

Acumen Community Buildings Ltd

**Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2025**

Charity number 1177852

Company number 10780847

Acumen Community Buildings Ltd

Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

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Acumen Community Buildings Ltd

Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Charity Registration Number: 1177852

Company Registration Number: 10780847

Reference and administration details

Charity name: Acumen Community Buildings Ltd

Registered charity number: 1177852

Company number: 10780847

Registered office address: Kepier Hall, Church Street, Houghton-le-Spring, DH4 4DN

Trustees and Directors

The trustees, who are also the directors of the charitable company under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were:

- Katherine Welch OBE DL (appointed 17 May 2017) – Chair
- Dr Joanna Berry (appointed 10 May 2018)
- Anne Toms (appointed 6 July 2018)
- Dr Ron Lawson (appointed 23 June 2021)
- Stacey Price (appointed 1 November 2024)

Independent Examiner

Mr R Maddison MBA

Structure, governance and management

Acumen Community Buildings Ltd is a charitable company limited by guarantee (company number 10780847) and a registered charity (charity number 1177852). The company was incorporated on 20 May 2017 and was registered as a charity on 6 April 2018. The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Trustees are appointed by the members on a skills basis, ensuring that all trustees have a commitment to the charity's area of work and the skills needed to deliver the strategic plan. One new trustee was appointed during the year, bringing additional skills in the management of buildings. The trustees met during the year both in person and via hybrid meetings.

Trustee induction and training

New trustees receive an induction on appointment, which includes meeting the existing trustees and senior staff, a tour of the charity's premises, and copies of the governing document, recent accounts, recent minutes, and Charity Commission guidance on the duties of trustees (including CC3 and the public benefit guidance). Trustees are encouraged to undertake further training during their term of office and matters of governance and emerging risk are reviewed at trustee meetings.

Risk management

The trustees have reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and have established systems and procedures to mitigate those risks. Principal risks identified during the year included the loss of premises, income volatility from grant funding, energy costs and safeguarding. Mitigations include diversification of income through earned rental and contract income, the building of free reserves, partnership working, and adherence to safeguarding policies appropriate to the activities delivered.

Objectives and activities

The charity's object, as set out in its governing document, is the promotion for the benefit of the public of urban or rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation (and in particular in the Sunderland coalfields and surrounding area) by all or any of the following means:

- (a) the relief of financial hardship;
- (b) the relief of unemployment;
- (c) the advancement of education, training or retraining, particularly among unemployed people, and providing unemployed people with work experience;
- (d) the provision of financial assistance, technical assistance or business advice or consultancy in order to provide training and employment opportunities for unemployed people in cases of financial or other charitable need through help: (i) in setting up their own business, or (ii) to existing businesses;
- (e) the creation of training and employment opportunities by the provision of workspace, buildings, and/or land for use on favourable terms;
- (f) the provision of housing for those who are in conditions of need and the improvement of housing in the public sector or in charitable ownership, provided that such power shall not extend to relieving any local authorities or other bodies of a statutory duty to provide or improve housing;
- (g) the maintenance, improvement or provision of public amenities;
- (h) the preservation of buildings or sites of historic or architectural importance;
- (i) the provision of recreational facilities for the public at large or those who, by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances, have need of such facilities;
- (j) the protection or conservation of the environment;
- (k) the provision of public health facilities and childcare;
- (l) the promotion of public safety and prevention of crime;
- (m) such other means as may from time to time be determined subject to the prior written consent of the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Public benefit

The trustees confirm that they have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities. The activities described in this report are delivered for the public benefit and are open to all members of the local community.

Achievements and performance

This was a year of steady, consistent growth in the charity's activities, accompanied by significant operational challenges. Earned income from rental of space to charities and social enterprises continued to grow, alongside contract income for the delivery of youth activities, digital inclusion, arts and cultural activity, and mental health support. The cost-of-living crisis and elevated energy costs continued to put pressure on both income and expenditure. Notwithstanding these pressures, the charity delivered a surplus on its unrestricted activities and applied all of its restricted grant income to the purposes for which it was given. Further detail is set out in the Financial Review below.

