outside our normal sphere of influence, highlighting our range of services and our unique position as a law firm and a Christian charity.

### **Relationship with strategic partners**

We have continued our close strategic relationship with FIEC, working together so that not only are we helping FIEC churches but also the FIEC are letting us know what churches need, and how we can best support them with their ministry aims. To maintain and develop that partnership, a number of senior staff attended the FIEC Conference and were able to build on personal connections and establish shared strategic goals. That has included redesigning how the FIEC Legal Advice Line works, ensuring that churches are passed through to ECS only when their issue has been defined, and it is clear that they need legal advice, saving churches time and money.

We have also been working with para-church organisations, building offerings with these strategic partners so that churches can access a wider range of services.

### **Church of England support**

Our charities team has undertaken a significant amount of training on ecclesiastical matters to ensure that they can best support our increasing numbers of Anglican clients. This move allows us to support a wider number of churches and ensure that evangelical Anglicans have access to Christ-centred legal services.

# Financial Review

## *Overview of the financial year*

The financial year ended with a turnover of £1.2m and a deficit of £109k. This was a financially and operationally challenging year, leading to an unplanned deficit, but absorbed within the reserve levels held to maintain resilience through challenges. The charity holds a balance sheet at the end of the year of £380k of net assets, £364k of which are current undesignated general funds.

Many of these challenges were temporal and transitional. The trustees have reflected upon the risks these have presented in the financial planning and budgeting for future periods to return the financial position to a surplus and growth.

Income was £1.23m, broadly the same as the prior financial year (£1.20m). This represented a higher volume of work completed than the prior year at a higher charge rate, but offset by a more substantial level of discount given to clients.

Expenditure was £1.34m, higher in the year due to inflationary costs and investment for growth. The rise in expenditure had been planned but was not offset by the anticipated growth in income.

### **Growing non-church work**

Highlighted in last year's report, recruitment of Mary Drew into the charities team was part of a strategy to grow work for non-church organisations without reducing the existing level of work provided to churches. It has been encouraging to see this work grow and a greater number of



larger charities benefit from the services offered. This took longer to grow than anticipated, leading to lower income and growth costs during the year. The benefits will be realised in future periods as this work continues to grow and develop.

### **Business development driving growth**

Similarly, investments were made in property work strategy and leadership, and in communications strategy and leadership, which are already driving greater growth beyond the reporting period.

A significant impact to higher discounting was a consequence of training and upskilling team members in advising clients in specialist legal areas. This investment provides a strong foundation for their ability to drive impact for clients and income to the charity in future periods.

Combined with an additional focus on further business development, the trustees are optimistic about income levels providing financial stability moving forward.

Recruitment to underpin our growth, essential for scaling financial sustainability, is critical but continues to present a challenge to the charity. Anticipated key recruitment into the legal teams was not realised during the year, impacting margin delivery.

Significant churn in the support team, including the departure of the Head of Legal Operations, and the restructuring of several roles created capacity challenges for efficient and consistent delivery of services during the year. This was further exacerbated by challenges in working through internal processes with the new IT system and a slow migration to strong management information on the new systems. Substantial progress in addressing all of these has been made, and continued work is being undertaken to ensure efficient and cost-effective delivery of client work.

Inflationary pressures were lower than the prior year but remained a pressure point on costs.

### **Managing cashflow**

Cashflow was a particular challenge during the year, with a combination of the running deficit and operational challenges leading to higher lock-up. In January 2025, a payment plan with HMRC was agreed for the VAT bill due to mitigate this. A new reserves policy with a greater focus on cash has been agreed, and as part of this and overall risk management, the trustees are exploring a range of options to increase working cash levels to reduce the risk of volatility from cashflow.

The trustees have set a budget for the forthcoming period to generate a small surplus and are confident in the charity's ability to deliver this. This includes resource and focus on business development to expand both work types and range of clients to ensure income can be consistently delivered, strengthening of the operational support, IT, and leadership in the organisation to ensure efficient and effective delivery, and control of discounting to recover costs. Strong steps have been made towards growing the team where there is unmet demand for services, which will further allow financial strengthening.

# Reserves Policy

## **The trustees have considered guidance from the Charity Commission and risks to the business in producing this policy.**

Unlike many charities, our current assets are predominantly not cash, but locked up in debtors in line with typical professional service models. This is primarily work-in-progress (unbilled earned income) as invoices are generally settled quickly.

There is therefore a greater emphasis in holding cash for management of short-term risks, whereas medium-term risks can be mitigated through assets held in WIP which can be billed and recovered.

Longer-term risks are managed through planned continual investment into the staff, structures and resources for the firm and business planning, and where opportunities or risks present on the horizon which may need additional capital, funds are designated rather than held within general reserves.

### **Short and medium term risks for which reserves are held include:**

- **Short term risks:** unexpected material staff changes, including staff sickness or key personnel loss materially impacting income; uneven trading due to timings of fluctuating demand; lack of agility for seizing opportunities either in recruitment or for serving beneficiaries; business interruption impacting income and presenting unexpected costs;
- **Medium term risks:** changes to staffing; changes to market conditions; available funds to take new growth opportunities arising.

In addition to risk from insufficient reserves, excessive reserves impact the effectiveness of the charity. Excessive cash held outside of designated or restricted funds would suggest the charity is being inefficient in impact or increasing accessibility to our services for our beneficiaries. Excessive non-cash reserves at present would suggest poorly managed lock-up, an inefficiency which decreases accessibility for beneficiaries to our services by driving up cost.

The trustees aim to provide resilience mitigating short-term risk by holding operating cash levels equivalent to an amount between 1 and 3 months' of income. Cash falling, or forecast to fall, below these levels diverts important management resource from efficient and effective service delivery to beneficiaries and increases the risk of default to creditors. Sustained undesignated unreserved cash above this level will generally be considered excessive and the trustees would seek to reinvest for the benefit of beneficiaries.

This cash may be financed through leveraging of work in progress, and the trustees therefore will hold minimum reserves that ensure the charity is forecast to maintain these cash levels, including sufficient assets to meet creditors as they fall.

The charity will aim to not hold more than undesignated current net assets equivalent to 9 months' of income in the general fund to avoid holding excessive reserves.

At the end of the year operating cash levels stood at £138k. This is equivalent to just over a month of income. With £195k of unbilled work in progress, and £364k of undesignated current reserves, the trustees are confident that sufficient reserves are held to sustain the cash within the above levels. There is an ambition over the forthcoming year to strengthen this through generation of a surplus.



# Future Plans

As we seek to help churches and Christian organisations flourish, we increasingly see the need to attract godly, skilled lawyers who are passionate about helping us carry out our mission. This will help us to operate sustainably, lay ground for future growth, and provide the highest quality, biblically faithful legal expertise.

To attract the right people to join us, we will be working on our internal and external communications, ensuring that ECS is a great place to work with a shared and supportive culture. And, establishing our brand and position in the market, so that clients know what we offer, and skilled lawyers can see how they will fit into and enhance our team.

## *Governance and leadership*

In our aim for exemplary leadership, we will work towards having a diverse team of godly and highly talented leaders who govern ECS well.

In the coming year therefore, we will put significant efforts into filling key roles at the organisation, recruiting a full-time senior Employment Partner and a new Head of Property. These senior appointments will be instrumental in supporting complex legal work, building up our team capacity, and providing stability and longevity to these departments.

We also want to build leadership skills across our staff team, recognise the importance of training, and giving opportunities for staff to increase responsibilities and lead within their various spheres.

We will continue to build an excellent Board by taking them through a trustee training journey, building on their specialised skills and experience in legal, finance, communications and theology.

We will also look to use the Board's varied backgrounds and perspectives to broaden the pool for future recruitments and for business development.

Lastly, we are committed to establishing a clear and effective annual cycle of business and reporting, streamlining our processes for transparency and efficiency.

## *Foundations for future growth*

In our aim to be a great place to work, we will continue to build a diverse team of godly and highly talented lawyers at ECS. Over the next period, we will be looking at ways to diversify our recruitment, advertising in new areas, and connecting with legal professionals from different church traditions.

We will also continue to improve HR procedures both in terms of efficiency and to ensure these better serve our staff team.

We will continue to foster an environment where all our staff can flourish. Key to this will be maintaining and improving our IT systems, ensuring that systems and processes are not hindering our service offering. We will continue to work on reporting systems so that all staff have clarity on goals and expectations.

## *Extending our reach*

In our aim for offering high-quality, gospel-impacting advice, we will work towards becoming the first-choice firm for Christian organisations and churches.

We will intentionally seek to broaden the range of churches and charitable organisations that we work with. Maintaining our commitment to our statement of faith, we realise that there are many church denominations who share our beliefs and need our support in a culture that is becoming increasingly legally complex. As such we will advertise our services in a wider range of publications, seek to develop partnerships with different church and para-church organisations, and produce widely available training for trustees and church leaders.

As we seek to operate sustainably while providing the most accessible legal support for our clients, we will review our pricing and costs to ensure good margins and accessibility.



# Risk Management

The trustees maintain a register of risks which is reviewed regularly as part of the Board's cycle of business, with mitigations to address both the likelihood and potential impact of major risks. Trustees regularly review SRA compliance breaches (which are few in number). Management also regularly reviews key risk areas. A business continuity plan has also been produced to ensure that operational risks have been considered and proper systems and procedures in place to mitigate against them.

Policies are also in place and regularly reviewed for dealing with conflicts of interest, compliance oversight, client care, complaints, data protection, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing, financial management, equalities legislation and cybersecurity to reduce risk exposure. The staff are given regular training on these policies and they are included in the induction process for new staff.

A new COLP was appointed during the year who has undertaken training and attended SRA and Law Society risk and compliance events.

The primary risks to the charity have been identified as staffing resources, management capacity, reputational risks, cash management and cyber-security. Each of these are priorities where the trustees have been seeking to reduce risk during the period reported, and continue to be invested in to address risk in the subsequent period. There is an increasing reputational risk arising from the nature of our work and how it is mis-reported on social media. There are limits on what can be done to address that (given the importance of client confidentiality) but trustees are taking steps to mitigate.



# Structure, Governance and Management

**Edward Connor Solicitors is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under company number 10821224, and registered as a charity in England and Wales under registration number 1175305. It is regulated by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority number 640691. The principal office is at 10 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU and its registered office address is at 41 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU.**

It is governed by its articles of association.

## *Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities*

The trustees, who are also directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the period and up to the date of approval of this Report were:

G L Adam  
K A Appleton  
D M Cornish  
C R Eade (resigned 06.06.24)  
C R Eade (appointed 12.11.24)  
P F Prangley  
A W J Stevens (resigned 2.5.24)  
R J M West  
S J Wright (resigned 12.7.24)  
Y Cristos-Wahab (appointed 16.10.24)  
S Cantore (appointed 22.7.24)  
M Kendall (appointed 4.11.24)

The trustees are appointed by the trustees and members of the charitable company, the members being the trustees of the FIEC (FIEC Trust Board) and the non-executive trustees of ECS. They ensure that the trustees are Christians with qualifications and experience in several relevant disciplines, with particular experience in law, finance and pastoral ministry. This experience is invaluable to the work of the charitable company.

The trustees have appointed Gemma Adam, David Cornish and Caroline Eade, as paid employees to the board of trustees. The trustees have also appointed Ursula Stevens, a connected person to A W J Stevens, as a paid employee. This is in accordance with the articles of associate of the charitable company. Steve Wright was engaged as a consultant in August 2024 through his company ACAL, and then employed by the charity from October 2024 on a temporary contract, subsequent to his resignation as a trustee.

Remuneration of trustees who are also paid employees or connected persons is set by the non-executive directors, who review salary levels in line with external benchmarks and in line with responsibilities held. Conflicts of interest are carefully managed amongst the trustees, recorded at

every meeting, and no staff member is ever involved in the setting of their own remuneration, or that of a connected person. The remuneration committee also set clear parameters within which the Managing Director is to set other staff pay.

Day to day duties are delegated to the Managing Director, and through her to other staff employed or contracted by the charitable company. The charity currently does not have any unpaid volunteers other than the non-executive trustees.

The trustees review at least annually the composition of the board to ensure that there is a suitable range of expertise and experience amongst the trustees.

New trustees are given the Charity Commission guidance concerning the responsibilities of trustees, and an introductory overview of the organisation and their responsibilities within it. The trustees keep under review the most appropriate means of ensuring regular, ongoing training for the trustees, both through the expertise within the team, and the use of external training. The trustees collectively received trustee training from an external provider in January 2025.

Company 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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that The Rowleys Partnership Ltd be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 10th July 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

***David Cornish***

.....signed on 24/07/2025, 08:38:04.BST

D M Cornish - Trustee



# Independent Auditors Report

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Edward Connor Solicitors (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 28 February 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 28 February 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- the charitable company has not kept adequate accounting records; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.
- the Trustees were not entitled to take advantage of small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

#### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

# Independent Auditors Report

## **Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the charitable company and determined that the most significant which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements are those related to the financial reporting frameworks (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011) and the relevant tax compliance regulations in the jurisdiction in which the charitable company operates. We enquired of management, had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- We enquired of management, whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or whether they had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the entity's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur;
- Our testing considered unusual or unexpected journal entries on a sample basis;
- We evaluated the assumptions and judgements used by management within significant accounting estimates and assessing if these indicate evidence of management bias;
- We tested significant transactions, in particular the evaluation of the business rationale for any which appear unusual or outside the company's normal course of business;
- We assessed the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team by understanding the practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity, plus ensuring the team had appropriate and relevant training of the financial reporting framework and the relevant tax compliance regulations specific to the entity;
- We reviewed the financial statements and tested the disclosures against supporting documentation;
- We communicated relevant matters to all members of the audit team to ensure they understood the risks specific to the entity and the audit procedures planned to mitigate these.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### ***The Rowleys Partnership Ltd***

***signed on 25/07/2025, 11:38:57 BST***

The Rowleys Partnership Ltd

Statutory Auditors

Chartered Accountants

Eligible to act as an auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006

Charnwood House

Harcourt Way

Meridian Business Park

Leicester

Leicestershire

LE19 1WP

Date: 10th July 2025

# Statement of Financial Activities

## Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

	Notes	2025 Unrestricted funds £	2024 Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>			
Donations and legacies	2	1,517	1,477
<b>Charitable activities</b>	5		
Fees received from legal advice provided		1,231,444	1,199,487
Other income	3	-	596
Investment income	4	666	1,410
<b>Total</b>		<u>1,233,627</u>	<u>1,202,970</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>			
Raising funds	6	4,064	2,680
<b>Charitable activities</b>	7		
Charitable activities		1,338,696	1,237,379
<b>Total</b>		<u>1,342,760</u>	<u>1,240,059</u>
<b>NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)</b>		(109,133)	(37,089)
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>			
Total funds brought forward		<u>489,627</u>	<u>526,716</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<u><u>380,494</u></u>	<u><u>489,627</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

The notes form part of these financial statements.

# Balance Sheet

## Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

	Notes	2025 Unrestricted funds £	2024 Total funds £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	15	5,191	1,872
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	16	442,034	371,079
Cash at bank		138,737	261,681
		<u>580,771</u>	<u>632,760</u>
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	17	(200,468)	(130,005)
		<u>380,303</u>	<u>502,755</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
		<u>380,303</u>	<u>502,755</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
		385,494	504,627
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due after more than one year	18	(5,000)	(15,000)
		<u>380,494</u>	<u>489,627</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			
		<u>380,494</u>	<u>489,627</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>			
Unrestricted funds	21	380,494	489,627
		<u>380,494</u>	<u>489,627</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>			
		<u>380,494</u>	<u>489,627</u>

The charitable company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 28 February 2025, although an audit has been carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011. No member of the charitable company has deposited a notice, pursuant to section 476, requiring an audit of these financial statements under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

The notes form part of these financial statements.

**Balance Sheet - continued (Registered number: 10821224)  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025**

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 10th July 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

***David Cornish***

.....signed on 24/07/2025, 08:38:04 BST

D M Cornish - Trustee

# Cash Flow Statement

## Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>(107,227)</u>	<u>(62,161)</u>
Net cash used in operating activities		<u>(107,227)</u>	<u>(62,161)</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(6,383)	(2,808)
Interest received		<u>666</u>	<u>1,410</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(5,717)</u>	<u>(1,398)</u>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Loan repayments in year		<u>(10,000)</u>	<u>(10,000)</u>
Net cash used in financing activities		<u>(10,000)</u>	<u>(10,000)</u>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>261,681</u>	<u>335,240</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>138,737</u></u>	<u><u>261,681</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements.

# Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

Notes to the Cash Flow Statement  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

## 1, RECONCILIATION OF NET EXPENDITURE TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2025 £	2024 £
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(109,133)	(37,089)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	3,064	936
Interest received	(666)	(1,410)
Increase in debtors	(70,955)	(35,063)
Increase in creditors	70,463	10,465
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
Net cash used in operations	<u>(107,277)</u>	<u>(62,161)</u>

## 2, ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.3.24 £	Cash Flow £	At 28.2.25 £
<b>Net cash</b>			
Cash at bank	<u>261,681</u>	<u>(122,944)</u>	<u>138,737</u>
	<u>261,681</u>	<u>(122,944)</u>	<u>138,737</u>
<b>Debt</b>			
Debts falling due within 1 year	(10,000)	-	(10,000)
Debts falling due after 1 year	<u>(15,000)</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>(5,000)</u>
	<u>(25,000)</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>(15,000)</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>236,681</u>	<u>(112,944)</u>	<u>123,737</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### **Charity information**

Edward Connor Solicitors is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 41 The Point, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7Q.

### **Basis of preparing the financial statements**

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charitable company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

### **Income**

Income is recognised when the charitable company is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charitable company has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charitable company has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Income from government and other grants are recognised at fair value when the charity has entitlement after any performance conditions have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably. If entitlement is not met then these amounts are deferred.

Continued...

## **Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis, inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered. Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charitable company on 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 based upon either time spent on the actual activity or usage.

### **Tangible fixed assets**

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

### **Fixtures and fittings**

33% per annum on a straight-line basis on IT equipment and 25% per annum straight line on others.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities

### **Impairment of fixed assets**

At each reporting end date, the charitable company reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

## **Taxation**

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

## **Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Continued...

## **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

## **Financial instruments**

The charitable company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charitable company's balance sheet when the charitable company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

## **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

## **Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Continued...

### **Derecognition of financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charitable company's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

### **Employee benefits**

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charitable company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

### **Retirement benefits**

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

### **Going concern**

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charitable company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Continued...

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES</b>		
Donations and gifts	<u>1,517</u>	<u>1,477</u>
<b>3. OTHER INCOME</b>		
Secondment fees and other income	<u>-</u>	<u>596</u>
<b>4. INVESTMENT INCOME</b>		
Interest receivable	<u>666</u>	<u>1,410</u>
<b>5. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>		
Charges and model document fees	<u>1,231,444</u>	<u>1,199,487</u>
<b>6. RAISING FUNDS</b>		
Raising donations and legacies		
Advertising	2,359	1,280
Other fundraising costs	<u>1,705</u>	<u>1,400</u>
	<u>4,064</u>	<u>2,680</u>

Continued...

