

FROME BIRTH TALK

England & Wales · Charity number 1175641

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2017-11-08

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

Contact

Address Frome Cheese and Grain Ltd
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Frome
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Website www.fromebirthtalk.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE RELIEF OF SICKNESS AND PRESERVATION OF HEALTH OF PREGNANT PEOPLE AND NEW PARENTS IN FROME AND THE SURROUNDING AREA BY THE PROVISION OF A FREE COUNSELLING SERVICE AND WELLBEING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES.

Activities: Frome Birth Talk provides a free counselling service for pregnant and parents in Frome, Westbury, Warminster and the surrounding area. We also offer two free weekly drop-in groups and occasional wellbeing events. All our activities are designed to promote positive perinatal mental health and bring people together to combat loneliness and isolation.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability
- **Who:** Children/young People, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Somerset
- Wiltshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-02-28	£53,172	£60,678	-	-
2024-02-29	£58,191	£53,451	-	-
2023-02-28	£36,254	£36,646	-	-
2022-02-28	£27,031	£23,778	-	-
2021-02-28	£26,239	£14,721	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Laura Alexander	Chair	2024-04-17
Aaron Calver		2024-04-17
Annette Schwalbe		2025-07-02
Gail Norris		2025-07-02
Holly Brown		2025-03-20
Rebecka Mau		2024-01-23

FROME BIRTH TALK

England & Wales - Charity number 1175641

Accounts

Annual report & accounts



The Board of Trustees present
their annual report and accounts
for the year
01/03/2024 to 28/02/2025

info@fromebirthtalk.org.uk

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www.fromebirthtalk.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1175641

Registered Address: Black Dog Cottage, Chapmanslade,
Wiltshire, BA13 4AE

Welcome!

2024–2025 was another exciting year of growth for Frome Birth Talk, marked by the launch of our new website, logo and refreshed visual identity.

Our counselling service continued to experience high demand, and our regular drop-in groups supported more families than ever before. Our board of trustees also evolved this year, as we warmly welcomed new members and said heartfelt goodbyes to some much-valued colleagues.

We've been busy shaping bigger, bolder ambitions for the charity, underpinned by an ambitious business plan to guide our next phase of growth.

At the same time, we've been preparing for the end of our National Lottery grant in 2025, with a renewed focus on community fundraising and exploring support from major donors. There is always more to do, but we feel energised, optimistic and ready for the next stage of our development.

Laura Alexander
Chair of Trustees



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Table of contents

Aims, objective and activities	3	Providing opportunities to trainee counsellors	17
What our service users say	4	Safeguarding	18
Our impact	5-7	Our finances	18-19
Groups and activities	8-12	Community fundraising	19-20
Our people:		Our governance and organisational management	21
Staff	13	Public benefit	22
Trustees	14-16	Risk management	23
Counsellors	17		

Aims, objective and activities

The objective of Frome Birth Talk is for the public benefit by the relief of sickness and the preservation of health of pregnant women and new parents in Frome and the surrounding area by the **provision of a free counselling service** and **wellbeing events and activities.**

What our service users say

We invite everyone who use our services to give qualitative feedback. Please see below for just some of the responses:

“This service **was a lifeline** during our time in NICU when our son was there for 5 weeks. It took a huge toll on my emotions and mental state. Knowing I had an outlet each week to share what I was going through **helped me to get through** a very challenging time.”

”

“

“I have needed **more support than the NHS were able to offer** and Frome Birth Talk were able to fill the gap.”

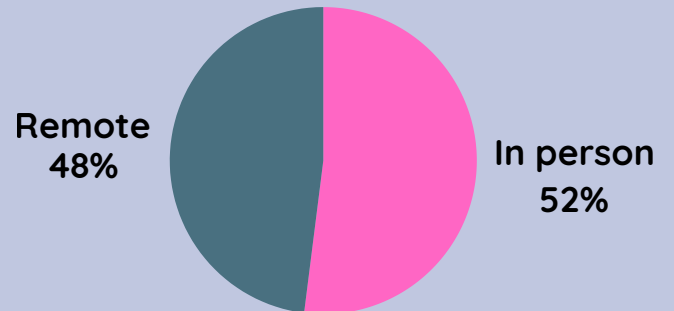
“Outstanding waiting time and contact. The **prompt response** was so important when needing help. I asked, and it was there. Thank you.”

“My whole life had been taken over by the responsibilities of having a newborn baby. Frome Birth Talk was the first time **I felt able to talk and think about myself again**, and really focus on how I was feeling rather than being swept up in the motions of being a new mother. The sessions allowed me **space to feel like myself again** rather than just a mum, and gave me tools to take forward with me. **It was really transformative.**”

Our impact: Counselling

We continued this year with a mixture of face-to-face and remote counselling, but responded to the needs of our clients by offering a more even split between in-person and remote sessions.

The number of referrals we received was 137, with 15 referrals from returning clients.



137

Referrals

We were able to respond to client demand by adding or reducing sessions based on our waiting list. This helped keep our waiting times short, and our vacant slots to a minimum.

We have improved our referrals process this year. Clients now fill out a simple Microsoft Form when registering with Frome Birth Talk, which is accessible directly via our website. This has streamlined the process, freeing up staff capacity and allowing at-a-glance analysis of service user information. Additional key questions can be added and removed as needed.

100%

of clients were satisfied or very satisfied with the way their referral was handled

Our impact: Counselling

We request feedback from counselling clients via an online questionnaire at the end of their sessions.

Throughout this year:



98% said the counselling **made a difference** to their lives



94% of clients told us they were **'very satisfied'** with the service they received



50% say they feel **less anxious** since having counselling with Frome Birth Talk



57% say they feel they are now able to be **more open about their feelings**



53% say they feel **hopeful about the future** thanks to counselling

“This is an **essential service for new parents**, I'm amazed this type of service isn't more widely available across the country! I feel **very lucky** to have been able to be seen and heard.”

Our impact: Counselling

To measure the impact of our counselling service, we use a clinically validated evaluation tool, Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE). Not only does this provide us with useful data about percentage improvements in client wellbeing, it also helps us practice safely and can help our counsellors recognise where there is a risk of harm and the need to involve other health professionals.

On 1st January 2024 we implemented a new data collection system for CORE scores, which has ensured consistency between all team members who enter information. It is now easier than ever to look at our CORE score data and see improvements, trends and patterns. This has been extremely helpful when providing information in grant applications.

We have 137 complete sets of CORE scores for people who used our counselling during 2024-25, a notable improvement since the introduction of our new system. Below is a breakdown of the improvements we have seen since using this system:

	Before	After	
Wellness	2.04	1.07	48% improvement
Problems & Symptoms	2.7	0.94	65% improvement
Functioning	1.18	0.64	46% improvement
Risk	0.09	0.03	67% improvement
All scores total	1.3	0.7	46% improvement
All scores (minus risk)	1.52	0.82	46% improvement

Groups and activities

Bump to Baby Group:

This group is for anyone who is expecting a baby, or who has a pre-mobile infant. This year it continued to run on Wednesday mornings at Frome Community Hospital, and saw a large increase in numbers. An average of 10 families attended each time - a total of 106.



The group benefited from our now-weekly volunteer Dinah Smith, who along with retired midwife Sarah Hartley and Margaret Graham, a retired counsellor, provided consistent friendly faces for visitors each week.

Some notable events from throughout the year included:

- In April, we ran another ‘Let’s Talk About Birth’ session, facilitated by midwives, and invited a specialist pelvic health physio guest speaker to visit the group
- In June, we welcomed massage therapist Sarah who offered free taster sessions for new parents
- In October, Geraldine from Frome Baby Link joined us for a session: ‘introducing family foods to your baby’
- In December, Alice from Frome Baby Link ran an informal Q&A session for parents with questions
- In February, we hosted a pop-up ‘Maternal Journal’ session - a craft and journaling workshop designed to harness creativity through the emotions of motherhood

Groups and activities

Toddler Group:

Our Friday morning toddler group continued to run at Trinity Church Hall with approximately 8-15 families attending each week - 142 families in total for the year period. Of these, 15 families attended five times or more. Carers and children are provided with a safe, warm and fun place to relax and play, as well as free healthy snacks and hot drinks. Volunteers Lisa Richards, Leah Jones, Judy Carter, Harriet Peatman, Emma Metcalf, Ebony Collis and Julie Lowe helped run the group. Thanks to more volunteers, pressure has been reduced on paid staff - and continues to improve as more volunteers come on board.

We organised several special events to attract new people to the group during the year:

- In June we ran a crafting session all about 'mini beasts'
- In October, Rhiannon from Maverick Mums joined to inspire parents' sense of adventure
- ... and we ran a spooky halloween crafting morning!
- In December we hosted a festive Christmas party with gift bags for all children and a music session with Willow from Sing-a-ling.



Groups and activities

Baby Loss Support Group:

Our first Baby Loss Support Group was held in February 2024 at Frome Town Hall. This group offers in-person support for anyone who has experienced baby loss, whenever and however they experienced it.

"I think the group is lovely. And it's what I would have wanted for myself when I lost my baby through a medical termination 28 years ago. I spent so many years feeling alone with my loss, which I feel increased my difficulties in coming to terms with it and finding a healthy way forward. I was stuck for many years."

The group is facilitated by qualified practitioners with lived experience of loss, including our counsellor Melina Robinson.

In February 2025 we moved location to The Good Heart Cafe, which has excellent links with Frome Grief Network.



One of our aims for this year is to continue to build numbers for this group. We understand that this kind of group takes time to develop, and requires ongoing efforts to connect with relevant groups in our community.

