

# SPARK SOMERSET

England & Wales · Charity number 1179438

## Details

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**Status** Registered

**Legal form** CIO

**Registered** 2018-08-03

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

## Contact

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**Address** Units 3 and 4  
The Courtyard  
Bowdens Farm  
Hambridge  
Langport  
Somerset

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**Website** [www.sparksomerset.org.uk](http://www.sparksomerset.org.uk)

## Activities

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**Objects:** TO PROMOTE THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC IN SOMERSET BY: I) THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION, ADVICE, TRAINING AND SUPPORT; AND II) PROMOTING AND ORGANISING PARTNERSHIP AND CO-OPERATION IN THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR. "VOLUNTARY SECTOR" IS DEFINED AS "CHARITIES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS". CHARITIES ARE ORGANISATIONS, WHICH ARE ESTABLISHED FOR EXCLUSIVELY CHARITABLE PURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW OF ENGLAND AND WALES. VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS ARE INDEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS WHICH ARE ESTABLISHED FOR PURPOSES THAT ADD VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, OR A SIGNIFICANT SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY, AND WHICH ARE NOT PERMITTED BY THEIR CONSTITUTION TO MAKE A PROFIT FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.

**Activities:** Our aim is to inspire strong and sustainable communities through voluntary and community action. We provide information, advice, training and support to charities and community groups and represent the sector on strategic bodies. We also run the Volunteer Service, inspiring people to make a difference in their communities.

## Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Disability, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

## Geography

- Somerset

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£1,610,632	£1,296,758	£1,380,672	26
2024-03-31	£1,345,682	£1,268,729	£570,164	30
2023-03-31	£1,026,916	£924,724	£493,211	27
2022-03-31	£872,358	£722,836	£391,019	27
2021-03-31	£588,327	£502,714	£241,497	21

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>Grahame Paine</b>	Chair	2022-03-21
Belinda Margaret Lock		2026-01-26
Debra Marie Drew		2023-06-15
Emily Katherine Taylor		2021-10-24
Ian John Bramley		2023-09-06
Joseph James Mcgregor-harper		2024-09-24
Martin John Green		2026-01-26

**SPARK SOMERSET**

England & Wales - Charity number 1179438

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# Accounts

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**SPARK SOMERSET**  
(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

**CHARITY NUMBER: 1179438**

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## **REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**

### **Directors and Trustees**

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The directors of the charitable company (“the charity”) are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees who served during the period and up to the date the accounts were approved are as follows:

Grahame Paine  
Emily Taylor  
Melanie Merrill  
Debra Drew  
Ian Bramley  
Victoria Offord (resigned on 4 December 2024)  
Rebecca Chandler (appointed 26 March 2025)  
Joseph McGregor-Harper (appointed 24 September 2024)

The registered office for the period of this report is  
**Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard**  
**Bowdens Farm**  
**Hambridge**  
**LANGPORT**  
**Somerset**  
**TA10 0BP**

The bankers are Co-operative Bank (UK) Plc

The Senior Statutory Auditor is Mr Dave Tucker, Thompson Jenner LLP, 1 Colleton Crescent, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4DG.

The full name of the Charity is Spark Somerset. Charitable Incorporated Organisation, number 1179438.

# You said, we did.

**Impact Report 2024/25**

**Together we don't  
just talk about change,  
we make it happen.**

# Contents

Click each section to view our impact.

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# Community-led solutions are the answer to some of the biggest challenges in society

As Somerset's infrastructure charity, we help strengthen the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector through practical support, connecting people and organisations, and championing local voices. Everything we do is shaped by what matters most to you: supporting our local communities.



# Our work

Our work is shaped by the findings from 'Reflect, Recover, Renew', a project we undertook following the pandemic where we worked with the sector to develop a 'road-map' for success. Everything we do at Spark Somerset reflects the priorities we identified together: *Collaborative, Funded, Community-led, Recognised, Coordinated.*

We were successful in attracting additional funding this year, which meant we could invest in a range of new pilot projects, responding to the needs identified.

## You said, we did...

'You said, we did' has been a real theme for us over the last 12 months, and we're delighted to share the impact of this work with you.

### An appropriately funded VCFSE with:

- \* Sustainable organisations
- \* Common priorities shaped by community need
- \* Totality of costs recognised



### A community-led VCFSE which:

- \* Understands community needs
- \* Plans for the future
- \* Works in partnership with volunteers
- \* Has equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart



### A collaborative VCFSE with:

- \* Reciprocity and joint project delivery
- \* Clear pathways for service users



### A coordinated VCFSE with:

- \* Enhanced opportunities to network and connect within and across sectors
- \* Meaningful and supportive professional relationships
- \* Streamlined core organisational procedures and training
- \* Improved coordination with statutory and public services



### A recognised VCFSE which:

- \* Raises awareness of the sector
- \* Recognises the uniqueness of Somerset



# Building capacity, now and in the future

We continue to be a trusted source of free support and advice for charities, community groups and social enterprises. We work alongside them as they go on their journey from set-up through to development, supporting them to thrive.



**You said:**



*"We need help accessing and finding grants. Identifying, researching, and cascading accessible information about potential grants and funders is crucial."*

**We did:**

This year, we've been proud to support

**582 groups**

on their journey to grow and thrive.

**Neighbourhoods**  
**Sustainability** **Safeguarding**  
**Communities** **Networking**  
**Governance**  
**Advocacy** **Collaborations**  
**Training** **Partnerships**  
**Volunteer management** **Inclusivity** **Funding**  
**Impact** **Trustees** **Peer to peer support**  
**Capacity building**  
**Research**

# Building capacity, now and in the future

Thanks to Shared Prosperity Funding, we were able to enhance our core support offering - providing tailored guidance to 287 organisations through in-depth 'health checks' and long-term planning conversations. This has helped them to explore their strategic priorities and long-term sustainability.

We worked with two Funding & Enterprise consultants who have been supporting groups with immediate and longer-term funding needs. Together, the organisations we've supported have secured over £1.5 million in funding, helping to bring vital new services and resources into Somerset communities.



Securing over  
**£1.5 million**  
in funding



"Again, we turned to Spark Somerset to ask for their help and Jenny Hannis gave us brilliant advice. You're the experts in the infrastructure side of things."

**John Chettoe, Wells Community Network**



"We are reaping the rewards of your funding advice and our diligent work. At the moment I've got a 100% success rate... we will keep on coming to events and asking for more advice as we go along."

**Jenny Archard, Neroche Woodlanders**



Click to read  
the story



# Supporting our people

Our people are our greatest assets - the vital support services we provide simply couldn't continue without the brilliant, passionate and experienced people that we work with. Supporting our people throughout the year has been - and will continue to be - a key priority for us.

## You said:

*"We need solid core training for all VCFSEs plus bespoke training for different organisations."*



## We did:

We delivered 73 training and networking sessions to 1,323 people. From one-off webinars through to in-depth courses, all were designed to build skills, confidence, and connections.


Subjects included, Fundraising Skills, Marketing, Safeguarding, Suicide Awareness and Youth Work, Volunteer Recruitment and Retention, Power BI, First Aid, HR for Beginners, and more.

**73**  
Training and  
networking  
sessions

**1,323**  
People  
participated

# Supporting our people

We ran a series of Skills Bootcamps and Leadership and Management courses to help develop the next generation of voluntary sector leaders. An added benefit of these courses has been the peer support relationships that have developed – and are still going strong - after the course has ended.

 [Click to read the story](#)

“This session really helped to focus my mind on how to set up a strategy and work with stakeholders. Thank you.”

**Attendee, Writing your Fundraising Strategy for Diversifying Funds**



“The Leaders course was invaluable. Having the course sector specific allowed us to relate the content and understand each person’s situation.”

**Lauren Haddon,  
Arc Inspire**



“A very good session, well delivered, well-pitched, informative and engaging. The HR trainer was knowledgeable and able to answer questions and relate content to the specific needs of the VCFSE sector. I appreciated the common-sense approach and signposting to further resources.”

**Becca Swaine, Somerset Art Works**



### You said:

*"We need to recognise talented people willing to share knowledge. Maybe have a directory of those people."*

### We did:

We launched our new SkillShare initiative, which connects smaller groups with generous individuals from larger organisations willing to share their knowledge and time - building stronger networks and mutual support.

*"I've only been to a few meetings, but I've gained a lot. I work alone from home, so these meetings lift my spirits and help me feel like I'm actually working with other people, not going it alone."*

**Colin Gummer, Volunteer, Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign**

*"Being able to speak to experts in fields in which we have no experience and then being signposted to places where we can gain more knowledge is essential for a small organisation that is looking to grow. The information that we have received has been invaluable."*

**Emma Lefevre,  
Wells Community Network**

### You said:

*"I think we need opportunities to build and form partnerships and collaborations."*

### We did:

We established three new peer-to-peer support networks for Trustees, Communications Staff and Fundraisers attended by over 85 people – in addition to the established Volunteering Coordinator Forums we have been running for many years.

# Sparking change through social action

We're passionate about the value of social action and volunteering to support vital services and activities, improve wellbeing, and build stronger, more resilient communities. Volunteers are the beating heart of so many services in Somerset, but we know that recruiting and retaining them remains a real challenge. To help address this, we deliver a range of services, projects and initiatives which aim to improve the quantity and diversity of volunteering in Somerset.

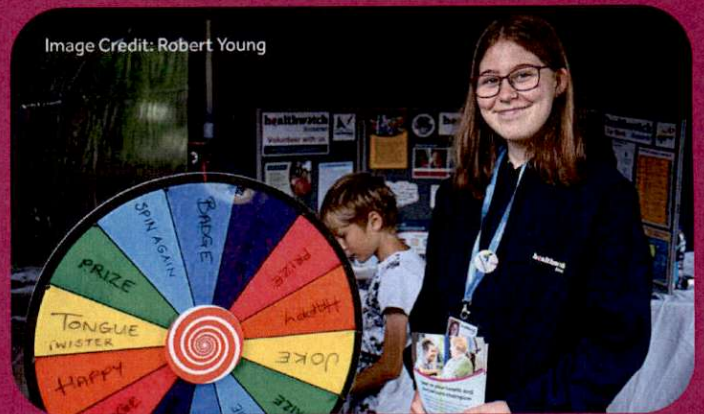
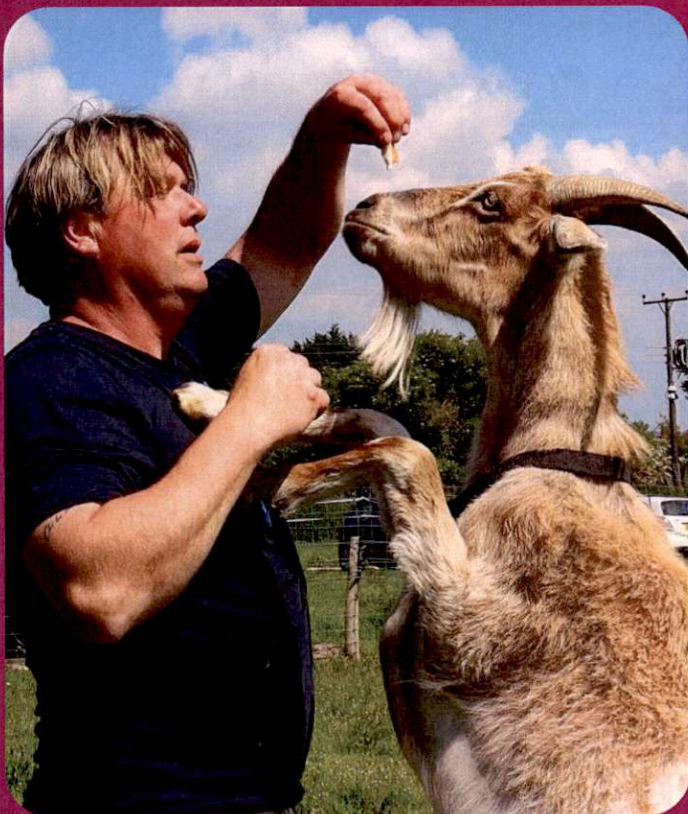


Image Credit: Robert Young

**You said:**

*“Volunteers in Somerset are essential, aren't they, in all sorts of areas...It's a real struggle to find active volunteers.”*



**We did:**

We held four in-person forums for over 100 Volunteer Coordinators to share ideas, resources, and best practice. Our volunteering platform, Spark a Change, welcomed over 85,000 visits this year - more than double the previous year - helping more people connect with meaningful opportunities.

**1,430**

**New volunteers registered on Spark a Change this year**



Click here to watch the Volunteering Video

Click here to watch the Volunteers' Week Video



“The team at Spark Somerset are inspirational and run some refreshing events - a great time to reflect on our volunteering offering and the journey involved. Thank you team Spark!”

**Tina Huntington, RSPCA West Hatch Animal Centre**

“I have always found Spark Somerset to be very approachable and the support they provide is varied and useful. When the Volunteer Coordinators of Somerset meet as a group under Spark's eye, it is rare to come away without a nugget of gold.”

**Andrew Pattie, Balsam Centre**

**You said:**



*"We need better awareness and marketing of the benefits that volunteering has on people. It's altruistic, but volunteers also get something for themselves in giving their time."*

**We did:**

To help break down barriers to volunteering, we launched a county-wide campaign to showcase a range of stories and the positive impact of getting involved. This resulted in twice as many new volunteers registering on Spark a Change, an increase of 714 on the previous year.



[Click here to watch our Volunteering Campaign Video](#)



**85,000**

**Visitors to Spark a Change**

**376**

**New volunteer opportunities registered**



*"We have been really pleased with the support of this campaign in raising ARK's profile and volunteering opportunities. It has been very influential in a recent surge in people looking to support us with volunteering."*

**Nigel Bell, ARK at Egwood**

*"Volunteering has given me so much — new perspectives, greater understanding of others, and a real sense of connection. It opened my eyes to so many things that I hadn't thought about in terms of where I live, the wildlife, the habitats, and what other people are experiencing."*

**Jo, Volunteer**

"I loved Fit for Work; I really enjoyed it. It was really fun, and I got to meet new people. I learnt to help other people and helped people get involved with activities. I learnt how to communicate and work as a team, and this has helped me with my volunteering when I am leading."