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

	Direct Costs (see note 8)	Totals £
<b>7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS</b>		
Charitable	<u>1,338,696</u>	<u>1,338,696</u>
<b>8. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>Charitable Activities direct costs</b>		
	2025	2024
	£	£
Staff costs	1,017,955	937,267
Training, conferences and other staff costs	38,194	32,274
Meeting expenses	4,518	919
Insurance	66,105	62,721
Staff travelling expenses	5,506	3,809
Professional fees	35,071	31,534
Professional subscriptions	27,315	27,851
Audit and accounts fees	20,000	18,950
Office expenses	42,822	22,546
Sundry expenses	25,915	22,534
Bank charges	1,128	1,996
Bad debts	583	1,074
IT project	50,520	72,698
Depreciation	<u>3,064</u>	<u>936</u>
	<u>1,228,696</u>	<u>1,237,379</u>

Continued...

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

9. NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)

Net income / (expenditure) is stated after charging / (crediting):

	2025	2024
	£	£
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>3,064</u>	<u>936</u>

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

None of the trustees were remunerated for their role as trustees.

In accordance with section 5 of its Articles of Association, three trustees were remunerated in connection with fulfilling their duties under their contracts of employment with the charitable company (2024 - three). During the year, Gemma Adam received gross remuneration of £41,478 (2024 - £36,956) and pension benefits of £3,733 (2024 - £3,244), Caroline Eade received gross remuneration of £69,129 (2024 - £61,594) and pension benefits of £6,222 (2024 - £5,406) and David Cornish received gross remuneration of £57,016 (2024 - £50,033) and pension benefits of £5,131(2024 - £4,481).

**Trustees' expenses**

Travel and meeting expenses of £936 were reimbursed to 6 trustees during the year (2024 - 4 trustees reimbursed £402).

11. STAFF COSTS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	862,900	792,029
Social security costs	78,880	71,995
Other pension costs	<u>76,175</u>	<u>73,243</u>
	<u>1,017,955</u>	<u>937,267</u>

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

	2025	2024
Trustees directors	3	3
Fee earners and support staff	24	23
Continued...	<u>27</u>	<u>26</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

11. STAFF COSTS - continued

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2025	2024
£60,001 - £70,000	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

12. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>	
Donations and legacies	1,477
<b>Charitable activities</b>	
Fees received from legal advice provided	1,199,487
Other income	596
Investment income	<u>1,410</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>1,202,970</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>	
Raising funds	2680
Charitable activities	
Charitable activities	<u>1,237,379</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>1,240,059</u>
<b>NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)</b>	(37,089)
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>	
Total funds brought forward	<u>526,716</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<u><u>489,627</u></u>

Continued...

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

13. AUDITORS' REMUNERATION

Fees payable to the charitable company's auditor and associates:

	2025	2024
Audit of the charitable company's annual accounts	<u>12,000</u>	<u>11,400</u>

The auditor was paid for non-audit services amounting to £3,300 (2024: £3,200).

14. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer equipment £
<b>COSTS</b>	
At 1 March 2024	2,808
Additions	<u>6,383</u>
At 28 February 2025	<u>9,191</u>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>	
At 1 March 2024	936
Charge for year	<u>3,064</u>
At 28 February 2025	<u>4,000</u>
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>	
At 28 February 2025	<u><u>5,191</u></u>
At 29 February 2024	<u><u>1,872</u></u>

15. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	165,247	123,240
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>276,787</u>	<u>247,839</u>
	<u><u>442,034</u></u>	<u><u>371,079</u></u>

Continued...

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts (see note 18)	10,000	10,000
Trade creditors	20,950	31,117
Social security and other taxes	20,182	18,797
VAT	119,165	41,907
Accruals and deferred income	30,171	28,184
	<u>200,468</u>	<u>130,005</u>

17. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank loans (see note 18)	<u>5,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>

18. LOANS

An analysis of the maturity of loans is given below:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year on demand:		
Bank loans	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Amounts falling between one and two years:		
Bank loans - 1-2 years	<u>5,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>

The Bounce Back Loan is unsecured and repayable over 5 years at a 2.5% fixed rate of annual interest.

19. LEASING AGREEMENTS

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Within one year	73,772	49,687
Between one and five years	<u>54,555</u>	<u>12,227</u>
	<u>128,327</u>	<u>61,914</u>

Continued...

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

20. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.3.24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 28.2.25 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Unrestricted fund	489,627	(109,133)	380,494
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>489,627</u>	<u>(109,133)</u>	<u>380,494</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expanded £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Unrestricted fund	1,233,627	(1,342,760)	(109,133)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>1,233,627</u>	<u>(1,342,760)</u>	<u>(109,133)</u>

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.3.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 29.2.24 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Unrestricted fund	526,716	(37,089)	489,627
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>526,716</u>	<u>(37,089)</u>	<u>489,627</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expanded £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Unrestricted fund	1,202,970	(1,240,059)	(37,089)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>1,202,970</u>	<u>(1,240,059)</u>	<u>(37,089)</u>

## 21. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Mrs U. Stevens, who is the wife of trustee A.W.J. Stevens, was employed by the charity during the year and received gross remuneration of £3,194 (2024 - £15,975) and pension benefits of £288 (2024 - £1,304). Mrs U Stevens husband Mr A W J Stevens who was a trustee resigned on 2 May 2024 therefore the disclosure of gross remuneration and pension for Mrs U Stevens has only been disclosed up to the 2 May 2024.

# Detailed Statement of Financial Activities

## Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>		
	1,517	1,477
<b>Donations and legacies</b>		
Donations and gifts		
<b>Other trading activities</b>		
Secondment fees and other income	-	596
<b>Investment income</b>		
Interest receivable	666	1,410
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Fees received from legal advice provided	<u>1,231,144</u>	<u>1,199,487</u>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	1,233,627	1,202,970
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Raising donations and legacies</b>		
Advertising	2,359	1,280
Other fundraising costs	1,705	1,400
	<u>4,064</u>	<u>2,680</u>
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Wages and salaries	862,900	792,029
Social security	78,880	71,995
Other pensions cost	76,175	73,243
Training, conferences and other staff costs	38,194	32,274
Meeting expenses	4,518	919
Insurance	66,105	62,721
Staff travelling expenses	5,506	3,809
Professional fees	35,071	31,534
Professional subscriptions	27,315	27,851
Audit and accountancy fees	20,000	18,950
Office expenses	42,822	30,581
<b>Sundry expenses</b>	25,915	22,534
<b>Bank charges</b>	1,128	1,996
<b>Bad debt</b>	583	1,074
<b>IT project</b>	50,520	64,933
	<u>1,335,632</u>	<u>1,236,443</u>

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 28 February 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Support costs</b>		
<b>Finance</b>		
Computer equipment	<u>3,064</u>	<u>936</u>
Total resources expended	<u>1,342,760</u>	<u>1,240,059</u>
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<u><u>(109,133)</u></u>	<u><u>(37,089)</u></u>

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements





## Annual Report 2025



[www.edwardconnor.com](http://www.edwardconnor.com)



[info@edwardconnor.com](mailto:info@edwardconnor.com)



01858 411 568

Edward Connor Solicitors is a registered charity (charity number 1175305) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 10821224). Its registered office is at 41 The Point, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 7QU. It is registered for VAT (number GB277792346). It is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (number 640691).

# Signatures' technical details

## Signatures

**david.cornish@edwardconnor.com**

24/07/2025, 08:38:04 BST

**Fingerprint**

e6005385c9f3a4d23f9b1d3be44849a640bde83e

**lisa@rowleys.biz**

25/07/2025, 11:38:57 BST

**Fingerprint**

b9a0ba0e3bc180808cb591f8ca5174d0d9d7f91b

## Event log

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System 24/07/2025, 08:37:05 BST  
Signing page opened by signee david.cornish@edwardconnor.com.

System 24/07/2025, 08:38:04 BST  
Signee david.cornish@edwardconnor.com signed document.

System 24/07/2025, 08:38:07 BST  
Notification sent to lisa@rowleys.biz.

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Signing page opened by signee david.cornish@edwardconnor.com.

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System 25/07/2025, 11:37:44 BST  
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System 25/07/2025, 11:38:57 BST  
Signee lisa@rowleys.biz signed document.

System 25/07/2025, 11:38:57 BST  
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## Summary

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**Final stamp:** 25/07/2025, 11:39:04 BST



Verification QR Code



**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1175305

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# Accounts

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REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 10821224 (England and Wales)  
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1175305

**Audited Financial Statements  
for the Year Ended  
29 February 2024**

for

**Edward Connor Solicitors  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

The Rowleys Partnership Ltd  
Statutory Auditors  
Chartered Accountants  
Charnwood House  
Harcourt Way  
Meridian Business Park  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE19 1WP

Contents of the Financial Statements  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

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Balance Sheet	22 to 23
Cash Flow Statement	24
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Reference and Administrative Details  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

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<b>TRUSTEES</b>	G L Adam K A Appleton D M Cornish C R Eade (resigned 26.6.24) M A Lawrence (resigned 25.9.23) P F Prangley A W J Stevens (resigned 2.5.24) R J M West S J Wright (resigned 12.7.24) S Cantore (appointed 22.7.24)
<b>REGISTERED OFFICE</b>	41 The Point Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7QU
<b>PRINCIPAL ADDRESS</b>	10 The Point Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7QU
<b>REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER</b>	10821224 (England and Wales)
<b>REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER</b>	1175305
<b>INDEPENDENT AUDITORS</b>	The Rowleys Partnership Ltd Statutory Auditors Chartered Accountants Charnwood House Harcourt Way Meridian Business Park Leicester Leicestershire LE19 1WP
<b>BANKER</b>	Barclays Bank Plc Leicester LE87 2BB

**Trustees' Report  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**

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The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 29 February 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published in October 2019.

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

**Objectives and activities**

The objects of the charitable company as stated in the Articles of Association are to advance the Evangelical Christian Faith and to promote the effective use of charitable resources by the provision of services to organisations involved in advancing the Evangelical Christian Faith. We do this by:

- Firstly, providing advice, assistance and support to churches and other Christian charities and groups who are in agreement with our Statement of Faith and conduct their affairs consistently with it.
- Secondly, promoting, aiding and furthering the objects and work of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), subject to the FIEC having aims and objects consistent with the Statement of Faith of the charitable company.

We are an 'Alternative Business Structure' under the Legal Services Act 2007 which enables us to offer a full breadth of legal services and SRA- regulated legal advice to Christian organisations. This advice combines legal expertise and theological insight so that our clients and beneficiaries are not only legally compliant but able to operate in accordance with their evangelical convictions. This enables them to realise their purposes more effectively and in turn, advance the Evangelical Christian faith.

Our Christ-centred legal expertise helps gospel work flourish in the midst of legal complexity.



As a charity, we're able to offer hourly rates for solicitors which are below market rates for equivalent levels of expertise and experience making Christ-centred legal expertise more accessible when needed.

We also offer model documents for sale which is a cost-effective way for Christian organisations to obtain good quality legal documentation to aid their work. We seek to share our expertise by regularly producing advice articles and guidance notes for our website and e-newsletter which highlights key legal and regulatory issues for the charitable sector we serve and indicates how Christian organisations can respond to these issues.

Further, an advice line is provided to all FIEC churches, providing 30 minutes of free advice on any matter, furthering the work of the FIEC and its affiliated churches.

The trustees have considered the general guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The charitable company benefits the public by helping a significant number of charities to comply with their legal and regulatory obligations and thereby in turn achieve their purposes and public benefit.

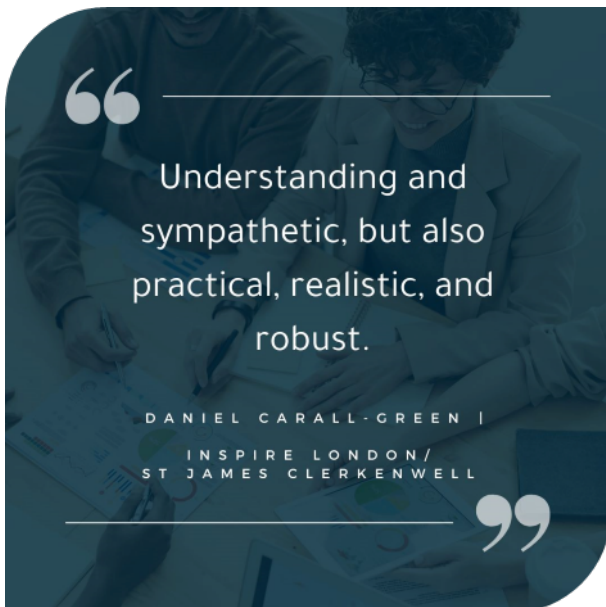
## ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

### Charitable activities

The reported year of March 2023 - February 2024 (from now on referred to as 'this year') continues to build on our strategy for sustainable growth.

Our mission is to maximise gospel impact by providing Christ-centred legal expertise.

Client feedback tells us that we are doing this well. We're offering churches and Christian organisations something distinctive that allows their ministries to flourish and so has positive gospel impact.



And because of that we see the need to offer our Christ-centred legal expertise wider and further. Our vision is for our Christ-centred legal expertise to be accessible wherever it will be fruitful.

**"Accessible Christ-centred legal expertise wherever it will be fruitful."**

This year we completed the next stage of our journey, towards this vision, with three 'focus areas':

1. Increased Quantity
2. Increased Quality
3. Increased Productivity

We look now at our achievements and performance over the last year under each of these focus areas.

#### **Increased Quantity**

##### **Through recruitment and retainment**

Growth of our legal teams is critical to increasing the accessibility of our Christ-centred legal expertise. We were, therefore, disappointed to lose two solicitors this year. This highlighted our vulnerability as a growing organisation and demonstrated the strategic importance of recruitment and retention of staff in expanding the scale of our work.

We did also have some significant recruitment successes this year.

In our Charities Team, we were joined by Katherine Coxon and Mary Drew. Katherine joined us as a Charity Solicitor bringing experience from helping charities with grant applications and being a charity trustee of two charities herself. Mary Drew joined us from Tearfund where she had been Head of Legal for 12 years. As well as being a Partner in our Charities Team, Mary has a strategic focus on partnering with and supporting larger Christian charities. As well as increasing our gospel impact, this appointment will add more economies of scale, allow us to sustain work with smaller church clients, and increase our supervision and training capacity internally.



#### **Spotlight on Mary Drew: Charities Partner**

With a passion for helping charitable organisations and a proven track record of delivering sound legal advice to large Christian organisations, Mary brings a wealth of expertise that aligns wonderfully well with our vision to bring accessible legal expertise where it will be most fruitful for the gospel.

In a brief interview, we asked Mary to outline her mission at ECS and what she is most excited about:

*"My focus will not be on churches but will instead be on charitable organisations. I am hoping to apply the skills and knowledge that I have accumulated working for a large Christian organisation for such a long time for the benefit of many more."*

*"I am excited to be working with a really lovely, godly team who are seeking to further God's kingdom by providing high quality legal advice to churches and Christian organisations so that they can be more effective in their ministries."*

**Trustees' Report  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**

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In our Property Team, we were delighted to welcome back Ganine Eshun on a part-time basis to provide support to our team as a Conveyancing Executive.

We continued to prioritise recruitment into our Employment Team and utilised the expertise of Carnelian Search to help us find Christian legal professionals captured by our vision and mission.

In addition to external support from Carnelian, we improved internal structures to support further recruitment, making this a key priority for our Managing Director. We recognise one of the challenges we face in recruitment is being able to offer the right level of salary to attract top Christian talent and, at the same time, keeping our costs as low as possible for clients with limited resources. This year the Board adopted a clear and biblical remuneration policy to codify how we seek to balance our care for staff and our care for clients in this important area.

Our commitment to Christ-like care of staff also included providing excellent training and development opportunities, allowing flexible working, giving staff opportunities to meet together in regular online and in-person staff meetings.

We conducted another employee survey this year. We were delighted that once again our staff reported that they are proud to work at ECS and feel confident recommending us to churches and Christian organisations. We were also pleased that staff felt able to raise issues that we will look to resolve, such as making sure all staff feel appreciated and valued, providing sufficient admin support while protecting our staff's workload, and how to address the shortcomings of remote working. Next year we will trial a new 'hub' in addition to our main office, to enable more staff to meet and work in-person when desired.

**Through client and service growth**

We continue to explore potential partnerships with service providers outside of our immediate expertise, in order to better meet our clients' needs. As a small but significant part of this, we consolidated and updated our list of subject experts for when we need to refer enquiries on to areas outside of our expertise or capacity. In addition, we explored and utilised partnerships with administration-focused resources so that we can direct clients to these sources for cost effective non-legal operational matters.

We are concerned that lack of diversity (in particular, ethnicity and church background) could contribute to a lack of accessibility of our Christ-centred legal expertise to some church groups. A strategic objective this year was to grow in our understanding of issues of Equality and Diversity in order to reduce barriers to access our legal expertise.

We received training at one of our in-person staff days on diversity and the current picture of black-majority churches in the UK.

With this vision of providing Christ-centred legal expertise to a wider group of churches, we were pleased that this year we were able to expand our work to support a number of organisations and churches within the Church of England, setting up robust legal structures to support them as they further the work of the gospel within the Church of England.

We expanded our advertising efforts with more investment and targeted campaigns with new media outlets and publications outside of our traditional sources. We identified relevant, new events where we can grow awareness of ECS and our work and connect with Christian legal professionals and Christian organisations that may benefit from Christ-centred legal expertise. We were pleased to attend Affinity's biannual conference, meeting with and providing resources to church leaders from Affinity's 1,200 network of members.

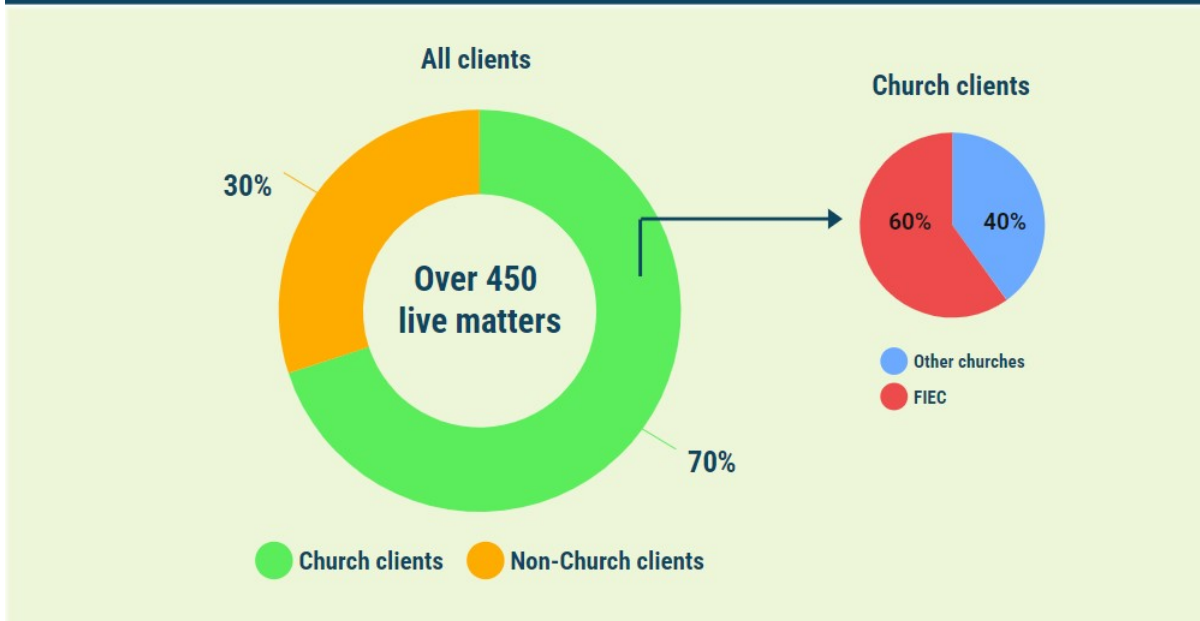
Nonetheless, supporting the work of the FIEC, with whom we have had a long and fruitful partnership, remains an important aim of our charitable operations. This year we have been able to attend the FIEC Leadership Conference, providing resources and free advice to a gathering of over 1,000 church leaders, staff workers and volunteers. We were also delighted to deliver a seminar covering how being legally sound not only helps churches to meet their legal obligations, but also helps them flourish in their charitable aims. We provided training to the FIEC Trust Board on their obligations in charity law.