The Old Rectory and relocation to Kepier Hall

In October 2024 the charity agreed with Sunderland City Council, the freeholder of The Old Rectory, to surrender the existing commercial lease and to participate in a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process for the building. The charity submitted a full CAT application supported by a sustainable business plan, in excess of 2,000 signatures of community support, and over 50 letters of support from local, regional and national partners. An agreement was made to pay an ongoing rent of £300 per month against the debt that had been incurred during Covid-19 closures and the subsequent energy crisis.

During the same period the charity was successful in a bid to the VCSE Energy Efficiency Grant, which would have funded replacement of the gas boilers and a range of further energy-saving measures at The Old Rectory. The CAT was not awarded to Acumen and the lease was awarded to another organisation. Following the outcome, the trustees moved the charity's operations to Kepier Hall at the end of April 2025, with surplus furniture stored by Tyne Tees Heritage Transport. The trustees are grateful to all of the partners and supporters who assisted the charity through this transition.

Community activities and wellbeing

The charity continues to deliver a full weekly programme of activities addressing physical and mental health, wellbeing and social isolation for adults, with around 150 people using the charity's facilities each week. A new Tuesday Trekkers walking group has grown rapidly and now welcomes more than 40 people (plus dogs) each week. Less frequent activities run during the year included a drumming circle, a heritage research group, and short courses ranging from crochet and wreath making to employment and skills.

Youth work

A new part-time youth worker was recruited during the year, enabling the charity to maintain a consistent youth offer comprising an after-school drop-in, two youth clubs, and the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme for 11- to 16-year-olds. The HAF programme delivered 320 places over the summer and received positive feedback from Together for Children. The charity's youth provision continues to address a

long-standing gap in services for young people in the area, and demand has been strong throughout the year.

Social enterprise development

The charity has continued to support people in the area who are starting or developing social enterprises. There is now a strong cluster of organisations working together to make a difference in the Sunderland coalfields area around Houghton-le-Spring, forming part of the County Durham and the Coalfields Social Enterprise Place — a Social Enterprise Places designation recognised by Social Enterprise UK and an indicator of the strength of social enterprise activity in the area.

Houghton Feast and community events

In October 2024 the charity led on a number of events on the first Saturday of Houghton Feast, including illuminations in Rectory Park (with a heart designed by local children to reflect the theme “kindness is at the heart of Houghton”), the traditional Ox Roast, the model fairground, and the Houghton Feast Parade, supported by the 41 Club. The charity also worked alongside Houghton-le-Spring Residents on Kids in the Park and the after-parade entertainment. The charity did not receive Council funding for any of these activities.

The charity was not invited to be part of the 2025 Houghton Feast Steering Group. The trustees are working with partners including the Houghton Feast Trust and Space 4 with a view to bringing more community involvement into the 2026 Feast

Big Lunch

The charity was unable to host the Big Lunch in June 2025. Plans are in place to celebrate a Christmas Big Lunch in late 2025 and deliver a Big Lunch in June 2026.

Financial Review

The principal sources of income during the year were rental income from charities and social enterprises sharing the charity’s premises, contract income for the delivery of youth, digital inclusion, arts and mental health activities, and restricted grant income to support specific projects.

During the year the charity received a number of small restricted grants totalling £15,439, all of which were applied in full to the purposes for which they were given. The closing balance on restricted funds at the year end was therefore £nil (2024: £14,310, which was also fully applied during the year).

The charity’s unrestricted (general) funds delivered a surplus of £4,718 for the year (2024: deficit), increasing unrestricted reserves from £23,947 to £28,665. Total reserves moved from £38,257 to £28,665, a reduction of £9,592 which reflects the application of the prior year’s restricted balances to their intended purposes.

The trustees consider that the underlying financial performance of the charity is positive: unrestricted income exceeded unrestricted expenditure, and reductions in recurring overheads following the move from The Old Rectory to Kepier Hall in April 2025 are expected to support a continued surplus on unrestricted activities in the current financial year.

Reserves policy

The trustees' policy is to hold sufficient unrestricted (free) reserves to support the charity's operations for at least three months. At the year end the charity held total reserves of £28,665, all of which were unrestricted, with no restricted balances carried forward. The trustees consider that the level of free reserves at the year end is broadly in line with the policy and intend to continue to grow unrestricted reserves over the coming year.

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

Plans for the future

In the coming year the charity will consolidate operations at Kepier Hall, continue to grow its weekly community programme (including the Tuesday Trekkers walking group, currently running at Kepier Hall, and the youth clubs, currently running at the Churchill Square Community Room thanks to gentoo), maintain and develop the youth offer, and seek to participate in Houghton Feast 2026. The trustees will also continue to rebuild free reserves and to diversify income.