Other activities & events

In July 2024, we took part in Frome's annual Children's Festival, organised by Purple Elephant. This is a free event for families and includes entertainment and activities for all ages. We provided a free 'Feed and Change' tent, allowing parents of small children a quiet space to tend to their children's needs. We provided snacks, nappies and toys.



A promotional poster for a 'find Live for Under 5s' event. The background is light blue with a faint image of children. The text reads: 'find Live for Under 5s', 'Do you have children under 5?', 'Drop in to this free live event to find out more about groups and services available to families in Frome.' Below the text is a list of services: 'Purple Elephant - Family Support', 'Health Visiting team', 'Young Somerset 0-5 team', 'Frome Birth Talk', 'Somerset Early Years Alliance', 'SS&L Early Years', 'Baby Link - Baby Connections', 'Good Heart - Tiny Hearts', and 'Public Health Nursing team'. There are three circular images: one of a baby in a green outfit, one of a child playing with a hammer, and one of a child being held.

In February 2025, we had a stall at the FIND LIVE for Under 5s event, hosted by Frome Town Council. This event brought together all Frome's offerings for families of young children, so people could find out about what's available to them in the area.

A THANK YOU

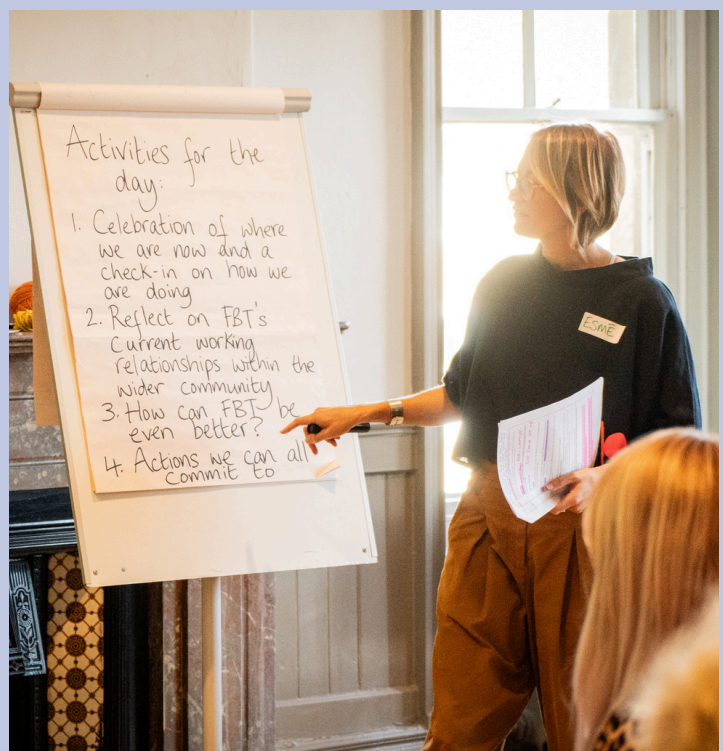
Huge thanks go to Made by Katie website design, who in January 2025 created a beautiful, functional website for us pro bono, and to Nick at Inkcap Design for our new logo and branding.

Other activities & events

In October 2024 we held our annual Community Day. The focus of this event was ‘how can our community support Frome Birth Talk?’ and saw staff, volunteers, service users, healthcare providers and enthusiastic supporters come together to develop ideas for the future of the charity.



Following this event, a WhatsApp group named ‘the Impact Collective’ was set up, which provides a space for FBT supporters to connect, and for the charity to send out ad-hoc requests for ‘micro volunteering.’ Much of the day’s discussion also informed our ongoing business plan.



Our people: staff

All our trustees, staff and volunteers have either used our services, have lived experience of post-natal depression or baby-loss or are active within the community of young families in Frome.

Director:

Suzy Cristinacce continues to lead the organisation as its Director, and is contracted to work 14 hours per week.

Counselling Coordinator:

Lucy Hill continued to co-ordinate our counselling service, as well as lead on marketing and communications output. She is contracted to work 8 hours per week.

Volunteer Co-ordinator:

This role was funded by grants from Frome Town Council and Somerset Community Foundation. Experienced Volunteer Co-ordinator, Becky Newton, began in this role in November 2023 alongside her Volunteer Co-ordinator role at Dorothy House hospice. This position is contracted for 7 hours per week.

It is worth noting that the salary and number of hours for all our employee roles are low given the amount of work and responsibility they involve. In order to ensure our organisation's long-term sustainability, we will continue to factor this in when creating our future fundraising strategies.

Our people: trustees

The voting members of the charity are the board of trustees, and their number must be no fewer than three and no more than twelve. The board seeks to meet the needs of Frome Birth Talk by recruiting and retaining trustees with relevant skills and expertise.

The trustees who served the whole period from 01.03.2024 to 29.02.2025 were:

- **Karen Patrick** (appointed 08.11.17): an experienced midwife, who brings clinical knowledge to the team. Karen completed a Masters by Research at the University of Southampton on the Continuity of Carer model being implemented across the UK following the government's 'Better Births' report in 2016. Karen has been our safeguarding lead throughout this period.
- **Jessica Taylor** (appointed 01.11.21): a local mother who is an experienced events co-ordinator and workplace mental health champion. Jess leads on fundraising events.
- **Annabel Litchfield** (appointed 09.09.22): a local mother who specialises in supporting charities of all sizes with their impact monitoring and evaluation. Annabel is leading on developing our monitoring and evaluation systems.
- **Rebecka Mau** (appointed 23.01.24) is a local mother with experience of event management and serving on charity trustee boards. She also provided cover for our Counselling Co-ordinator role in this period, so has an in-depth knowledge of the organisation.

Our people: new trustees

The trustees who joined part way through this period were:

- **Laura Alexander** (appointed 17.04.24): a local mother who works for a large local charity in a Commercial Director role.
- **Aaron Calver** (appointed 17.04.24): a local father, accountant and trainee counsellor. Aaron is our treasurer.

Trustees who now sit on the board but who joined after 28.02.2025 are:

- **Holly Brown** (appointed 08.05.2025): a local mother who has extensive experience in HR and policy
- **Gail Norris** (appointed 02.07.2025): a local mother with experience in health care, charity settings and volunteer management.
- **Annette Schwalbe** (appointed 02.07.2025): a local mother and somatic & creative arts psychotherapist with 25 years of experience in private practice and various charity settings

Trustee resignations

- **Hayley Clements** (resigned 18.04.24)
- **Kathryn Riddick** (resigned 23.10.24)
- **Jaime Swift** (resigned 23.10.24)
- **Hanna Fisher** (resigned 23.10.24)



Thank you to all retiring trustees!

Trustee payments

Rebecka Mau continued to do occasional paid work providing cover for our Counselling Co-ordinator role.

The trustees are satisfied that this is for the benefit of the charity as she was recruited in an open and fair manner before becoming a trustee. Rebecka does not contribute to discussion where there would be a conflict of interest e.g. discussion of staff pay.

In 2025, Jess Scott joined as a volunteer minute-taker for the board. She has now taken on the role of covering the Counselling Co-ordinator position where needed.

Hanna Fisher was paid a small one-off fee for creating and delivering an organisational development day in April 2024.

The trustees were satisfied that this was for the benefit of the charity as the fee was a fraction of the usual fees charged by someone with Hanna's qualifications and experience, and Frome Birth Talk would not have been able to afford such an intervention otherwise.

“Becoming a parent, whether it’s for the first time or not, can be so exhausting and so overwhelming. I have two boys, and when they were tiny I really benefitted from Frome Birth Talk’s free groups. I’m now a volunteer trustee for the charity!”

Our people: counsellors

In 2024 we welcomed new student counsellors Kadie Schofield and Esmeralda Vere. Lynne Gregory continued to work towards qualification in July 2025.

In the summer of 2024 students Lisa Beattie, Melina Robinson and Lucy Edwards qualified, with Lisa and Melina both returning in 2025 as paid counsellors. In October 2024 volunteer counsellor Sue Pollock stepped down due to family commitments.

Our qualified counsellors were: Helen Enright, Jane Henderson, Tracy Creed, Amanda Falconer and Kat Cross.

At the end of February 2025 we had nine counsellors providing 14 in-person and 14 remote sessions per week (28 sessions per week in total).

Providing opportunities to trainee counsellors

Counselling students must complete initial training before seeing clients, then accrue clinical hours for full professional registration. By using trainee counsellors, we can significantly increase the number of sessions on offer, for the cost of professional supervision and mileage costs.

Working with student counsellors also helps us build a team of qualified counsellors who know our organisation ready for increased demand.

Safeguarding

All staff, counsellors, trainee counsellors and volunteers have DBS checks, renewable every three years, organised and paid for by the charity. Safeguarding training has been provided for staff, counsellors, volunteers and trustees and will be repeated every year.

Our safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy is reviewed and ratified annually. Our DSL for this period was Karen Patrick. Our safeguarding reporting procedure was updated in 2024: all concerns, no matter how minor, are reported via a securely-stored Microsoft Form and reviewed by the DSL. Using this form means all incidents - from minor welfare concerns to larger safeguarding referrals are safely recorded and securely stored, enabling our team to build a reliable and accurate picture of safeguarding concerns.

Our finances

Financial sustainability

FBT has been sustained largely by grant funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund and other organisations during this financial period. Our National Lottery grant ended in April 2025.

Our income during this financial period was £53,172 and our expenditure was £60,678. We aim to hold sufficient unrestricted reserves for three months' expenditure, which is currently £15,169.

We currently have £16,835 in unrestricted reserves.