**Betty, Volunteer, SASP Fit for Work & Nova Sports**



Click to read the story

# But there are lots of ways to give back to your community – and ‘traditional’ volunteering isn’t the only way.

## You said:

*“We need to look at working with additional specific communities of interest or place-based groups to start building skills/trust needed for more collaborative working.”*



## We did:

Hoping to reach out to people who don’t usually volunteer, we ran community organising pilots in Highbridge and the Westfield and Birchfield areas of Yeovil, working alongside more than 1,000 community members, supporting 61 organisations, and enabling 53 events.

Our team worked with local residents to support them to develop new projects themselves including the ‘Great Highbridge Drop-in’, a free family event, a new ‘Tea and Poetry’ group and the development of the Birchfield Action Group, a monthly space for developing new projects and events.

Working alongside  
**1,012**  
residents

Enabling  
**53**  
events

“Poetry has been a huge success for us. We have had engagement from learners who are normally reluctant to try new things. More importantly, it has given our Learners the chance to speak in public, be listened to and praised for their words.”

**Joe Knights, Able2Achieve**

 [Click to read the story](#)



Working with the Somerset Community Foundation, the project also provided £6,000 of seed funding for local grassroots activities. Decisions about how the funding was spent in their community were made by local residents via a participatory grant-making panel.

# £6,000

Seed funding for local grassroots activities



“Community Organisers are a vital connection to the community. The insights we’re gaining are invaluable. It’s not just a means to an end but an outcome itself - building knowledge, leadership, relationships, and agency among participants. I’m eager to see the community’s ideas and watch new initiatives take shape.”

**Kirsty Campbell, Somerset Community Foundation**



**SPARK iT**   
your digital discovery

# Discovering digital

Increasingly, digital solutions are providing transformative opportunities for charities and community groups – enabling us to help more people, more effectively and more efficiently. Technology also helps us to reach more people - and brings our sector closer together through collaboration and shared learning. Technology can also help us connect and work together better as a sector.

## You said:

*“Improve collaborative working and sharing of resources and ideas.”*

## We did:

We created the VCFSE ShareSpace, an online hub where colleagues can share ideas and resources, ask questions, and connect with their peers.



*“The chat channels are really useful and people are always happy to offer suggestions and advice. It is yet another valuable resource for charity workers courtesy of Spark Somerset and I think it will continue to evolve into a much-used resource.”*

**Jo Morrison, YMCA, Taunton**

# Demonstrating our collective impact as a sector can be a real challenge.

## You said:

*"If it were understood just how much we contribute, perhaps resources and genuine collaborative approaches would follow."*



## We did:

Working with a range of VCFSE organisations, we have taken the first steps to addressing this, developing an Insights Hub: an online space where we are creating common impact measures and a system for VCFSE organisations, large and small, to record the impact of their work. Still in development, the platform includes a knowledge library and a mapping and data bank where we can all report on shared impact measures.



Example of Insights Hub webpage ▾



Although digital solutions have been a real focus in our work this year, we know that getting online isn't always easy.

**You said:**

*"Many people and families lack access to tech equipment, which ultimately, many services rely on, like benefits and housing. Access needs to improve."*

**We did:**

Working in partnership with community spaces and local volunteers, the Spark iT project hosted 25 digital cafés. Supported by 30 volunteer champions, over 800 skills sessions and 157 refurbished devices were provided to those who need them most.

# 809

Digital skills sessions

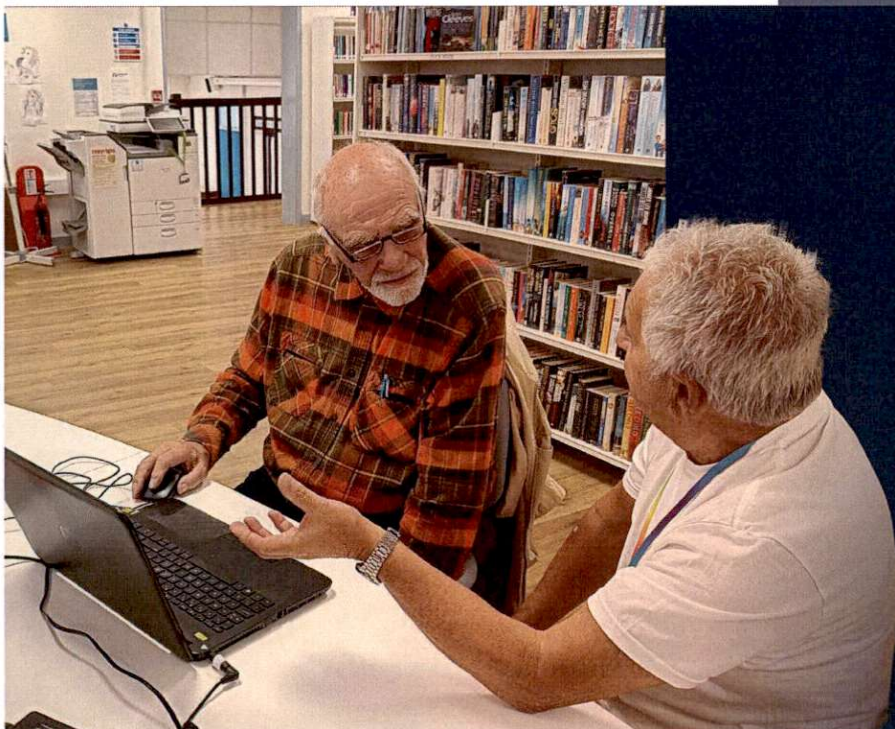
Supporting

# 4,672

clients

*"I hope to re-engage with technology to have a more fulfilling life and hopefully learn skills, study, become more independent and improve my chances of returning to work. Thank you so much for this opportunity - it's a real lifeline."*

**Sara, client**



*"John had a Stroke in December 2024 and lost his wife in January 2025. He has had a lot of change. He used to love writing books but due to his stroke, he became unable to write well anymore. A recycled device means that now he can type or dictate his writing, greatly improving his quality of life and mental wellbeing."*

**The Stroke Association**

# Stronger together

This year we have worked hard to strengthen the voice of the Somerset VCFSE sector, providing opportunities for collaboration with public sector partners.



**You said:**

*"We need to establish our place as a key partner for the new local authority, ICB and newly merged NHS trust."*



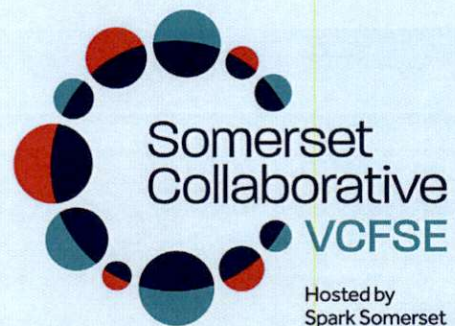
**We did:**

With over 50 member organisations, the VCFSE Collaborative - hosted by Spark Somerset- is a vital bridge between the voluntary sector and public bodies, championing shared values and joint working. It has an independent Chair, supported by a Steering Group of key leaders. Building on the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#), signed by system leaders, the Collaborative holds events, forums and shares regular updates with

members from the Council and ICB. Thanks to the Collaborative, we have helped shape outcomes in a number of areas including VCFSE representation on the Board of Governors for Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, formal VCFSE contribution to the Somerset Council Peer Review, and enhanced relationships between the sector and commissioners.

**50**

**VCFSE voices in the Somerset VCFSE Collaborative**



*"Just wanted to say how fab the Collaborative Bulletin is - it's amazing to see all the hard work coming together."*

**Val Bishop, CEO, Thrive**



**You said:**

*"I think we need opportunities to build and form partnerships and collaborations."*

**We did:**

We hosted a partnership event at Haynes Motor Museum in 2024, attended by more than 100 leaders from across the VCFSE, health and the local authority, to strengthen relationships, commit to working together and discuss how to bring the MoU to life.

In October we hosted 'Live Well in Somerset' - a celebration of Social Prescribing in the county with inspiring talks, interactive workshops, and networking attended by 130 people.



[Click here to watch the Live Well in Somerset Video](#)





“A wonderful opportunity to continue to champion the VCFSE sector in this space and provide an opportunity to build relationships and foster trust between the sectors.”

**Mel Smith-Wild,  
British Red Cross**



“I really enjoyed the conference and had a brilliant insight into what needs to be done within Social Prescribing in Somerset, let alone the rest of the country! Thank you for allowing me to be part of something really inspiring and meaningful.”

**Kathy Fellender-Clark,  
Health Connections Mendip**



“Excellent to get so many commissioners in the room. The informal and semi-structured networking opportunities were key to the success of the day.”

**Sue Place, The Balsam Centre**

## Stronger together

Strongly aligned with the work of the Collaborative, we also supported and coordinated a range of thematic networks to support closer partnership working.

With 77 members, the Dementia Partnership supports the development of a Dementia Strategy for Somerset to improve the lives of those living with and caring for those with dementia.

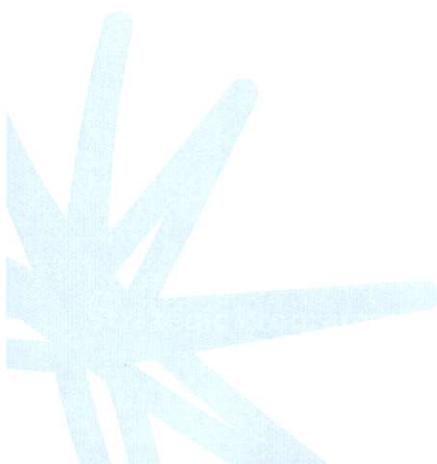


“Spark Somerset have been instrumental in pulling together, and coordinating, our new Somerset Dementia Wellbeing Service. Cindy has done fantastic work in putting together an informal alliance of 60+ VCFSE dementia organisations to work proactively together to deliver, and improve, dementia services in partnership with our statutory providers and we could not have done this without her.”

**David Sealey, Assistant Commissioning Manager for Mental Health Services, NHS Somerset**

“Let’s keep championing how support for people living with Dementia is delivered. We will only settle for the very best in Somerset.”

**Kate Smith, Associate Director Strategic Programmes, NHS Somerset**



Engaged with

49

members of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Network

23

Organisations engaged with the Somerset Youth Alliance

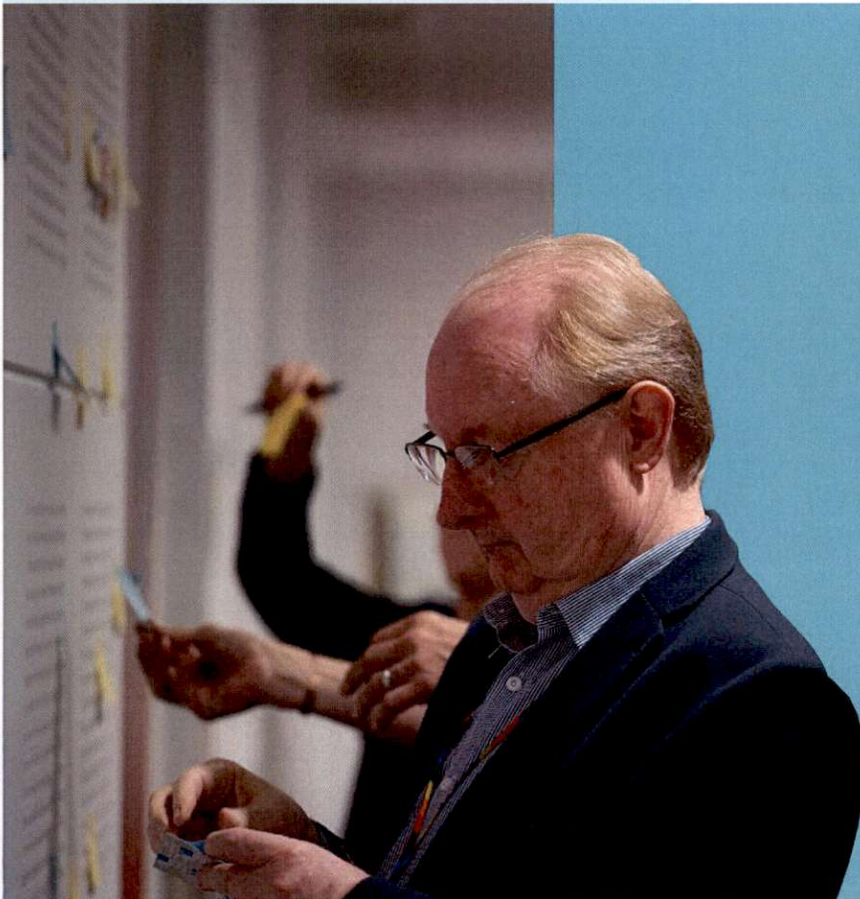
**You said:**

*"We need to develop a strong case and strategy for the youth sector in Somerset. One that not only advocates the importance of youth work in the county, but also spotlights youth mental health as an essential priority."*

**We did:**

A new initiative this year, the Children and Young People's Mental Health Network already has 49 members and meets regularly to enable close partnership working and better outcomes for young people.

The Somerset Youth Alliance is a network of 23 youth organisations which aims to grow the infrastructure and profile of youth work, supporting them with training, guidance and collaboration.



*"Liz Loud's background and experience mean that "she gets it" - she knows what helps and hinders charities like ours.....She identifies opportunities and focuses your resources to the benefit of PROMISEworks and other charities like us that are dedicated to improving the lives of children and young people across Somerset. Liz is also building stronger links across those organisations and, in doing so, helping to create a single voice for the sector."*

**Kev O'Donnell, Trustee, PROMISEworks**

“Spark has played a vital role in helping the ICB strengthen partnerships with the VCFSE sector across Somerset. Over the past year, Spark Somerset has been instrumental in shaping our thinking around more inclusive and sustainable commissioning models, including early work to explore a VCFSE network and alliance-based approaches. Their insight and ability to bring partners together has added real value to our strategic planning and helped ensure the voice of the sector is better reflected in how we design and procure services.”

**Rose Firth, Head of Commissioning and Localities –  
Women’s and Children’s Commissioning, NHS Somerset**



# SOMERSET YOUTH ALLIANCE

“The Somerset Youth Alliance was involved with Hestercombe Local Community Network and Children and Young People Working Group from the start and was key to bringing together a group that were focused on a needs-led solution.”