FIEC church clients received discounted advice that this year amounted to over 2,500 hours. In addition, we have been able to provide over 50 hours of free advice via our Advice Line service for FIEC churches. This year saw the Advice Line used over 100 times by nearly 100 different FIEC churches, with enquiries ranging from employee contracts, to governing documents, to the roles and responsibilities of trustees.



But it is not only FIEC churches that benefit from discounted advice - all churches and startup charities receive a discount on our fees as we seek to make our legal expertise accessible to charities with limited resources. This year, we provided nearly 5,000 hours of discounted advice to churches, and 130 hours of discounted advice to startup charities. This amounted to a total of over 5,000 hours of discounted advice given to Christian organisations, supporting them in their ministry with high-quality legal advice that they might not otherwise be able to afford. This year, we worked on over 450 live matters, made up of around 70% church clients and 30% non-church clients. Church clients were this year primarily FIEC churches (60%) with the remaining 40% composed of a diverse variety of other denominations, groups and independent churches.

# This year we worked on **over 450** live matters made up of:



## Increased Quality

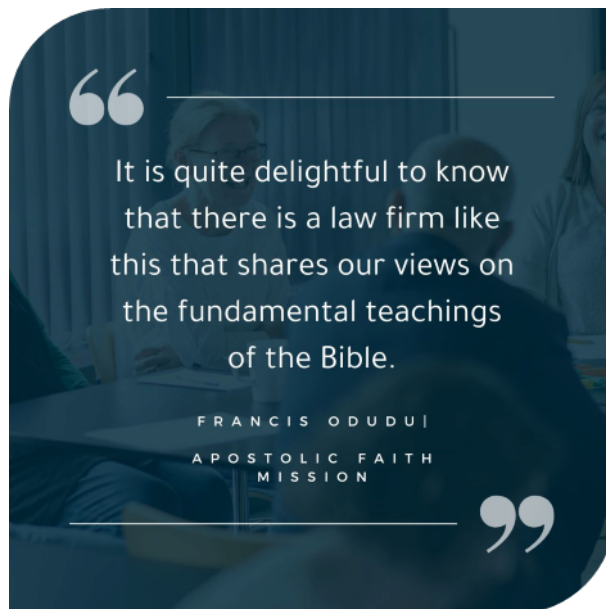
Our appointment last year of a new Compliance Officer for Legal Practice as part of the role of Head of Legal Operations has enabled us to conduct a compliance audit and review, as well as improving processes and efficiencies in a number of areas. We have a clear compliance plan, regularly reviewed by the Board, alongside policies that accurately reflect current regulatory demands.

We conducted a thorough review of the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) policy and risk assessment, demonstrating our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct in our operations. This year, we gave training on this and other key compliance topics such as financial policy and procedures, client care and whistleblowing.

We have seen successful cross-team collaboration, particularly on larger projects, facilitating a flow of expertise and resources, and providing a higher quality service for our clients. Standout examples of this are how our Charities and Property Team have supported many churches in their journey towards becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and transferring property over to the newly set up charity. The CIO process is about giving churches tools to govern themselves well and build transparency and trust in their communities. It's important that this work is done, not just by charity and property law experts but by Christian solicitors who can understand and shape advice based on the church's ecclesiology and theology.



Our Charities Team have also worked closely with our Employment Team this year to help trustees of high-profile Christian clients navigate the employment and governance issues around complaints being made. Sadly, we have seen an increased number of clients facing these situations, but again we can see the importance of access to lawyers who not only understand the legal issues but also the Christian organisation’s biblical position and desire for Christ-like care of people.



We saw significant change this year in the world of charity law, with the staggered rollout of the Charities Act 2022. We proactively responded to the implementation of Act with the production of external resources and guidance, underscoring our commitment to helping gospel work flourish in the midst of legal complexity.

**Trustees' Report  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**

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We've shown ongoing improvement through the provision of comprehensive guidance notes, precedents, and templates. These resources not only support internal operations but also contribute to our clients' knowledge base and are a cost-effective means of providing clients and others with high-quality legal expertise.

Lastly, our Managing Director carried out an internal review of the Board and the effectiveness of our own governance structures, assessing how well the Board currently meets the expectations of the Charity Governance Code. This included carrying out a board survey, skills and experience audit to establish the whole Board's view of compliance with the Code's principles and to identify any skills, experience or 'diversity' gaps on the Board, which we are now looking to fill.

We made some constitutional changes that reflect the organisation's adaptability to evolving needs and circumstances, ensuring our setup remains optimum for achieving our charitable aims. Our recruitment drive for new trustees complements this, as we seek a greater breadth and depth of experience and diversity on our Board.

**Increased Productivity**

Substantial investment into new IT systems this year has greatly grown our capacity for increasing the quantity, quality and productivity of the work we're doing. It was a major achievement to deliver such a significant project on time, within budget and with a good uptake from staff and little disruption to client service.

We called this first phase of the project 'Launchpad' to reflect that - rather than being an endpoint - we have laid the firm foundation from which further growth in quality, quantity and productivity can 'take-off'.

The system is still new to our team, but we are very pleased with the uptake. And while there are still teething issues to fix, we're excited by the capabilities we are already seeing.

- We are improving **quantity** through: staff being more satisfied in their work; more consistent working procedures; better collaboration and information sharing.
- We are improving **quality** through: better knowledge management and document templates; stronger tracking of our matters; improved client satisfaction.
- We are improving **productivity** through: reducing admin; automating processes; making important information and documents easier to find; reducing the amount of our fees written-off.

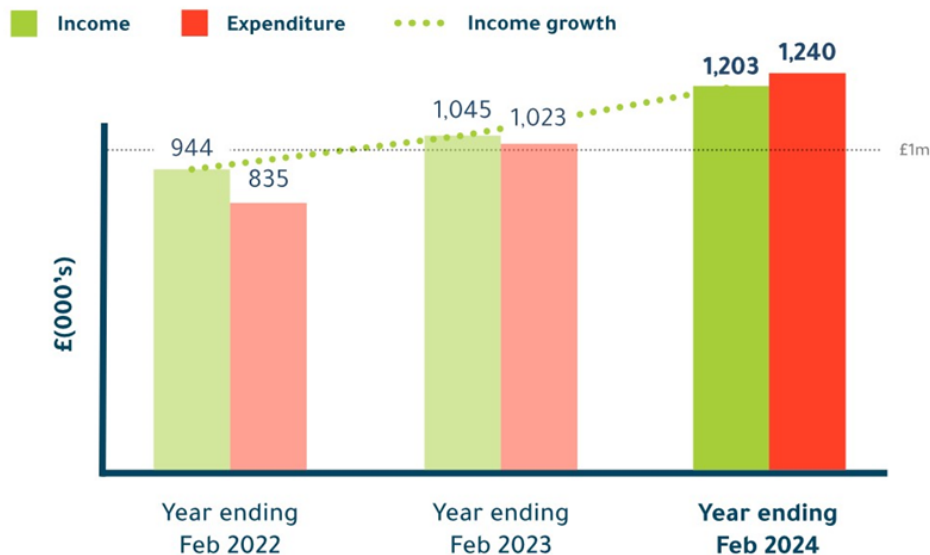
In summary, the flexibility and power of the system will enable us go on improving our operations, as well as growing as a firm, without being so constrained by the limitations of the IT system.

Our new pricing structure came into effect at the beginning of this year. This was carefully agreed upon to help us operate sustainably and allow for the investments in people and resources that facilitate our growth and effectiveness. We worked hard both to communicate the information well, and resource our staff around the reasons for our new pricing structure and how to have good conversations with clients about it. We were pleased that the price changes were received well by our clients, with feedback being very positive in the main.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

We have continued to see God's graciousness, kindness and generosity towards us over the past year.

**Financial summary 2022 - 2024:**



The year brought a successful implementation of a new IT system to underpin our legal work and practice. This is already bringing immediate benefits to our work, but importantly is providing a firm foundation for further growth in our tripartite strategy of quantity, quality and productivity. This essential investment had a planned impact on capacity during the year, and consequently income, in addition to the increased planned expenditure. The combined impact of these was in the order of £100k.

As such a deficit for the year was planned to deliver this change to support future growth of the charity's work.

The year also saw significant team changes and sickness within the team, which further inhibited our capacity to deliver Christ-centred legal services. Despite this, God's hand of provision has been clear, and we have a stronger team with new joiners to deliver going forward.

With the inflationary environment and overheads to match a growing team not immediately realised, constraining costs has been challenging. Recruitment and retention have been recognised both as key priorities and key risks for us, and staff cost represented around 75% of expenditure during the year. As such the implementation of a remuneration policy during the year to help facilitate these within a framework of delivering strong value for clients has been an important step for the organisation.

As such, the trustees recognise that a £37k deficit for the year has represented a significant achievement, and gives much to be encouraged and grateful to God for.

The wider external inflationary environment led to the need to increase prices by an average of 13% for our services at the start of the financial year, and the opportunity was taken to make adjustments to our pricing policy in line with our values and objectives. By the grace of God, whilst legal costs generally remain a challenge for clients who are already stretched, these changes have been well received amongst our client base, and demand for our services continues to outstrip our ability to deliver them.

The 15% increase of our income in legal work from £1.04m to £1.20m is primarily accounted for with this inflationary price increase, but also represents a modest increase in services delivered to clients despite the short-term loss of productivity with the IT system change.

Going forward we are looking to build on this investment to see a greater increase in productivity benefit from the investment in the new IT, as well as improvements to our processes and systems. This will allow us to meet more of the demand, and increase funds to allow for continued investment in growth, alongside planned team growth.

Given the deficit for the year, and the rising of costs, the net assets at the end of the year of £490k represent a little over 4½ months' of expenditure. Whilst this is below the target reserves of 6 months' of expenditure, the use of reserves has facilitated investment for a stronger future for the charity, and the trustees are satisfied that there is sufficient risk management and resilience within the current business at this time. The forthcoming periods plan surplus budgets to re-build reserve levels, ensuring greater future resilience and mitigating longer-term risk.

#### **Reserves policy**

Our reserves policy is to generally hold current net assets to the greater of 6 month's expenditure and £350,000. The former figure provides for a period through which adjustments can be made in the firm, and through which unbilled earned income can be billed and realised as cash. The latter figure (of £350k) is an estimation of costs for an unplanned closure. Reserves provide a buffer in case sudden, unexpected cash-flow shortage, and allow for an orderly wind-down in the face of unexpected closure.

The Trustees review the reserves regularly, at least annually, and whenever a material contract is entered into.

Ahead of the reported period, the trustees agreed a budget which would allow reserves to reduce slightly below the upper of the two figures (6 months' expenditure) to allow for necessary investment in the business in IT, with a view to generating surplus budgets in future years which would re-build the reserves.

At the end of the year the unrestricted current assets stood at £490k or just over 4½ months of expenditure. This remains above the £350k level to cover for unplanned closure.

The trustees are satisfied that the current stability of the business and demand for work means that reserves held are appropriate for the risks of the firm, in line with the purposes of the reserves, and have planned a budget to deliver a surplus which will rebuild the level of reserves closer to that of the charity's policy.

The charity does not hold any restricted funds.

#### **FUTURE PLANS**

As we journey towards a vision of 'accessible Christ-centred legal expertise wherever it will be fruitful', we increasingly see the need to attract godly, skilled lawyers who are passionate about helping us carry out our mission. This will help us to operate sustainably, lay ground for future growth, and provide the highest quality, biblically faithful legal expertise.

As such, our main focus for the next period will be on attracting the right people to join our mission, in particular, Christian lawyers. We aim to do this by gaining a reputation for:

- Exemplary leadership
- Being a great place to work
- Offering high-quality, gospel-impacting expertise

### **Exemplary leadership**

In our aim for exemplary leadership, we will work towards having a diverse team of godly and highly talented leaders who govern ECS well.

In the coming year therefore, we will put significant efforts into filling key roles at the organisation, recruiting a full-time, senior Employment Partner and a new Head of Property. These senior appointments will be instrumental in supporting complex legal work, building up our team capacity, and providing stability and longevity to these departments.

As well as our staff leadership, we will continue to build an excellent Board by welcoming additional trustees with specialised skills and experience in legal, finance, communications and theology.

This infusion of varied backgrounds and perspectives will not only fortify our governance but also broaden the pool for future recruitments. As will increasing awareness of ECS outside our current constituency.

Lastly, we are committed to establishing a clear and effective annual cycle of business and reporting, streamlining our processes for transparency and efficiency.

### **A Great Place to Work**

In our aim to be a great place to work, we will continue to build a diverse team of godly and highly talented lawyers at ECS. Over the next period, we will streamline our recruitment process, and continue to improve HR procedures in terms of efficiency but also to better serve our staff team.

Our online presence will play a pivotal role in attracting the right talent. A career page and work stories on our website and other channels will showcase our culture and values, and the unique work and opportunities available at ECS.

We will continue to foster a supportive environment where all our staff can flourish. Key to this will be the provision of further training on supervision, setting new measures of effectiveness for supervision, and improving our cycle of appraisals, ensuring they contribute meaningfully to professional growth and development. Building on last year's successes, we will also further improve cross-team working on large projects.

In response to our staff's feedback around the shortcomings of remote working, we will trial a 'hub' office, providing an additional space for staff to meet and work in-person. We will seek further input from our staff team through conducting another staff survey.

When our systems and structures work well, our staff are properly supported and can thrive in their roles. To achieve this, we will provide training on meeting and setting client expectations, set up processes that enable better workflow, improve our document management and usefulness, and continue to augment our IT and administrative support.

**Trustees' Report  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**

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**High-quality, Gospel impacting Advice**

In our aim for offering high-quality, gospel-impacting advice, we will work towards becoming the first choice firm for Christian organisations and churches.

As we look to maximise our gospel impact, we will continue to grow partnerships who have expertise outside of our coverage and build good relationships with top Christian lawyers across a spectrum of Church denominations. In diversifying our client base, we will increase attendance at key Christian events, and form new working relationships with large charity clients. We will form a business development plan for each of our areas of expertise and take on new areas of work that are relevant and significant for churches and Christian charities today. In our work with Anglican churches, for example, we will gain training on Ecclesiastical Law to better support these clients.

We will review our client journey, seeking to apply service standards at each stage. As we seek a more representative return on our client feedback, we will utilise the constructive feedback gathered to improve our delivery of client-focused advice.

We aim to implement a clear PR and social media strategy, enhancing our communication of mission and values both internally and externally. This concerted effort will ensure that our purpose resonates strongly with potential recruits and existing team members alike. Recognising the importance of resources that resonate with our clients, we will develop new materials that include references to biblical issues, providing biblical frameworks for our clients as well as sound legal guidance.

As we seek to operate sustainably while providing the most accessible legal support for our clients, we will review our pricing and costs to ensure good margins and accessibility.

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Governing document**

Edward Connor Solicitors is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under company number 10821224 and registered as a charity in England and Wales under registration number 1175305. It is regulated by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority number 640691. The principal office is at 10 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU and its registered office address is at 41 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU.

It is governed by its articles of association.

During the reported year, the Board of Trustees approved changes to the constitution of Edward Connor Solicitors. In summary these were

- the National Director of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches is no longer the Chair of Edward Connor Solicitors ex officio.
- Non-executive trustees of Edward Connor Solicitors are now also members of the company;
- Edward Connor Solicitors has adopted the basis of faith of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of approval of this Report were:

G L Adam	
D M Cornish	
C R Eade	(Resigned on 26 June 2024)
M A Lawrence	(Resigned on 25 September 2023)
P F Prangley	
A W J Stevens	(Resigned on 2 May 2024)
R West	
K Appleton	
S J Wright	(Resigned on 17 July 2024)
S Cantore	(Appointed on 22 July 2024)

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**Trustees' Report  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**

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**Induction and training of new trustees**

The trustees are appointed by the trustees and members of the charitable company, the members being the trustees of the FIEC (FIEC Trust Board) and the non-executive trustees of ECS. They ensure that the trustees are Christians with qualifications and experience in several relevant disciplines, with particular experience in law, finance and pastoral ministry. This experience is invaluable to the work of the charitable company.

The trustees have appointed Gemma Adam, David Cornish and Caroline Eade, as paid employees to the board of trustees. The trustees have also appointed Ursula Stevens, a connected person to A W J Stevens, as a paid employee. This is in accordance with the articles of association of the charitable company.

Remuneration of trustees who are also paid employees or connected persons is set by the non-executive directors, who review salary levels in line with external benchmarks and in line with responsibilities held. Conflicts of interest are carefully managed amongst the trustees, recorded at every meeting, and no staff member is ever involved in the setting of their own remuneration, or that of a connected person. The remuneration committee also set clear parameters within which the Managing Director is to set other staff pay.

Day to day duties are delegated to the Managing Director, and through her to other staff employed or contracted by the charitable company. The charity currently does not have any unpaid volunteers other than the non-executive trustees.

The trustees review at least annually the composition of the board to ensure that there is a suitable range of expertise and experience amongst the trustees.

New trustees are given the Charity Commission guidance concerning the responsibilities of trustees, and an introductory overview of the organisation and their responsibilities within in. The trustees keep under review the most appropriate means of ensuring regular, ongoing training for the trustees, both through the expertise within the team, and the use of external training.

**Risk management**

The trustees maintain a register of risks which is reviewed regularly as part of the Board's cycle of business, with mitigations to address both the likelihood and potential impact of major risks. Trustees regularly review SRA compliance breaches (which are few in number). Management also regularly reviews key risk areas. A business continuity plan has also been produced to ensure that operational risks have been considered and proper systems and procedures in place to mitigate against them.

Policies are also in place and regularly reviewed for dealing with conflicts of interest, compliance oversight, client care, complaints, data protection, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing, financial management, equalities legislation and cybersecurity to reduce risk exposure. The staff are given regular training on these policies, and they are included in the induction process for new staff

The new COLP was appointed towards the end of the previous financial year. With his help, the Board reviewed and updated the firm's compliance plan in July 2023.

The primary risks to the charity have been identified as staffing resources, management capacity, reputational risks and cyber-security. Each of these are priorities where the trustees have been seeking to reduce risk during the period reported, and continue to be invested in to address risk in the subsequent period. There is an increasing reputational risk arising from the nature of our work and how it is mis-reported on social media. There are limits on what can be done to address that (given the importance of client confidentiality) but trustees are taking steps to mitigate.