Our finances

Grants

In 2024, we secured the following grants and large donations, totalling £42,264:

- £23,014 from the National Lottery Community Fund
- £10,000 from the Friends of Frome Hospital
- £8,250 from Somerset Community Foundation for additional counselling
- £1,000 from Frome Carnival

Community fundraising

In 2024, we received £10,908 through community fundraising. Some notable events from this period included:

- Local author Libby Page raised money at her book launch
- Grateful grandfather Gary Strangwood, whose daughter used our counselling service, ran the Brighton Marathon
- Local nurseries, Bright Stars & Rainbow, held bake sales
- A local winning pub quiz team donated their yearly prize pot



Community fundraising

- Trustee Jess hosted a 'Mini Yoga Retreat'
- A face painting duo raised money at Frome Town Council's 50th Anniversary event
- A local tarot reader hosted a fundraiser for us
- As part of the Big Give week (where funds were matched and essentially doubled) we held a festive Christmas movie night for families, featuring a screening of The Muppet Christmas Carol and a tuck shop
- Frome Birth Talk was one of Frome's local Co-Op 'chosen causes', meaning shoppers who chose us and scanned their membership cards added to a community cash pot, without spending any extra pennies!



Our governance and organisational management

Frome Birth Talk (FBT) is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) established on 8th November 2017. The charity is governed by its CIO constitution.

The board of trustees met six times during the year ending 28th February 2025. Frome Birth Talk is not currently an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) but chooses to follow its Ethical Framework for Counselling and Psychotherapy guidelines, in line with our self-employed counsellors' practice and that of the Bath College of Psychotherapy and Counselling (BCPC), for whom we are an agency for trainee counsellors on placement.

Public benefit

The board of trustees confirm they have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and have complied with their duty under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives; and in implementing current and planning future activities.

The Charities Act 2011 sets out 13 different aims which are recognised as charitable purposes, and Frome Birth Talk fits within the aim of **the relief of sickness and preservation of health**. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and continue to be committed to providing all our services free of charge, although donations are welcomed.

Risk Management

Effective risk management is crucial for ensuring the ongoing success and stability of our charity. We have identified two primary risks that require continuous attention and proactive management:

1. Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Maintaining long-term financial sustainability is essential for our charity to continue providing valuable services and support to our beneficiaries. To address this risk, we are implementing several strategies:

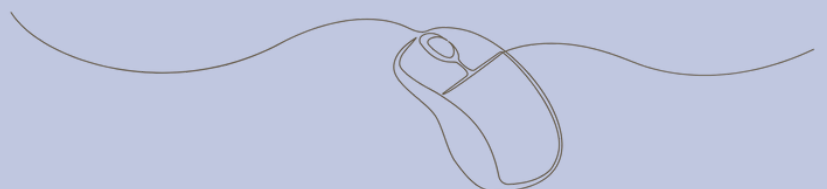
- **Diversified Funding Sources:** We are continuing to expand our funding sources to include grants, donations, corporate partnerships, and fundraising events to reduce dependency on any single revenue stream.
- **Financial Planning and Budgeting:** Rigorous financial planning and budgeting processes are being put in place to ensure funds are allocated effectively and efficiently, with regular reviews to monitor progress and make necessary adjustments.
- **Reserves Policy:** We maintain an adequate level of financial reserves to provide a buffer against unforeseen financial challenges, ensuring we can sustain our operations in times of uncertainty.

2. Loss of Key Staff/Trustees

The dedication and expertise of our staff and trustees are integral to our charity's success. To mitigate the risk associated with the loss of key personnel, we have established the following measures:

- **Succession Planning:** We are developing a comprehensive succession plan to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of leadership and critical roles within the organisation.
- **Professional Development:** we are enhancing our continuous professional development opportunities provided to staff and trustees to enhance their skills and capabilities, promoting job satisfaction and retention.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** We are actively cultivating a strong network of volunteers who can provide support and potentially step into key roles as needed.

By implementing these risk management strategies, we are committed to safeguarding the future of our charity and continuing to fulfill our mission effectively.



**Thank you for taking the time to read
this report.**

**The next year will be pivotal for Frome
Birth Talk as we continue to meet
growing demand and strive towards
sustainability.**

**Please do get in touch if you would like
to discuss any aspect of our work!**



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Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/03/2024	To	28/02/2025
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds National Lottery Community Fund - RC South West Region	Restricted funds Frome Town Council	Restricted funds Somerset Community Foundation	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts							
Grants	10,000	23,014	-	8,250	-	41,264	54,488
Donations	6,928	-	-	-	-	6,928	3,703
Fundraising	4,980	-	-	-	-	4,980	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	21,908	23,014	-	8,250	-	53,172	58,191
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).							
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	21,908	23,014	-	8,250	-	53,172	58,191
A3 Payments							
Counsellor Fees	12,748	7,502				20,250	20,918
Bank fees	15					15	-
Student Supervision	-	2,091				2,091	2,622
Software, Admin, Welfare and Consumables	1,072			250		1,322	604
Salaries and Pension	5,893	15,000	1,440	5,062		27,395	19,961
Printing, Post and Marketing	-	454	200			654	327
Mileage and Travel	-	782	120			902	1,446
Training and consultancy	-	80	1,080			1,160	1,635
Subscriptions	473					473	215
Activities	-			1,271		1,271	557
Mobile Phone	204					204	91
Insurance	-	391				391	352
Room Rental and Storage	1,735		1,080			2,815	4,413
Cost of Fundraising and facilitators	1,445		160			1,605	50
DBS Checks	130					130	259
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	23,715	26,300	4,080	6,583	-	60,678	53,451
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)							
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	23,715	26,300	4,080	6,583	-	60,678	53,451
Net of receipts/(payments)	(1,807)	(3,286)	(4,080)	1,667	-	(7,506)	4,739
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	18,642	3,286	4,080	-	-	26,008	21,269
Cash funds this year end	16,835	-	-	1,667	-	18,502	26,008

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Unrestricted Funds	16,835		-
	Somerset Community Foundation		1,667	-
				-
	Total cash funds	16,835	1,667	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

OK OK OK

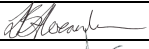

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Computer equipment	Unrestricted	-	400
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Laura Alexander	16/12/2025
	Aaron Calver	16/12/2025



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name
Frome Birth Talk

On accounts for the year ended

28/2/25

**Charity no
(if any)**

1175641

Set out on pages

18-19

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I 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 accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed: 

Date: 14/12/25

Name: Caroline Bee

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

FCA

Address: 11 Cuckoo Walk

Trowbridge

BA147GG

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

None

FROME BIRTH TALK

England & Wales - Charity number 1175641

Accounts

Annual report & accounts



The Board of Trustees present their annual report and
accounts for the year
28/02/2023 to 29/02/2024

info@fromebirthtalk.org.uk
07399 356863
www.fromebirthtalk.org.uk

Welcome!

2023-2024 was yet another year of growth for Frome Birth Talk.

Demand for our services grew again, we raised an extra £37,000 on top of our National Lottery grant, and we had a couple of key staff changes.

We also started preparing and planning for when our National Lottery grant ends in 2025.

There is a lot more work left to do, but we are feeling optimistic and excited about the next stage of our development!



Jess Taylor
Chair of Trustees



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Table of contents

Aims, objective and activities	3	Safeguarding	17
What our service users say	4	Our finances	17-18
Our impact	5-7	Community fundraising	19-20
Groups and activities	8-10	Other highlights	21
Our people:		Our governance and organisational management	22
Staff	11-12	Public benefit	22
Trustees	12-15	Risk management	23-24
Counsellors	16	Our future:	
Providing opportunities to trainee counsellors	16	Vision, Mission & Goals	25
		Strategic aims	26

Aims, objective and activities

The objective of Frome Birth Talk is for the public benefit by the relief of sickness and the preservation of health of pregnant women and new parents in Frome and the surrounding area by the provision of a free counselling service and wellbeing events and activities.

In October 2023 a group of volunteers, staff, trustees and service users created our Vision, Mission and Goals for 2024-2027. Information about this can be found in the Our Future section on page 25 of this report.

What our service users say

We invite everyone who use our services to give qualitative feedback. Please see below for just some of the responses:

“I never knew that I could talk about how I felt and not feel judged or scared to open up. My **counsellor was just incredible** and helped me to understand my feelings and how there were all valid! I now miss being able to freely talk to someone in that **safe space** that she created.”



“It was a really positive experience for me. **I would not have been able to access otherwise** and am incredibly grateful for it.”

“After talking to someone, I felt my worries were heard and that my experiences were valid. I **have felt less overwhelmed and anxious** since completing the counselling too.”

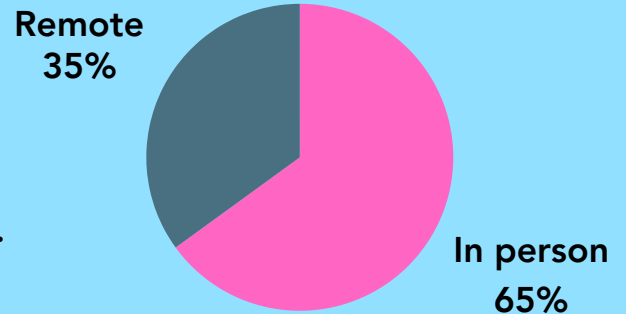
“I am so happy Frome Birth Talk exists! Without it, I would have felt very lonely at a very difficult time. **The service is excellent and invaluable.**”

“You got me through the toughest stage of my life yet and helped me to get through the other side. I think **had I not had the chance to speak** and be listened to, we would have been in a **very different situation**. My counsellor was just incredible, and I couldn't rate her highly enough! Thank you so much!”

Our impact: Counselling

We continued this year with a mixture of face-to-face and remote counselling, with an approximate percentage split of 65% in-person to 35% remote.

The number of new referrals we received was 116, with 26 referrals from returning clients – 142 in total.