**Emmaline Kay, LCN Link Worker**



Click to read  
the story

In partnership with Turtle  
CYP, the Somerset Youth  
Alliance has supported a  
training programme for

# 32

newly qualified  
youth workers



“I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate the course you have been facilitating for my volunteer.....She has developed so much since starting the course and now we are able to work in partnership to ensure that we can provide a super provision for our young people.”

**West Monkton Parish Council**

# Listened to, recognised and valued

While our sector plays an essential role in Somerset life, it's not always fully recognised - and many feel their voices go unheard. We are working hard to improve visibility amongst the public, stakeholders and funders of the incredible contributions made by VCFSE organisations to our community.

## You said:

*"Sometimes when I'm talking to colleagues who are coming from a statutory perspective, they use the word collaborate, well, actually, they actually mean as a partnership, or a contract, where they're the commissioner, and you're doing what they want you to do."*



## We did:

This year, we undertook comprehensive research into the State of the Sector, working with over 300 organisations to build a fuller picture of the challenges and strengths across Somerset. We commissioned Quay Research to develop a suite of reports, including a summary, a main report and lessons from the national picture.

One of the many fascinating insights from the report was that many colleagues feel we often don't get the recognition we deserve. This prompted us to write an Opinion Piece which we have used to amplify the sector's voice. It was downloaded 868 times and shared widely during presentations to senior leaders across the ICB, Somerset NHS Foundation and Somerset Council.

[Click here to read more about the State of the Sector](#)



[Click here to read our downloadable Opinion Piece](#)



QUAY RESEARCH

SPARK  
SOMERSET  
Inspiring communities

# Collaboration between the VCFSE and Public Sector in Somerset: challenge or opportunity?

Commissioned by Spark Somerset  
Quay Research, October 2024

"Spark Somerset are a critical partner for Somerset Council. Whether it is developing thinking around our collective vision for Somerset or leading the development of the sector through their collaborations, life in Somerset is better because of Spark. I was really pleased to be able to work with Spark on an opinion piece that considered the relationship between voluntary and community partners and the public sector. Some of the issues identified and named in that piece have changed our thinking around how we engage with and commission the sector."

**Duncan Sharkey, Chief Executive, Somerset Council**

Prof Michael  
John Ryan Aslett  
Director

# Listened to, recognised and valued

We've seen encouraging growth in awareness of our work, and of the wider sector's value. Compared to the same period last year, our newsletter subscribers are up by 24% to 2,828, our new, more accessible website has seen a 15% increase in the number of users to 22,596, and our social media following is up 23% at 4,453.

We talk to colleagues in our sector every day about their challenges, opportunities and aspirations for the future and this is one of the messages we hear loud and clear: "nothing about us without us". More and more, people are recognising the vital role that communities themselves play in tackling society's most pressing issues. A key area of development for us this year has been about listening and learning and supporting the sector to improve their community engagement skills.



# 15%

Increase in website users

# 24%

Increase in newsletter subscribers



"The monthly newsletter is incredibly useful. There's always at least one useful 'take-away' along with links to relevant events, and funding sources. It's in a format that is easy to follow and read and is just the right length."

**Maria Bailey, Grief Specialists**

**You said:**

*“Groups can do as much as possible but if there is no feedback from the community, how do you know that it’s needed?”*



**We did:**

Our team worked with NHS Somerset and Somerset Council to improve community participation in research. Spark Somerset’s role has been to advocate for VCFSE involvement in research and champion lived experience and community voices.

Although this work is in its early stages, there is a growing recognition of the importance of “community experts” and the VCFSE, especially when working with under-served communities. We funded seven community-based leaders, training them to be ‘Research Connectors’, who then shared their knowledge, skills and learning with other colleagues across the sector.



We held our first Research Conference in May – 72 delegates from 45 organisations heard from a range of speakers, academic and social researchers, community groups, health and the local authority.

**72**

**Delegates attended our Research Conference**



# £15,000

Invested in the sector for community research

“It was really great to hear from different types of researchers. There is a lot of energy in the county for more pooling of research expertise and learnings.”

**Conference delegate**



“The process of conducting the research taught me a lot and I was able to encourage my group to respond confidently. Like me, they were all thrilled to be asked their opinion as they often feel unheard. I felt like the mouthpiece for these people and the wider voluntary sector.”

**Margaret Tatham, Watchet and Quantocks Dementia Action Alliance and Research Connector**

# Thank you.

It's been a busy year for Spark Somerset, but we couldn't have done it without you - our funders, partners, stakeholders, volunteers and Spark team. A huge thank you to every individual and organisation that has worked alongside us this year; it has been an absolute pleasure. Although there will always be challenging times to navigate, we look forward to continuing to work and collaborate with you to ensure we have the vibrant, dynamic and sustainable VCFSE sector we need to support people in Somerset.



**Katherine Nolan**  
Chief Executive,  
Spark Somerset



**Grahame Paine**  
Chair of Trustees,  
Spark Somerset



## We'd love to hear from you!

Please visit our website, follow us on social media, send us an email or sign up to receive our regular newsletters.



[sparksomerset.org.uk](https://sparksomerset.org.uk)

01458 550973 | [support@sparksomerset.org.uk](mailto:support@sparksomerset.org.uk)  
Units 3 & 4, The Courtyard, Bowdens Farm, Hambridge, TA10 0BP

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**SPARK**  
**SOMERSET**  
Inspiring communities

## TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2025

### Structure, Governance and Management

---

Spark Somerset, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, was incorporated on 3 August 2018. The operations of Spark Somerset moved from the charity South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) from 1 January 2019. The Board of Trustees made this decision for numerous compelling reasons, one of these being continued sustainability. Three trustees from SSVCA moved to become trustees of the new charity, Spark Somerset.

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee is appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. When a trustee has served the three-year term, they will retire from office at the subsequent Annual General Meeting and can then seek re-election. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. A procedure has been introduced for the induction and training of trustees. The trustees attend board meetings every three months.

The trustees delegate the overall management of Spark Somerset to the Chief Executive. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. The trustees regularly review their documented risk management policies.

### Objects of the Charity and Principal Activity

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The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. The structure and content of this report is designed to reflect the requirement to explain how the Charity has operated within that guidance.

**Our vision** is of a Somerset where anyone can make great things happen for their communities.

**Our mission** is to support and champion Somerset's voluntary and community organisations to help change lives and build healthy, resilient communities. We're passionate about the power of community to transform people's lives and enhance their health and happiness

#### **Our values**

##### **We are collaborative**

We help build strong partnerships, support effective connections and share knowledge to achieve the greatest impact in our communities.

##### **We are empowering**

We value the wisdom in communities and take pride in sharing our collective knowledge and experience to encourage and enable others to develop the skills and confidence they need.

##### **We have integrity**

We strive to build trusting relationships with the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector so that we can advocate on their behalf, positively contributing to decisions, and ensuring that the sector is heard and valued as an equal partner.

##### **We are responsive**

We proactively seek opportunities to learn, take time to listen, find creative solutions and adapt so that we, and those we support, can make a real difference to people in need.

##### **We are inclusive**

We are approachable, friendly and open. We look to the future and explore new ways of doing things, with inclusivity and equity at our core.

## **Our Core Activities**

### **Support for voluntary and community groups**

- Setting up, governance
- Funding advice, business planning
- Support via our website, social media and also through our weekly e-bulletin
- Volunteer management, recruitment and retention
- Supporting partnerships and collaboration
- Training

### **‘Spark a Change’ Volunteer Service**

We run a volunteering brokerage service, engaging with local communities to improve the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering, matching individuals to a cause that matters to them. We also promote the value of volunteering and social action and work with local partners to ensure that it can flourish.

As well as supporting individuals to take part in social action, we encourage volunteering good practice amongst the groups with whom we work, providing guidance, support and training.

### **Voice of the Sector**

The Spark Somerset team represents the voluntary sector in a range of different forums, including these examples below:

- NHS Integrated Care Board
- Somerset ICB People Board
- Somerset Board (Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Partnership – Committee in common)

As the independent infrastructure organisation in Somerset, we represent the local voluntary sector at community, County, Regional and National level. We also listen to the needs of the local sector so that we can shape and develop the support we provide accordingly.

## **Reserves Policy and Risk Management**

---

It is the intention of the Trustees that the freely available reserves of the Charity should be sufficient to ensure the continuance of its activities, should there be an unexpected short-term adverse fluctuation in income. The Trustees consider that an appropriate level of free reserves is approximately three to six months' normal expenditure. This equates to approximately £325,000 - £650,000. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 there was a total of £873,158 of funding freely available for general purposes. The Trustees are satisfied that the long-term financial plans generate sufficient free reserves to satisfy its reserves policy over the coming 12 months and beyond.

The Trustees review the charity's Reserves Policy on an annual basis. This review is based on the future strategy and financial plans for the charity, as well as the environment which the charity is operating in at the time. The Trustees will make adjustments to the reserves based on this review and set them at a level that is deemed appropriate for the coming year. Reserve policy remains at up to six months in light of ever changing needs and funding.

Having reviewed the reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and taken into consideration the pending reduction in financial support from the public sector and the evolving unitary structure, the Trustees are satisfied that the current higher level is proportionate to the risks faced by the charity.

The Trustees have examined and addressed the financial risks to which the Charity is exposed and in association with its insurers, has mitigated those risks to the best of its ability.

## Transactions and Financial Position

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During the period the Charity incurred total expenditure of £1,296,758 (2024: £1,268,729) of which £1,290,414 (2024: £1,250,427) was directly charitable.

Over the year the Charity received income of £1,610,632 (2024: £1,842,316 restated from £1,345,682) leading to an overall surplus of £313,874 (2024: £573,587 restated from £76,953). The Balance sheet shows total reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 of £1,380,672 (2024: £1,066,798 restated from £570,164).

## Chair's Report

---

I commend to you this report of how Spark Somerset has deployed its considerable activity during 2024/25 where I am grateful for the strong collaboration with others in the voluntary, community, faith, social enterprise and our private and public sector partners.

Our Board and management team have looked hard at how funding for the sector has evolved, especially since the pandemic, when more traditional sources of funding have diminished and we have had to establish brighter sources for organisations around Somerset. Funding in the previous year was already changing shape for us and Spark Somerset had to make some difficult choices to prioritise pieces of work with greater longevity and change the shape of our wonderful team to suit.

Trustees are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the development at our refreshed strategy where our excellent senior leadership team have picked up the reins of new approaches alongside those well trodden elements to establish a more sustainable path for us going forward.

Demand from the sector in Somerset has barely diminished though, and our Impact Report illustrates the importance of maintaining the high quality support that Spark has continued to deliver to many in the county. The use of digital solutions for sharing vacancies, learning and experience has continued to develop and our team have risen to the challenge of being more available through digital routes, I hope our partners benefit from our continued development in this area.

2025/26 sees the launch of an even greater focus on volunteers. The great benefits that individuals, sector organisations, private sector businesses and the wider public receive from a very active volunteering base are already obvious and we hope that our stronger support here will drive more volunteering with larger benefits over time.

I and my Board colleagues are immensely proud of the successes we have contributed to Somerset sector organisations through the hard work of our expert team members who contribute to making sure that citizens benefit from strong leadership in our sector. We hope you enjoy this full breakdown of our year.

Chair of Trustees



Grahame Paine

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

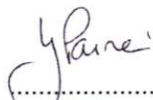
The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on ~~26th Jan '26~~ and signed on its behalf by:



.....  
**G-R Paine**  
Trustee

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Spark Somerset (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising Charities SORP - FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

#### Basis for opinion

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

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

#### Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### **Comparative information**

The comparative information is audited.

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

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

#### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities (set out on page 38), the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

#### **Auditor Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

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

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

#### **The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud**

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the charity through discussions with trustees and other management, and from our commercial knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the charity, including the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, taxation legislation, data protection, anti-bribery, employment, environmental, fire safety and health and safety legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management, reviewing licenses, certificates and relevant correspondence including the inspection of legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- reviewing correspondence with HMRC, relevant regulators and the charity's legal advisors.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

#### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the trustees those matters we are required to state to trustees in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*Thompson Jenner LLP*

.....  
Dave Tucker FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
For and on behalf of Thompson Jenner LLP, Statutory Auditor

1 Colleton Crescent  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4DG

Date: *27 January 2026*

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	3	7,002	-	7,002
Charitable activities	4	528,629	1,068,082	1,596,711
Investment income	5	6,919	-	6,919
Total income		<u>542,550</u>	<u>1,068,082</u>	<u>1,610,632</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	6	(6,344)	-	(6,344)
Charitable activities	6	(233,212)	(1,057,202)	(1,290,414)
Total expenditure		<u>(239,556)</u>	<u>(1,057,202)</u>	<u>(1,296,758)</u>
Net income		<u>302,994</u>	<u>10,880</u>	<u>313,874</u>
Net movement in funds		302,994	10,880	313,874
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		<u>570,164</u>	<u>496,634</u>	<u>1,066,798</u>
Total funds carried forward	19	<u><u>873,158</u></u>	<u><u>507,514</u></u>	<u><u>1,380,672</u></u>

The notes on pages 47 to 64 form an integral part of these financial statements.

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £ (As restated)
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	3	175,141	-	175,141
Charitable activities	4	163,533	1,497,777	1,661,310
Investment income	5	5,865	-	5,865
Total income		<u>344,539</u>	<u>1,497,777</u>	<u>1,842,316</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	6	(18,302)	-	(18,302)
Charitable activities	6	(249,284)	(1,001,143)	(1,250,427)
Total expenditure		<u>(267,586)</u>	<u>(1,001,143)</u>	<u>(1,268,729)</u>
Net income		<u>76,953</u>	<u>496,634</u>	<u>573,587</u>
Net movement in funds		76,953	496,634	573,587
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		<u>493,211</u>	-	<u>493,211</u>
Total funds carried forward	19	<u><u>570,164</u></u>	<u><u>496,634</u></u>	<u><u>1,066,798</u></u>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

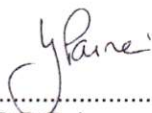
The funds breakdown for 2024 is shown in note 19.