Trustees' responsibilities in respect of the financial statements

Company law requires the trustees, who are the directors under company law, to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company at the year end and of the net incoming or outgoing resources of the company for the year then ended. In preparing these financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charitable company will continue on that basis.

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

Independent examiner

The trustees have taken advantage of the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the audit requirements for small companies and have opted for an independent examination in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

Small company special provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime as set out in Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the trustees on 29 April 2026 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Welch', is displayed within a light gray rectangular box.

Katherine Welch OBE DL

Chair, Director and Trustee

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts

I report to the trustees of Acumen Community Buildings on my examination of the accounts for the year ended 30 June 2025 set out on pages 8 to 14

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed

R J Maddison

Date 27 April 2026

Name

Mr R J Maddison MBA

Acumen Community Buildings

Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 30 June 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024 £
Incoming resources	3				
Generated funds					
Voluntary income			-		
Activities for generating funds		420		420	148
Investment income		55	-	55	52
Charitable activities		103124	15439	118563	147000
Other incoming resources			-		3215
<i>Total incoming resources</i>		<u>103599</u>	<u>15439</u>	<u>119038</u>	<u>150415</u>
Resources expended	4				
Generation of voluntary income		-	-	-	
Charitable Activities		93048	29749	122797	138117
Governance costs					-
Other resources expended		4833		4833	3103
Depreciation		1000		1000	2779
<i>Total resources expended</i>		<u>98881</u>	<u>29749</u>	<u>128630</u>	<u>143999</u>
Net income/expenditure (-) for the year		<u>4718</u>	<u>-14310</u>	<u>-9592</u>	<u>6416</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		23947	14310	38257	31841
Net movement in funds throughout year		<u>4718</u>	<u>-14310</u>	<u>-9592</u>	<u>6416</u>
Prior Year adjustment					
<i>Total funds carried forward</i>		<u>28665</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>28665</u>	<u>38257</u>

All the charitable company's operations are classed as continuing and recognised gains and losses and movement on reserves are shown above.

The notes on pages 12 to 17 form part of these accounts.

Acumen Community Buildings

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2025

	Note	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	7	1000	3779
Depreciation		1000	2779
<i>Total fixed assets</i>		0	1000
Current Assets			
Debtors	8	18496	23789
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>16043</u>	<u>23857</u>
<i>Total current assets</i>		34539	47693
Liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	9	<u>3224</u>	<u>2695</u>
Payroll Taxation		<u>2549</u>	<u>5652</u>
Wages		<u>101</u>	<u>88</u>
<i>Total current liabilities</i>		5874	8436
<i>Net current assets</i>		28665	40257
<i>Total assets less current liabilities</i>			
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		<u>0</u>	<u>2000</u>
Provisions for liabilities and charges			-
<i>Net assets</i>		<u>28665</u>	<u>38257</u>
The funds of the charity	12		
Restricted income funds		0	14310
Unrestricted income funds	13	28665	23947
Prior Year Adjustment			
<i>Total charity funds</i>		<u>28665</u>	<u>38257</u>

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006; and no notice has been deposited under section 476.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirement of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small company's regime as set out in Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees 

Kate Welch OBE DL
Director and Trustee

Date 29 April 2026

Acumen Community Buildings

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

Note 1: Basis of preparation

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the basis of historic cost (except that investments are shown at market value) in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102) as applicable to Charities (effective January 2019) comprising the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities ("SORP 2019").

Note 2: Accounting policies

2.1 Incoming resources

2.1.1 Recognition of incoming resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- The charity becomes entitled to the resource
- The trustees are virtually certain they will receive the resources and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability

2.1.2 Incoming resources with related expenditure

Where incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) the incoming resources and related expenditure are reported gross in the SoFA.

2.1.3 Grants and donations

Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.

2.1.4 Tax reclaims on donations and gifts

Incoming resources from tax reclaims are included in the SoFA at the same time as the gift to which they relate.

2.1.5 Contractual income and performance related grants

This is only included in the SoFA once the related goods or services have been delivered.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

2.1.6 Gifts in kind

Gifts in kind are accounted for at a reasonable estimate of their value to the charity or the amount actually realised. Gifts in kind for sale or distribution are included in the accounts as gifts only when sold or distributed by the charity. Gifts in kind for use by the charity are included in the SoFA as incoming resources when receivable.