142

Referrals

Throughout the year, we were in a financial position to add extra sessions in order to keep up with demand. Certain regular slots alternated between remote and in-person, usually based on client needs.

Towards the end of 2023 and into early 2024, we implemented a new registration process which will allow us to securely process and store new clients' information.

Clients now fill out a Microsoft Form when registering with Frome Birth Talk, which has streamlined the referral process and means counsellors no longer need to take paper notes.

This will allow us to see at a glance exactly how many referrals we have received, as well as analyse this information to understand our clients' circumstances better.

Our impact: Counselling

We request feedback from counselling clients via an online questionnaire at the end of their sessions.

Throughout this year:



100% said the counselling **made a difference** to their lives



97.5% of clients told us they were **'very satisfied'** with the service they received



82% say they feel **less anxious** since having counselling with Frome Birth Talk



60% say they feel they are now able to be **more open about their feelings**



54% say they feel **hopeful about the future** thanks to counselling

"I was in a very difficult place in my life, dealing with a lot of stress from many different areas and my counselling sessions helped me cope and have a **more positive and optimistic mindset.**"

Our impact: Counselling

To measure the impact of our counselling service, we use a clinically validated evaluation tool, Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE). Not only does this provide us with useful data about percentage improvements in client wellbeing, it also helps us practice safely and can help our counsellors recognise where there is a risk of harm and the need to involve other health professionals.

Improving the way in which we collect and analyse our CORE data has been a key strategic aim for us this year. In late 2023 we developed a new data input process for the CORE scores, which was implemented from the 1st January 2024.

Counsellors now input CORE data from both the start and end of their client's counselling block into a Microsoft Form, which is securely saved within the Frome Birth Talk server. This now means all CORE data input is uniform no matter which counsellor the client saw, and the scores can be more easily analysed to look for trends, patterns and improvements.

We have 97 complete sets of CORE scores for people who used our counselling during 2023-24. Despite not using our new and improved data collection system until January 2024, all of these scores show some improvement following the last session, some by a very significant amount.

We are excited by the prospect of using more detailed CORE data in the future.

Groups and activities

Bump to Baby Group:

Our group for pregnant women and new parents continued to run on Wednesday mornings at Frome Community Hospital for the whole of 2023-24, with approx. 4-10 families attending each time. Our regular volunteer and retired midwife Sarah Hartley continued to facilitate the group. She was joined by Margaret Graham, a retired counsellor, in March 2023, then Dinah Smith in February 2024. They take turns running the group, with staff stepping in when they are away.



The group continues to be well attended, with parents reporting that it is a friendly and welcoming place to go. We organised several special events at the group throughout the year:

- In March and October, we hosted more “Let’s Talk About Birth” sharing circles, led by an experienced midwife who runs the Birth Reflections service at Bath RUH.
- In May, Kizzy from Babywearing Southwest led a demonstration of various sling and carrier options and answered questions from new and expectant parents.
- In August, we hosted a “Maternal Journal” session, led by a local birth practitioner. Maternal Journal is a creative way for new parents to explore and document their experiences of becoming parents and feedback from the session was very positive.
- In January, Veronica from Restack Pilates ran a Pilates session. Most of the mums present took part while our volunteers kept an eye on their babies.

Groups and activities

Toddler Group:

Our Friday morning toddler group continued to run at Trinity Church Hall throughout 2023 with approximately 5-10 families attending each time, sometimes up to 20. Parents and children are provided with a safe, warm and fun place to relax and play, as well as free healthy snacks and hot drinks.

Volunteers Leah Jones and Helen Curry continued to support the group and were joined towards the end of the year by Lisa Richards and Emma Metcalf. We are recruiting more volunteers to facilitate the group, as this will relieve pressure on paid staff.

We organised several special events to attract new people to the group during the year:

- Mojo Moves, feel-good comedy aerobics did an Easter-themed session for us.
- Sing-a-ling did an Autumn-themed music session.
- Tales for Talking provided a Christmas-themed activity session.



Groups and activities

Feedback from people who came to the group continued to be positive, but one of our priorities for this year is to attract more families to this Friday session.

During 2023-24 the toddler group was attended by 105 different families. Of those who attended, nine attended five times or more (including two who attended over 20 times). We continue to receive positive feedback:

“Frome Birth Talk toddlers' group is one of the most **warm, welcoming groups** I have been to. Everyone is super friendly, and my children both really enjoy coming here.”

Childrens' Festival & Cheese Show:

For the third year running we provided parent and baby spaces at Frome's annual Children's Festival and Cheese Show. These were safe spaces where parents could feed their children, enjoy a snack themselves or allow overwhelmed toddlers to meltdown in peace. The Cheese Show was held on the 9th September, the hottest day of the year, so we helped overheated families by providing shade and handing out lots of cold drinks and ice-cubes! Thank you to volunteers from Baby Connections for helping out in the space.



Our people: staff

All our trustees, staff and volunteers have either used our services, have lived experience of post-natal depression or baby-loss or are active within the community of young families in Frome.

Staff:

Suzy Cristinacce was contracted to work 10 hours a week for Frome Birth Talk until June 2023, when, thanks to the support of the National Lottery, we were able to secure extra cost-of-living funds to increase her hours to 14 per week. These hours were needed due to the increased demand for Suzy's time during this period of growth for Frome Birth Talk.

Administrator/Counselling Coordinator:

Lucy Hill continued to co-ordinate our counselling service until April 2023, when she went on maternity leave. Her role was covered by Rebecka Mau, who had been shortlisted and interviewed during a previous recruitment process. Again, from June, extra cost-of-living funding from the National Lottery was used to increase her hours from 5 to 8. Despite this, we still needed to pay Rebecka for extra hours every month. Lucy Hill returned at the end of December.

Volunteer Coordinator:

This role was funded by grants from Frome Town Council and Somerset Community Foundation. Alice Caudle continued working 7 hours per week in this role until mid-September, when she left for a job that offered more hours.

Our people: staff

This role was left vacant until the beginning of November, when our new Volunteer Co-ordinator, Becky Newton, took over the role. Becky is also a Volunteer Co-ordinator for Dorothy House hospice.

It is worth noting that the salary and number of hours for all our employee roles are low given the amount of work and responsibility they involve. In order to ensure our organisation's long-term sustainability, we will factor this in when creating our future fundraising strategies.

Our people: trustees

The voting members of the charity are the board of trustees, and their number must be no fewer than three and no more than twelve. The board seeks to meet the needs of Frome Birth Talk by recruiting and retaining trustees with relevant skills and expertise.

The trustees who served the whole period from 01/03/2023 to 29/02/2024 were:

- **Karen Patrick** (appointed 08.11.17): an experienced midwife, who brings clinical knowledge to the team and recently completed a Masters by Research at the University of Southampton on the Continuity of Carer model being implemented across the UK following the government's 'Better Births' report in 2016. Karen is our safeguarding lead.

Our people: trustees

- **Jessica Taylor** (appointed 01.11.21): a local mother who is an experienced events co-ordinator and workplace mental health champion. Jess leads on our fundraising events.
- **Kathryn Riddick** (appointed 13.01.22): a local mother who works as a nurse. She was one of the first parents to attend our Bump to Baby group and leads on community liaison.
- **Jaime Swift** (appointed 04.02.22): a local mother who is currently training to become midwife. Jaime was also one of the first parents to attend our Bump to Baby group and assists with community liaison alongside Kathryn.
- **Hayley Clement** (appointed 01.11.21): a local mother and midwife, who works at Frome Birth Centre. Hayley is our treasurer.
- **Hanna Fisher** (appointed 21.10.22): a local mother and experienced psychotherapist. Hanna assists us with clinical advice and expertise.
- **Annabel Litchfield** (appointed 09.09.22): a local mother who specialises in supporting charities of all sizes with their impact monitoring and evaluation. Annabel is leading on developing our monitoring and evaluation systems.

New trustee appointments

- **Rebecka Mau** (appointed 23.01.24) is a local mother with experience of event management and serving on charity trustee boards. She also provides cover for our Counselling Co-ordinator role, so has an in-depth knowledge of the organisation.
- **Laura Alexander** (appointed 17.04.24): a local mother who works for a large local charity in a Commercial Director role.
- **Aaron Calver** (appointed 17.04.24): a local father-to-be, accountant and trainee counsellor. Aaron is our treasurer.

Trustee resignations

- **Jessica Cornwell** (resigned 18.11.23)
- **Fiona Willis** (resigned 16.01.24)
- **Hayley Clements** (resigned 18.04.24)



Thank you to all retiring trustees!

Fiona was one of Frome Birth Talk's founding trustees and served for over seven years. She continues to work as a volunteer assisting with our social media and website.

Trustee payments

Rebecka Mau continues to do occasional paid work providing cover for our Counselling Co-ordinator role.

The trustees are satisfied that this is for the benefit of the charity as she was recruited in an open and fair manner before becoming a trustee and training someone else to take up this role would take more time and resources away from the organisation.

Rebecka does not contribute to discussion where there would be a conflict of interest e.g. discussion of staff pay.

Hanna Fisher was paid a small one-off fee for creating and delivering an organisational development day in April 2024.

The trustees were satisfied that this was for the benefit of the charity as the fee was a fraction of the usual fees charged by someone with Hanna's qualifications and experience, and Frome Birth Talk would not have been able to afford such an intervention otherwise.

“Becoming a parent, whether it’s for the first time or not, can be so exhausting and so overwhelming. I have two boys, and when they were tiny I really benefitted from Frome Birth Talk’s free groups. I’m now a volunteer trustee for the charity!” - Jess

Our people: counsellors

In 2023 we welcomed new student counsellor Lynne Gregory. Our counsellor Kat Cross (previously a student, then a volunteer counsellor) has now joined us as an ad-hoc paid counsellor for when demand peaks. We were also joined this year by experienced volunteer counsellor Sue Pollock. This is in addition to our existing qualified counsellors (Helen Enright, Jane Henderson, Tracy Creed and Amanda Falconer) and trainee counsellors (Melina Robinson, Lisa Beattie and Lucy Edwards).