## Spark Somerset

### (Registration number: 1179438) Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £ (As restated)
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	13	22,122	22,091
Tangible assets	14	<u>2,022</u>	<u>4,150</u>
		<u>24,144</u>	<u>26,241</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	15	394,984	396,181
Cash at bank and in hand	16	<u>1,346,521</u>	<u>937,884</u>
		1,741,505	1,334,065
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	17	<u>(384,977)</u>	<u>(293,508)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>1,356,528</u>	<u>1,040,557</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>1,380,672</u>	<u>1,066,798</u>
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>			
<b>Restricted income funds</b>			
Restricted funds	19	507,514	496,634
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds	19	<u>873,158</u>	<u>570,164</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	19	<u>1,380,672</u>	<u>1,066,798</u>

The financial statements on pages 43 to 64 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 26.Jan.'26.... and signed on their behalf by:

  
 .....  
 G R Paine  
 Trustee

## Spark Somerset

### Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £ (As restated)
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash income		313,874	573,587
<b>Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items</b>			
Depreciation		2,128	3,744
Amortisation		6,469	4,558
Interest receivable and similar income	5	<u>(6,919)</u>	<u>(5,865)</u>
		315,552	576,024
<b>Working capital adjustments</b>			
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	15	1,197	(116,015)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	17	17,540	(18,393)
Increase/(decrease) in deferred income	17	<u>73,929</u>	<u>(518,902)</u>
Net cash flows from operating activities		<u>408,218</u>	<u>(77,286)</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	6,919	5,865
Purchase of intangible fixed assets	13	(6,500)	(6,785)
Disposal of intangible fixed assets		-	1,573
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	14	<u>-</u>	<u>(2,805)</u>
Net cash flows from investing activities		<u>419</u>	<u>(2,152)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		408,637	(79,438)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		<u>937,884</u>	<u>1,017,322</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		<u><u>1,346,521</u></u>	<u><u>937,884</u></u>

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

#### 1 Charity status

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales.

The address of its registered office is:

Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard

Bowdens Farm

Hambridge

Langport

Somerset

TA10 0BP

#### 2 Accounting policies

##### Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

##### Basis of preparation

Spark Somerset meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

##### Prior period adjustment

The prior year has been adjusted to reflect a reassessment of the performance-related conditions attached to certain funding to reflect that performance-related conditions had been satisfied at the prior reporting date and therefore deferred income was overstated. As a result, deferred income has been reduced and income increased in the comparative figures, with an overall impact to restricted reserves carried forward at the prior year's period end. There has been no impact on overall funds over the life of the funding arrangements in relation to these adjustments.

	<b>31/03/2024</b>
	<b>Restated</b>
	<b>Amounts</b>
	<b>£</b>
SOFA: Restricted Income, Charitable Activities	496,634
BS: Creditors, Deferred Income	(496,634)
Reserves: Restricted Reserves	496,634

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### **Going concern**

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

#### **Income and endowments**

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

#### ***Donations and legacies***

Donations and legacies are recognised on a receivable basis when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

#### ***Grants receivable***

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

#### ***Deferred income***

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

#### ***Investment income***

Dividends are recognised once the dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the dividend due.

#### **Expenditure**

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

#### ***Raising funds***

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.

#### ***Charitable activities***

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

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### **Grant expenditure**

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled.

#### **Grant provisions**

Provisions for grants are made when the intention to make a grant has been communicated to the recipient but there is uncertainty about either the timing of the grant or the amount of grant payable.

#### **Governance costs**

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees meetings and reimbursed expenses.

#### **Taxation**

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

#### **Intangible assets**

Intangible assets are stated in the Balance Sheet at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment. They are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives.

#### **Tangible fixed assets**

Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost.

#### **Amortisation**

Amortisation is provided on intangible assets so as to write off the cost, less any estimated residual value, over their useful life as follows:

<b>Asset class</b>	<b>Amortisation method and rate</b>
Computer software	20% straight line

#### **Depreciation**

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

<b>Asset class</b>	<b>Depreciation method and rate</b>
Computer equipment	33% straight line

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

#### Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

#### Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if they do not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### Borrowings

Interest-bearing borrowings are initially recorded at fair value, net of transaction costs. Interest-bearing borrowings are subsequently carried at amortised cost, with the difference between the proceeds, net of transaction costs, and the amount due on redemption being recognised as a charge to the Statement of Financial Activities over the period of the relevant borrowing.

Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and similar charges.

Borrowings are classified as current liabilities unless the charity has an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting date.

#### Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

#### 3 Income from donations and legacies

	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Total funds £</b>
Donations and legacies;		
Donations	7,002	7,002
<b>Total for 2025</b>	7,002	7,002
<b>Total for 2024</b>	175,141	175,141

#### 4 Income from charitable activities

	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total 2025 £</b>
Provision of Advice, Training & Support	528,629	1,068,082	1,596,711
	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total 2024 £ (As restated)</b>
Provision of Advice, Training & Support	163,533	1,497,777	1,661,310

#### 5 Investment income

	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Total funds £</b>
Interest receivable and similar income;		
Interest receivable on bank deposits	6,919	6,919
<b>Total for 2025</b>	6,919	6,919
<b>Total for 2024</b>	5,865	5,865

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 6 Analysis of expenditure

	Cost of raising funds	Provision of advice, training & support	Support costs	Governance costs	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Wages and salaries	6,344	417,575	301,066	9,791	734,776	802,925
Other staff costs	-	55,723	9,836	-	65,559	63,228
Disclosure and barring service costs	-	18,985	285	-	19,270	6,918
Project equipment and other costs	-	-	474	-	474	593
Premises and other costs	-	2,832	19,679	-	22,511	35,668
Computer and software costs	-	14,937	7,264	-	22,201	21,020
Marketing, PR and events costs	-	24,360	15,069	-	39,429	11,233
Legal, insurance and professional	-	-	12,838	-	12,838	8,977
Consultancy costs	-	213,171	28,683	-	241,854	48,812
Grant payments	-	63,196	-	-	63,196	216,935
Other costs	-	55,262	19,388	-	74,650	52,420
	<u>6,344</u>	<u>866,041</u>	<u>414,582</u>	<u>9,791</u>	<u>1,296,758</u>	<u>1,268,729</u>
Support costs	-	414,582	(414,582)	-	-	-
Governance costs	-	9,791	-	(9,791)	-	-
Total expenditure 2025	<u>6,344</u>	<u>1,290,414</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,296,758</u>	<u>1,268,729</u>
Total expenditure 2024	<u>18,302</u>	<u>1,250,427</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,268,729</u>	<u>-</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 7 Grant-making

##### Analysis of grants

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Analysis</b>		
Individual Donations	-	8,552
Food Resilience Project	-	100,000
ICB Young People Food and Housing	-	83,000
Rural Communities	-	10,383
Research Engagement Network	-	6,000
Digital Inclusion Project	40,608	9,000
Dementia Alliance	88	-
Carers	3,500	-
Children and Young People Mental Health	2,300	-
Shared Prosperity Fund	12,800	-
What Makes You Happy	3,900	-
	<u>63,196</u>	<u>216,935</u>

#### 8 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2025 £	2024 £
Audit fees	6,000	5,775
Depreciation of fixed assets	2,128	3,744
Amortisation of intangible assets	6,469	4,558

#### 9 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 10 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Staff costs during the year were:</b>		
Wages and salaries	666,773	729,003
Social security costs	54,681	58,496
Pension costs	13,322	15,426
	<u>734,776</u>	<u>802,925</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2025 No	2024 No
Employees	<u>26</u>	<u>30</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £158,249 (2024 - £165,548).

#### 11 Auditors' remuneration

	2025 £	2024 £
Audit of the financial statements	<u>6,000</u>	<u>5,775</u>

#### 12 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 13 Intangible fixed assets

	Computer Software £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>		
At 1 April 2024	26,649	26,649
Additions	6,500	6,500
At 31 March 2025	<u>33,149</u>	<u>33,149</u>
<b>Amortisation</b>		
At 1 April 2024	4,558	4,558
Charge for the year	6,469	6,469
At 31 March 2025	<u>11,027</u>	<u>11,027</u>
<b>Net book value</b>		
At 31 March 2025	<u>22,122</u>	<u>22,122</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>22,091</u>	<u>22,091</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 14 Tangible fixed assets

	<b>Computer equipment £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Cost</b>		
At 1 April 2024	17,681	17,681
At 31 March 2025	<u>17,681</u>	<u>17,681</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
At 1 April 2024	13,531	13,531
Charge for the year	<u>2,128</u>	<u>2,128</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>15,659</u>	<u>15,659</u>
<b>Net book value</b>		
At 31 March 2025	<u>2,022</u>	<u>2,022</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>4,150</u>	<u>4,150</u>

#### 15 Debtors

	<b>2025 £</b>	<b>2024 £</b>
Trade debtors	215,834	380,348
Prepayments	17,620	8,968
Accrued income	160,530	5,865
Other debtors	<u>1,000</u>	<u>1,000</u>
	<u>394,984</u>	<u>396,181</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 16 Cash and cash equivalents

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Cash at bank	1,176,521	767,884
Short-term deposits	170,000	170,000
	1,346,521	937,884

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

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£ (As restated)</b>
Trade creditors	20,639	14,883
Other taxation and social security	44,949	29,687
Other creditors	-	18
Pension scheme creditor	2,696	3,083
Accruals	9,120	12,197
Deferred income	307,573	233,640
	384,977	293,508
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Deferred income at 1 April 2024	233,640	752,542
Resources deferred in the period	307,573	233,640
Amounts released from previous periods	(233,640)	(752,542)
Deferred income at year end	307,573	233,640

#### 18 Pension and other schemes

##### Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents contributions payable by the charity to the scheme and amounted to £13,322 (2024 - £15,426).

Contributions totalling £2,696 (2024: £3,083) were payable to the scheme at the end of the year and are included in creditors.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 19 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<i>General</i>				
Unrestricted funds	570,164	542,550	(239,556)	873,158
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
Somerset County Council / CCS - Carers' Support	5,742	-	(5,742)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Digital Inclusion Project	-	155,200	(105,200)	50,000
National Lottery - Youth Work Alliance	88,767	-	(47,296)	41,471
NHS Somerset ICB - Children and Young People Mental Health	-	140,203	(47,503)	92,700
Somerset County Council - Mental Health Network	15,436	-	(1,436)	14,000
Rethink Mental Health Illness - OMH County Wide Specialism	-	63,815	(63,815)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Hypertension Blood Pressure Connector	28,360	-	-	28,360
NHS Somerset CCG - Dementia Alliance	10,000	28,060	(38,060)	-
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Dementia Roadshows	59,215	-	-	59,215
NHS Somerset CCG - Vaccination Volunteers	16,185	-	-	16,185
Somerset County Council - Reflect, Recover, Renew	82,279	-	(264)	82,015
Somerset County Council - Warm Spaces - Food Resilience	-	41,000	(41,000)	-
Rethink Mental Health Illness – OMH Underserved Communities	2,709	-	(2,709)	-
Public Sector Engagement	107,779	-	(45,279)	62,500
NHS Somerset ICB - Research Engagement Network (REN)	33,087	20,000	(53,087)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - The Together Fund	1,922	-	(1,922)	-

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
NHS Somerset ICB - Young People, Food & Housing	17,000	-	-	17,000
Core	28,153	1,515	-	29,668
Citizens Hub	-	15,000	(600)	14,400
What Makes You Happy	-	5,200	(5,200)	-
Somerset County Council - Health Determinants Research Collaboration	-	44,445	(44,445)	-
Shared Prosperity Fund	-	445,960	(445,960)	-
Volunteering for Health	-	102,684	(102,684)	-
Social Prescribing	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>496,634</u>	<u>1,068,082</u>	<u>(1,057,202)</u>	<u>507,514</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u><u>1,066,798</u></u>	<u><u>1,610,632</u></u>	<u><u>(1,296,758)</u></u>	<u><u>1,380,672</u></u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<i>General</i>				
Unrestricted funds	493,211	344,539	(267,586)	570,164
<b>Restricted</b>				
Somerset County Council / CCS - Carers' Support	-	51,898	(46,156)	5,742
NHS Somerset ICB - Digital Inclusion Project	-	105,967	(105,967)	-
Somerset Council - Connect Somerset Area Champion Contact Officers	-	17,280	(17,280)	-
National Lottery - Youth Work Alliance	-	166,844	(78,077)	88,767
Rural Practice Network - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	4,998	(4,998)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Children and Young People Mental Health	-	1,101	(1,101)	-
Somerset County Council - Mental Health Network	-	44,272	(28,836)	15,436
Rethink Mental Health Illness - OMH County Wide Specialism	-	17,573	(17,573)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Hypertension Blood Pressure Connector	-	31,002	(2,642)	28,360
NHS Somerset CCG - Dementia Alliance	-	35,520	(25,520)	10,000
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Dementia Roadshows	-	59,215	-	59,215
Lockwood Charitable Foundation - Health and Wellbeing in Somerset	-	47,588	(47,588)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - ICS Engagement	-	1,817	(1,817)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Vaccination Volunteers	-	16,185	-	16,185
Somerset County Council - Reflect, Recover, Renew	-	129,973	(47,694)	82,279
South Somerset District Council - Rural Recovery Projects	-	33,883	(33,883)	-
Sports England The Together Fund	-	2,076	(2,076)	-
Somerset County Council - Warm Spaces - Food Resilience	-	29,633	(29,633)	-
Rethink Mental Health Illness – OMH Underserved Communities	-	171,733	(169,024)	2,709

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Public Sector Engagement	-	225,708	(117,929)	107,779
NHS Somerset ICB - Research Engagement Network (REN)	-	60,000	(26,913)	33,087
Somerset Community Foundation - The Together Fund	-	3,552	(1,630)	1,922
Somerset County Council – Together for Mental Health Training & Covid Recovery	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Sedgemoor District Council – Wellbeing Directory	-	1,436	(1,436)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Young People, Food & Housing	-	200,000	(183,000)	17,000
Somerset County Council – Children & Young People Community Engagement	-	7,370	(7,370)	-
Core	-	28,153	-	28,153
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,497,777</u>	<u>(1,001,143)</u>	<u>496,634</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>493,211</u>	<u>1,842,316</u>	<u>(1,268,729)</u>	<u>1,066,798</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:-

Somerset County Council / CCS - delivering the peer group support element of the Somerset Carers' Service.