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The trustees (who are also the directors of Edward Connor Solicitors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company 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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Trustees' Report  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

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**AUDITORS**

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that The Rowleys Partnership Ltd be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

08/08/2024

Approved by order of the board of trustees on ..... and signed on its behalf by:

*David Cornish*

.....  
D M Cornish - Trustee

signed on 09/08/2024, 15:06:12 BST

### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Edward Connor Solicitors (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 29 February 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 29 February 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### **Other information**

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- the charitable company has not kept adequate accounting records; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.
- the Trustees were not entitled to take advantage of small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

**Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the charitable company and determined that the most significant which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements are those related to the financial reporting frameworks (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011) and the relevant tax compliance regulations in the jurisdiction in which the charitable company operates. We enquired of management, had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- We enquired of management, whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or whether they had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the entity's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur;
- Our testing considered unusual or unexpected journal entries on a sample basis;
- We evaluated the assumptions and judgements used by management within significant accounting estimates and assessing if these indicate evidence of management bias;
- We tested significant transactions, in particular the evaluation of the business rationale for any which appear unusual or outside the company's normal course of business;
- We assessed the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team by understanding the practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity, plus ensuring the team had appropriate and relevant training of the financial reporting framework and the relevant tax compliance regulations specific to the entity;
- We reviewed the financial statements and tested the disclosures against supporting documentation;
- We communicated relevant matters to all members of the audit team to ensure they understood the risks specific to the entity and the audit procedures planned to mitigate these.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

**Report of the Independent Auditors to the Trustees of  
Edward Connor Solicitors**

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**Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*The Rowleys Partnership Ltd*

signed on 12/08/2024, 15:40:35 BST

The Rowleys Partnership Ltd  
Statutory Auditors  
Chartered Accountants  
Eligible to act as an auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Charities Act 2011  
Charnwood House  
Harcourt Way  
Meridian Business Park  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE19 1WP

12/08/2024

Date: .....

**Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**

	Notes	2024 Unrestricted funds £	2023 Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>			
Donations and legacies	2	1,477	49
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
Fees received from legal advice provided	5	1,199,487	1,044,863
Other income	3	596	(80)
Investment income	4	<u>1,410</u>	<u>80</u>
<b>Total</b>		<u>1,202,970</u>	<u>1,044,912</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>			
Raising funds	6	2,680	3,873
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
Charitable activities	7	<u>1,237,379</u>	<u>1,018,637</u>
<b>Total</b>		<u>1,240,059</u>	<u>1,022,510</u>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		(37,089)	22,402
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>			
Total funds brought forward		<u>526,716</u>	<u>504,314</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<u><u>489,627</u></u>	<u><u>526,716</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

**Balance Sheet**  
**29 February 2024**

	Notes	2024 Unrestricted funds £	2023 Total funds £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	14	1,872	-
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	15	371,079	336,016
Cash at bank		<u>261,681</u>	<u>335,240</u>
		632,760	671,256
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	16	(130,005)	(119,540)
		<u>502,755</u>	<u>551,716</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
		<u>502,755</u>	<u>551,716</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		504,627	551,716
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due after more than one year	17	(15,000)	(25,000)
		<u>489,627</u>	<u>526,716</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			
		<u>489,627</u>	<u>526,716</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>	20		
Unrestricted funds		<u>489,627</u>	<u>526,716</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		<u>489,627</u>	<u>526,716</u>

The charitable company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 29 February 2024, although an audit has been carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011. No member of the charitable company has deposited a notice, pursuant to section 476, requiring an audit of these financial statements under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

The notes form part of these financial statements

Balance Sheet - continued  
29 February 2024

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These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on .....08/08/2024..... and were signed on its behalf by:

*David Cornish*

.....signed on 09/08/2024; 15:06:12 BST  
D M Cornish - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

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**Cash Flow Statement  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>(62,161)</u>	<u>49,237</u>
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		<u>(62,161)</u>	<u>49,237</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,808)	-
Interest received		<u>1,410</u>	<u>80</u>
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities		<u>(1,398)</u>	<u>80</u>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Loan repayments in year		<u>(10,000)</u>	<u>(10,000)</u>
Net cash used in financing activities		<u>(10,000)</u>	<u>(10,000)</u>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>335,240</u>	<u>295,923</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u>261,681</u>	<u>335,240</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Notes to the Cash Flow Statement  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2024 £	2023 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(37,089)	22,402
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation charges	936	-
Interest received	(1,410)	(80)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(35,063)	7,958
Increase in creditors	<u>10,465</u>	<u>18,957</u>
<b>Net cash (used in)/provided by operations</b>	<u>(62,161)</u>	<u>49,237</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.3.23 £	Cash flow £	At 29.2.24 £
<b>Net cash</b>			
Cash at bank	<u>335,240</u>	<u>(73,559)</u>	<u>261,681</u>
	<u>335,240</u>	<u>(73,559)</u>	<u>261,681</u>
<b>Debt</b>			
Debts falling due within 1 year	(10,000)	-	(10,000)
Debts falling due after 1 year	<u>(25,000)</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>(15,000)</u>
	<u>(35,000)</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>(25,000)</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>300,240</u>	<u>(63,559)</u>	<u>236,681</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### Charity information

Edward Connor Solicitors is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 41 The Point, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7Q

### Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charitable company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

### Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charitable company has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charitable company has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Income from government and other grants are recognised at fair value when the charity has entitlement after any performance conditions have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably. If entitlement is not met then these amounts are deferred.

### Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis, inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered. Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charitable company on 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 based upon either time spent on the actual activity or usage.

### Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

### Fixtures and fittings

50% per annum on a straight-line basis on IT equipment and 25% per annum straight line on others.

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

**Tangible fixed assets**

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities

**Impairment of fixed assets**

At each reporting end date, the charitable company reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

**Taxation**

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

**Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

**Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities

**Financial instruments**

The charitable company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charitable company's balance sheet when the charitable company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued**

**Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

**Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

**Derecognition of financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charitable company's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

**Employee benefits**

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charitable company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

**Retirement benefits**

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

**Going concern**

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charitable company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus, the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

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<b>2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES</b>		
	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations and gifts	<u>1,477</u>	<u>49</u>
<b>3. OTHER INCOME</b>		
	2024	2023
	£	£
Secondment fees and other income	596	777
Job retention scheme grant income	<u>-</u>	<u>(857)</u>
	<u>596</u>	<u>(80)</u>
<b>4. INVESTMENT INCOME</b>		
	2024	2023
	£	£
Interest receivable	<u>1,410</u>	<u>80</u>
<b>5. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>		
	2024	2023
	£	£
Charges and model document fees	<u>1,199,487</u>	<u>1,044,863</u>
<b>6. RAISING FUNDS</b>		
<b>Raising donations and legacies</b>		
	2024	2023
	£	£
Advertising	1,280	1,873
Other fund raising costs	<u>1,400</u>	<u>2,000</u>
	<u>2,680</u>	<u>3,873</u>

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Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

## 7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (See note 8 £	Totals
Charitable	<u>1,237,739</u>	<u>1,237,379</u>

## 8. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

## Charitable Activities direct costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	937,267	792,988
Training, conferences and other staff costs	32,274	27,782
Meeting expenses	919	1,849
Insurance	62,721	55,542
Staff travelling expenses	3,809	2,465
Professional fees	31,534	33,763
Professional subscriptions	27,851	21,126
Audit and accounts fees	18,950	14,350
Office expenses	22,546	35,415
Sundry expenses	22,534	22,346
Bank charges	1,996	1,945
Bad debts	1,074	88
IT project	72,968	8,978
Depreciation	936	-
	<u>1,237,379</u>	<u>1,018,637</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**9. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)**

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2024 £	2023 £
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>936</u>	<u>-</u>

**10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

None of the trustees were remunerated for their role as trustees.

In accordance with section 5 of its Articles of Association, three trustees were remunerated in connection with fulfilling their duties under their contracts of employment with the charitable company (2023 - three). During the year, Gemma Adam received gross remuneration of £36,956 (2023 - £35,435) and pension benefits of £3,244 (2023 - £3,189), Caroline Eade received gross remuneration of £61,594 (2023 - £59,059) and pension benefits of £5,406 (2023 - £5,315) and David Cornish received gross remuneration of £50,033 (2023 - £48,693) and pension benefits of £4,481 (2023 - £4,382).

**Trustees' expenses**

Travel and meeting expenses of £402 were reimbursed to 4 trustees during the year (2023 - 3 trustees reimbursed £381).

**11. STAFF COSTS**

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	792,029	670,839
Social security costs	71,995	62,234
Other pension costs	<u>73,243</u>	<u>59,915</u>
	<u>937,267</u>	<u>792,988</u>

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

	2024	2023
Trustees directors	3	3
Fee earners and support staff	<u>23</u>	<u>21</u>
	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2024	2023
£60,001 - £70,000	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>

**12. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**

	Unrestricted funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>	
Donations and legacies	49
<b>Charitable activities</b>	
Charges and model document fees	1,044,863
Other Income	(80)
Investment income	<u>80</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u><u>1,044,912</u></u>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>	
Raising funds	3,873
<b>Charitable activities</b>	
Charitable	<u>1,018,637</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u><u>1,022,510</u></u>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	22,402
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>	
Total funds brought forward	<u>504,314</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<u><u>526,716</u></u>

**13. AUDITORS' REMUNERATION**

Fees payable to the charitable company's auditor and associates:	2024	2023
	£	£
Audit of the charitable company's annual accounts	<u>11,400</u>	<u>12,250</u>

For the year ended 29 February 2024 the auditor was paid for non-audit services amounting to £3,200.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

## 14. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
<b>COST</b>			
At 1 March 2023	12,052	-	12,052
Additions	-	2,808	2,808
Disposals	<u>(12,052)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(12,052)</u>
At 29 February 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>2,808</u>	<u>2,808</u>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
At 1 March 2023	12,052	-	12,052
Charge for year	-	936	936
Eliminated on disposal	<u>(12,052)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(12,052)</u>
At 29 February 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>936</u>	<u>936</u>
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>			
At 29 February 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>1,872</u>	<u>1,872</u>
At 28 February 2023	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

## 15. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	123,240	150,656
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>247,839</u>	<u>185,360</u>
	<u>371,079</u>	<u>336,016</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts (see note 19)	10,000	10,000
Trade creditors	31,117	5,414
Social security and other taxes	60,704	78,483
Other creditors	-	19
Accruals and deferred income	<u>28,184</u>	<u>25,624</u>
	<u>130,005</u>	<u>119,540</u>

**17. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank loans (see note 19)	<u>15,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>

**18. LOANS**

An analysis of the maturity of loans is given below:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year on demand:		
Bank loans	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Amounts falling between one and two years:		
Bank loans - 1-2 years	<u>15,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>

The above Bounce Back Loan is unsecured and repayable over 5 years at a 2.5% fixed rate of annual interest.

**19. LEASING AGREEMENTS**

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Within one year	49,687	25,089
Between one and five years	<u>12,227</u>	<u>16,005</u>
	<u>61,914</u>	<u>41,094</u>

## 20. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.3.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 29.2.24 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Unrestricted Fund	526,716	(37,089)	489,627
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>526,716</u>	<u>(37,089)</u>	<u>489,627</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Unrestricted Fund	1,202,970	(1,240,059)	(37,089)
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>1,202,970</u>	<u>(1,240,059)</u>	<u>(37,089)</u>

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.3.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 28.2.23 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Unrestricted Fund	504,314	22,402	526,716
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>504,314</u>	<u>22,402</u>	<u>526,716</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
Unrestricted Fund	1,044,912	(1,022,510)	22,402
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>1,044,912</u>	<u>(1,022,510)</u>	<u>22,402</u>

**21. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES**

Mrs U. Stevens, who is the wife of trustee A.W.J. Stevens, was employed by the charity during the year and received gross remuneration of £15,975 (2023 - £14,118) and pension benefits of £1,304 (2023 - £1,271).

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024**

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>		
<b>Donations and legacies</b>		
Gifts	1,477	49
<b>Other trading activities</b>		
Secondment fees	596	777
Job retention scheme	-	(857)
	596	(80)
<b>Investment income</b>		
Interest receivable	1,410	80
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Fees received from legal advice provided	<u>1,199,487</u>	<u>1,044,863</u>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	1,202,970	1,044,912
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Raising donations and legacies</b>		
Advertising	1,280	1,873
Other fund raising costs	<u>1,400</u>	<u>2,000</u>
	2,680	3,873
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Wages and salaries	792,029	670,839
Social security	71,995	62,234
Other pensions costs	73,243	59,915
Training, conferences and other staff costs	32,274	27,782
Meeting expenses	919	1,849
Insurance	62,721	55,542
Staff travelling expenses	3,809	2,465
Professional fees	31,534	33,763
Professional subscriptions	27,851	21,126
Audit and accountancy fees	18,950	14,350
Office expenses	30,581	35,415
Sundry expenses	22,534	22,346
Bank charges	1,996	1,945
Carried forward	1,170,436	1,009,571

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

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	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Brought forward	1,170,436	1,009,571
Bad debts	1,074	88
IT project	<u>64,933</u>	<u>8,978</u>
	1,236,443	1,018,637
<b>Support costs</b>		
<b>Finance</b>		
Computer equipment	<u>936</u>	<u>-</u>
Total resources expended	<u>1,240,059</u>	<u>1,022,510</u>
<b>Net (expenditure)/income</b>	<u>(37,089)</u>	<u>22,402</u>

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

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**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1175305

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# Accounts

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Charity registration number 1175305

Company registration number 10821224 (England and Wales)

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**  
**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023**

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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**Trustees**

G L Adam  
D M Cornish  
C R Eade  
A W J Stevens  
R West  
K Appleton  
P F Prangley

(Appointed 7 September  
2022)

S J Wright

(Appointed 6 July 2022)

**Charity number**

1175305

**Company number**

10821224

**Principal address**

10 The Point  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire  
LE16 7QU

**Registered office**

41 The Point  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire  
LE16 7QU

**Auditor**

The Rowleys Partnership Ltd  
Charnwood House  
Harcourt Way  
Meridian Business Park  
Leicester  
LE19 1WP

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

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# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 28 February 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (published in October 2019).

### **Objectives and activities**

The objects of the charitable company as stated in the Articles of Association are to advance the Evangelical Christian Faith and to promote the effective use of charitable resources by the provision of services to organisations involved in advancing the Evangelical Christian Faith. The subsidiary objects, by which the charitable company advances the Evangelical Christian Faith, are twofold. Firstly, by providing advice, assistance and support to churches and other Christian charities and groups who are in agreement with the Statement of Faith and conduct their affairs consistently with it. Secondly, by promoting, aiding and furthering the objects and work of the FIEC, subject to the FIEC having aims and objects consistent with the Statement of Faith of the charitable company.

The charitable company seeks to achieve these objects by providing legal advice and services to churches and charities and organisations who are in agreement with, and conduct their affairs consistently with, the Statement of Faith. This advice combines legal expertise and theological insight so that our clients are not only legally compliant but able to operate in accordance with their evangelical convictions. This enables them to realise their purposes more effectively and in turn, advance the Evangelical Christian faith.

We also offer model documents for sale which is a cost-effective way for Christian organisations to obtain good quality legal documentation to aid their work. We seek to share our expertise by regularly producing advice articles and guidance notes for our website and e-newsletter which highlights key legal and regulatory issues for the charitable sector we serve and indicates how Christian organisations can respond to these issues.

Further, an advice line is provided to all FIEC churches, providing 30 minutes of free advice on any matter, furthering the work of the FIEC and its affiliated churches.

The trustees have considered the general guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The charitable company benefits the public by helping a significant number of charities to comply with their legal and regulatory obligations and thereby in turn achieve their purposes and public benefit.

### **Achievements and performance**

The reported year of March 2022 – February 2023 (from now on referred to as "this year") has been the third in our 3-year strategic plan for sustainable growth. Our underlying focus therefore remained that of putting in place measures to ensure future growth would be sustainable. At the same time, we were pleased to see continued growth as a firm, and the maintenance of a high standard of service provision throughout this year.

### **Setting up for future growth**

Our strategic plan emphasises the need to have the right systems, processes and resources in place in order to achieve sustainable growth: a growth that enables us to go on providing the high quality, best value service we seek to provide.

One of the most significant ways we have worked towards sustainable growth this year is through our IT project: that of updating of our Practice Management System. Working with external consultants, a working group of staff reviewed and shortlisted a number of products, before agreeing upon one that we feel will most successfully meet our needs, and provide exciting scope for expansion and development as we grow as a firm.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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A healthy financial position has meant that we were thankfully able to progress with our IT project this year. Yet the pressures of the current economic environment have meant that – after maintaining our prices since March 2020 – we agreed this year upon the need to increase our prices. Through a comprehensive pricing and discount strategy, we agreed upon price and discount changes (for the preceding financial year) that we trusted would enable us to continue to operate sustainably, while still making accessible legal advice for the client base we love to serve. Recognising the particular financial challenges facing many of our clients at this moment, we worked hard to communicate relevant information to clients in a timely manner, as well as seeking to communicate the value of our service, and the assurance that service provision would be maintained and even improved through these price changes. We also recognised the importance of our staff being fully informed and resourced to speak with and support our clients regarding the price changes, and so provided training and resources to support them in this.

A constant challenge to sustainable growth has been the ability of ECS to meet the demand for specialist, legal advice in the area of Christian ministry. We are therefore delighted to have been able to make some significant appointments this year, bringing in three new support staff (including a new position of Data & IT Analyst / Finance Officer), three new fee earners across all three of our legal teams, and perhaps most significantly filled the new position of Head of Legal Operations. As well as freeing up strategic time for our Managing Director, the new Head of Legal Operations will look to improve internal efficiency and effectiveness, helping us in our mission to meet a growing demand for our services with continued excellence.

We have complemented recruitment with a greater balance of seniority across teams, making two internal promotions within our Charities Team, and making an appointment at Partner level in our Employment Team. These appointments will improve workload across our teams, and bring greater expertise to our service offering, again helping us to achieve sustainable growth. We were also delighted to appoint two new trustees to our Board of Directors, each bringing their own wisdom and expertise and positively adding to our Board's diversity as we continue to seek the benefits of a diverse leadership.

Recognising the need for ongoing recruitment of lawyers passionate about our vision and mission, we continued to work with and support partnership organisations where we might see fruit from envisioning potential recruits. We were therefore delighted to once more sponsor the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship's annual conference, as well as sponsor and contribute to the legal panel at their Student and Young Lawyers' conference.

Recruitment is though only the first step – retaining our staff and trustees is the all-important next step, and is crucial for achieving growth that is sustainable. We love all our staff and seek to treat them in a way that honours our loving God. As such, we have worked hard this year to ensure that staff have appropriate workloads and are not overstretched, creating procedures for workload monitoring and new instruction taking. We have sought within our means to ensure that staff are appropriately remunerated, regularly reviewing staff pay and increasing this where possible, in light of inflationary increases. We have also fully updated our Staff Handbook to better reflect the operations of the firm today and the needs of our staff. Through both virtual and in-person staff days, we have been pleased to provide a high volume of training on many important topics such as GDPR, Cybersecurity, and AML and financial controls. Our in-person staff days are particularly important as a time for connection and fellowship as a staff team, building really meaningful and fruitful relationships amongst our team. Lastly, we conducted another employee survey to gather important information that will help the firm operate more effectively, but just as valuably to ensure all of our staff team had the opportunity to voice concerns, issues or ideas.

### ***Continued growth and excellent service provision***

Even with a considerable focus on putting things in place for future growth, we are thankful to God that we have still continued to grow this year, and been able to consistently provide the high level of client service that we aim for.