This means at the end of February 2024 we had 10 counsellors providing 16 in-person and 12 remote sessions per week (28 sessions per week in total).

Providing opportunities to trainee counsellors

We now have four counsellors in training working for Frome Birth Talk. Counselling students must complete initial training before seeing clients, then accrue clinical hours for full professional registration. By using trainee counsellors, we can significantly increase the number of sessions we can offer, for the cost of professional supervision (provided in-house by our qualified counsellors) and mileage/travel costs.

Working with student counsellors also helps us build a team of qualified counsellors who know our organisation ready for increased demand.

Safeguarding

All staff, counsellors, trainee counsellors and volunteers have DBS checks, renewable every three years, organised and paid for by the charity. Safeguarding training has been provided for staff, counsellors and trustees and will be repeated every year.

We have a safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy which is reviewed and ratified annually. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Karen Patrick. Our safeguarding procedure is backed up by a 'due diligence' process where any concerns not necessitating a full escalation are discussed with the DSL, recorded and stored in a password-protected folder.

Our finances

Financial sustainability

FBT has been sustained largely by grant funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund and other organisations during this financial period. Our National Lottery grant covers our core costs and will last for another year.

Our income during this financial period was £58,191 and our expenditure was £53,541. We aim to hold sufficient unrestricted reserves for three months' expenditure, which is currently £13,385. We currently have £18,643 in unrestricted reserves.

Our finances

We consider Frome Birth Talk a going concern for the next twelve months because we will continue to receive core funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and fundraise before undertaking any additional activities not covered by this grant.

Grants

In 2023, we secured the following grants and large donations, totalling approximately £52,000:

- £21,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund
- £10,000 from the Friends of Frome Hospital
- £9,000 from the People's Postcode Lottery
- £5,000 from Somerset Community Foundation for additional counselling
- £3,000 from three different branches of Frome's Rotary Club
- £2,988 from Frome Town Council towards the cost of the Toddler group hall hire
- £1,000 from the Charities Benevolent Fund

"I found it incredibly helpful to have a space to process my birth and long-lasting physical impacts. And it was **"guilt free"** for me in the sense of being free for me and possible for my baby to be in the sessions too - at a time when she was too young for childcare and **cash was tight for us."**

Community fundraising

Easter Egg Hunt:

This year we trialled an Egg Hunt over the two-week Easter holidays. This involved families donating a suggested amount of £5 for a clue sheet, which led them to different businesses in and around the town centre, who were displaying a hand-made cardboard Easter egg in their window. Once families had found all the clues, they could take their sheet back to the Discover Frome office for a small prize, such as chocolate or craft materials.



Feedback from families was very positive and the 10 businesses were very happy to participate, as they saw the benefits of bringing more visitors into the town centre.

THANK YOU ALICE!

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR NEW ADVENTURES!

Alice walked a million steps from June - September this year and raised £200 for Frome Birth Talk. This will help fund our free counselling service for new and pregnant parents and for those who have experienced baby loss.

We're sad to see her go, but wish her the best of luck for the future!

<https://localgiving.org/fundraising/birth-talk-steps/>

Alice's Steps challenge

Our Volunteer Co-ordinator Alice walked a million steps from June to September to raise money for us. She managed to complete the challenge just before leaving for her new job. She reported that it was fun and helped improve her wellbeing in many ways!

Community fundraising



Adam's Snowden challenge
For the second year running, local dad Adam Way undertook the Snowden challenge for Frome Birth Talk.

This year, he managed an incredible five ascents in 24 hours and raised £191!

Vicky's Yoga fundraiser

In September, yoga teacher Vicky Hall organised a family fundraiser event for Frome Birth, after benefitting from our services.

This involved a couple of family-friendly yoga classes and a raffle with some wonderful prizes. Altogether Vicky raised over £500 for us.



Other highlights

Make a Difference Awards

We were delighted to be shortlisted for BBC Somerset's Make a Difference Awards, Community Group Award this year. The award ceremony at Haynes Motor Museum was hosted by BBC Points West's Alex Lovell and BBC Radio Somerset Breakfast Show presenter Charlie Taylor. The aim of the awards is to shine a light on the everyday, unsung heroes who go that extra mile for others in their own community. As part of the process, Suzy was interviewed by Vernon from BBC Somerset. The interview can be heard here: <https://on.soundcloud.com/gtzds>

Frome Carnival

Staff, trustees and volunteers had great fun supporting midwives from Frome Birth Centre at the Frome Carnival in September. The theme was "Call the Midwife" so everyone dressed up in vintage outfits and danced along to old-fashioned tunes. It was lovely to be cheered on by so many familiar faces in the crowd and to promote our brilliant local birth centre! The event also raised £1,000 for Frome Birth Talk.



Our governance and organisational management

Frome Birth Talk (FBT) is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) established on 8th November 2017. The charity is governed by its CIO constitution.

The board of trustees met six times during the year ending 29th February 2024. Frome Birth Talk is not currently an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) but chooses to follow its Ethical Framework for Counselling and Psychotherapy guidelines, in line with our self-employed counsellors' practice and that of the Bath College of Psychotherapy and Counselling (BCPC), for whom we are an agency for trainee counsellors on placement.

Public benefit

The board of trustees confirm they have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and have complied with their duty under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives; and in implementing current and planning future activities.

The Charities Act 2011 sets out 13 different aims which are recognised as charitable purposes, and Frome Birth Talk fits within the aim of **the relief of sickness and preservation of health**. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and continue to be committed to providing all our services free of charge, although donations are welcomed.

Risk Management

Effective risk management is crucial for ensuring the ongoing success and stability of our charity. We have identified two primary risks that require continuous attention and proactive management:

1. Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Maintaining long-term financial sustainability is essential for our charity to continue providing valuable services and support to our beneficiaries. To address this risk, we are implementing several strategies:

- **Diversified Funding Sources:** We are continuing to expand our funding sources to include grants, donations, corporate partnerships, and fundraising events to reduce dependency on any single revenue stream.
- **Financial Planning and Budgeting:** Rigorous financial planning and budgeting processes are being put in place to ensure funds are allocated effectively and efficiently, with regular reviews to monitor progress and make necessary adjustments.
- **Reserves Policy:** We maintain an adequate level of financial reserves to provide a buffer against unforeseen financial challenges, ensuring we can sustain our operations in times of uncertainty.

Risk Management

2. Loss of Key Staff/Trustees

The dedication and expertise of our staff and trustees are integral to our charity's success. To mitigate the risk associated with the loss of key personnel, we have established the following measures:

- **Succession Planning:** We are developing a comprehensive succession plan to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of leadership and critical roles within the organisation.
- **Professional Development:** we are enhancing our continuous professional development opportunities provided to staff and trustees to enhance their skills and capabilities, promoting job satisfaction and retention.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** We are actively cultivating a strong network of volunteers who can provide support and potentially step into key roles as needed.

By implementing these risk management strategies, we are committed to safeguarding the future of our charity and continuing to fulfill our mission effectively.

Our future: Vision, Mission & Goals

In October 2023 a group of volunteers, staff, trustees and service users created our Vision, Mission and Goals for 2024-2027:

Vision



Our vision is better mental health for everyone throughout pregnancy, birth and early parenthood

Mission



Our mission is to provide free therapeutic support for people living in the Frome area who are pregnant or have recently had or lost a baby



Values: We are

Respectful: we treat everyone with respect and dignity

Sustainable: we work in ways that are sustainable for individuals, our organisation, our community, and our planet

Connected: we remain rooted in our community whilst reaching out to individuals, organisations, and communities who share our passion

Safe: we create safe spaces, where everyone is protected from harm and enabled to thrive

Courageous: we honour the courage of people who reach out for help, and we are never afraid of rising to new challenges

Our strategic aims 2024-2027

Continually strengthen our foundations:

- Improve our governance, policies, and procedures.
- Support and develop the potential of our trustees, staff, counsellors, and volunteers
- Secure long-term funding

Continue to make a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing:

- Ensure the counselling service is responsive and effective.
- Continue the bump to baby and toddler groups and start a baby loss group
- Develop our monitoring and evaluation systems

Work collaboratively with organisations and individuals who share our values:

- Continue to build on established relationships within our community
- Develop a community engagement strategy

Be inclusive and accessible:

- Continue to support people of all genders
- Develop communications to ensure we reach all parts of our community
- Provide training for trustees, volunteers, counsellors, and staff to ensure our work is inclusive

Strengthen our communications:

- Develop a strategy for improving communications both internally and externally. This will include the use of IT systems, social media, website, press and newsletters etc

**Thank you for taking the time to read
this report.**

**The next year will be pivotal for Frome
Birth Talk as we continue to meet
growing demand and strive towards
sustainability.**