NHS Somerset ICB - Digital Inclusion Project - Improving access to physical, mental and social care by reducing digital poverty across Somerset.

Somerset Council - Connect Somerset Area Champion Contact Officers - to provide the provision to support Connect Somerset in the locality.

National Lottery - Youth Work Alliance - To support and develop the Somerset Youth work Alliance.

Rural Practice Network - Social Prescribing Link Worker - hosting of the SPLW.

NHS Somerset ICB - Children and Young People Mental Health- The development of a Somerset Children and Young People's Mental Health Network that can be used to establish a Children and Young People's Alliance robust and able to respond to opportunities and challenges within the area both financially and more generally (scoping phase during this period)

Somerset County Council - Mental Health Network - coordination of peer support network for VCSE organisations working in mental health.

Rethink Mental Illness - partner in Open Mental Health VCSE Alliance - chair of partnership board, provision of countywide volunteering infrastructure support and admin support for grants programme.

NHS Somerset ICB - Hypertension - Blood Pressure Community Connectors Coordinator post.

NHS Somerset CCG - Dementia Alliance - lead organisation for the delivery of roadshows.

Lockwood Charitable Foundation - Health and Wellbeing in Somerset - host organisation for Jenny Hartnoll, supporting health and wellbeing activity in Somerset and linking in with UK-wide work via the National Association for Social Prescribing (NASP)

NHS Somerset CCG - ICS Engagement - Supporting the voluntary sector to engage with the emerging Integrated Care System as part of the NHS England "Imbedding VCSE in the ICB".

Somerset County Council - Reflect, Recover, Renew - To support the development of the 5 key priorities identified by the Reflect, Recover, Renew survey report.

South Somerset District Council - Rural Recovery Projects - A project to assist rural communities in South Somerset in their recovery from Covid and to build future resilience to be able to meet future challenges such as the current Cost of Living crisis.

Sports England The Together Fund - to help keep people affected by the pandemic in Somerset, physically active.

Somerset County Council - Warm Spaces - Food Resilience - To develop and co-ordinate a warm spaces programme during winter and to work with stakeholders through task and finish groups to improve food resilience.

Public Sector Engagement Model, Somerset County Council - Supporting the development of a VCSE partnership engagement model.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

NHS Somerset ICB - Research Engagement Network (REN) - Funding to Spark Somerset for their support and work as a lead VCFSE partner in the Somerset Research Engagement Network Project.

NHS Somerset ICB - Children and Food, Young People and Housing - funding allocated to other VCFSE organisation to lead delivery.

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers - Short term to support vaccination programme and longer term 'bank' of volunteers (carried over from Covid.)

Core - providing infrastructure support to the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Sector in Somerset.

Citizen's Hub - supporting VCFSE engagement and participation in NHS Somerset Citizen's Hub.

What Makes you Happy - administer participation grants to community organisations who support children and young peoples mental health, on behalf of Somerset Council.

SCC - Health Determinants Research Collaboration - Support the Somerset Council HDRC project, providing a bridge between communities and the HDRC in order to develop community-based participatory research opportunities in Somerset.

Shared Prosperity Fund - to build capacity within the Voluntary, Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector and to support volunteering in Somerset.

Volunteering for Health - to build the capacity and capability of local health and care organisations in Somerset, through the development of volunteering infrastructure.

Social Prescribing - to coordinate a partnership event to celebrate Social Prescribing.

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Dementia Roadshows - to be the lead partner for the Dementia Partnership organising the delivery of Roadshows and Sharing of Excellence framework.

Rethink Mental Health Illness - OMH Underserved Communities - To improve the mental health of communities who don't traditionally engage with mental health services, thus increasing the reach of Open Mental Health and its ability to serve all communities in Somerset.

Somerset Community Foundation - The Together Fund - administer funding to Carers Groups to support physical activity.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

#### 20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2025 £
Intangible fixed assets	22,122	-	22,122
Tangible fixed assets	2,022	-	2,022
Current assets	926,418	815,087	1,741,505
Current liabilities	(77,404)	(307,573)	(384,977)
Total net assets	<u>873,158</u>	<u>507,514</u>	<u>1,380,672</u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2024 £ (As restated)
Intangible fixed assets	22,091	-	22,091
Tangible fixed assets	4,150	-	4,150
Current assets	642,028	692,037	1,334,065
Current liabilities	(98,105)	(195,403)	(293,508)
Total net assets	<u>570,164</u>	<u>496,634</u>	<u>1,066,798</u>

#### 21 Analysis of net funds

	At 1 April 2024 £	Financing cash flows £	At 31 March 2025 £
Cash at bank and in hand	937,884	408,637	1,346,521
Net debt	<u>937,884</u>	<u>408,637</u>	<u>1,346,521</u>
	At 1 April 2023 £	Financing cash flows £	At 31 March 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,017,322	(79,438)	937,884
Net debt	<u>1,017,322</u>	<u>(79,438)</u>	<u>937,884</u>

#### 22 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

**SPARK SOMERSET**

England & Wales - Charity number 1179438

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# Accounts

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**SPARK SOMERSET**  
(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

**CHARITY NUMBER: 1179438**

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2024  
REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND  
ADVISERS**

**Directors and Trustees**

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The directors of the charitable company ("the charity") are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees who served during the period and up to the date the accounts were approved are as follows:

Grahame Paine  
Emily Taylor  
Melanie Merrill  
Debra Drew  
Victoria Offord  
Stephen Woollett (resigned on 10/09/2024)  
Andrew Ridgewell (Resigned on 05/12/2023)  
Ian John Bramley (appointed on 06/09/2023)  
Joseph Mcgregor-harper (appointed on 24/09/2024)

The registered office for the period of this report is

**Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard  
Bowdens Farm  
Hambridge  
LANGPORT  
Somerset  
TA10 0BP**

The bankers are Co-operative Bank (UK) Plc

The Senior Statutory Auditor is Mr Dave Tucker, Thompson Jenner LLP, 1 Colleton Crescent, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4DG.

The full name of the Charity is Spark Somerset. Charitable Incorporated Organisation, number 1179438.

## Structure, Governance and Management

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Spark Somerset, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, was incorporated on 3 August 2018. The operations of Spark Somerset moved from the charity South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) from 1 January 2019. The Board of Trustees made this decision for numerous compelling reasons, one of these being continued sustainability. Three trustees from SSVCA moved to become trustees of the new charity, Spark Somerset.

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee is appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. When a trustee has served the three-year term, they will retire from office at the subsequent Annual General Meeting and can then seek re-election. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. A procedure has been introduced for the induction and training of trustees. The trustees attend board meetings every three months.

The trustees delegate the overall management of Spark Somerset to the Chief Executive. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. The trustees regularly review their documented risk management policies.

## Objects of the Charity and Principal Activity

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The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. The structure and content of this report is designed to reflect the requirement to explain how the Charity has operated within that guidance.

**Our vision** is of a Somerset where anyone can make great things happen for their communities.

**Our mission** is to support and champion Somerset's voluntary and community organisations to help change lives and build healthy, resilient communities. We're passionate about the power of community to transform people's lives and enhance their health and happiness

### Our values

#### **We are collaborative**

We help build strong partnerships, support effective connections and share knowledge to achieve the greatest impact in our communities.

#### **We are empowering**

We value the wisdom in communities and take pride in sharing our collective knowledge and experience to encourage and enable others to develop the skills and confidence they need.

#### **We have integrity**

We strive to build trusting relationships with the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector so that we can advocate on their behalf, positively contributing to decisions, and ensuring that the sector is heard and valued as an equal partner.

#### **We are responsive**

We proactively seek opportunities to learn, take time to listen, find creative solutions and adapt so that we, and those we support, can make a real difference to people in need.

#### **We are inclusive**

We are approachable, friendly and open. We look to the future and explore new ways of doing things, with inclusivity and equity at our core.

## **Our Core Activities**

### **Support for voluntary and community groups**

- Setting up, governance
- Funding advice, business planning
- Support via our website, social media and also through our weekly e-bulletin
- Volunteer management, recruitment and retention
- Supporting partnerships and collaboration
- Training

### **'Spark a Change' Volunteer Service**

We run a volunteering brokerage service, engaging with local communities to improve the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering, matching individuals to a cause that matters to them. We also promote the value of volunteering and social action and work with local partners to ensure that it can flourish.

As well as supporting individuals to take part in social action, we encourage volunteering good practice amongst the groups with whom we work, providing guidance, support and training.

### **Voice of the Sector**

The Spark Somerset team represents the voluntary sector in a range of different forums, including these examples below:

- NHS Integrated Care Board
- Chair of Integrated Volunteering Steering Group
- Somerset People Board for Health and Social Care
- Neighbourhoods Board

As the independent infrastructure organisation in Somerset, we represent the local voluntary sector at community, District, County, Regional and National level. We also listen to the needs of the local sector so that we can shape and develop the support we provide accordingly.

## **Reserves Policy and Risk Management**

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It is the intention of the Trustees that the freely available reserves of the Charity should be sufficient to ensure the continuance of its activities, should there be an unexpected short-term adverse fluctuation in income. The Trustees consider that an appropriate level of free reserves is approximately three to six months' normal expenditure. This equates to approximately £181,000 - £362,000. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 there was a total of £570,164 of funding freely available for general purposes. The Trustees are satisfied that the long-term financial plans generate sufficient free reserves to satisfy its reserves policy over the coming 12 months and beyond.

The Trustees review the charity's Reserves Policy on an annual basis. This review is based on the future strategy and financial plans for the charity, as well as the environment which the charity is operating in at the time. The Trustees will make adjustments to the reserves based on this review and set them at a level that is deemed appropriate for the coming year. Reserve policy remains at up to six months in light of ever changing needs and funding.

Having reviewed the reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and taken into consideration the pending reduction in financial support from the public sector and the evolving unitary structure, the Trustees are satisfied that the current higher level is proportionate to the risks faced by the charity.

The Trustees have examined and addressed the financial risks to which the Charity is exposed and in association with its insurers, has mitigated those risks to the best of its ability.

## Transactions and Financial Position

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During the period the Charity incurred total expenditure of £1,268,729 (2023: £924,724) of which £1,250,427 (2023: £908,821) was directly charitable.

Over the year the Charity received income of £1,345,682 (2023: £1,026,916) leading to an overall surplus of £76,953 (2023: £102,192). The Balance sheet shows total reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 of £570,164 (2023: £493,211).

## Chair's Report

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We are pleased to share with you this report into how Spark Somerset - in collaboration with a wide range of voluntary, community, faith, social enterprise, private and public sector partners - has been working to support Somerset and its citizens during 2023/24.

The voluntary sector continues to provide many fantastic services for the population of the County, from those rooted in health and social care through to services for young people and pets. Yet those who volunteer give their time selflessly in village halls and people's homes and we celebrate them through these pages too. As 2024 has arrived we see continued pressures on finances and so in the short term we must consider that charities must continue to provide their support in the most cost effective ways possible.

Spark has been delighted to facilitate the launch of the Somerset VCFSE Assembly with Liz Simmons as its independent chair, aiming to strengthen the voice and influence of the sector by enabling VCFSE groups to have a say on the issues that affect the health and wellbeing of the people and communities they support. If this is of interest to you please refer to the pages on our website.

Our marvellous team at Spark Somerset are proud of the successes we have contributed to within voluntary action in all its forms – from the work of local grassroots volunteers and neighbours through to the coordinated efforts of large, specialist service-based charities. Thanks to the hard work of our team new funding has been received in the sector including monies from the Shared Prosperity Funding from the UK Government. We hope that this and other awards will continue to benefit the sector when traditional sources such as public sector funding continues to be squeezed.

This is all possible thanks to the support, hard work and commitment of volunteers, staff, funders, partners, and trustees. We thank them all, and we thank you for your ongoing interest and support of Somerset's voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector. We continuously seek to improve, and I hope that you will give feedback to us about what changes/improvement/new work you would like from the Spark Somerset team.

Chair of Trustees



Grahame Paine

For more than 40 years - as Spark Somerset, previously SSVCA and before that Yeovil CVS - we have worked with voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations to enable them to learn, grow, collaborate and influence. Somerset's VCFSE sector and our communities are at the heart of everything we do. It has been another difficult year for our sector, with financial uncertainty to navigate, rising demands to respond to and a growing realisation that we absolutely have to work together better in order to meet the challenges ahead. Never has the work of Spark Somerset, and the role we play, been so critical. Within this context, we have had to prioritise partnerships. Our relationships are our greatest strength and we pride ourselves on our approach to partnership working, whether that is working with the VCFSE, communities, businesses, Somerset Council, parish and town councils or the NHS. There's no doubt that we are better together. We hope this report provides you with an insight into the positive change we are making together. We would not be able to do this without the support of all the people, organisations, partners and funders we work with across the County. Thank you to you all. A special thanks goes to our fantastic staff and volunteers, who continuously go above and beyond in their roles to support Somerset's communities. They are what makes Spark Somerset so great. This is a snapshot of our work over the last 12 months.

**Our vision** is of a Somerset where anyone can make great things happen for their communities and **our mission** is to support and champion Somerset's voluntary and community organisations to help change lives and build healthy, resilient communities. We're passionate about the power of community to transform people's lives and enhance their health and happiness. We have distilled our vision and mission into a simple and memorable phrase:

**Inspiring communities** is a statement that crystallises the essence of Spark Somerset. It defines what we do and reflects what our people and partners do every day to achieve the genuine results we aim for.

**Our values** really matter to us. They are the ideas and beliefs that unite and motivate us and that we aspire to embody through our work.

- ❖ **We are collaborative** - We help build strong partnerships, support effective connections and share knowledge to achieve the greatest impact in our communities.
- ❖ **We are empowering** - We value the wisdom in communities and take pride in sharing our collective knowledge and experience to encourage and enable others to develop the skills and confidence they need.
- ❖ **We have integrity** - We strive to build trusting relationships with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations (VCSE) so that we can advocate on their behalf, positively contributing to decisions, and ensuring that the sector is heard and valued as an equal partner.
- ❖ **We are responsive** - We proactively seek opportunities to learn, take time to listen, find creative solutions and adapt so that we, and those we support, can make a real difference to people in need.
- ❖ **We are inclusive** - We are approachable, friendly and open. We look to the future and explore new ways of doing things, with inclusivity and equity at our core.