Our client feedback demonstrates this well – in the period covered in this report, clients collectively gave us a rating of 4.9 out of 5 for satisfaction and 9.6 out of 10 for likelihood to recommend ECS' services. This quantitative feedback alone would be of great encouragement to us, yet we have also been blessed with many wonderful comments from clients who have been thankful for the work we have been able to do for them, such as the below:

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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*“As a church leadership team and congregation, we are so thankful to ECS for their highly personalised and professional help in our application to become a CIO and in resolving longstanding issues relating to the registration of our church property and building with the Land Registry. We are so blessed through you ... Simply put, ECS helped us achieve what we could not have done ourselves.”*

### **David Kelso Pastor, Gateshead Evangelical Church**

We continue to provide both free and discounted advice thereby giving quality advice to clients who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

In terms of free support, our Advice Line service for FIEC churches continues to be a well-used resource, and a great way of supporting the work of the FIEC (one of our charitable objectives). This year, nearly 100 FIEC churches received free advice on over 100 enquiries, amounting to a total of over 100 hours of free, high-quality advice given to FIEC churches. Topics covered a wide range, with the most common areas of support being employment policies and contracts, charity registration and governing documents, and charity reporting requirements.

In our charged-for work, this year we were pleased to provide a total of over 6,000 hours of discounted advice given to our clients, supporting them in their ministry with high-quality legal advice that they might not otherwise be able to afford. This was formed of just under 4,500 hours of discounted advice to FIEC churches, over 1,500 hours to non-FIEC churches, and a further amount of time for smaller charities (charities with incomes below £500k).

Another way we sought to support the work of the FIEC was through having a presence at the FIEC Leaders' Conference this year. In the first of their national conferences since the pandemic, we were delighted to deliver a seminar equipping church leaders with the knowledge needed for identifying and taking steps to address the legal issues facing their churches, as well as maintaining a stall at which we engaged in many useful conversations with church leaders.

Our model document packs continue to be a valued resource for our clients, providing a cost effective way of obtaining high quality advice, guidance and template documents they can tailor to their own circumstances. We saw over 100 purchases of our various packs, and nearly 200 downloads of our numerous free resources, with our Employment Pack and CIO Booklet being our most popular paid-for and free resources respectively. We were pleased therefore to add to our library of resources this year with a recruitment pack to help in the recruitment process, an appraisal pack to help navigate the appraisal process, and a free guide for taking on employees for the first time. We also completed the creation of a suite of property guidance booklets, designed to better equip churches and organisations as they consider instructing us, with the aim of improving the efficiency of the process, saving the client money and ourselves time that can be invested back into our service.

We published a total of 20 online articles this year on a variety of important charity, employment and property matters relevant to our client base. These also included two new client stories – testimonial features that enable us to showcase the amazing work of some of clients, as well as explain and evidence the need they had, how ECS were able to meet that need, and the positive results that client are now experiencing in their ministry through our partnership with them. As we seek to fill gaps in our service provision and better equip our clients, we were also pleased to publish two articles on health and safety matters with the support of an external health and safety consultant.

As we look to effectively communicate our resources to a wide and diverse range of clients and other Christian organisations, we were pleased to see significant increases in subscriptions across all of our social media platforms, with our newsletter (+25%), Twitter (+20%) and LinkedIn (+30%) followings all increasing.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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### Financial review

Despite some challenges through the year including higher than planned staff turnover, the year has ended with an encouraging financial position, and God's goodness to us has been clear.

Income from charitable activities within the year increased to just over £1m, an increase of around £105k from the prior period, or 11%. Although greater growth had been planned, this still represented a growing gospel impact through support of a growing number of beneficiaries in their charitable activities.

Expenditure also increased to just over £1m, which included the recruitment of new staff, and increased costs from inflationary pressures. Costs charged for the charity's work were increased just after the period being reported, in line with the wider inflationary environment, but this has been received generally positively. Additional investment was also made into Information Technology to procure new systems for the charity, although the majority of this cost will be incurred with the implementation and migration in the next financial period.

A small surplus of £22k was generated during the year, which will provide funds to allow for the next stage of investment into Information Technology.

Total funds at the end of the year increased to £527k.

A strategic priority in the forthcoming periods is to increase productivity, which the recruitment of a Head of Legal Operations and the migration to a new IT platform are anticipated to help drive.

### Reserves policy

Our reserves policy is to hold current net assets to the greater of 6 month's expenditure and £350,000. The former figure provides for a period through which adjustments can be made in the firm, and through which unbilled earned income can be billed and realised as cash. The latter figure (of £350k) is an estimation of costs for an unplanned closure. Reserves provide a buffer in case of sudden, unexpected cash-flow shortage, and allow for an orderly wind-down in the face of unexpected closure.

The Trustees review the reserves regularly, at least annually, and whenever material contract is entered into.

At the end of the year, reserves were above this policy, with unrestricted current assets standing at £527k, representing just over 6 months' expenditure.

The trustees are satisfied that the reserves held are appropriate for the risks and planned growth for the firm, in line with the purposes for which the reserves are held.

The charity does not hold any restricted funds.

### Risk management

The trustees maintain a register of risks which is reviewed regularly as part of the Board's cycle of business, with mitigations to address both the likelihood and potential impact of major risks. Trustees regularly review SRA compliance breaches. Management also regularly reviews key risk areas. A business continuity plan has also been produced to ensure that operational risks have been considered and proper systems and procedures in place to mitigate against them.

Policies are also in place and regularly reviewed for dealing with conflicts of interest, compliance oversight, client care, complaints, data protection, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing, financial management, equalities legislation and cybersecurity to reduce risk exposure. The staff are given regular training on these policies and they are included in the induction process for new staff.

A new Compliance Officer Practice (COLP) was appointed towards the end of the financial year. He will manage this role as part of his overall job as Head of Legal Operations. But the fact he is a full-time employee will further strengthen the charity's focus on regulatory compliance and risk.

The primary risks to the charity have been identified as staffing resources, management capacity and IT systems. Each of these are priorities which the trustees have been seeking to reduce the risk of during the period reported, and continue to be invested in to address risk in the subsequent period.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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### Plans for future periods

As we look ahead, we want to be working to increase the accessibility of Christ-centred legal expertise now and in the future. We want more and more clients to be able to see lasting fruits in their various ministries due to their engagement with ECS. Our aim is that whenever a church or a Christian organisation need it, we have the capacity to do the work in the timescales they need. And in all of this, we want our advice to be consistently excellent, biblically-shaped and gospel-focused without any client facing barriers to access it.

Our new, amended vision is therefore **accessible Christ-centred legal expertise wherever it will be fruitful**.

The next stage of our journey towards this vision involves focusing over the next couple of years on increasing the **quantity, quality and productivity** of our Christ-centred legal expertise.

### ***Increased quantity***

Building on our recruitment this year, we will further recruit and expand the scale of our work in line with an enlarged team. While we see the need for expansion in most areas, our particular focus in the immediate term is our employment work, and we are pleased to be in positive talks with several potential recruits for our Employment Team.

We will build on recruitment successes to create a strategy for future recruitment with improved structures to support further recruitment. Several planned activities will aid us in our search for legal professionals captured by our vision and mission: first, we will expand our advertising efforts, providing greater investment and more targeted campaigns to find the right people; second, we will identify and attend relevant events where we can grow awareness of ECS and our work, and connect with Christian legal professionals; third, we will produce a professional video capturing our identity, purpose and impact in a creative way, with the aim of envisioning potential recruits, as well as reaching further potential clients.

We will continue to provide and lovingly care for our staff, because we love them, but also pragmatically because it will aid staff retention and support our sustainable growth. As such we will ensure we provide sufficient training and development opportunities for our staff, as well as conduct another employee survey to ensure we are capturing all of our staff needs and any issues that may be present.

We will work further on creating clear business development plans to support future growth, including reaching a more diverse client base and clarity on work types being sought. As part of this, we will provide external training on diversity and equality, and seek to grow in our partnerships with churches and church groups that until now have been beyond our capacity to support. We will continue to explore potential partnerships with service providers outside of our immediate expertise, in order to better meet our clients' needs.

### ***Increased quality***

We will have a clear compliance plan regularly reviewed by the Board and policies will accurately reflect current regulatory demands, our core values, and are consistently followed.

Clear and well communicated service standards across the firm will be consistently followed providing a smooth and enjoyable client experience every time, supported by excellent IT.

Knowing that client feedback is such an invaluable resource for ensuring we achieve a consistently excellence service, we will look to ensure a higher and more representative return on our client feedback survey. Alongside this, we will ensure that complaints are handled promptly and effectively and lessons are learned from our clients' feedback, ensuring continual improvement.

Production of guidance notes, precedents and templates will continue, both internal documents for staff and external resources for clients. These will be biblically shaped as well as legally excellent, and will be quickly and easily accessible.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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### ***Increased productivity***

We want our lawyers to be consistent able to focus on client work without feeling burdened by administrative tasks, supported by an effective admin team and IT systems. Our IT project will go a long way to achieving this, and we are excited therefore by the planned 'go-live' date of our new practice management system towards the end of 2023.

Our new pricing structure comes into effect in the next period, enabling us to not only operate sustainably, but allow for the investments in people and resources that facilitate our growth and effectiveness.

We want our governance and management to be effective and efficient in overseeing all of this. We will therefore create clear role descriptions of company members, Board members, sub-committees and senior managers such that decision-making is consistently timely, effective and efficient.

### **Structure, governance and management**

Edward Connor Solicitors is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under company number 10821224, and registered as a charity in England and Wales under registration number 1175305. It is regulated by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority number 640691. The principal office is at 10 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU and its registered office address is at 41 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU.

It is governed by its Articles of Association.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of approval of this Report were:

G L Adam	
J C H Anelay	(Resigned 31 May 2022)
J L Cooke	(Resigned 7 September 2022)
D M Cornish	
C R Eade	
M A Lawrence	(Resigned 25 September 2023)
A W J Stevens	
R West	
K Appleton	
P F Prangley	(Appointed 7 September 2022)
S J Wright	(Appointed 6 July 2022)

The trustees are appointed by the trustees and members of the charitable company, the members being the trustees of the FIEC (FIEC Trust Board). They ensure that the trustees are Christians with qualifications and experience in several relevant disciplines, with particular experience in law, finance and pastoral ministry. This experience is invaluable to the work of the charitable company.

The trustees have appointed Gemma Adam, David Cornish and Caroline Eade, as paid employees to the board of trustees. The trustees have also appointed Ursula Stevens, a connected person to A W J Stevens, as a paid employee. This is in accordance with the articles of association of the charitable company.

Remuneration of trustees who are also paid employees or connected persons is set by the non-executive directors, who review salary levels in line with external benchmarks and in line with responsibilities held. Conflicts of interest are carefully managed amongst the trustees, recorded at every meeting, and no staff member is ever involved in the setting of their own remuneration, or that of a connected person. The remuneration committee also set clear parameters within which the Managing Director is to set other staff pay.

Day to day duties are delegated to the Executive Team, and through them to other staff employed or contracted by the charitable company. The charity currently does not have any unpaid volunteers other than the non-executive trustees.

The trustees review at least annually the composition of the board to ensure that there is a suitable range of expertise and experience amongst the trustees.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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New trustees are given the Charity Commission guidance concerning the responsibilities of trustees, and an introductory overview of the organisation and their responsibilities within in. The trustees keep under review the most appropriate means of ensuring regular, ongoing training for the trustees, both through the expertise within the team, and the use of external training.

### **Statement of trustees' responsibilities**

The trustees, who are also the directors of Edward Connor Solicitors for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company 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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Auditor**

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that The Rowleys Partnership Ltd be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

This Report has been prepared having taken advantage of the small companies exemption in the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

*David Cornish*

.....signed on 01/11/2023, 09:25:27 GMT

**D M Cornish**

Trustee

Dated: ..... 01/11/2023

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

### TO THE TRUSTEES OF EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

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#### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Edward Connor Solicitors (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 28 February 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 28 February 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

#### Other matters

The comparative financial statements of the charity for the year ended 28 February 2022 were unaudited.

#### Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our report of the independent auditor's thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) TO THE TRUSTEES OF EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

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### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees, who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a report of the independent auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the charitable company and determined that the most significant which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements are those related to the financial reporting frameworks (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011) and the relevant tax compliance regulations in the jurisdiction in which the charitable company operates. We enquired of management, whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or whether they had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the entity's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur;
- Our testing considered unusual or unexpected journal entries on a sample basis;
- We evaluated the assumptions and judgements used by management within significant accounting estimates and assessing if these indicate evidence of management bias;
- We tested significant transactions, in particular the evaluation of the business rationale for any which appear unusual or outside the charitable company's normal course of business;
- We assessed the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team by understanding the practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity, plus ensuring the team had appropriate and relevant training of the financial reporting framework and the relevant tax compliance regulations specific to the entity;
- We reviewed the financial statements and tested the disclosures against supporting documentation;
- We communicated relevant matters to all members of the audit team to ensure they understood the risks specific to the entity and the audit procedures planned to mitigate these.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) TO THE TRUSTEES OF EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

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Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*L. Parkes*

signed on 01/11/2023, 10:50:30 GMT

**The Rowleys Partnership Ltd**

**Statutory Auditor**

**Chartered Accountants**

Charnwood House

Harcourt Way

Meridian Business Park

Leicester

LE19 1WP

.....01/11/2023

The Rowleys Partnership Ltd is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charitable company by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023**

		Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
		2023	2022
	Notes	£	£
<b><u>Income and endowments from:</u></b>			
Donations and legacies	2	49	207
Charitable activities	3	1,044,863	940,702
Investments	4	80	148
Other income	5	(80)	3,149
<b>Total income</b>		<u>1,044,912</u>	<u>944,206</u>
<b><u>Expenditure on:</u></b>			
Raising funds	6	<u>3,873</u>	<u>870</u>
Charitable activities	7	<u>1,018,637</u>	<u>834,272</u>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<u>1,022,510</u>	<u>835,142</u>
<b>Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>		22,402	109,064
Fund balances at 1 March 2022		<u>504,314</u>	<u>395,250</u>
<b>Fund balances at 28 February 2023</b>		<u><u>526,716</u></u>	<u><u>504,314</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	13	336,016		343,974	
Cash at bank and in hand		335,240		295,923	
		<u>671,256</u>		<u>639,897</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	15	(119,540)		(100,583)	
Net current assets			551,716		539,314
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	16		(25,000)		(35,000)
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>526,716</u>		<u>504,314</u>
<b>Income funds</b>					
Unrestricted funds			526,716		504,314
			<u>526,716</u>		<u>504,314</u>

The charitable company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 28 February 2023, although an audit has been carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011. No member of the charitable company has deposited a notice, pursuant to section 476, requiring an audit of these financial statements under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on .....11/10/2023

*David Cornish*

.....signed on 01/11/2023, 09:25:27 GMT

D M Cornish

Trustee

Company registration number 10821224

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash generated from operations	19		49,237		29,325
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Investment income received		80		148	
<b>Net cash generated from investing activities</b>			80		148
<b>Financing activities</b>					
Repayment of bank loans		(10,000)		(5,000)	
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>			(10,000)		(5,000)
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>			39,317		24,473
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			295,923		271,450
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>			335,240		295,923

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# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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### 1 Accounting policies

#### Charity information

Edward Connor Solicitors is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 41 The Point, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7QU.

#### 1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charitable company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (published in October 2019). The charitable company is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charitable company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

#### 1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charitable company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

#### 1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charitable company.

#### 1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charitable company has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charitable company has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Income from government and other grants are recognised at fair value when the charity has entitlement after any performance conditions have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably. If entitlement is not met then these amounts are deferred.

#### 1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis, inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charitable company on 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 based upon either time spent on the actual activity or usage.

#### 1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Fixtures and fittings	50% per annum on a straight line basis on IT equipment and 25% per annum straight line on others
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The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

#### 1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charitable company reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

#### 1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

#### 1.9 Financial instruments

The charitable company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charitable company's balance sheet when the charitable company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

#### **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

#### **Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### **Derecognition of financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charitable company's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

#### 1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charitable company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

#### 1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

### 2 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations and gifts	49	207

### 3 Charitable activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Charges and model document fees	1,044,863	940,702

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

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### 4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest receivable	80	148
	<u>80</u>	<u>148</u>

### 5 Other income

	Unrestricted funds	Total
	2023	2022
	£	£
Secondment fees and other income	777	1,041
Job Retention Scheme grant income	(857)	2,108
	<u>(80)</u>	<u>3,149</u>

### 6 Raising funds

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2023	2022
	£	£
<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>		
Advertising	1,873	870
Other fundraising costs	2,000	-
	<u>3,873</u>	<u>870</u>

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

### 7 Charitable activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs	792,988	644,811
Depreciation and impairment	-	34
Training, conferences and other staff costs	27,782	16,954
Meeting expenses	1,849	1,893
Insurance	55,542	39,892
Staff travelling expenses	2,465	1,175
Professional fees	33,763	54,820
Professional subscriptions	21,126	18,956
Audit and accountancy fees	14,350	1,850
Office expenses	35,415	26,182
Sundry expenses	22,346	26,115
Bank charges	1,945	1,459
Bad debts	88	131
IT project	8,978	-
	<u>1,018,637</u>	<u>834,272</u>

### 8 Auditor's remuneration

Fees payable to the charitable company's auditor and associates:	2023 £	2022 £
Audit of the charitable company's annual accounts	<u>12,250</u>	<u>-</u>

### 9 Trustees

Travel and meeting expenses of £381 were reimbursed to 3 trustees during the year (2022 - 3 trustees reimbursed £1,726).

None of the trustees were remunerated for their role as trustees.

In accordance with section 5 of its Articles of Association, three trustees were remunerated in connection with fulfilling their duties under their contracts of employment with the charitable company (2022 - three). During the year, Gemma Adam received gross remuneration of £35,435 (2022 - £32,037) and pension benefits of £3,189 (2022 - £2,883), Caroline Eade received gross remuneration of £59,059 (2022 - £53,503) and pension benefits of £5,315 (2022 - £4,815) and David Cornish received gross remuneration of £48,693 (2022 - £41,546) and pension benefits of £4,382 (2022 - £3,739).

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

### 10 Employees

#### Number of employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Trustee directors	9	9
Fee earners and support staff	24	18
	<u>33</u>	<u>27</u>

#### Employment costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	670,839	550,324
Social security costs	62,234	46,055
Other pension costs	59,915	48,432
	<u>792,988</u>	<u>644,811</u>

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was £60,000 or more.

### 11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

### 12 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 March 2022	12,052
At 28 February 2023	<u>12,052</u>
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>	
At 1 March 2022	12,052
At 28 February 2023	<u>12,052</u>
<b>Carrying amount</b>	
At 28 February 2023	<u>-</u>
At 28 February 2022	<u>-</u>

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

### 13 Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade debtors	150,656	185,764
Prepayments and accrued income	185,360	158,210
	<u>336,016</u>	<u>343,974</u>

### 14 Loans and overdrafts

	2023	2022
	£	£
Bank loans	<u>35,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>
Payable within one year	10,000	10,000
Payable after one year	<u>25,000</u>	<u>35,000</u>

The above Bounce Back Loan is unsecured and repayable over 5 years at a 2.5% fixed rate of annual interest.

### 15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
Bank loans	14	10,000	10,000
Other taxation and social security		78,483	75,902
Trade creditors		5,414	3,351
Other creditors		19	674
Accruals and deferred income		25,624	10,656
		<u>119,540</u>	<u>100,583</u>

### 16 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
Bank loans	14	<u>25,000</u>	<u>35,000</u>

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023

### 17 Operating lease commitments

At the reporting end date the charitable company had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Within one year	22,089	18,388
Between two and five years	16,005	8,833
	<u>38,094</u>	<u>27,221</u>

### 18 Related party transactions

Mrs U. Stevens, who is the wife of trustee A.W.J. Stevens, was employed by the charity during the year and received gross remuneration of £14,118 (2022 - £12,172) and pension benefits of £1,271 (2022 - £913).