**Please do get in touch if you would like
to discuss any aspect of our work!**



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Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/03/2023	To	29/02/2024
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds National Lottery Community Fund - RC South West Region	Restricted funds Frome Town Council	Restricted funds Somerset Community Foundation	Restricted funds LHC South West Community Benefit Fund	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts								
Grants	22,500	21,000	5,988	5,000	-	-	54,488	27,875
Donations	3,703	-	-	-	-	-	3,703	7,812
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	567
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	26,203	21,000	5,988	5,000	-	-	58,191	36,254
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).								
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	26,203	21,000	5,988	5,000	-	-	58,191	36,254
A3 Payments								
Counsellor Fees	11,426	3,892	-	5,000	600	-	20,918	12,713
Student Supervision	-	2,622	-	-	-	-	2,622	2,240
Computer, Software, Admin and Consumables	604	-	-	-	-	-	604	453
Salaries	2,000	14,011	2,939	1,011	-	-	19,961	11,701
Printing & Marketing	-	327	-	-	-	-	327	472
Mileage and Travel	-	1,446	-	-	-	-	1,446	599
Training	-	1,635	-	-	-	-	1,635	2,097
Subscriptions	215	-	-	-	-	-	215	158
Activities	557	-	-	-	-	-	557	798
Mobile Phone	91	-	-	-	-	-	91	122
Insurance	-	352	-	-	-	-	352	351
Room Rental and Storage	2,493	-	1,920	-	-	-	4,413	4,003
Cost of Fundraising	50	-	-	-	-	-	50	495
DBS Checks	-	-	259	-	-	-	259	444
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	17,437	24,286	5,118	6,011	600	-	53,451	36,646
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)								
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	17,437	24,286	5,118	6,011	600	-	53,451	36,646
Net of receipts/(payments)	8,766	- 3,286	870	- 1,011	- 600	-	4,739	- 392
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	9,877	6,571	3,210	1,011	600	-	21,269	21,661
Cash funds this year end	18,643	3,286	4,080	-	-	-	26,008	21,269

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Unrestricted Funds	18,643	-	-
	National Lottery	-	3,286	-
	Frome Town Council	-	4,080	-
	Total cash funds	18,643	7,366	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

OK OK OK



Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Computer equipment	Unrestricted	-	400
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Jess Taylor	16/08/2024
	Aaron Calver	16/08/2024



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Frome Birth Talk

**On accounts for the year
ended**

29 February 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1175641

Set out on pages

1-2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **29 / 02 / 2024**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

28/8/2024

Name:

Caroline Bee

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (FCA)

Address:

11 Cuckoo Walk

Trowbridge

Wiltshire BA147GG

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

None

FROM BIRTH TALK

England & Wales - Charity number 1175641

Accounts

Annual report & accounts



The Board of Trustees present their annual report and
accounts for the year
01/03/2022 to 28/02/2023

info@fromebirthtalk.org.uk
07399 356863
www.fromebirthtalk.org.uk

Welcome!

Welcome to our annual report and accounts for the year 2022-23. We are Frome Birth Talk: supporting, connecting, listening.

We have had another busy year! We continue to expand, with ever-increasing demand for our services, another new staff member and three new trustees. We have also been refining our internal systems whilst continuing to build on the support we have from our community.

As ever, there is a lot more we would like to achieve, but our focus for the coming year will be fundraising. Our five-year (2020-2025) National Lottery grant has given Frome Birth Talk vital breathing space to establish itself more securely, but we are now beginning to outgrow the grant.

We are confident, however, that there are many untapped sources of funding out there and that we will secure everything we need to maintain our current level of service and more.



Karen Patrick
Chair of Trustees



Table of contents

Aims, objective and activities	3	Providing opportunities to trainee counsellors	11
What our service users say	4	Safeguarding	12
Our impact	5	Our finances	12-13
Groups and activities	6-8	Community fundraising	13-14
Our people:		Our governance and organisational management	15
Staff	9	Public benefit	15
Trustees	9-10	Our future	16
Counsellors	11		
Volunteers	11		

Aims, objective and activities

Frome Birth Talk exists to support birthing parents of all ages and circumstances to make the transition to parenthood confidently and positively, raising awareness of and combating the stigma associated with anxiety, low mood and mental ill health in the perinatal period.

The objective of the charity is for the public benefit by the relief of sickness and the preservation of health of pregnant women and new parents in Frome and the surrounding area by the provision of a free counselling service and wellbeing events and activities.

What our service users say

We invite everyone who use our services to give qualitative feedback. Please see below for just some of the responses:

“It was extremely beneficial to talk not only without judgement but **feeling like someone was completely on my side.** It helped me to be kinder to myself.”



“It was a really **positive experience.** I would not have been able to access counselling otherwise and am incredibly grateful for it.”

“It helped me to get through my second daughter’s delivery after having **PTSD** from my first daughter’s delivery.”

“It has helped me on my journey since losing my baby, and I can’t **thank you all** enough for this amazing service.”

“I am extremely grateful to have benefitted from this exceptional service. I was lucky enough to have Lisa as my counsellor, and she immediately made me feel **completely comfortable.** I very much looked forward to seeing her each week and was a little tearful when our sessions came to an end.”

Our impact: Counselling

This year we received 134 referrals. We continued with a mixture of face-to-face and remote counselling, with a rough percentage split of 60% in-person to 40% remote.

Throughout the year, we were in a financial position to add extra sessions in order to keep up with demand. Certain regular slots alternated between remote and in-person, usually based on client needs.



134
Referrals

We constantly monitor the effectiveness of all our services, requesting feedback from counselling clients via an online questionnaire. The responses we get provide us with vital information about the aspects of our services that work and any gaps in provision, as well as serving to raise awareness and uptake.

In order to further measure the impact of our counselling service, we use a clinically validated evaluation tool, **Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE)**. Not only does this provide us with useful data about percentage improvements in client wellbeing, it also helps us practise safely and can help our counsellors recognise where there is a risk of harm and the need to involve other health professionals.

All our evaluations show some improvement following the last session, some by a very significant amount. Making improvements in the way we collect and analyse such data is one of our aims for the coming year.

Groups and activities

Bump to Baby Group:

Our group for pregnant women and new parents continued to run on Wednesday mornings at Frome Community Hospital for most of 2022-23, with 5-10 parents attending each time.

Having visitors from local organisations really helped attract new people. For example, we held a baby-wearing workshop, singing session and a Sing and Sign session.

We also trialled a “Let’s Talk About Birth” sharing circle led by an experienced midwife who runs the Birth Reflections service at Bath RUH. Participants told us this felt like a safe and helpful way of talking about their birthing experiences, so we plan to organise further sessions in 2023.



WhatsApp Groups:

Our ‘FBT Mamas’ group on WhatsApp has naturally evolved to become two new groups: **FBT Toddlers** and **FBT Mamas 2022**.

Although not as busy as 2021-22, when COVID restrictions were still in place, these continued to be used throughout 2022-23 with members adding new people all the time. They are still warm, respectful, and supportive spaces with approximately 75 members, who also help signpost to the counselling service.

Groups and activities contd.

Toddler Group:

Our families have been asking us for a group that is suitable for toddlers (as well as new-borns) for a long time, so we were delighted to launch Frome Toddler Talk in February 2022. Since then, the group has run every Friday at Trinity Church Hall in central Frome.



There is a big cupboard full of toys and plenty of space, so we set up the room to allow toddlers and pre-schoolers the chance to play freely while their parents can chat and enjoy a cup of (proper!) coffee.

During 2022-23 the group was attended by over 100 different adults and 150 children. Of the adults who attended, 14 attended five times or more (including two who attended over 20 times) and a majority came more than once.

We have received very positive feedback about the group:

“We love the toddler group. It’s great for the little ones to have the social time and for parents to have the opportunity to spend time chatting with other parents, knowing the children are safe. Please keep this group going. Thank you so much!”

Groups and activities contd.

Time For You:

This year our trustee Jess Taylor organised two “Time for You” pamper days, the first in April and the second in December.

"Lovely morning, great length and a good variety of activities to keep us entertained but also very relaxed."

Attendees enjoyed a massage, yoga, foot soak, snacks, and goody bags. Raffle prizes were also donated by local Frome companies. We charged £20 per ticket but provided some free tickets for those on a low income. We aim to organise more days next year, using the lessons we've learned to increase their fundraising potential.



"Wonderful day and I enjoyed every second. Jess was welcoming and lovely. Thank you!"



Childrens' Festival and Cheese Show:

The NCT is no longer active in Frome, so this year we stepped in to host parent and baby spaces at Frome's annual Children's Festival and Cheese Show. These were safe spaces where parents could feed their children, enjoy a snack themselves or allow overwhelmed toddlers to meltdown in peace.

Our people: Staff

This year Suzy Cristinacce continued to work as our director, working 10 hours per week. Our counselling co-ordinator Lucy Hill also continued with us, increasing her hours from 4.5 to 5 hours per week from June 2022. In November 2022, they were joined by Alice Caudle, who works 7 hours per week as volunteer co-ordinator.

Our people: Trustees

The voting members of the charity are the board of trustees, and their number must be not fewer than three and not more than twelve.

The board seeks to meet the needs of Frome Birth Talk by recruiting and retaining trustees with relevant skills and expertise. The trustees who served from 01/03/2022 to 28/02/2023 were:

- **Karen Patrick:** an experienced midwife, who brings clinical knowledge to the team and recently completed a Masters by Research at the University of Southampton on the Continuity of Carer model being implemented across the UK following the government's 'Better Births' report in 2016. Karen is our safeguarding lead.
- **Fiona Willis:** a local mother, doula and birth worker, shiatsu practitioner and facilitator of groups for pregnant and postnatal women over many years. Fiona manages our website and social media

Our people: Trustees contd.

- **Jessica Taylor:** a local mother who is an experienced events coordinator and workplace mental health champion. Jess leads on our fundraising events
- **Kathryn Riddick:** a local mother who works as a nurse. She was one of the first parents to attend our Bump to Baby group and leads on community liaison
- **Jaime Swift:** a local mother who is currently training to become midwife. Jaime was one of the first parents to attend our Bump to Baby group and assists with community liaison alongside Kat
- **Hayley Clement:** a local mother and midwife, who works at Frome Birth Centre. Hayley is our treasurer

We have also welcomed three new trustees during the year:

- **Annabel Litchfield:** a local mother who specialises in supporting charities of all sizes with their impact monitoring and evaluation. Annabel is leading on developing our monitoring and evaluation systems
- **Hanna Fisher:** a local mother and experienced psychotherapist. Hanna is assisting us with clinical advice and expertise
- **Jessica Cornwell:** a local mother, novelist and screenwriter, Jessica, published her book “Birth Notes: A Memoir of Trauma, Motherhood and Recovery” in 2022. Jessica is helping Frome Birth Talk to record and retell its story.