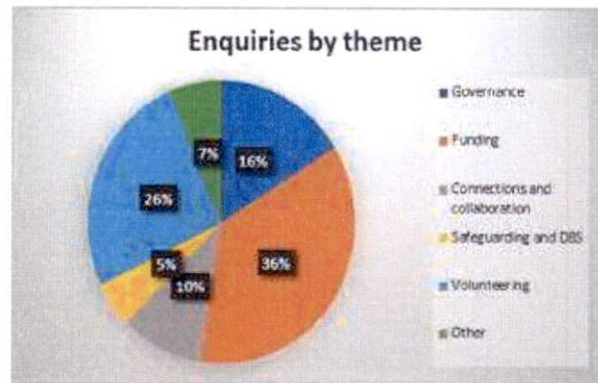
## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Support the establishment and growth of VCFSE groups, improve their effectiveness and governance, and demonstrate impact. Develop collaboration and partnerships to address local and strategic priorities.

### 121 SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE FOR VCFSE GROUPS

In the 12 months from April 2023 to March 2024, **personalised guidance and support has been given to 412 Somerset based VCFSE** groups through face-to-face meetings, phone, email and Live Chat.

The Community Development and Engagement Team continued to work broadly based on the previous districts, in order to provide one to one, local support to community groups and organisations. Enquiries have remained high and we found ourselves providing a more complex level of support than has previously been the case, which has impacted on the total number of groups supported during this period.



This year has seen a large increase in the number of groups looking for support with funding. The cost-of-living crisis and cuts in public sector have impacted groups significantly and continue to do so. Larger organisations who have not traditionally required our support are finding their long-term sources of funding are no longer available and they are having to look at a variety of options. Similarly, there is more competition for existing sources of funding meaning smaller groups are also missing out.

#### Case Study



Rockin' Daddy's Emporium are a community radio station and community hub. The radio station evolved during Covid when Joey Daniels (the founder) started to stream music to help his own mental health. The online radio station developed along with the idea to support people in Crewkerne that needed help.

The team at Spark Somerset supported the group to register as a Community Interest Company and provided guidance on how to find funding. They are now trading in a premises in Crewkerne, their listeners have increased and they are attracting support from local businesses.

*"Spark have been friendly and knowledgeable and have guided us through. Although the radio station evolved to help my mental health, it is obvious from the increase in listeners that we are supporting others. We don't include bad news and only businesses that support the community advertise with us. The shop is open and the plan is to become self-sustaining with the sale of records, CDs and memorabilia supporting the radio station and community hub.*

*"There are people in the town who won't go to official places for help. People suffering with alcoholism, drugs or isolation. These are people who are living on the edges of society, but because of my background, they are comfortable to come to us to talk and we can signpost them or get them help if they need it."*

## NETWORKING FORUMS & TRAINING

From the 12-month period between April 2023 and March 2024, Spark Somerset hosted a total of **60 events**, with a total number of **1,722** registered attendees.

Of these 60 events, 17 were training sessions, 30 were networking forums and 13 had a mix of training and networking elements. These events had a total of 389, 930, and 403 attendees respectively.

The most popular subject or area of work for these events was funding. 21 events took place over the last 12 months aimed at supporting VCFSE groups with funding support including, 'Meet the Funder' sessions, Funding Workshops for VCFSE organisations offering mental health support, and bite-sized 'Lunch & Learn' sessions hosted by experts covering specific areas of income generation. These were attended by 422 people.

We also hosted 15 forums, including location-based and theme-specific events that gave staff and volunteers of VCFSE organisations a chance to network, share peer support and get advice from members of the Spark Somerset team. These were attended by 345 people.

## ADDITIONAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

This section includes an overview of key programmes we led and managed last year - responding to need and building capacity in Somerset communities for the longer-term.

### Warm Welcome

During the winter of 2022/23 we were commissioned by Somerset Council to lead the development of 'Warm Welcome' spaces across the county. The programme aimed to support community venues and groups opening their doors to people during the winter months, offering a welcoming place to keep warm without judgement.

We also offered individual support to venues who required help in setting up, this included a page dedicated to Warm Welcome providers which had 470 views.

A total of **77 venues registered as a Warm Welcome**. These ranged from libraries to leisure centres, churches to schools and each venue had their own unique offer providing much needed warmth and company during the winter months.

### Open Mental Health – Community Engagement Project

Our Open Mental Health Community Engagement Project started up in June 2022 – with 3 Community Engagement Workers embedded within communities; listening to groups and supporting them to address gaps in service provision. The aim of the project was to improve the mental health of communities who don't traditionally engage with mental health services. Initial communities of focus were based on data and local knowledge:

- Neurodivergent Communities
- Veterans
- Adults with Learning Disabilities
- D/deaf Community
- Low income Communities

## NEWSLETTERS, CAMPAIGNS AND ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the one-to-one support we provide for VCFSE organisations, we send regular bulletins and disseminate information and guidance via our website and social media.

### Spark Somerset VCFSE Newsletter:

- 1,825 subscribers.
- 10 'general' newsletters (news, events, vacancies, and funding opportunities).
- For the period, our newsletter was opened 8,839 times and there were 1,789 clicks on content.
- In addition, we sent 10 targeted newsletters on key topics including Local Community Networks, the Somerset VCFSE Assembly and a survey into the financial health of the sector.
- We also published 7 'Funding Five' bulletins which has 232 subscribers and features the latest grants, news, blogs and training opportunities for local fundraisers.
- For the period, the Funding Five was opened 666 times and there were 144 clicks on content.

### Spark Somerset website [www.sparksomerset.org.uk](http://www.sparksomerset.org.uk) :

- 22,596 total users
- 93,731 total page views
- Top 4 pages viewed
  - Jobs 5736
  - Funding Portal 4,916
  - Volunteer 4,846
  - News & events 4,217

During Volunteers' Week, we showcased inspiring stories from volunteers across the county via our social media channels, and signposted users to the Spark a Change website.

Examples include [Lara](#), a Move More Together volunteer with SASP: *"I volunteer to give back and help people but then find that in doing so, I meet inspiring and interesting people. My volunteering gives me a feeling of self-worth and appreciation for life."*

And Renate, who in [this short video](#), explains how volunteering at Paddington Farm enables her to improve her gardening skills and spend time with others. During the week, there were 953 visits to the Spark a Change website which is 14% more than the weekly average for the period.

### Celebrating the sector

In September 2023, we worked with local CiC, Somerset Film, to produce [this video](#) about the incredible work of local voluntary groups and organisations, and the positive impact they have on people's lives. It has been watched over 400 times and was also featured in Our Somerset, the Somerset Integrated Care System (ICS) newsletter.

## FUNDING

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**Identify and promote funding opportunities and facilitate collaborative approaches to maximise funding for Somerset organisations; develop VCFSE groups' capacity and expertise to secure external funding.**

### 121 SUPPORT FOR VCFSE GROUPS

During this last year there has been a significant increase in groups seeking support with accessing funding. Cuts in public sector funding, increased running costs and a reduction in donations has meant competition for funding has never been higher. A total of **171 groups** from across Somerset received bespoke, 1-2-1 support from either our Funding Officer or the Community Development and Engagement team.

Groups who have received direct support and advice from the funding team specifically relating to their funding bid, such as a bid review, has resulted in **successful outcomes of just under £300,000**. Further bids from this period are pending, to a value of £166,000 and we expect to see the financial return of some of our work supporting other areas of income generation over a much longer period.

Aside from bids we have had a direct involvement in, we also work with a number of organisations to support them along their journey to making an application. This could be with governance, policies and procedures, safeguarding or any other areas needed to help strengthen their funding bids to give the best chance of success. Funders are increasingly signposting groups and organisations to us for the support work that is often required before groups can begin to write a bid and this is likely to continue. Somerset groups we have worked with over the course of the year to become 'funding-ready' have been successfully awarded **nearly £1.2m of funding**.

#### Case Study

Minehead Development Trust came to us looking for core funding to sustain their charity, project funding for the continuation of their community projects and events, including the Minehead Bay Festival. We supported the group with their funding bid to several funders, including the National Lottery and the Hinkley Point C Funds, which resulted in them being awarded £210k.



*"The support that we have received from Spark Somerset has been invaluable. We can't express how grateful we are for the help and advice we have received. Thanks to support and advice from Spark, we have been able to secure 3 years of core and project costs to ensure the sustainability of our charity and staff, while also being able to recruit an additional member of staff to help scale our operations up."* Zara Aitken, Project Coordinator

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT – INCREASING CAPACITY FOR FUNDRAISING

We continued to produce our Funding Five newsletter which is directed at fundraisers across Somerset. Each monthly edition focuses on at least one local or national funder or funding opportunity, a blog post with advice on a key element of fundraising, links and recommendations to media and useful resources for fundraisers.



In addition to our 1:1 support we have also provided several training and networking opportunities for groups to access:

- Boost your bid writing and bring a bid workshops attended by **66 people**
- Fundraisers Network attended by **15 people**
- Meet the Funder events attended by **102 people**

The Meet the Funder events have been very popular and sessions have been delivered by Clark Foundation, National Lottery and Children in Need. We have also offered a series of 'lunch and learn' sessions which have come from the Reflect, Recover, Renew (RRR) work and were arranged by the RRR Project Manager. These focused on social investment, corporate fundraising, fundraising strategies and legacy giving and were attended by **149 individuals**.

## VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL ACTION

**Stimulate social action; supporting volunteers and encouraging businesses and individuals to take a greater role in their communities.**

In the past 12 months we have supported the following activity through Spark a Change, Somerset's digital volunteering platform:

- **716 new volunteers** registered to volunteer.
- **99 new groups** joined the platform.
- **354 volunteering opportunities** promoted.
- **445 volunteers 'signed up'** to an opportunity

Between 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 there were **33,461 unique visitors to Spark a Change**, averaging over 2,788 per month. This is an overall increase of almost 10% compared to the same period last year.

Organisations registered on Spark a Change identify up to 3 causes their charity/group exists to help with. In the last 12 months the most popular causes were community and family, wellbeing, and children and youth. Least represented causes include foreign aid and disaster relief, gender equality, and those which are faith-based.

### SUPPORT FOR ORGANISATIONS

**We have supported 94 organisations** with requests including help to establish corporate volunteering, training on the Spark a Change platform and recruitment and policy advice for the involvement of volunteers.

During the 12-month period we **hosted 6 in person and 4 virtual Volunteer Coordinator Forums**. Themes and guest speakers have included; harnessing video, difficult conversations with volunteers, student volunteering, diversity in volunteering, 5 ways to wellbeing training and a vision for volunteering workshop. Examples of how we have helped:

- Implemented the creation of an extranet platform equipped with a comprehensive array of templates and resources tailored specifically for Volunteer Coordinators. This platform serves as a centralised hub, allowing Volunteer Coordinators access to a wealth of relevant information essential for effective volunteer management.
- Established a dedicated Discord channel designed for organisations seeking guidance and support, fostering an interactive community where they can freely seek advice, share insights, and ask questions.
- The Volunteer Pool continues to grow and organisations have been successful in reaching out to individuals who would like to volunteer:

*"We needed to recruit a lot of volunteers quickly and by using the Spark volunteer pool we were able to target people expressing an interest in what we were offering. This allowed us to let people know about the opportunity who may have a genuine interest in it and it led to us recruiting enough volunteers to launch a new project."*

SWAN advocacy

### SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS TO ACCESS VOLUNTEERING

We provide personalised assistance to individuals seeking volunteering opportunities tailored to their preferences and circumstances. While many potential volunteers can easily find opportunities through our user-friendly Spark a Change platform, we understand that this approach might not be suitable for everyone. Our goal is to eliminate obstacles to volunteering for those who may face challenges accessing digital services or lack the necessary skills to navigate them effectively. Some examples of how we provide personalised support to people wanting to volunteer:

- 'A' came into the Spark Somerset office as he was looking for administration volunteering to build up his skills for future employment. Our team provided personalised assistance, guiding him through the registration process on Spark a Change and identifying suitable opportunities. We connected him with a volunteering position at Citizens Advice in Yeovil.

- 'L' called as looking for a volunteering opportunity but wanted to talk to someone from the Spark Somerset team first as had suffered with his mental health and wanted to build his confidence back up. He wanted to volunteer on Christmas Day but also find a long-term opportunity. 'L' applied for volunteering opportunities with Mind and Rethink and also undertook a Christmas Day volunteering opportunity with Wellsprings Community Church.

## VOLUNTEERING DEVELOPMENT – COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Collaborated with Bridgwater and Taunton College to orchestrate a student volunteer fair in January 2024, showcasing the invaluable benefits of volunteering to students. The event facilitated meaningful connections between various organisations and individuals interested in volunteering, fostering a positive and impactful environment.

*'Wonderful event! Not only to engage and inform younger people about our opportunities, but also it's been great to network with other organisations. Really great to speak to young people, some of whom, seem really interested in volunteering. Thank you!' Amy Wigglesworth, National Trust*

- Organised a volunteer tree planting event with asylum seekers at J24 Hotel in collaboration with CHARIS who provided transport, RAFT who provided warm clothes for the residents, and Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme who facilitated the tree planting activity.

**Our Facebook group 'Volunteers in Somerset' continues to grow and currently has 1,516 members.**

On an ongoing basis we work with charities across the County to create and publish case studies that can be used to inspire others to volunteer. A particular focus for these is during volunteers' week (1-7 June). Our case studies (links below) reflect the diverse pool of volunteers we have in Somerset.

[Clare's story | Spark a Change](#)

[The power of listening: Maisy's volunteering story | Spark a Change](#)

[Carole's story | Spark a Change](#)

[Abby's volunteering story | Spark a Change](#)

## EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING



The last 12 months has seen an increase in enquiries for and focus on corporate volunteering days, employer supported volunteering and trustee roles. We have created a [dedicated page](#) for this on Spark a Change with some bespoke case studies and highlighted opportunities.

### Case study: Mulberry

Mulberry, an international fashion brand, reached out to us seeking guidance on finding a charitable organisation that could accommodate a group of employer-supported volunteers for a meaningful team-building activity.