### 19 Cash generated from operations

	2023 £	2022 £
Surplus for the year	22,402	109,064
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(80)	(148)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	-	34
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	7,958	(77,771)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	18,957	(1,854)
<b>Cash generated from operations</b>	<u>49,237</u>	<u>29,325</u>

### 20 Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1 March 2022 £	Cash flows £	At 28 February 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	295,924	39,316	335,240
Loans falling due within one year	(10,000)	-	(10,000)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(35,000)	10,000	(25,000)
	<u>250,924</u>	<u>49,316</u>	<u>300,240</u>

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1175305

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# Accounts

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Draft Financial Statements at 05 October 2022 at 08:46:24

Charity registration number 1175305

Company registration number 10821224 (England and Wales)

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**  
**ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

## EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

### LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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<b>Trustees</b>	G L Adam D M Cornish C R Eade M A Lawrence A W J Stevens R West K Appleton P F Prangley  S J Wright	(Appointed 7 September 2022) (Appointed 6 July 2022)
<b>Charity number</b>	1175305	
<b>Company number</b>	10821224	
<b>Principal address</b>	10 The Point Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7QU	
<b>Registered office</b>	41 The Point Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7QU	
<b>Independent examiner</b>	Philip John Dymond FCCA Cheyettes Ltd 167 London Road Leicester LE2 1EG	
<b>Bankers</b>	Barclays Bank plc Leicester LE87 2BB	

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# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022***

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The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 28 February 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (published in October 2019).

**Objectives and activities**

The objects of the charitable company as stated in the Articles of Association are to advance the Evangelical Christian Faith and to promote the effective use of charitable resources by the provision of services to organisations involved in advancing the Evangelical Christian Faith. The subsidiary objects, by which the charitable company advances the Evangelical Christian Faith, are twofold. Firstly, by providing advice, assistance and support to churches and other Christian charities and groups who are in agreement with the Statement of Faith and conduct their affairs consistently with it. Secondly, by promoting, aiding and furthering the objects and work of the FIEC, subject to the FIEC having aims and objects consistent with the Statement of Faith of the charitable company.

The charitable company seeks to achieve these objects by providing legal advice and services to churches and charities and organisations who are in agreement with, and conduct their affairs consistently with, the Statement of Faith. This advice combines both legal expertise and theological insight so that our clients are not only legally compliant but able to operate in accordance with their evangelical convictions. This enables them to realise their purposes more effectively and in turn, advance the Evangelical Christian faith.

We also offer model documents for sale which is a cost effective way for Christian organisations to obtain good quality legal documentation to aid their work. We seek to share our expertise by regularly producing advice articles and guidance notes for our website and e-newsletter which highlights key legal and regulatory issues for the charitable sector we serve and indicates how Christian organisations can respond to these issues.

Further, an advice line is provided to all FIEC churches, providing 30 minutes of free advice on any matter, furthering the work of the FIEC and its affiliated churches.

The trustees have considered the general guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The charitable company benefits the public by helping a significant number of charities to comply with their legal and regulatory obligations and thereby in turn achieve their purposes and public benefit.

**Achievements and performance**

The reported year of March 2021 – February 2022 (from now on referred to as 'this year') has been the second in our 3-year strategic plan for sustainable growth, forming part of our overall vision for the next 10 years that by 2030 Edward Connor Solicitors would be the first port of call for all evangelical churches and Christian organisations facing a legal issue.

The plan for sustainable growth is formed of 3 focus areas – recruiting and retaining qualified, godly staff; growing our services; and ensuring sustainability. We were pleased that in the first year we made good progress in the first 2 of these strategic areas. The challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, plus continued high demand for our services and a difficult recruitment environment have meant that we have not progressed as far as we would have liked in the third focus area of sustainability. We recognised that such a position puts our aim of providing consistently excellent client service at risk.

So, whilst we maintain that the overall strategic objective for this period should be sustainable growth under all 3 focus areas, the main focus this year has been putting measures in place that will ensure we consistently and sustainably deliver excellent client service. In realising this over the reported year, we devised 6 new focus areas:

## **EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

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#### ***Excellence***

Our aim is to have clearly defined, firm-wide expectations of what excellence looks like in terms of our client service, and to measure ourselves against these standards, seeking high quality excellence while being aware of our limitations, so that we do not compromise the level of service provided.

We were pleased to come together as a staff team during one of our in-person staff days to discuss our expectations of excellent client service, and from this, develop our 7 principles for excellence:

- Give advice the client needs (not what they necessarily want to hear), understanding their unique needs and purposes as Christian organisations
- Give advice the client can understand with practical application
- Have a client-focused attitude (i.e. giving clients time, being friendly, praying for the client, tailoring our service to their preferences)
- Be transparent about time and costs
- Be clear about the process and who should do what, when
- Be efficient and accurate, meeting key deadlines and showing a high level of professionalism
- Own mistakes and promptly resolve; being honest

We have begun important work in streamlining our matter processes, i.e. making our client work flow more smoothly, and in particular have made good progress in the area of charity incorporation. Two significant improvements we have made in this area of work are streamlining the work we do for one of our largest clients which often requires preliminary work to be done before the actual matter can be opened, and fostering better collaboration and communication between our Charities and Property teams throughout their respective work during the CIO process.

This year we upgraded our client feedback form into an electronic version, improving the efficiency of the client feedback process. This new form also includes a score for client satisfaction and likelihood to recommend. It has been deeply encouraging to see very high levels of satisfaction expressed through these scores (an average of 4.9 out of 5 for satisfaction and 9.7 out of 10 for likelihood to recommend), and also from the qualitative feedback from our clients. While we know there is more work to do, we are pleased that many of the 7 principles for excellence are already being noticed by clients in their feedback.

As part of our drive for excellence, we have already made good progress on improving both our policies and client communications, making each more user friendly and accessible. In terms of our policies, we have completely overhauled our financial procedures, conflicts of interest policies, and internal staff handbook, improving their usability and bringing them more in line with the present needs of the organisation. We have also begun developing client resources to improve efficiency at the early stages of the matter process, such as an easy-to-use guide for clients submitted ID documents. We are also developing property guidance notes to support prospective clients, but also our Property Team in terms of their capacity, as they make decisions about whether to instruct us or not in their property matter. These free resources will empower clients to work through preliminary questions in their property matter and will be of great value even if they choose not to instruct us. Furthermore, clients' use of the guides will free up precious time for the Property team, increasing their capacity for chargeable client work.

Lastly, we have continued working to standardise and visually improve our client products and resources, keeping them in line with our branding, and ensuring they are embedded in our firm's core values which we finalised in the previous reported year.

#### ***Right work levels***

Recruiting and retaining godly staff remains a key focus area as we seek to achieve optimum levels of workload across all our teams, while maintaining consistent and excellent service delivery. Another key aspect to this is improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of our IT systems and our internal knowledge management.

## **EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

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Our Charities team continued to experience our greatest workload, and so it has been important to create better workload management in this team in particular. We have achieved this over the past year through the reduction of individual workloads, completing backlogs of client work, and identifying new enquiries that we could not take on in order to continue providing excellent service. We were also pleased to promote our charity advisor Lynn Cadman to Associate level in the Charities Team, and in Jane Whitfield and Liz Bowes-Smith recruiting 2 highly experienced lawyers into senior positions in the team. Each of these appointments enabled greater spreading of work across the team, in particular creating a more manageable workload for the Head of Team.

The recruitment of a full time Office Manager has been a real blessing to the firm, improving and streamlining the overall day-to-day operation of the office, as well as relieving the workload of the Finance & Operations Director by taking on some of his administrative duties, such as becoming the MLRO, as well as practical duties around the office.

Additional recruitment into our support teams has been met with challenges over the year, which has enabled us to learn lessons to take into future recruitment drives. These recent recruitment drives and a continued dependence on God's providence throughout the year mean that at the time of writing we have made successful appointments into several roles beyond what we had expected!

Capacity challenges with the Finance and Admin Teams resulted in us taking the strategic decision to delay our IT project until sufficient resources were in place to progress it. Nevertheless, we laid good groundwork for the project this year, allowing a much more rapid progression of the project in the next period. Good progress has also been made elsewhere, such as with our internal knowledge management, in which we have set up a new platform for storing and easily accessing internal staff news and updates, as well as creating new standard template forms that can be easily and centrally accessed so that all staff are using the same versions of our forms.

#### ***Roles and structures***

In addition to increasing team capacities, we recognise the need to have a balance of staff across all levels of seniority, and staff who are well-trained, clear in the scope of their roles, and have excellent development opportunities. The same aim applies at Board level where we are seeking to improve the Board's expertise and experience.

We were delighted this year to recruit 2 highly experienced charity lawyers into senior positions into our Charities team, bringing a wealth of expertise and diversifying the team's levels of seniority. In our Property team we were greatly encouraged to welcome 2 new lawyers joining us at Associate level, diversifying that team. We have also had positive discussions with potential recruits for our Employment team.

On our Board of Trustees, we have invested considerable time this year in identifying the needs of the Board in terms of expertise and experience gaps. We have sought to address this partly through regular training sessions at Board level, but ultimately through recruiting new trustees, which we see as key to diversifying our Board. We have been pleased to identify 2 new potential trustees who are in the process of formalising their appointment.

We are pleased to have provided regular training for line managers and produced clear supervision and line management guidelines, providing greater clarity to line managers, supervisors and line reports and supervisees in their respective roles. Our continued work on the staff handbook will further help staff in their roles. We have also made important changes to our delegated authority policy, amending it to provide greater clarity on levels of required authority, allowing for more efficient decision making.

## **EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**

#### ***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022***

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To provide greater investment in our staff's personal and professional, development, this year saw the appointment of a designated contact for HR matters, providing greater clarity and access for staff as to what issues should be taken where. We have worked hard to provide internal training for staff and have been blessed with speakers – both external and internal – on a wealth of topics, from theology, to communicating with clients well, to internal policies and procedures. The pandemic faced us with the challenge of maintaining staff morale and a collective sense of identity and mission. While meeting face-to-face was impossible, we ensured we held regular, 2-hourly all-staff virtual meetings, but as soon as we were able to, we made provision for in-person staff days again, and have been pleased to hold 3 of these this year. Such meetings have been crucial for protecting and fostering that sense of community again that is so important for our staff to feel.

An ongoing topic of conversation throughout the pandemic has been that of home and office working. To understand our staff's needs and wants we scoped out remote and office working in our latest staff survey, and also used in-person staff days to foster discussion and gather feedback. The feedback has been very useful, and is already shaping our strategy, such as officially making all fee-earning staff 'homeworkers' and seeing the requirement for a new office as a less immediate need.

#### ***Investing in future recruitment***

We can see the need to continue recruiting to achieve consistently excellent client service, so we are considering ways of making our vision and mission even more well known to enthruse more Christian solicitors.

The Lawyers' Christian Fellowship (LCF) is a key partner for us. We are therefore proud to have become corporate members of the organisation and were delighted to have sponsored their 2021 national conference. We also attended and presented at this year's LCF Careers Fair, understanding the importance of envisioning the next generation of Christian lawyers about the important work of Edward Connor Solicitors.

We are continuing to increase the reach of our recruitment, advertising in new places and devoting a greater budget to the advertising process, including the engagement of specialist recruitment consultants. We are also finding innovative ways of envisioning prospective staff members, such as: creating an engaging 'Annual Review' document to summarise the year's achievements; revamping our job packs to be more visionally appealing and reflective of our vision and core values; and continuing to publish and communicate successful client stories of clients' experiences of working with ECS.

#### ***Cost management***

We want to see consistent pricing to give realistic estimates, and transparent, clear communication to clients throughout the work regarding costs, as well as increasing our accessibility to clients. We want to continue our work on reducing funds locked up to provide sustainable working cash levels.

This year a key means by which we have worked towards achieving our objectives is by significantly improving our internal Financial reporting at all levels, from Board to Management to Fee Earner. We are also investing in IT and staff to continue improving our ability to report and forecast our financials to ensure efficient and effective use of resources.

As a not-for-profit organisation, our aim is to provide the highest quality service at the most affordable prices for our clients. We therefore do not want to be overcharging or charging high amounts without very good reason. One of the areas in which we have been developing this is within our property work, where we have conducted market research into conveyancing, to better understand our pricing compared to competitors. An outworking of this research is confirmation that we are offering something truly unique and specialist to clients, and costs may therefore be higher than a 'high-street' law firm. We have been working on text and resources to better communicate this value to clients, so that they better see the value of working with us despite potentially higher costs.

## **EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

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#### ***Meeting client needs***

We recognise the importance of continuing to respond to client needs, either in house or through partnerships with others. Highlighting areas of need and gaps in provision of these needs is a key part of our strategy for becoming the first port of call for legal support for all Christian organisations by 2030.

We continue to provide both free and discounted advice thereby giving quality advice to clients who might not otherwise be able to afford it. Our Advice Line service for FIEC churches continues to be a well-used resource, and a great way of supporting the work of the FIEC (one of our charitable objectives). This year, over 100 FIEC churches received free advice on nearly 150 enquiries, amounting to a total of over 1,700 hours of free, high-quality advice given to FIEC churches. Topics covered a wide range, for example seeking advice on employment contracts, charity registration, and health and safety issues.

But it is not only FIEC churches that benefit from discounted advice – all churches and small charities receive a discount on our fees. This year, we provided nearly 4,000 hours of discounted advice to FIEC churches, nearly 1,000 hours to non-FIEC churches, and nearly 900 hours to smaller charities (charities with incomes below £500k). This amounted to a total of over 5,700 hours of discounted advice given to our clients, supporting them in their ministry with high-quality legal advice that they might not otherwise be able to afford.

In terms of areas of need outside of our current service provision, we have identified safeguarding and investigations as an important issue that our clients need support in, and so are currently exploring whether we offer something further in this area. Where gaps exist in our service provision, we continue to work with and find new partners for referrals. For example, this year we have begun a collaborative project with a Health & Safety consultant in order to provide resources on health and safety topics, and allow churches and other organisations to find trusted, specialist support if required.

We continue to produce new resources for clients, allowing clients to access affordable advice that they are able to tailor to their specific circumstances. Our new Recruitment Pack is a good example of this, providing clients with a step-by-step guide and checklist to the recruitment process. We are also currently working on a set of property guidance notes to provide clients with user friendly answers to some initial questions that often come our way at the start of a matter process.

#### **Financial review**

We are once more grateful to God in his providence for blessing us with another strong financial performance this year despite some challenging circumstances.

Income from charitable activities within the year increased to over £940k, an increase from £721k in the previous period, or around a 30% increase, representing a significant growth in the reach of our activities to support our beneficiaries in their charitable activities.

Total expenditure for the year was £835k, representing an increase of around 22% from the previous year. Around 54% of this was the employment of legally qualified staff, whose services represent the primary means through which the charitable work is delivered.

This resulted in a surplus of a little under £110k being generated during the year, which will provide funds to allow for the next stage of growth, including investment into Information Technology and taking on additional new staff.

Total funds at the end of the year increased to £504k (up from £395k in the previous period).

No grants were received in the last financial year, providing an encouraging confirmation that the firm is a sustainable entity in its own right.

## **EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**

#### ***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022***

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#### **Reserves policy**

Our reserves policy is to hold current net assets to the greater of 6 month's expenditure and £350k. The former figure provides for a period through which adjustments can be made in the firm, and through which unbilled earned income can be billed and realised as cash. The latter figure (of £350k) is an estimation of costs for an unplanned closure. Reserves provide a buffer in case of sudden, unexpected cash-flow shortage, and allow for an orderly wind-down in the face of unexpected closure.

The Trustees review the reserves regularly, at least annually, and whenever material contract is entered into, and was reviewed during the year.

At the end of the year, reserves were above this policy, with unrestricted current assets standing at £504k, representing nearly 7 months' expenditure. This is in line with the charity's plan for generating capital for the next stages of growth.

The trustees are satisfied that the reserves held are appropriate for the risks and planned growth for the firm, in line with the purposes for which the reserves are held.

The charity does not hold any restricted funds.

#### **Risk management**

The trustees maintain a register of risks which is reviewed regularly as part of the Board's cycle of business, with mitigations to address both the likelihood and potential impact of major risks. Regulatory guidance is fed into this, and in particular, the trustees consider the annual SRA Risk Outlook publication to ensure that risks of concern to the regulator are properly addressed and managed. This is further monitored and reviewed regularly by the management staff. A business continuity plan has also been produced to ensure that operational risks have been considered and proper systems and procedures in place to mitigate against them. Cover of key staff is regularly reviewed, and the trustees consider succession planning for senior staff on an annual basis, or as circumstances arise.

Policies are also in place and regularly reviewed for dealing with conflicts of interest, compliance oversight, client care, complaints, data protection, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing, financial management, equalities legislation and cybersecurity to reduce risk exposure. The staff are given regular training on these policies and they are included in the induction process for new staff.

Given the rise in cyber security risk, both given increased working from home, and due to an increase in external threats, training is planned both at a governance and staff level in May 2022.

The primary risks to the charity have been identified as cybersecurity, staff workloads, securing professional indemnity insurance and management capacity. Each of these are priorities which the trustees have been seeking to reduce the risk of during the period reported, and continue to be invested in to address risk in the subsequent period.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

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**Plans for future periods**

Our overall strategic objective up until 2023 remains that of sustainable growth, and this coming year (March 2022 - February 2023) our focus remains that of journeying to deliver consistently sustainable excellent client service. As such, in what will be the firm's fifth year of operation, we will be building on what we have already achieved in the reported year in each of the 6 focus areas of excellence.

A strong performance in the previous 2 financial years means we are in a good position for investing in measures that will work to ensure the sustainable, excellent client service we are aiming to provide. A significant portion of investment – both financially and in terms of focus – will be spent on our IT project, where we will be working with external partners to improve and streamline our IT, better equipping our staff and enabling us to provide increasingly and consistently excellent client service.

Another significant area for investment will be the continued recruitment of godly staff into our fee earning and support teams, with a particular focus on senior recruitment into all teams. The creation and appointment of a Head of Legal Operations will create capacity at senior management level, enabling us to make quicker and more substantial progress with strategic planning. We are already pursuing positive avenues of recruitment into our Legal Secretary, IT and Employment teams, yet recognise the need to further invest in advertisement and new media – such as videos – for the envisioning for potential new staff. The development of a diversity strategy will help to ensure we are retaining and recruiting a team – both of staff and of board members – who reflect and understand the diverse backgrounds and needs of our client base. We have identified our property work as an area that requires investment in order to ensure it is a financially sustainable part of our operations. As outlined already, our investment into our property work will comprise of recruitment into senior roles, production of resources to streamline work and save time at the initial enquiry stage, and also improvement of client communications, better explaining the value of our property services to clients.

We will continue investing in our current staff, ensuring we retain our qualified, godly team. As such, we will aim to complete our revised staff handbook, continue to provide quality internal training on a variety of topics, and conduct a remuneration review to consider staff salaries. We will also implement procedures for workload monitoring and new instruction taking, thereby safeguarding our team's wellbeing but also ensuring we are not overstretched, and capable of delivering excellent service.