Our people: Volunteers

We also enjoy the support of regular volunteers. Our Bump to Baby group is hosted by Sarah Hartley, a retired midwife, and Margaret Graham, a retired counsellor.

Our toddler group, Frome Toddler Talk, is hosted on a regular basis by Leah Jones, Helen Curry and Amanda Fisher.

Our people: Counsellors

We now have four full-qualified counsellors working with us on a self-employment basis: Helen Enright, Jane Henderson, Tracy Creed and Amanda Falconer.

Providing opportunities to trainee counsellors

We have four counsellors in training working for FBT: Melina Robinson, Kat Cross, Lisa Beattie and Lucy Edwards.

Counselling students must complete initial training before seeing clients, then accrue clinical hours for full professional registration. By using trainee counsellors, we can significantly increase the number of sessions we can offer to parents, for the cost of professional supervision (provided in-house by our qualified counsellors) and mileage/travel costs.

Safeguarding

All staff, counsellors, trainee counsellors and volunteers have DBS checks, renewable every three years and organised and paid for by the charity. Safeguarding training has been provided for staff, counsellors and trustees and will be repeated at least every three years.

We have a safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy which will be reviewed and ratified annually, along with a named safeguarding officer, Karen Patrick. Our safeguarding procedure is backed up by a 'due diligence' process where any concerns not necessitating a full escalation are discussed with the safeguarding lead, recorded and stored in a password-protected folder.

Our finances

Financial sustainability

FBT has been sustained largely by grant funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund and other organisations during this financial period. This grant covers our core costs and will last for another two years.

Our income during this financial period was £36,254 and our expenditure was £36,646. We currently have £9,877 in unrestricted reserves. We aim to hold sufficient unrestricted reserves for three months' expenditure. We consider that we are a going concern for the next twelve months because we will continue to receive core funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and will fundraise before undertaking any additional activities that are not covered by this grant.

Our finances contd.

Grants

In 2022-23, we secured the following grants in addition to our National Lottery grant of £20,000:

- £1,875 from the South West Community Benefit Fund, to cover hall hire for the toddler group and extra counselling sessions.
- £3,000 from Frome Town Council towards the cost of a volunteer co-ordinator.
- £3,000 from Somerset Community Foundation towards the cost of a volunteer co-ordinator.

Community fundraising

Jazz and cream tea event

In May a local supporter who used our services organised a jazz and cream tea fundraiser. She donated £600 from the event, and we made a further small profit selling Prosecco.

Band in a Barn

Band in a Barn is an annual event in Norton St Philip that raises money for local charities. A woman who uses our services nominated Frome Birth Talk to be one of their three major beneficiaries and we came top of the public vote on Facebook.

The event raised £3,000 for us.



Community fundraising contd.



Adam's Snowden challenge

Local dad Adam Way, whose partner used our services following the birth of their first child, undertook a sponsored challenge that involved climbing Snowden as many times as possible in 24 hours. Incredibly, he managed four ascents and raised over £500 for us.

Jess's frostbite challenge

Our trustee Jess Taylor completed 12 cold-water swims between 1st November and 28th February. In total she raised £500 for Frome Birth Talk.

Beard-shaving

At the end of November we were delighted to receive a £500 donation in our LocalGiving from the husband of someone who used our services. This dad had shaved off his beard to raise money for us.



Our governance and organisational management

Frome Birth Talk (FBT) is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) established on 8th November 2017. The charity is governed by its CIO constitution.

The board of trustees met seven times during the year ending 28th February 2023.

FBT is not currently an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) but chooses to follow its Ethical Framework for Counselling and Psychotherapy guidelines, in line with our self-employed counsellors' practice and that of the Bath College of Psychotherapy and Counselling (BCPC), for whom we are an agency for trainee counsellors on placement.

Public benefit

The board of trustees confirm they have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and have complied with their duty under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives; and in implementing current and planning future activities. The Charities Act 2011 sets out 13 different aims which are recognised as charitable purposes, and Frome Birth Talk fits within the aim of **the relief of sickness and preservation of health**.

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and continue to be committed to providing all our services free of charge, although donations are welcomed.

Our future

At the beginning of November, we celebrated our fifth birthday with our second Community Workshop. As before, this was a gathering of everyone involved in Frome Birth Talk: people who have used our services, local women, trustees, staff, and volunteers.

A creche was provided as well as a celebration lunch. Two local women helped us plan and facilitate the event, providing their knowledge and expertise for free.

We built on what was discussed last year, refining our conversations to start development of our vision, mission and goals. Reassuringly, the message we took from the day was that we need to develop and improve our activities but essentially, we are doing almost everything that people would like us to. The only major changes suggested were similar to those that were suggested last year: a group for people who have experienced baby loss; actively working to reach all parts of our community, including young people, people of colour and people from the LGBTQI+ community and opening up our services to people who are experiencing fertility issues.



It has been a busy year for everyone at Frome Birth Talk, but we are looking forward to growing our community, ready for challenges ahead!

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/03/2022				To	28/02/2023
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Restricted funds	Restricted funds	Restricted funds	Restricted funds	Restricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	Unrestricted	National Lottery Community Fund - RC South West Region	FROME TOWN COUNCIL	FRIENDS OF FROME COMMUNITY HOSPITAL	SOMERSET COMMUNITY FOUNDATION	MAGIC LITTLE GRANT	AWARDS FOR ALL GRANT	LHC SOUTH WEST COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND			
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts											
GRANTS		20,000	3,000		3,000			1,875		27,875	24,000
DONATIONS	7,812									7,812	3,031
FUND RAISING EVENTS	567									567	0
										-	0
										-	0
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	8,379	20,000	3,000	-	3,000	-	-	1,875	-	36,254	27,031
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).											
		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	8,379	20,000	3,000	-	3,000	-	-	1,875	-	36,254	27,031
A3 Payments											
COUNSELLOR FEES		8,019		3,298	19	83	426	868	-	12,713	10,423
COST OF FUNDRAISING	315	180							-	495	53
COST OF BREATHING & RELAXATION CLASSES	798								-	798	423
SALARIES	1,113	9,293			1,295				-	11,701	4,865
ROOM RENTAL	1,806		1,530					407	-	3,743	2,874
STUDENT SUPERVISION		2,240							-	2,240	1,260
STUDENT TRAVEL COSTS		599							-	599	336
PRINTING & MARKETING		472							-	472	297
COMPUTER PURCHASE	25				189				-	214	307
SUBSCRIPTIONS	158								-	158	349
GENERAL ADMIN	237			2					-	239	-
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT	71	1,643			383				-	2,097	1,585
DBS CHECKS	322				122				-	444	112
STORAGE		260							-	260	520
INSURANCE		351							-	351	308
FBT MOBILE PHONE COST	98	24							-	122	66
	4,943	23,081	1,530	3,300	2,008	83	426	1,275	-	36,646	23,778

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	4,943	23,081	1,530	3,300	2,008	83	426	1,275		Add Error	23,778	
Net of receipts/(payments)	3,436	- 3,081	1,470	- 3,300	992	- 83	- 426	600		- 392	3,253	
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	
A6 Cash funds last year end	6,441	9,652	1,740	3,300	19	83	426			21,661	18408	
Cash funds this year end	9,877	6,571	3,210	-	1,011	-	-	600		21,269	21,661	

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period


Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Unrestricted	9,877		-
	National Lottery	6,571		-
	Frome Town Council	3,210		
	Friends of Frome Community Hospital			
	Somerset Community Foundation	1,011		
	Magic Little Grant			
	Awards for All			
	LHC SW Community Benefit Fund	600		
		-	-	-
		Total cash funds	21,269	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	Agreement Error	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	NETITUDE HP PRO BOOK	NATIONAL LOTTERY	743	-

		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature


Print Name
 Karen Patrick

Date of approval
04/12/2023

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Frome Birth Talk

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Frome Birth Talk (the Trust) for the year ended 28 February 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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 accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name: Beverley Goddard

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any):
Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Address: 25 Leaze Road, Frome, BA11 3EY

Date: 05 December 2023

FROME BIRTH TALK

England & Wales - Charity number 1175641

Accounts



Annual report

Frome Birth Talk charity no. 1175641

Annual report and accounts 01/03/2020 to 28/2/2021

Governing document

Frome Birth Talk (FBT) is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) established on 8th November 2017.

The charity is governed by its CIO constitution.

Aims, objectives and activities

Frome Birth Talk exists to support birthing parents of all ages and circumstances to make the transition to parenthood confidently and positively, raising awareness of and combating the stigma associated with anxiety, low mood and mental ill health in the perinatal period. We do this by providing free professional counselling, gentle exercise led by skilled practitioners and a welcoming, judgement-free space to facilitate friendships and support networks.

The Board of Trustees present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 28th February 2021. The objective of the charity is for the public benefit by the relief of sickness and the preservation of health of pregnant women and new mothers in Frome and the surrounding area by the provision of a free counselling service and wellbeing events and activities.

Appointment and training of trustees

The voting members of the charity are the board of trustees and their number must be not fewer than three and not more than twelve. The number of four-year consecutive terms of office that a trustee may currently serve cannot exceed three, thereby limiting continuous membership to twelve years. After a gap of one year a trustee who has served three terms is eligible to request to re-join the board.