*"To facilitate the organisation of the volunteering day, we reached out to Spark Somerset, and were connected with the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme (QLPS). This provided us with an invaluable volunteering opportunity that we wouldn't have otherwise been aware of. It streamlined the process and*

*enabled us to make a meaningful impact on our community and environment. "- Dion Bell, Team Lead Dead hedging on the Quantock Hills | Spark a Change*

## VOICE, ENGAGEMENT AND INFLUENCE

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**Improve and support communication and collaboration within and between sectors; strengthen the voice and influence of the sector to shape and design policy and delivery; act as independent advocate for Somerset's VCFSE sector**

This section highlights our strategic role for partnerships and engagement as the lead VCFSE infrastructure body for Somerset.

### REFLECT, RECOVER, RENEW – WHAT WE DID NEXT

The Reflect, Recover, Renew research project – completed in late 2021 -identified a shared vision for a thriving voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Somerset.

In May 2023 we **engaged with some 50 VCFSE groups across the county to establish a number of task and finish groups**, to keep the vision firmly in focus and explore practical ways to take it forward. A core group of 27 people from 25 different VCFSE organisations formed into 3 Task and Finish groups and met monthly through to February 2024. Practical outcomes from the work of these groups include:

- The completion of a Financial Health snapshot survey by 100 VCFSE groups to inform the content of future training and support
- The delivery of a range of 'Lunch and Learn- Diversifying Income' sessions, delivered by high quality trainers to give groups the practical tools and knowledge they need to start to reduce their over reliance on grant income
- Direct input to the meetings of the Somerset Funders group, to argue the case for a more flexible and targeted approach to grant support as a 'one off' during this period of particular challenge in the county
- The establishment of a 'Comms and Marketing' Peer support group, both to enable those staff/volunteers working in this role in smaller VCFSE groups to be supported by specialist posts in larger organisations, and to build recognition for the sector by joining forces for awareness raising campaigns
- A voluntary sector YouTube playlist of videos about local organisations and the impact they have on people's lives.
- Delivery of training/support for smaller groups to produce short videos/films and case studies of their work, to be used both as marketing tools and to help better demonstrate impact to funders

Many areas of work carried forward via the Task and Finish groups are now feeding into projects we are currently developing and delivering, with funding awarded from the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). For example, the further exploration of the potential for shared impact measurement and data reporting for VCFSE groups carried out by the 'Recognised' group, is informing our work on the Insights Hub project. Members of the 'Recognised' group will be directly involved with the pilot work on this.

Likewise, the discussion around the potential for sharing staff functions by the Appropriately Funded group have contributed to the design of our Skill Share project, again as part of SPF funded work.

The Task and Finish groups are continuing to input in other ways. For example, the Community Led group is directly involved with an ICS working group, ensuring the unique voices of various groups within our communities are heard as part of discussion about the design of personalised care planning.

## VCFSE/PUBLIC SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Work to develop and strengthen collaborative working between the VCFSE and the public sector has continued to be a key priority for us throughout this period.

In September 2023 Somerset ICB, Somerset Council and the VCFSE sector signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that commits system partners to engage and embed the VCFSE sector in system-level governance and decision making arrangements, alongside collaborating to deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes: <https://sparksomerset.org.uk/signing-MoU-agreement>

Informed by a workshop we convened in March 2023 and signed by senior representatives from across the system, it was the first time that leaders have come together at such scale to demonstrate their commitment to working together.

During this period, we worked closely with colleagues across the ICB and the Council and coordinated a number of collaborative events.

- We held **two Assembly events throughout the year, attended by almost 200 people**, where participants could learn more about the challenges and opportunities ahead, and ask questions about the new ICB and unitary authority.
- We took steps to develop a new, more inclusive VCFSE Leaders Group, so that we could begin to involve more colleagues in the strategic conversations – beyond the Somerset Group of Charities who were the initial catalyst for this work. We invited **40 leaders from key health and social care charities** to a **Leaders meeting** in January and were joined by Jonathan Higman, CEO of the ICB and Alyn Jones, Executive Director for Strategy, Workforce and Localities at Somerset Council. Key priorities identified included:
  - Recognition for the sector
  - Data sharing and collective impact measurement
  - Improved and trusting relationships with commissioners

These priorities very much align with the findings of Reflect, Recover, Renew and we have taken steps to respond to this – although the subsequent activity took place in the following financial year, which is not part of this report.

As described previously, the VCFSE, including Spark, are increasingly attending a wide variety of public sector led and wider partnership meetings. This has been particularly challenging during this period, due to the pressures on the public sector. The list below provides a snapshot of the meetings we currently contribute to, on behalf of the sector.

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMES: 'SYSTEM' PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Partnership and collaboration is a significant, and growing, area of work for us. With limited resources and growing demand, there is more need than ever for us to work together. Our local, place-based working is often based on partnerships working, whether it is bringing people together in a local forum or connecting specific organisations around a theme.

In addition to this, we convene, lead or coordinate a number of ongoing partnerships and networks:

### Somerset Mental Health Network

The Somerset Mental Health Network is a collaboration of voluntary and community organisations, faith groups and social enterprises involved in delivering mental health services to people with poor mental wellbeing, and those who care for and support them.

### **Research Engagement Network (REN)**

A collaborative ICS project that saw ICB, STF, Public Health and the VCFSE work together to understand barriers to participation in research. Spark Somerset enabled the project to work with 7 organisations from a range of geographies and communities to participate in the research, **training leaders to become Research Champions** and understanding and learning about why health research opportunities have limited participation.

### **Somerset Youth Work Alliance**

A collaboration of VCSFE youth work providers, this project secured a 3 year grant from the National Lottery in May 2023 to grow the infrastructure, and profile of youth work locally (and beyond) and support the workforce with training, support and collaboration.

### **VCFSE Somerset Dementia Partnership**

The Somerset VCFSE Dementia Partnership has continued to grow with over **60 organisations signed up** to receive information, and around **30 organisations actively participating** in strategic discussions around dementia services improvement.

### **Food Resilience Group**

In early 2023, we began work on a Somerset Council funded piece of work focused on Food Resilience. We were tasked with forming a Steering Group of key partners and three Task & Finish groups focused on the following areas;

- **Supply & Distribution** – alternative food sources & fair distribution.
- **Cooking Skills & Equipment** – ensuring all groups have access to high quality training and have their equipment needs met, considering cultural difference.
- **Pathways to Resilience** – create a charter to commit groups to moving away from emergency support and provide wraparound support.

## **SOCIAL PRESCRIBING**

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**Support and develop formal and informal volunteering opportunities; communication of health and care-related topics; develop and maintain networks with VCFSE groups and other stakeholders involved in social prescribing.**

Much of our core work relates to this priority, in that the groups we provide advice and guidance to are supporting the health and wellbeing of communities. Therefore, all areas of this report relate to this. In addition, we supported the following specific activity:

### **SOCIAL PRESCRIBING – COMMUNITY CONNECTORS**

Jenny Hartnoll has worked as a consultant hosted by Spark Somerset since January 2023 with funding from the Lockwood Foundation. The funding agreement is that the consultancy role is to support organisations that are interested in 'connector' type work and to create links between Somerset and National Academy of Social Prescribing.

- Supported organisations to explore how they can build the Connector model into their work.
- Supported Public Health with the successful bid to the National Institute of Health and Care Research.
- Supported the Carers service to develop Carer's Connector training which will be shared more widely once piloted in Somerset.

- Developed a Connector toolkit which will be shared across the UK and beyond: [https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/media/0dxfpbur/connector\\_toolkit\\_2024.pdf](https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/media/0dxfpbur/connector_toolkit_2024.pdf)

### DIGITAL INCLUSION AND WELLBEING – THE SPARK iT PROJECT



The Spark iT project aims to support individuals to build their confidence and learn digital skills. The Spark iT project now includes a portfolio of 15 Digital Cafés facilitated within community spaces by a cohort of 38 volunteer Digital Champions who have had over 2,000 client interactions in the last 12 months.

To support a range of clients, the Spark iT team has delivered talks and training to a range of groups, fostered local partnerships and hosted ad hoc digital drop ins or roadshows. This has included links with young family groups, job seekers, homeless charities, Talking Cafés, Village Agents, local libraries, food cupboards and community fridges, carers, hospital patients and GP surgeries.

*“The Digital Café has become a beacon of inclusivity, breaking down barriers and creating an environment where everyone, regardless of age or background, can thrive in the digital landscape. The positive outcomes in terms of enhanced digital literacy, improved mental health, access to ordering online prescriptions and the ability to obtain GP consultations via video call highlight the vital role your organisation plays in shaping a healthier and more connected West Somerset.”*

Mark Shields, Locality Manager, Village Agents

We were also delighted to win a national award – winning first place in the Digital Inclusion category at the Internet Service Provider Association Awards.

### SOMERSET CARERS SERVICE – COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT FOR UNPAID CARERS

We support the Somerset Carers service, providing support for carers groups and volunteers. Throughout this period:

- We supported 27 carers groups
- Groups were attended by 345 carers
- Supported volunteer leaders to run safely and provide an engaging programme of speakers and activities

*“I enjoy sharing time with people on their caring journeys and being able to support them at times of need, including bereavement, which has been rewarding. We have a wonderful Carers Group and I feel proud of what we have accomplished over a relatively short period of time.”*

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



G R Paine  
Trustee

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Spark Somerset (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising Charities SORP - FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

#### Basis for opinion

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

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

#### Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### Comparative information

The comparative information is audited.

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

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

#### Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities (set out on page 16), the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

#### Auditor Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

#### The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the charity through discussions with trustees and other management, and from our commercial knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the charity, including the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, taxation legislation, data protection, anti-bribery, employment, environmental, fire safety and health and safety legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management, reviewing licenses, certificates and relevant correspondence including the inspection of legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- reviewing correspondence with HMRC, relevant regulators and the charity's legal advisors.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

#### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the trustees those matters we are required to state to trustees in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

  
.....  
Dave Tucker FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
For and on behalf of Thompson Jenner LLP, Statutory Auditor

1 Colleton Crescent  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4DG

Date: 6/12/24.....

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	3	175,141	-	175,141
Charitable activities	4	163,533	1,001,143	1,164,676
Investment income	5	5,865	-	5,865
Total income		<u>344,539</u>	<u>1,001,143</u>	<u>1,345,682</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	6	(18,302)	-	(18,302)
Charitable activities	6	<u>(249,284)</u>	<u>(1,001,143)</u>	<u>(1,250,427)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(267,586)</u>	<u>(1,001,143)</u>	<u>(1,268,729)</u>
Net income		<u>76,953</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>76,953</u>
Net movement in funds		76,953	-	76,953
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		<u>493,211</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>493,211</u>
Total funds carried forward	18	<u>570,164</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>570,164</u>

The notes on pages 25 to 42 form an integral part of these financial statements.  
Page 21

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	3	180,800	-	180,800
Charitable activities	4	<u>272,299</u>	<u>573,817</u>	<u>846,116</u>
Total income		<u>453,099</u>	<u>573,817</u>	<u>1,026,916</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	6	(15,903)	-	(15,903)
Charitable activities	6	<u>(335,004)</u>	<u>(573,817)</u>	<u>(908,821)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(350,907)</u>	<u>(573,817)</u>	<u>(924,724)</u>
Net income		<u>102,192</u>	-	<u>102,192</u>
Net movement in funds		102,192	-	102,192
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		<u>391,019</u>	-	<u>391,019</u>
Total funds carried forward	18	<u>493,211</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>493,211</u>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The funds breakdown for 2023 is shown in note 18.

## Spark Somerset

(Registration number: 1179438)  
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	12	22,091	21,437
Tangible assets	13	<u>4,150</u>	<u>5,089</u>
		<u>26,241</u>	<u>26,526</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	14	396,181	280,166
Cash at bank and in hand	15	<u>937,884</u>	<u>1,017,322</u>
		1,334,065	1,297,488
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	16	<u>(790,142)</u>	<u>(830,803)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>543,923</u>	<u>466,685</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>570,164</u>	<u>493,211</u>
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>			
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds		<u>570,164</u>	<u>493,211</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	18	<u>570,164</u>	<u>493,211</u>

The financial statements on pages 21 to 42 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



.....  
G R Paine  
Trustee

## Spark Somerset

### Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash income		76,953	102,192
<b>Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items</b>			
Depreciation		3,744	4,308
Amortisation		4,558	-
Interest receivable and similar income	5	<u>(5,865)</u>	<u>-</u>
		79,390	106,500
<b>Working capital adjustments</b>			
Increase in debtors	14	(116,015)	(162,710)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	16	(18,393)	44,787
(Decrease)/increase in deferred income	16	<u>(22,268)</u>	<u>345,750</u>
Net cash flows from operating activities		<u>(77,286)</u>	<u>334,327</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	5,865	-
Purchase of intangible fixed assets	12	(6,785)	(21,437)
Disposal of intangible fixed assets		1,573	-
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	13	<u>(2,805)</u>	<u>(2,966)</u>
Net cash flows from investing activities		<u>(2,152)</u>	<u>(24,403)</u>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		(79,438)	309,924
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		<u>1,017,322</u>	<u>707,398</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		<u>937,884</u>	<u>1,017,322</u>

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

#### 1 Charity status

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales.

The address of its registered office is:

Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard  
Bowdens Farm  
Hambridge  
Langport  
Somerset  
TA10 0BP

#### 2 Accounting policies

##### Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

##### Basis of preparation

Spark Somerset meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

##### Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

##### Income and endowments

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

##### *Donations and legacies*

Donations and legacies are recognised on a receivable basis when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

##### *Grants receivable*

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### ***Deferred income***

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

#### ***Investment income***

Dividends are recognised once the dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the dividend due.

#### ***Expenditure***

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

#### ***Raising funds***

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.

#### ***Charitable activities***

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

#### ***Grant expenditure***

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled.

#### ***Grant provisions***

Provisions for grants are made when the intention to make a grant has been communicated to the recipient but there is uncertainty about either the timing of the grant or the amount of grant payable.

#### ***Governance costs***

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees meetings and reimbursed expenses.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

#### Intangible assets

Intangible assets are stated in the Balance Sheet at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment. They are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives.

#### Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost.