2.1.7 Donated services and facilities

These are only included in incoming resources (with an equivalent amount in resources expended) where the benefit to the charity is reasonably quantifiable, measurable and material. The value placed on these resources is the estimated value to the charity of the service or facility received.

2.1.8 Volunteer help

The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the trustees' annual report.

2.1.9 Investment income

This is included in the accounts when receivable.

2.2 Expenditure and liabilities

2.2.1 Liability recognition

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.

2.2.2 Governance costs

Include costs of the preparation and examination of statutory accounts, the costs of trustee meetings and costs of any legal advice to trustees on governance or constitutional matters.

2.2.3 Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

2.3 Assets

2.3.1 Tangible fixed assets for use by charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £500. They are valued at cost or, if gifted, at the value to the charity on receipt.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

Note 3 Analysis of grant income

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £
Grant Income			
Groundwork Stronger Start		1000	1000
The Joicey Trust		550	550
DWP A2W		389	389
Firstport Boost		5000	5000
Electrical Safety First		5000	5000
Groundwork Stronger Start		500	500
NE Youth Music		3000	3000
Total incoming resources	<u>0</u>	<u>15439</u>	<u>15439</u>

Note 4 Analysis of resources expended

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £
Charitable activities			
Staffing	33624		33624
Sessional staff/Consultant	9322		9322
Administration/IT	5700		5700
Refreshments	1554		1554
Consumables	865		865
Building Costs	17450		17450
Charitable Expenditure	24114	29749	53863
Other Resources Expended			
Bank Interest/Charges	117		117
Depreciation	1000		1000
Bad Debts (Rent owed by tenants of The Old Rectory)	5135		5135
Total resources expended	<u>98881</u>	<u>29749</u>	<u>128630</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

Note 5 Details of certain items of expenditure

5.1 Trustee expenses

There were no trustee expenses during 2025

5.2 There were no fees for the examination of the accounts from the Independent Examiner

Note 6 Paid employees

During the year, the organisation employed three part time members of staff and bought in sessional time for administration and other activities

Note 7 Tangible fixed assets

The company owns office equipment valued at £1000 at the start of the year with depreciation of £1000 during the year.

Note 8 Contingent Liabilities

The charity is in dispute with Sunderland City Council in respect of rent said to be owed for the period during which the charity's activities were affected by Covid-19 restrictions and other unexpected costs. The trustees do not accept that the full amount claimed is properly due and are pursuing a review of the position through the channels available to them.

In order to preserve the charity's position pending resolution of the dispute, a payment plan of £300 per month was agreed with the Council. Payments made under this plan during the year have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as expenditure and are not made in admission of the underlying liability.

At the date of approval of these financial statements the outcome of the dispute cannot reliably be estimated. Accordingly, no provision has been made in these financial statements in respect of the disputed amount, which is disclosed as a contingent liability in accordance with Section 21 of FRS 102 and the Charities SORP. The trustees will reflect any change in the position in the financial statements for the year in which the matter is resolved.

Note 9 Debtors and prepayments

Analysis of debtors

	2025 £
Debtors as per Sales ledger	18496

<i>Total</i>	<i>18496</i>
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Note 10 Creditors and accruals

Analysis of creditors

2025
£

Creditors as per purchase ledger	5874
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<i>Total</i>	<u><u>5874</u></u>
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Note 11 Transactions and related parties

There were no transactions between related parties

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

Note 12 Movements on funds

	Fund balance b/fwd	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Transfer between funds	Fund balance c/fwd
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds					
Groundwork Stronger Start		1000	1000		
The Joicey Trust		550	550		
DWP A2W		389	389		
Firstport Boost		5000	5000		
Electrical Safety First		5000	5000		
Groundwork Stronger Start		500	500		
NE Youth Music		3000	3000		
National Lottery CF	14310	0	14310		0
Total funds	<u>14310</u>	<u>15439</u>	<u>29749</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Note 13 Net assets by fund

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £
Fixed assets	-	-	-
Net current assets	28665		28665
Long Term creditors	-		-
Total assets	28665	<u>0</u>	28665

Liability of Members

The liability of members is limited by guarantee. In the event of the charity being wound up during the period of membership, members would be required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.