We will continue to improve our client communications throughout the matter process, from guides to field questions at the enquiry stage, to the client care letter, to the provision of updates to the client throughout the period of work. Continuing to develop a consistent firm voice across all communications will be a key component in the delivery of these client communications.

An important part of our client communication centres around fee estimates and updates to initial estimates throughout the matter. We will continue to carry out market research where required to better qualify our costs, and produce communications and resources to explain to our clients the high value of our services relative to the costs. Market research will feed into the development of a new pricing and discount strategy to ensure we are operating sustainably while still offering our clients accessible, cost-effective legal advice. Alongside this we will conduct a full review of our Advice Line service, to ensure that it is a sustainable service for us, but also one of excellence and relevance to its users.

Finally, we will continue to produce and expand the provision of our resources and services as we scope out our clients' (and prospective clients') needs and felt needs. This will look like the continued production of resource packs, guidance notes, articles and perhaps videos or webinars on the most relevant and important topics; communicating those resources through available channels such as social media platforms, our monthly newsletter, and our website; and exploring the further development of new service areas. Where an area of service falls outside of our capability or capacity, we will continue to foster existing, and identify new, partnerships so that we can refer clients to trusted sources of help as and when we are not able to provide that ourselves.

## **EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**

#### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

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#### **Structure, governance and management**

Edward Connor Solicitors is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under company number 10821224, and registered as a charity in England and Wales under registration number 1175305. It is regulated by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority number 640691. The principal office is at 10 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU and its registered office address is at 41 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU.

It is governed by its Articles of Association.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of approval of this Report were:

G L Adam

J C H Anelay

(Resigned 31 May 2022)

J L Cooke

(Resigned 7 September 2022)

D M Cornish

C R Eade

M A Lawrence

A W J Stevens

R West

K Appleton

P F Prangley

(Appointed 7 September 2022)

S J Wright

(Appointed 6 July 2022)

The trustees are appointed by the trustees and members of the charitable company, the members being the trustees of the FIEC (FIEC Trust Board). They ensure that the trustees are Christians with qualifications and experience in several relevant disciplines, with particular experience in law, finance and pastoral ministry. This experience is invaluable to the work of the charitable company.

The trustees have appointed Gemma Adam, David Cornish and Caroline Eade, as paid employees to the board of trustees. The trustees have also appointed Ursula Stevens, a connected person to A W J Stevens, as a paid employee. This is in accordance with the articles of association of the charitable company.

Remuneration of trustees who are also paid employees or connected persons is set by the non-executive directors, who review salary levels in line with external benchmarks and in line with responsibilities held. Conflicts of interest are carefully managed amongst the trustees, recorded at every meeting, and no staff member is ever involved in the setting of their own remuneration, or that of a connected person. The remuneration committee also set clear parameters within which the Managing Director is to set other staff pay.

Day to day duties are delegated to the Executive Team, and through them to other staff employed or contracted by the charitable company. The charity currently does not have any unpaid volunteers other than the non-executive trustees.

The trustees review at least annually the composition of the board to ensure that there is a suitable range of expertise and experience amongst the trustees.

New trustees are given the Charity Commission guidance concerning the responsibilities of trustees, given some introductory overview of the organisation and their responsibilities within it. The trustees keep under review the most appropriate means of ensuring regular, ongoing training for the trustees, both through the expertise within the team, and the use of external training.

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**  
***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022***

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This Report has been prepared having taken advantage of the small companies exemption in the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

.....  
**A W J Stevens**  
Chair of trustees  
Dated: .....

## EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

### INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

#### TO THE TRUSTEES OF EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

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I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Edward Connor Solicitors (the charitable company) for the year ended 28 February 2022.

#### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

#### **Independent examiner's statement**

Since the charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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 financial statements to be reached.

**Philip John Dymond FCCA**

Cheyettes Ltd  
167 London Road  
Leicester  
LE2 1EG

Dated: .....

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT*****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022***

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
<b><u>Income and endowments from:</u></b>			
Donations and legacies	2	207	21,273
Charitable activities	3	940,702	721,448
Investments	4	148	987
Other income	5	3,149	6,707
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total income</b>		944,206	750,415
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><u>Expenditure on:</u></b>			
Raising funds	6	870	371
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Charitable activities	7	834,272	681,651
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		835,142	682,022
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>		109,064	68,393
Fund balances at 1 March 2021		395,250	326,857
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Fund balances at 28 February 2022</b>		504,314	395,250
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****BALANCE SHEET****AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	10		-		34
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	11	343,974		266,203	
Cash at bank and in hand		295,923		271,450	
		<u>639,897</u>		<u>537,653</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	13	<u>(100,583)</u>		<u>(97,437)</u>	
Net current assets			539,314		440,216
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<u>539,314</u>		<u>440,250</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	14		(35,000)		(45,000)
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>504,314</u>		<u>395,250</u>
<b>Income funds</b>					
Unrestricted funds			504,314		395,250
			<u>504,314</u>		<u>395,250</u>

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

**BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)**

***AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2022***

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The charitable company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 28 February 2022. No member of the charitable company has deposited a notice, pursuant to section 476, requiring an audit of these financial statements.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on .....

.....

A W J Stevens

**Trustee**

**Company registration number 10821224**

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash generated from operations	17		29,325		78,339
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Investment income received		148		987	
<b>Net cash generated from investing activities</b>					
			148		987
<b>Financing activities</b>					
Proceeds of new bank loans		-		50,000	
Repayment of bank loans		(5,000)		-	
<b>Net cash (used in)/generated from financing activities</b>					
			(5,000)		50,000
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>					
			24,473		129,326
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			271,450		142,124
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>			<b>295,923</b>		<b>271,450</b>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

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**1 Accounting policies**

**Charity information**

Edward Connor Solicitors is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 41 The Point, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7QU.

**1.1 Accounting convention**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charitable company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (published in October 2019). The charitable company is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charitable company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

**1.2 Going concern**

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charitable company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

**1.3 Charitable funds**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charitable company.

**1.4 Income**

Income is recognised when the charitable company is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charitable company has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charitable company has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

**1.5 Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis, inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered.

## EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022

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#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charitable company on 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 based upon either time spent on the actual activity or usage.

#### 1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Fixtures and fittings	50% per annum on a straight line basis on IT equipment and 25% per annum straight line on others
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The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

#### 1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charitable company reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

#### 1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

#### 1.9 Financial instruments

The charitable company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charitable company's balance sheet when the charitable company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

#### **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022****1 Accounting policies****(Continued)*****Basic financial liabilities***

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

***Derecognition of financial liabilities***

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charitable company's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

**1.10 Employee benefits**

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charitable company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

**1.11 Retirement benefits**

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

**2 Donations and legacies**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2022</b>	2021
	£	£
Donations and gifts	207	1,273
Grants receivable	-	20,000
	<u>207</u>	<u>21,273</u>

**3 Charitable activities**

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	£	£
Charges and model document fees	<u>940,702</u>	<u>721,448</u>

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022****4 Investments**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2022</b>	2021
	£	£
Interest receivable	148	987
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

**5 Other income**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Total
	<b>2022</b>	2021
	£	£
Secondment fees and other income	1,041	3,981
Job Retention Scheme grant income	2,108	2,726
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	<u>3,149</u>	<u>6,707</u>

**6 Raising funds**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2022</b>	2021
	£	£
<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>		
Advertising	870	371
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	<u>870</u>	<u>371</u>

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022****7 Charitable activities**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Staff costs	644,811	499,687
Depreciation and impairment	34	2,411
Training, conferences and other staff costs	16,954	6,649
Meeting expenses	1,893	1,266
Insurance	39,892	32,530
Staff travelling expenses	1,175	486
Professional fees	54,820	50,664
Professional subscriptions	18,956	17,987
Independent examiner's fees	1,850	1,850
Office expenses	26,182	25,466
Sundry expenses	26,115	41,648
Bank charges	1,459	919
Bad debts	131	88
	<u>834,272</u>	<u>681,651</u>

**8 Trustees**

Travel and meeting expenses of £1,726 were reimbursed to 3 trustees during the year (2021 - 3 trustees reimbursed £269).

None of the trustees were remunerated for their role as trustees.

In accordance with section 5 of its Memorandum and Articles of Association, three trustees were remunerated in connection with fulfilling their duties under their contracts of employment with the charitable company (2021 - three). During the year, Gemma Adam received gross remuneration of £32,037 (2021 - £31,673) and pension benefits of £2,883 (2021 - £2,851), Caroline Eade received gross remuneration of £53,503 (2021 - £43,990) and pension benefits of £4,815 (2021 - £3,959) and David Cornish received gross remuneration of £41,546 (2021 - £41,120) and pension benefits of £3,739 (2021 - £3,701).

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022****9 Employees****Number of employees**

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>
Trustee directors	9	10
Fee earners and support staff	18	14
	<u>27</u>	<u>24</u>

**Employment costs**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Wages and salaries	550,324	428,491
Social security costs	46,055	33,869
Other pension costs	48,432	37,327
	<u>644,811</u>	<u>499,687</u>

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was £60,000 or more.

**10 Tangible fixed assets**

	<b>Fixtures and fittings</b>
	<b>£</b>
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 March 2021	12,052
At 28 February 2022	<u>12,052</u>
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>	
At 1 March 2021	12,018
Depreciation charged in the year	34
At 28 February 2022	<u>12,052</u>
<b>Carrying amount</b>	
At 28 February 2022	<u>-</u>
At 28 February 2021	<u>34</u>

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022****11 Debtors**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	£	£
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade debtors	185,764	93,037
Other debtors	-	3,352
Prepayments and accrued income	158,210	169,814
	<u>343,974</u>	<u>266,203</u>

**12 Loans and overdrafts**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	£	£
Bank loans	<u>45,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>
Payable within one year	10,000	5,000
Payable after one year	<u>35,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>

The above Bounce Back Loan is unsecured and repayable over 5 years at a 2.5% fixed rate of annual interest.

**13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>Notes</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
		£	£
Bank loans	12	10,000	5,000
Other taxation and social security		75,902	79,855
Trade creditors		3,351	-
Other creditors		674	81
Accruals and deferred income		10,656	12,501
		<u>100,583</u>	<u>97,437</u>

**14 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year**

	<b>Notes</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
		£	£
Bank loans	12	<u>35,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>

**15 Operating lease commitments**

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2022****15 Operating lease commitments****(Continued)**

At the reporting end date the charitable company had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	£	£
Within one year	18,388	21,355
Between two and five years	8,833	11,447
	<u>27,221</u>	<u>32,802</u>

**16 Related party transactions**

Mrs U. Stevens, who is the wife of trustee A.W.J. Stevens, was employed by the charity during the year and received gross remuneration of £12,172 (2021 - £10,143) and pension benefits of £913 (2021 - £1,096).

**17 Cash generated from operations**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	£	£
Surplus for the year	109,064	68,392
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(148)	(987)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	34	2,411
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase) in debtors	(77,771)	(19,680)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(1,854)	28,203
<b>Cash generated from operations</b>	<u>29,325</u>	<u>78,339</u>

**18 Analysis of changes in net funds**

	<b>At 1 March 2021</b>	<b>Cash flows</b>	<b>At 28 February 2022</b>
	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	271,450	24,474	295,924
Loans falling due within one year	(5,000)	(5,000)	(10,000)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(45,000)	10,000	(35,000)
	<u>221,450</u>	<u>29,474</u>	<u>250,924</u>

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1175305

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# Accounts

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Charity Registration No. 1175305

Company Registration No. 10821224 (England and Wales)

**EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**  
**ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021**

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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<b>Trustees</b>	G L Adam J C H Anelay J L Cooke D M Cornish C R Eade M A Lawrence A W J Stevens R West K Appleton	(Appointed 22 May 2020)  (Appointed 27 April 2020) (Appointed 27 April 2020)
<b>Charity number</b>	1175305	
<b>Company number</b>	10821224	
<b>Principal address</b>	10 The Point Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7QU	
<b>Registered office</b>	41 The Point Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7QU	
<b>Independent examiner</b>	Philip John Dymond FCCA Cheyettes Ltd 167 London Road Leicester LE2 1EG	
<b>Bankers</b>	Barclays Bank plc Leicester LE87 2BB	

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# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

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# **EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)**

### **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021**

---

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 28 February 2021.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (published in October 2019).

#### **Objectives and activities**

The objects of the charitable company as stated in the Articles of Association are to advance the Evangelical Christian Faith and to promote the effective use of charitable resources by the provision of services to organisations involved in advancing the Evangelical Christian Faith. The subsidiary objects, by which the charitable company advances the Evangelical Christian Faith, are twofold. Firstly, by providing advice, assistance and support to churches and other Christian charities and groups who are in agreement with the Statement of Faith and conduct their affairs consistently with it. Secondly, by promoting, aiding and furthering the objects and work of the FIEC, subject to the FIEC having aims and objects consistent with the Statement of Faith of the charitable company.

The charitable company seeks to achieve these objects by providing legal advice and services to churches and charities and organisations who are in agreement with, and conduct their affairs consistently with, the Statement of Faith. This advice combines both legal expertise and theological insight so that our clients are not only legally compliant but able to operate in accordance with their evangelical convictions. This enables them to realise their purposes more effectively and in turn, advance the Evangelical Christian faith.

We also offer model documents for sale which is a cost effective way for Christian organisations to obtain good quality legal documentation to aid their work. We seek to share our expertise by regularly producing advice articles and guidance notes for our website and e-newsletter which highlights key legal and regulatory issues for the charitable sector we serve and indicates how Christian organisations can respond to these issues.

Further, an advice line is provided to all FIEC churches, providing 30 minutes of free advice on any matter, furthering the work of the FIEC and its affiliated churches.

The trustees have considered the general guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The charitable company benefits the public by helping a significant number of charities to comply with their legal and regulatory obligations and thereby in turn achieve their purposes and public benefit.

#### **Achievements and performance**

This year has been the first year in our 3-year strategic plan for sustainable growth. This strategic plan forms part of our overall vision for the next 10 years that by 2030 Edward Connor Solicitors would be the first port of call for all evangelical churches and Christian organisations facing a legal issue. Our plan for sustainable growth is formed of 3 focus areas – recruiting and retaining qualified, godly staff; growing our services; and ensuring sustainability – and we will look at each of these focus areas in turn.

#### ***Recruiting and retaining qualified Godly staff***

We wanted to expand our capacity for client work by recruiting an additional property lawyer and a senior charity lawyer. Since March 2020, we are delighted to have welcomed onto our team a property lawyer (growing our property team to 3 in total) and two further charity lawyers. The Charities and Property teams have seen our heaviest workload over the last year, and the impact of our successful recruitment into those teams has been felt immediately by spreading workloads to a more manageable degree across teams, and by increasing our capacity to support more client matters.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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As we grow our staff team, it becomes increasingly important for the wellbeing of our workforce and health of the firm to ensure all our staff policies and processes are robust and fit for purpose. Over the last year, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of such policies and processes, and in particular are pleased to have produced a clear supervision policy and new fee earner structure. These documents demonstrate our intent to invest in our staff, encouraging them to grow and develop, which in turn increases the quality and the value of the service we provide as a firm.

Our investment in the development of our staff is part of a wider and deeper aim of caring for all our employees with Christlike care. Fostering togetherness has been a key part of this first year of the 3-year strategic plan, and we have been so encouraged by the fellowship arising from our weekly prayer meetings set up at the start of the financial year. These gatherings – which we have continued virtually during the pandemic – are a fantastic way of sharing with and supporting one another, as well as praying for our clients. Our monthly staff meetings (again, virtual during the pandemic) have also been a great way of fostering that sense of being a team and working together towards the same aim. Within these meetings, we have been blessed with both internal and external speakers providing training on a wealth of topics, from our own policies, to theology, to the different governance structures of churches (one of our main client groups).

Moreover, communication had been highlighted as a key means by which we could achieve a greater sense of togetherness and staff morale. The appointment of a full-time Communications Officer just prior to this financial year has seen a great improvement in our internal communication, for example in the production of a fortnightly internal newsletter that contains the important information for those weeks, updates on work we are doing, and further useful resources on areas such as cybersecurity, mental wellbeing, and physical health.

Internal communication has been key in our staff having an excellent understanding of our core values, strategic aims, and our vision for the next few years. This is one of many encouragements that emerged from the Employee Opinion Survey we ran this year. We are thankful to God that over 90% of employees said they were proud to work at ECS, and all employees would recommend us as a great place to work! As well as a source of many encouragements of how we are caring for our staff, the survey was also a great source of ideas and suggestions for how to continue improving our staff care. Where issues were raised regarding areas such as process inefficiencies and too much work, we have used such information within trustee and management discussions to improve our care further. Many of these areas also fall within our strategic programs already, such as recruiting to ease workload, and investing in IT to improve process efficiency.

#### ***Growing our services***

As the seriousness of the Coronavirus pandemic grew and we and our clients went into lockdown, we made plans and provisions for what we expected to be a significant downturn in incoming work. However, we have not only retained our stable position from pre-pandemic times, but our incoming work has actually increased this year. Considering the circumstances, this is nothing short of a small miracle, and we praise God for His amazing faithfulness and provision – both to us, and to our clients - throughout this challenging period.

This year we have served over 550 clients on over 700 matters, representing increases of around 40% in our reach (i.e. new clients), and 25% in the service provided (i.e. number of matters). These figures show in numbers what we have described above – the amazing provision that we have experienced this year, that has seen our service grow. Our aim, though, was not simply to increase the number of clients we serve but also to increase the diversity of the client base. Last year we reported that our work was proportionally around 75% churches and 25% Christian organisations, and of those who were churches around two thirds belonged to FIEC. This past year, the proportion of our work has been 80% churches and 20% Christian organisations, with around 70% of churches being FIEC churches. Our work for churches then has increased relative to our work for Christian charities (probably due to the high volume of CIO work for churches we have conducted over the past year), yet it is encouraging to see the continued diversity of churches we are serving. Within our church client base for example, we are pleased to have clients from within the Baptist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist, United Reformed Church and Pentecostal denominations, as well as many non-denominational churches, showcasing the variety of clients we work with. Our training on the different types of church governance is helping us both to understand clients from diverse backgrounds better and reach out into new groups of clients not previously supported by us.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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Being a not-for-profit organisation, seeking to love our clients, we are pleased to have provided over nearly 6,000 hours of discounted advice this year; and furthering the work of the FIEC in accordance with our charitable objectives, we are pleased to have provided over 2,500 hours of discounted advice to FIEC churches from lawyers, and over 100 hours of free advice through our Advice Line service for FIEC churches.

We want to continue diversifying our client base and reaching more clients in each group. Our recruitment has already aided this and will continue to as we look to further strengthen our staff teams. Further, we have this year developed a communications strategy and set up a Marketing Team to help us reach these new groups, and strengthen relationships with key new clients – particularly within the field of employment – that will aid our aim of sustainable growth. Through these developments, we have already this year seen our employment solicitors provide expert advice in webinars hosted by Stewardship. We have also seen an improved presence on social media, where our Twitter and LinkedIn pages have each seen greater activity and increase in followers, as well as our monthly client newsletter growing in subscribers. Our website too has been growing, both in number of users, its content, and its functionality.