The board seeks to meet the needs of Frome Birth Talk by recruiting and retaining trustees with relevant skills and expertise. The trustees who served from 01/03/2020 to 28/2/2021 are:

- Suzy: a local mother with a third sector background, bid-writing knowledge, volunteer recruitment and retention and community fundraising experience. Suzy leads on our community fundraising and organisation of our member feedback sessions and 'away days'.
- Jane: a local mother and sales manager with experience of running businesses and associated bookkeeping. Jane is FBT's treasurer.
- Lucy: a local mother who works for a larger counselling organisation in a communications role and has extensive admin and event management experience. Lucy coordinates the counselling service and served as chair throughout the year.
- Karen: an experienced midwife, who brings clinical knowledge to the team and recently completed a Masters by Research at the University of Southampton on the Continuity of Carer model being implemented across the UK following the government's 'Better Births' report in 2016. Karen is our safeguarding lead.
- Fiona is a local mother, doula and birth worker, shiatsu practitioner and facilitator of groups for pregnant and postnatal women over many years. Fiona manages our website and social media.

We also enjoy the support of regular volunteers Emilie, who runs our postnatal yoga class, and retired midwives Sarah and Jackie, who help to run our weekly group. The work of our volunteers has been severely hampered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however.

Governance and organisational management

The board of trustees met five times during the year ending 28th February 2021.

FBT is not currently an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) but chooses to follow its Ethical Framework for Counselling and Psychotherapy guidelines, in line with our self-employed counsellors' practice and that of the Bath College of Psychotherapy and Counselling (BACP), for whom we are an agency for trainee counsellors on placement.

Public benefit

The board of trustees confirm they have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and have complied with their duty under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives; and in implementing current and planning future activities.

The Charities Act 2011 sets out 13 different aims which are recognised as charitable purposes, and Frome Birth Talk fits within the aim of the relief of sickness and preservation of health. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and continue to be committed to providing all our services free of charge, although donations are welcomed.



Financial sustainability

FBT has been sustained largely by grant funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund during this financial period. This grant covers our core costs and will last for another four years. Nevertheless, we have been active in fundraising to provide FBT with unrestricted income through raffles and sponsored challenges. In addition, we have been supported by a number of local businesses, who have donated products and services to us. We continue to implement our endorsement policy to vet, approve and manage support from private business and do not endorse any product or service over another.

Safeguarding

All counsellors and trainee counsellors have enhanced DBS checks, renewable every three years and organised and paid for by the charity. Safeguarding training has been provided for counsellors and trustees and will be repeated at least every three years. We have a safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy which will be reviewed and ratified annually, along with named safeguarding officers. Our safeguarding procedure is backed up by a 'due diligence' process where any concerns not necessitating a full escalation are

discussed with the safeguarding lead, recorded and stored in a password-protected folder.

Location:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we were not able to hold our activities in Frome Community Hospital as usual for most of this year. Counselling has been taking place online via Zoom, over the phone or at Frome Therapy Rooms. We were also able to host some groups at Christchurch Parish Hall.

Background

Frome Birth Talk was formed in early 2017 in response to the loss of funding for an existing counselling service operating in Frome Community Hospital. Although the service was open to any users of the hospital, uptake had always been overwhelmingly from users of Frome Birth Centre. Three local women started to fundraise for a new service specifically for pregnant and postnatal women. This was successful, but the increase in profile led to a huge increase in referrals and it was clear that we needed to add grant funding to our community fundraising activities.

Our funders

Frome Birth Talk has been well supported by local and national funders, as well as community fundraising. In April 2020 we were delighted to receive the first instalment of a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, which will cover our core costs for five years. This funding has helped us keep our services running throughout the pandemic at a time when our capacity for community fundraising was severely hampered. Nevertheless, we have continued to grow and by the end of this period were providing 13 professional counselling sessions per week. All our activities are geared towards one goal: to promote emotional wellbeing in women during pregnancy and the first year of motherhood, a time when at least one in five women experience anxiety, depression and low mood and a small but significant percentage become seriously unwell. Early intervention during this period has huge potential for good – helping women make a positive and confident transition at this unique and intense stage of life can have far-reaching benefits, not least a strong bond with their baby.

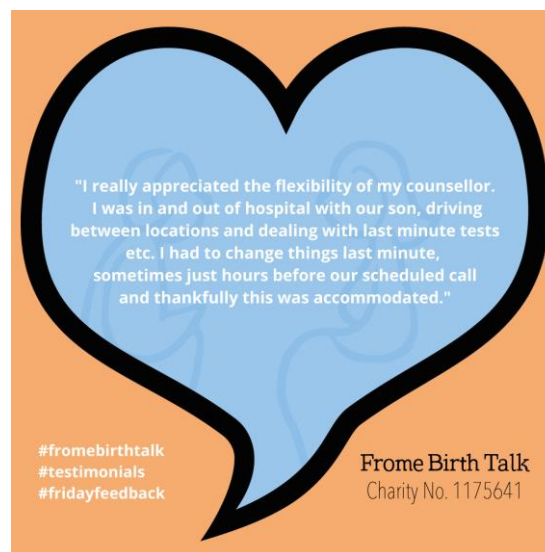
How we know we make a difference

We constantly monitor the effectiveness of all our services, requesting feedback from counselling clients and class attendees via an online questionnaire. The responses we get provide us with vital information about the aspects of our services that work and any gaps in provision, as well as serving to raise awareness and uptake.

In order to further measure the impact of our counselling service, we use a clinically validated evaluation tool, Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE).

*The CORE System is for managers and practitioners working in psychological therapy services and is in use by a wide range of professions and sectors. It provides a framework for responding to the increasing demand in health and other sectors to provide evidence of service quality and effectiveness. It is freely available under **copyright** and supported by over a hundred **academic publications**.*

The tool uses 34 statements and respondents grade each statement from 0 to 4 depending on how accurately they feel it describes their feelings in the preceding week. The statements are designed to measure functioning, problem, wellbeing and risk. Not only does this provide us with useful data about percentage improvements in client wellbeing to go alongside narrative feedback, it also helps us practise safely and can help our counsellors recognise where there is a risk of harm and the need to involve other health professionals.



Providing opportunities

We have two counsellors in training working for FBT and plan to recruit a third. Counselling students have to complete initial training before seeing clients, then accrue clinical hours for full professional registration. By using trainee counsellors, we more than double the number of sessions we can offer to women, for the cost of professional supervision (provided in-house by our qualified counsellors) and mileage/travel costs.

What next?

As for many small charities, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our charity. We (a group of volunteers with demanding jobs and children) have had to adapt quickly to ever-changing circumstances as well as coping with additional pressures such as lockdowns and home-schooling. For this reason, we did not recruit our first employee, a director, as we intended to this year. Recruitment took place in the spring, however, and we are confident that having a paid person in this role will allow us to consolidate the work we have done, as well as develop new projects to support our community. Depending on the progress of the pandemic, we are keen to create another drop-in group that is accessible to parents with toddlers and return to the Community Hospital for counselling and groups.





Receipts and payments

For the period
from

03/01/2020

Section A Receipts and payments

Unrestricted
funds

Restricted
funds

National
Lottery
Community
Fund - RC
South West
Region

to the nearest
£

to the nearest £

A1 Receipts

GRANTS	288	24,000
ANON FAMILY TRUST GRANT - UNRESTRICTED		
DONATIONS	1,346	
FUND RAISING EVENTS	105	
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	1,739	24,000

A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).

		-
	-	-
Sub total	-	-

Total receipts **1,739**

24,000

A3 Payments

COUNSELLOR FEES		9,648
COST OF FUNDRAISING	40	
COST OF BREATHING & RELAXATION CLASSES		
ROOM RENTAL		300
STUDENT SUPERVISION		840
STUDENT TRAVEL COSTS		104
PRINTING	19	
COMPUTER PURCHASE		743
SUBSCRIPTIONS		240
COST OF DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING		91
TRAINING		225
COST OF POSTNATAL GROUP		
DBS CHECKS		60
STORAGE		196
INSURANCE		317

FBT MOBILE PHONE COST		66
EQUIPMENT - YOGA MATS AND BLANKETS		
	59	12,830

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)		
	-	-
	-	-
Sub total	-	-

Total payments	59	12,830
-----------------------	----	--------

Net of receipts/(payments)	1,680	11,170
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,730	
Cash funds this year end	3,410	11,170

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the

Categories

Details

B1 Cash funds

Unrestricted
National Lottery
Friends of Frome Community Hospital
Somerset Community Foundation
Magic Little Grant
Awards for All

Total cash funds

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

B2 Other monetary assets

Details

Details

B3 Investment assets

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details

NETITUDE HP PRO BOOK

B5 Liabilities

Details

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

728	276	420	408

-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-

728	276	420	408
-----	-----	-----	-----

- 728	- 276	80	- 408
-	-	-	-
4,028	295	3	834
3,300	19	83	426

end of the period

Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
3,410		-
	11,171	-
	3,300	
	19	
	83	
	425	
-	-	-
3,410	14,998	-

OK OK OK

Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

Fund to which asset belongs Cost (optional) Current value (optional)

	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-

Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
NATIONAL LOTTERY	743	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-

Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	-	
	-	
	-	
	-	

Print Name

-
-

66
-
14,721

90
302
11,303

-
-
-

-
-
-

-
-
-

-

14,721

11,303

-
-
-
-

11,518
-
6,890
18,408

-532
0
7421
6,889



Date of approval

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Frome Birth Talk

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Frome Birth Talk (the Trust) for the year ended 28 February 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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 accounts to be reached.

Signed: B Goddard

Name: Beverley Goddard

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any):
Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Address: 25 Leaze Road, Frome, BA11 3EY

Date: 20 December 2021