Finally, we have continued to produce both free and purchasable resources to guide and support those seeking Christ-centred legal expertise. A unique year called for unique resources, and we were pleased to provide clients with guidance to help them through the legal challenges brought by the Coronavirus pandemic. This included guidance on holding members meetings and AGMs, requesting filing extensions for submitting annual accounts, and ongoing support throughout the various stages of the Coronavirus Job Retention (“furlough”) Scheme. Overall, this year we have produced 19 articles, 2 client stories 3 advice notes, and new resources covering furlough, redundancy, TUPE, and Workers. We also ensured our clients are provided with the most accurate and up-to-date information by updating our Employment Pack to reflect the implementation of the Good Work Plan, and our GDPR Pack to reflect changes due to the exit of the UK from the EU.

#### ***Ensuring sustainability***

When we set our strategic plan, we recognised that growth without a firm foundation, or capacity to manage such growth, is unwise and not sustainable. That is why we set our third strategic objective – that of ensuring sustainability.

This year we have taken important steps towards ensuring sustainability, such as implementing a new pricing structure. While generally remaining considerably lower than market prices for law firms, our fee rates now better reflect the quality of the service we provide – a fact that has been seen in the generally successful reception of the new prices by our clients. Clearly, our service is seen to be of very high value, as well as high quality, a core value of ours that we wish to ensure continues.

We have also worked hard this year to improve many of our internal processes and systems. We have for instance improved our billing process, reducing the time between charging clients and being remunerated, ensuring we receive charity funds in a timely manner. In another financial move, having considered our working patterns and use of our resources, we took the decision that at this time, our needs are not best met by having a London office, and that the resources consumed by it could be better used elsewhere. Therefore, the Board approved the closure of our London office. Our improvements to processes and systems are moreover giving our work greater clarity and efficiency, both for our own staff and our clients. We have, for example, completed a review of our CIO process and pricing, producing clear processes as well as precedents and advice notes. This year we also began our review of and planning for improved IT systems that will help further our drive towards sustainable growth.

We cannot ignore the fact that this has been an unusual year. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been felt globally, and Edward Connor Solicitors has not escaped that. As mentioned already, we have amazingly seen growth this year despite the circumstances, for which we are incredibly thankful. Yet, largely due to the added pressure caused by the pandemic, we have made less progress in the area of sustainability than we would have liked this year. Much of the time and resources which we would have hoped to go towards reviewing and implementing new processes and systems has been required in simply ‘keeping us going’ throughout the pandemic. As with many organisations, almost our entire operations had to move online, and our processes and practices had to change accordingly. With levels of client work at the highest we have seen in our 3-year history, we recognise the unsustainability of such conditions as we look ahead into the next financial year, the second in our 3-year plan.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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#### Financial review

We are immensely thankful to God that, despite the real challenges brought from the coronavirus pandemic, our financial performance has once again been encouraging.

As part of an ongoing strategy of investment for growth, we had planned for a small deficit before grants received. However, in God's goodness, a surplus was realised of approximately £48k before grants received, equating to just over £68k after grants received, providing much needed funds for on-going investment in growth.

Total funds at the end of the year increased to £395k (from £324k in the previous period). With a greater emphasis on lock-up reduction, a somewhat higher proportion of these were in cash form, which combined with a bounce-back loan, has increased liquidity for growth in the 2021 – 22 financial year.

Income increased over the year to £750k (of which £721k was from legal advice provided, being the primary charitable activities undertaken). This represents a 27% increase over the previous year, and more than a 29% increase in income from direct charitable activities.

A grant of £20k was received from the FIEC. This is the final of the FIEC grants which were agreed to be provided for the initial three years of Edward Connor Solicitors.

Total expenditure for the year was £682k, representing an increase of around 30% from the previous year. Around 79% of this was staffing cost, with the expertise of legally qualified staff being the primary means through which the charitable work is delivered.

With the coronavirus pandemic, the charity was able to use a variety of government schemes to reduce financial impact upon the charity. The government's furlough scheme was used where government restrictions, such as school and nursery closures, prevented staff from working all or some of their hours. The VAT deferral option, and subsequent VAT deferral new payment scheme, were used to improve liquidity through the pandemic. The trustees also, as noted in last year's report, took out a £50k government-backed "bounce-back" loan in August 2020, to ensure liquidity through the uncertainty of the pandemic, and to ensure that the charity could continue its strategy of sustainable growth over subsequent period.

#### Reserves policy

Our reserves policy is to hold current net assets of value greater than six month's expenditure and £350k. The former figure provides for a period through which adjustments can be made in the firm, and through which unbilled earned income can be billed and realised as cash. The latter figure (of £350k) is an estimation of costs for an unplanned closure. Reserves provide a buffer in case of sudden, unexpected cash-flow shortage, and allow for an orderly wind-down in the face of unexpected closure.

The Trustees review the reserves regularly, at least annually, and whenever material contract is entered into, and was reviewed during the year.

At the end of the year, reserves were marginally above this policy, with £395k, representing a little over 6 months' expenditure, which met the expectation from the prior report that the reserves level would be realised.

The trustees are satisfied that the reserves held are appropriate for the risks and planned growth for the firm, in line with the purposes for which the reserves are held.

The charity does not hold any restricted funds.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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#### Risk management

The trustees maintain a register of risks which is reviewed regularly as part of the Board's cycle of business, with mitigations to address both the likelihood and potential impact of major risks. Regulatory guidance is fed into this, and in particular, the trustees consider the annual SRA Risk Outlook publication to ensure that risks of concern to the regulator are properly addressed and managed. This is further monitored and reviewed regularly by the management staff. A business continuity plan has also been produced to ensure that operational risks have been considered and proper systems and procedures in place to mitigate against them.

Policies are also in place and regularly reviewed for dealing with conflicts of interest, compliance oversight, client care, complaints, data protection, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing, financial management, equalities legislation and cybersecurity to reduce risk exposure. The staff are given regular training on these policies and they are included in the induction process for new staff.

Of particular note during the period was the risk caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The charity was able to continue to operate effectively remotely and continued to have strong demand from the churches and charities served.

Risks from working at home were assessed with a year of remote working, with particular focus on cybersecurity and health and safety, with both training and steps taken to manage these risks.

The primary risk to the charity has been identified as staff workloads, and investment to new recruitment to address this was started during the period reported, and continued into the subsequent period.

#### Plans for future periods - *Journey to delivery of consistently sustainable excellent client service*

As we look ahead, we still believe that our strategic objective of sustainable growth is the right one. But we must ensure that as we grow, we continue to consistently provide our clients with excellent service. Having progressed very well with the first two focus areas of our strategic plan for this period (recruiting and retaining staff and growing our services), we will particularly focus over the next period on measures to ensure sustainability as we believe these will most help us on our journey to consistent delivery of sustainable excellent client service. We will look to achieve this through six focus areas:

- **Excellence** – we will ensure we have clearly defined, firm-wide expectations of what excellence looks like in terms of our client service. We will measure ourselves against these standards, seeking high quality excellence while being aware of our limitations, so that we do not compromise the level of service provided. To achieve this we will conduct a full review of the client journey with us, including the processes, systems and policies which underpin our clients' engagement with us. An important aspect of this will be developing a consistent firm 'voice' that reflects our identity of Christ-like legal expertise.
- **Right work levels** - recruiting and retaining godly staff will remain a key focus area as we seek to achieve optimum levels of workload across all our teams, while maintaining consistent and excellent service delivery. To this end we will continue with our plans to recruit senior lawyers into both our Charities and Property Teams, and strengthen our Admin and Finance Teams with additional support staff and the installation of an Office Manager to oversee day-to-day operational matters. Recruitment across these teams will enable us to both better distribute work amongst fee earners and provide our fee earners with efficient and consistently excellent support. We will also continue developing and implementing our IT strategy in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness of our staff.
- **Roles and structures** – in addition to increasing our teams' capacities, we will seek to have a balance of staff across all levels of seniority to ensure all staff are properly supported in their roles, and will continue to recruit into our legal teams to ensure this. Moreover, we want all our staff to be clear in the scope of their roles, as well as properly trained with excellent development opportunities. To this end we will improve our line management and supervision, as well as HR provision and internal training throughout all levels of the firm. At a Board level, we will ensure excellent governance by reviewing the composition of the Board and recruiting trustees to improve the Board's expertise and experience. Lastly, we will establish a strategy for our office, meeting space, and remote working to ensure efficient, effective and consistent delivery of services, as well as Christlike care of our staff.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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- **Investing in future recruitment** – even as we welcome new staff in the next period, we will be seeking to make ourselves and our gospel work increasingly well-known to attract future recruits. To achieve this we will invest in measures to envision such people – for example having a presence at relevant events, communicating stories of our gospel impact, developing more engaging annual reporting – as well as developing our remuneration policy, and laying the foundations for biblically-shaped diversity strategy.
- **Cost management** – We want to see consistent pricing of jobs to give realistic estimates, and transparent, clear communication to clients throughout the work regarding costs, and so will conduct a review to improve the cycle for client matter estimates. We also want to increase our accessibility to clients and so will be conducting market research into wider pricing and job costings. Lastly, we have already been encouraged this year by a reduction in cash lock-up and time written off, and will continue reducing these amounts in the next period, thereby continually improving our financial position to ensure sustainability.
- **Meeting client needs** – we want to ensure we meet our existing clients' needs, insofar as we are able to do so, either in house or through partnerships with others. To achieve this we recognise the need to have a good understanding of existing clients' actual and perceived needs, which we will gather through working with our existing partner organisations, through existing client feedback, and through monitoring of social media. Moreover, we will increase the use of our website and social media, and review our Advice Line service, to continue improving the breadth and quality of resources and support we can provide to clients in a cost effective manner.

### Structure, governance and management

Edward Connor Solicitors is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under company number 10821224, and registered as a charity in England and Wales under registration number 1175305. It is regulated by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority number 640691. The principal office is at 10 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU and its registered office address is at 41 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU.

It is governed by its Articles of Association.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of approval of this Report were:

G L Adam	
J C H Anelay	
J I Bond	(Resigned 4 November 2020)
J L Cooke	
D M Cornish	
C R Eade	(Appointed 22 May 2020)
M A Lawrence	
A W J Stevens	
R West	(Appointed 27 April 2020)
K Appleton	(Appointed 27 April 2020)

The trustees are appointed by the trustees and members of the charitable company, the members being the trustees of the FIEC (FIEC Trust Board). They ensure that the trustees are Christians with qualifications and experience in several relevant disciplines, with particular experience in law, finance and pastoral ministry. This experience is invaluable to the work of the charitable company.

The trustees have appointed Gemma Adam, David Cornish and Caroline Eade, as paid employees to the board of trustees. The trustees have also appointed Ursula Stevens, a connected person to A W J Stevens, as a paid employee. This is in accordance with the articles of association of the charitable company.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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Remuneration of trustees who are also paid employees or connected persons is set by the non-executive directors, who review salary levels in line with external benchmarks and in line with responsibilities held. Conflicts of interest are carefully managed amongst the trustees, recorded at every meeting, and no staff member is ever involved in the setting of their own remuneration, or that of a connected person. The remuneration committee also set clear parameters within which the Managing Director is to set other staff pay.


Day to day duties are delegated to the Executive Team, and through them to other staff employed or contracted by the charitable company. The charity currently does not have any unpaid volunteers other than the non-executive trustees.

The trustees review at least annually the composition of the board to ensure that there is a suitable range of expertise and experience amongst the trustees.

New trustees are given the Charity Commission guidance concerning the responsibilities of trustees, given some introductory overview of the organisation and their responsibilities within it. The trustees keep under review the most appropriate means of ensuring regular, ongoing training for the trustees, both through the expertise within the team, and the use of external training.

This Report has been prepared having taken advantage of the small companies exemption in the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

  
.....  
**A W J Stevens**  
Chair of trustees  
Dated: ..... 19/2/2021 .....

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

### TO THE TRUSTEES OF EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

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I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Edward Connor Solicitors (the charitable company) for the year ended 28 February 2021.

#### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

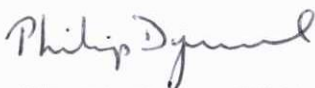
#### **Independent examiner's statement**

Since the charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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 financial statements to be reached.



Philip John Dymond FCCA

Cheyettes Ltd  
167 London Road  
Leicester  
LE2 1EG

Dated: 21/10/2021

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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		Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2020 £
	Notes		
<b><u>Income and endowments from:</u></b>			
Donations and legacies	2	21,273	30,000
Charitable activities	3	721,448	558,059
Investments	4	987	1,484
Other income	5	6,707	330
<b>Total income</b>		<u>750,415</u>	<u>589,873</u>
<b><u>Expenditure on:</u></b>			
Raising funds	6	371	1,364
Charitable activities	7	681,651	522,867
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<u>682,022</u>	<u>524,231</u>
<b>Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>		68,393	65,642
Fund balances at 29 February 2020		<u>326,857</u>	<u>261,215</u>
<b>Fund balances at 28 February 2021</b>		<u><u>395,250</u></u>	<u><u>326,857</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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	Notes	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	10		34		2,444
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	11	266,203		246,523	
Cash at bank and in hand		271,450		142,124	
		<u>537,653</u>		<u>388,647</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	13	<u>(92,437)</u>		<u>(64,234)</u>	
Net current assets			445,216		324,413
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<u>445,250</u>		<u>326,857</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	14		(50,000)		-
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>395,250</u>		<u>326,857</u>
<b>Income funds</b>					
Unrestricted funds			395,250		326,857
			<u>395,250</u>		<u>326,857</u>

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## **EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS**

### **BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)**

***AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2021***

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The charitable company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 28 February 2021. No member of the charitable company has deposited a notice, pursuant to section 476, requiring an audit of these financial statements.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 19 October 2021



A W J Stevens  
Trustee

**Company Registration No. 10821224**



# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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	Notes	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations	17		78,339		(33,176)
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		-		(4,561)	
Investment income received		987		1,484	
<b>Net cash generated from/(used in) investing activities</b>					
			987		(3,077)
<b>Financing activities</b>					
Proceeds of new bank loans		50,000		-	
<b>Net cash generated from/(used in) financing activities</b>					
			50,000		-
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>					
			129,326		(36,253)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			142,124		178,377
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>			<u>271,450</u>		<u>142,124</u>

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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### 1 Accounting policies

#### Charity information

Edward Connor Solicitors is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 41 The Point, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7QU.

#### 1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charitable company's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (published in October 2019). The charitable company is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charitable company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

#### 1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charitable company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

#### 1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charitable company.

#### 1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charitable company is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charitable company has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charitable company has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

#### 1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis, inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charitable company on 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 based upon either time spent on the actual activity or usage.

#### 1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Fixtures and fittings	50% per annum on a straight line basis on IT equipment and 25% per annum straight line on others
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The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

#### 1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charitable company reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

#### 1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

#### 1.9 Financial instruments

The charitable company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charitable company's balance sheet when the charitable company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

#### **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

#### **Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### **Derecognition of financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charitable company's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

#### 1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charitable company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

#### 1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

### 2 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2021	2020
	£	£
Donations and gifts	1,273	-
Grants receivable	20,000	30,000
	<u>21,273</u>	<u>30,000</u>

### 3 Charitable activities

	2021	2020
	£	£
Charges and model document fees	721,448	558,059
	<u>721,448</u>	<u>558,059</u>

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## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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### 4 Investments

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2021</b>	2020
	£	£
Interest receivable	987	1,484
	<u>987</u>	<u>1,484</u>

### 5 Other income

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Total
	<b>2021</b>	2020
	£	£
Secondment fees and other income	3,981	330
Job Retention Scheme grant income	2,726	-
	<u>6,707</u>	<u>330</u>

### 6 Raising funds

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	Unrestricted funds
	<b>2021</b>	2020
	£	£
<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>		
Advertising	371	1,364
	<u>371</u>	<u>1,364</u>

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

### 7 Charitable activities

	2021	2020
	£	£
Staff costs	499,687	376,115
Depreciation and impairment	2,411	4,257
Training, conferences and other staff costs	6,649	9,096
Meeting expenses	1,266	4,651
Insurance	32,530	18,798
Staff travelling expenses	486	5,322
Professional fees	50,664	22,429
Professional subscriptions	17,987	16,195
Independent examiner's fees	1,850	1,850
Office expenses	25,466	17,710
Sundry expenses	41,648	45,417
Bank charges	919	960
Bad debts	88	67
	<u>681,651</u>	<u>522,867</u>

### 8 Trustees

Travel and meeting expenses of £269 were reimbursed to 3 trustees during the year (2020 - 4 trustees reimbursed £1,027).

None of the trustees were remunerated for their role as trustees.

In accordance with section 5 of its Memorandum and Articles of Association, three trustees were remunerated in connection with fulfilling their duties under their contracts of employment with the charitable company (2020 - three). During the year, Gemma Adam received gross remuneration of £31,673 (2020 - £29,906) and pension benefits of £2,851 (2020 - £2,692), Caroline Eade received gross remuneration of £43,990 (2020 - £4,279) and pension benefits of £3,959 (2020 - £385) and David Cornish received gross remuneration of £41,120 (2020 - £20,000) and pension benefits of £3,701 (2020 - £1,800).

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

### 9 Employees

#### Number of employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2021 Number	2020 Number
Trustee directors	10	10
Fee earners and support staff	17	16
	<u>27</u>	<u>26</u>

#### Employment costs

	2021 £	2020 £
Wages and salaries	428,491	325,719
Social security costs	33,869	23,623
Other pension costs	37,327	26,773
	<u>499,687</u>	<u>376,115</u>

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was £60,000 or more.

### 10 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £
<b>Cost</b>	
At 29 February 2020	12,052
At 28 February 2021	<u>12,052</u>
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>	
At 29 February 2020	9,607
Depreciation charged in the year	2,411
At 28 February 2021	<u>12,018</u>
<b>Carrying amount</b>	
At 28 February 2021	<u>34</u>
At 28 February 2020	<u>2,444</u>

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

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11 Debtors	2021	2020
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	93,037	131,199
Other debtors	3,352	5,193
Prepayments and accrued income	169,814	110,131
	<u>266,203</u>	<u>246,523</u>

12 Loans and overdrafts	2021	2020
	£	£
Bank loans	<u>50,000</u>	<u>-</u>
Payable after one year	<u>50,000</u>	<u>-</u>

The above Bounce Back Loan is unsecured and repayable over 5 years at a 2.5% fixed rate of annual interest.

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2021	2020
	£	£
Other taxation and social security	79,855	44,914
Other creditors	81	27
Accruals and deferred income	12,501	19,293
	<u>92,437</u>	<u>64,234</u>

14 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	Notes	2021	2020
		£	£
Bank loans	12	<u>50,000</u>	<u>-</u>

# EDWARD CONNOR SOLICITORS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

#### 15 Operating lease commitments

At the reporting end date the charitable company had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Within one year	17,704	24,668
Between two and five years	6,670	19,693
	<u>24,374</u>	<u>44,361</u>

#### 16 Related party transactions

Mrs U. Stevens, who is the wife of trustee A.W.J. Stevens, was employed by the charity during the year and received gross remuneration of £10,143 (2020 - £7,494) and pension benefits of £913 (2020 - £nil).

#### 17 Cash generated from operations

	2021 £	2020 £
Surplus for the year	68,392	65,642
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(987)	(1,484)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	2,411	4,257
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase) in debtors	(19,680)	(110,506)
Increase in creditors	28,203	8,915
<b>Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations</b>	<u>78,339</u>	<u>(33,176)</u>

#### 18 Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 29 February 2020 £	Cash flows £	At 28 February 2021 £
Cash at bank and in hand	142,124	129,326	271,450
Loans falling due after more than one year	-	(50,000)	(50,000)
	<u>142,124</u>	<u>79,326</u>	<u>221,450</u>