#### Amortisation

Amortisation is provided on intangible assets so as to write off the cost, less any estimated residual value, over their useful life as follows:

Asset class	Amortisation method and rate
Computer software	20% straight line

#### Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Computer equipments	33% straight line

#### Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

#### Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### Borrowings

Interest-bearing borrowings are initially recorded at fair value, net of transaction costs. Interest-bearing borrowings are subsequently carried at amortised cost, with the difference between the proceeds, net of transaction costs, and the amount due on redemption being recognised as a charge to the Statement of Financial Activities over the period of the relevant borrowing.

Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and similar charges.

Borrowings are classified as current liabilities unless the charity has an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting date.

#### Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

#### Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total funds £
Donations and legacies;		
Donations	9,270	9,270
Grants, including capital grants;		
Grants and gifts	165,871	165,871
<b>Total for 2024</b>	<b>175,141</b>	<b>175,141</b>
<b>Total for 2023</b>	<b>180,800</b>	<b>180,800</b>

#### 4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Provision of Advice, Training & Support	163,533	1,001,143	1,164,676
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Provision of Advice, Training & Support	272,299	573,817	846,116

#### 5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total funds £
Interest receivable and similar income;		
Interest receivable on bank deposits	5,865	5,865
<b>Total for 2024</b>	<b>5,865</b>	<b>5,865</b>

Spark Somerset

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

6 Analysis of expenditure

	Cost of raising funds	Provision of advice, training & support	Support costs	Governance costs	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Wages and salaries	18,302	455,287	317,074	12,262	802,925	650,613
Other staff costs	-	43,663	19,565	-	63,228	43,120
Disclosure and barring service costs	-	6,918	-	-	6,918	48,556
Project equipment and other costs	-	593	-	-	593	(1,500)
Premises and other costs	-	12,883	22,785	-	35,668	29,584
Computer and software costs	-	8,989	12,031	-	21,020	12,771
Marketing, PR and events costs	-	9,703	1,530	-	11,233	16,344
Legal, insurance and professional	-	-	3,441	5,536	8,977	11,299
Consultancy costs	-	14,696	34,116	-	48,812	22,754
Grant payments	-	216,935	-	-	216,935	59,073
Other costs	-	24,191	28,229	-	52,420	32,110
	18,302	793,858	438,771	17,798	1,268,729	924,724
Support costs	-	438,771	(438,771)	-	-	-
Governance costs	-	17,798	-	(17,798)	-	-
Total expenditure 2024	18,302	1,250,427	-	-	1,268,729	924,724
Total expenditure 2023	15,903	908,821	-	-	924,724	

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 7 Grant-making

##### Analysis of grants

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Analysis</b>		
Individual Donations	8,552	-
Food Resilience Project	100,000	-
ICB Young People Food and Housing	83,000	-
Rural Communities	10,383	-
Research Engagement Network	6,000	-
Digital Inclusion Project	9,000	50,544
Arts Council - Thriving Communities	-	8,529
	<u>216,935</u>	<u>59,073</u>

#### 8 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2024 £	2023 £
Audit fees	5,775	5,775
Depreciation of fixed assets	3,744	4,308
Amortisation of intangible assets	<u>4,558</u>	<u>-</u>

#### 9 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 10 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Staff costs during the year were:</b>		
Wages and salaries	729,003	591,404
Social security costs	58,496	46,665
Pension costs	15,426	12,544
	<u>802,925</u>	<u>650,613</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2024 No	2023 No
Employees	<u>30</u>	<u>27</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £165,548 (2023 - £228,593).

#### 11 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 12 Intangible fixed assets

	Computer Software £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>		
At 1 April 2023	21,437	21,437
Additions	6,785	6,785
Disposals	(1,573)	(1,573)
At 31 March 2024	<u>26,649</u>	<u>26,649</u>
<b>Amortisation</b>		
At 1 April 2023	-	-
Charge for the year	4,558	4,558
At 31 March 2024	<u>4,558</u>	<u>4,558</u>
<b>Net book value</b>		
At 31 March 2024	<u>22,091</u>	<u>22,091</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>21,437</u>	<u>21,437</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 13 Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>		
At 1 April 2023	14,876	14,876
Additions	2,805	2,805
At 31 March 2024	17,681	17,681
<b>Depreciation</b>		
At 1 April 2023	9,787	9,787
Charge for the year	3,744	3,744
At 31 March 2024	13,531	13,531
<b>Net book value</b>		
At 31 March 2024	4,150	4,150
At 31 March 2023	5,089	5,089

#### 14 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	380,348	271,042
Prepayments	8,968	7,839
Accrued income	5,865	-
Other debtors	1,000	1,285
	396,181	280,166

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 15 Cash and cash equivalents

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash at bank	767,884	1,017,322
Short-term deposits	170,000	-
	937,884	1,017,322

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

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	14,883	21,026
Other taxation and social security	29,687	13,539
Other creditors	18	21,323
Pension scheme creditor	3,083	-
Accruals	12,197	22,373
Deferred income	730,274	752,542
	790,142	830,803

	2024	2023
	£	£
Deferred income at 1 April 2023	752,542	406,792
Resources deferred in the period	730,274	720,553
Amounts released from previous periods	(752,542)	(374,803)
Deferred income at year end	730,274	752,542

#### 17 Pension and other schemes

##### Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents contributions payable by the charity to the scheme and amounted to £15,426 (2023 - £12,544).

Contributions totalling £3,083 (2023: £Nil) were payable to the scheme at the end of the year and are included in creditors.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 18 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<i>General</i>				
Unrestricted funds	493,211	344,539	(267,586)	570,164
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
Somerset County Council / CCS - Carers' Support	-	46,156	(46,156)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project	-	105,967	(105,967)	-
Somerset Council - Connect Somerset Area Champion Contact Officers	-	17,280	(17,280)	-
National Lottery - Youth Work Alliance	-	78,077	(78,077)	-
Rural Practice Network - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	4,998	(4,998)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Children and Young People Mental Health	-	1,101	(1,101)	-
Somerset County Council - Mental Health Network	-	28,836	(28,836)	-
Rethink Mental Health Illness - OMH County Wide Specialism	-	17,573	(17,573)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Hypertension Blood Pressure Connector	-	2,642	(2,642)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Dementia Alliance	-	25,520	(25,520)	-
Lockwood Charitable Foundation - Health and Wellbeing in Somerset	-	47,588	(47,588)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - ICS Engagement	-	1,817	(1,817)	-
Somerset County Council - Reflect, Recover, Renew	-	47,694	(47,694)	-
South Somerset District Council - Rural Recovery Projects	-	33,883	(33,883)	-
Sports England The Together Fund	-	2,076	(2,076)	-
Somerset County Council - Warm Spaces - Food Resilience	-	29,633	(29,633)	-

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Rethink Mental Health Illness – OMH Underserved Communities	-	169,024	(169,024)	-
Public Sector Engagement	-	117,929	(117,929)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Research Engagement Network (REN)	-	26,913	(26,913)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - The Together Fund	-	1,630	(1,630)	-
Somerset County Council – Together for Mental Health Training & Covid Recovery	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Sedgemoor District Council – Wellbeing Directory	-	1,436	(1,436)	-
NHS Somerset ICB - Young People, Food & Housing	-	183,000	(183,000)	-
Somerset County Council – Children & Young People Community Engagement	-	7,370	(7,370)	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,001,143</u>	<u>(1,001,143)</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>493,211</u>	<u>1,345,682</u>	<u>(1,268,729)</u>	<u>570,164</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<b>General</b>				
Unrestricted funds	391,019	453,099	(350,907)	493,211
<b>Restricted</b>				
NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project	-	129,670	(129,670)	-
Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	29,988	(29,988)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project	-	15,000	(15,000)	-
CRF Engage Somerset	-	6,314	(6,314)	-
CRF Social Enterprises	-	15,933	(15,933)	-
CRF Velocity	-	47,767	(47,767)	-
Somerset County Council - Mental Health Hub	-	15,227	(15,227)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Dementia Alliance	-	27,100	(27,100)	-
Rethink Mental Health Illness	-	148,025	(148,025)	-
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Dementia Roadshows	-	4,451	(4,451)	-
Arts Council - Thriving Communities	-	22,237	(22,237)	-
NHS Somerset CCG (Yeovil) - Engagement and Communications Delivery Plan	-	1,500	(1,500)	-
Lockwood Charitable Foundation - Health and Wellbeing in Somerset	-	9,384	(9,384)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - ICS Engagement	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers	-	5,553	(5,553)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - ICS PHM Programme	-	25,000	(25,000)	-
Somerset County Council - Reflect, Recover, Renew	-	27	(27)	-
Somerset County Council - Dementia Training	-	3,156	(3,156)	-
South Somerset District Council - Rural Recovery Projects	-	10,117	(10,117)	-

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Sports England The Together Fund	-	1,081	(1,081)	-
Somerset County Council - VCFSE Partnership Support	-	5,562	(5,562)	-
Somerset County Council - VCSE Partnership Engagement Model	-	2,238	(2,238)	-
Sedgemoor District Council - Social Prescribing	-	5,854	(5,854)	-
Somerset County Council - Warm Spaces - Food Resilience	-	24,633	(24,633)	-
Somerset County Council - Youth Work Alliance	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
Somerset County Council - Training	-	7,000	(7,000)	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>573,817</b>	<b>(573,817)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>391,019</b>	<b>1,026,916</b>	<b>(924,724)</b>	<b>493,211</b>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:-

Somerset County Council / CCS - delivering the peer group support element of the Somerset Carers' Service.

NHS Somerset ICB - Digital Inclusion Project - Improving access to physical, mental and social care by reducing digital poverty across Somerset

Somerset Council - Connect Somerset Area Champion Contact Officers - to provide the provision to support Connect Somerset in the locality.

National Lottery - Youth Work Alliance - To support and develop the Somerset Youth work Alliance.

Rural Practice Network - Social Prescribing Link Worker - hosting of the SPLW

NHS Somerset ICB - Children and Young People Mental Health- The development of a Somerset Children and Young People's Mental Health Network that can be used to establish a Children and Young People's Alliance robust and able to respond to opportunities and challenges within the area both financially and more generally (scoping phase during this period)

Somerset County Council - Mental Health Network - coordination of peer support network for VCSE organisations working in mental health.

Rethink Mental Illness - partner in Open Mental Health VCSE Alliance - chair of partnership board, provision of countywide volunteering infrastructure support and admin support for grants programme.

NHS Somerset ICB - Hypertension - Blood Pressure Community Connectors Coordinator post.

NHS Somerset CCG - Dementia Alliance - lead organisation for the delivery of roadshows.

Lockwood Charitable Foundation - Health and Wellbeing in Somerset - host organisation for Jenny Hartnoll, supporting health and wellbeing activity in Somerset and linking in with UK-wide work via the National Association for Social Prescribing (NASP)

NHS Somerset CCG - ICS Engagement - Supporting the voluntary sector to engage with the emerging Integrated Care System as part of the NHS England "Imbedding VCSE in the ICB".

Somerset County Council - Reflect, Recover, Renew - To support the development of the 5 key priorities identified by the Reflect, Recover, Renew survey report.

South Somerset District Council - Rural Recovery Projects - A project to assist rural communities in South Somerset in their recovery from Covid and to build future resilience to be able to meet future challenges such as the current Cost of Living crisis.

Sports England The Together Fund - to help keep people affected by the pandemic in Somerset, physically active.

Somerset County Council - Warm Spaces - Food Resilience - To develop and co-ordinate a warm spaces programme during winter and to work with stakeholders through task and finish groups to improve food resilience.

Public Sector Engagement Model, Somerset County Council - Supporting the development of a VCSE partnership engagement model.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

NHS Somerset ICB - Research Engagement Network (REN) - Funding to Spark Somerset for their support and work as a lead VCFSE partner in the Somerset Research Engagement Network Project.

Somerset County Council - Training for Mental Health Training & Covid Recovery- Delivery of an agreed mental health and wellbeing training programme to develop knowledge, skills and attitude of staff, VSCE and community groups linked to covid recovery.

Sedgemoor District Council - Welbeing Directory - web platform featuring support services in the Sedgemoor area.

NHS Somerset ICB - Children and Food, Young People and Housing - funding allocated to other VCFSE organisation to lead delivery

Somerset County Council - Children & Young People Community Engagement - To support young people's personal and social development and enable them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities.

Arts Council - Thriving Communities - to improve and increase the range and reach of arts and nature-based social prescribing activities in Somerset.

CRF Engage Somerset - 6 month project to promote social inclusion and combat poverty, with an underlying key aim to support people towards and into employment.

CRF Social Enterprises - A programme of support and networking for social enterprises (both established and aspiring) to support in their development and long term sustainability.

CRF Velocity - A digital inclusion project accessible to all voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in Somerset, offering fully funded training, support and investment.

Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker - hosting of the SPLW

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers - Short term to support vaccination programme and longer term 'bank' of volunteers (carried over from Covid)

NHS Somerset ICB - Engagement and Communications Delivery Plan - To support engagement and consultation for the ICB (was CCG)

NHS Somerset CCG - ICS PHM Programme - Supporting the VCSE to engage in the Population Health Management Program in the ICB.

Somerset County Council - VCFSE Partnership Support - Match Funding for a partnership post to support engagement of the VCSE in the local government reorganisation.

Somerset County Council - Youth Work Alliance - To support and develop the Somerset Youth Work Alliance.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (continued)

#### 19 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2024 £
Intangible fixed assets	22,091	-	22,091
Tangible fixed assets	4,150	-	4,150
Current assets	642,028	692,037	1,334,065
Current liabilities	<u>(98,105)</u>	<u>(692,037)</u>	<u>(790,142)</u>
Total net assets	<u>570,164</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>570,164</u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2023 £
Intangible fixed assets	21,437	-	21,437
Tangible fixed assets	5,089	-	5,089
Current assets	723,671	573,817	1,297,488
Current liabilities	<u>(256,986)</u>	<u>(573,817)</u>	<u>(830,803)</u>
Total net assets	<u>493,211</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>493,211</u>

#### 20 Analysis of net funds

	At 1 April 2023 £	Financing cash flows £	At 31 March 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>1,017,322</u>	<u>(79,438)</u>	<u>937,884</u>
Net debt	<u>1,017,322</u>	<u>(79,438)</u>	<u>937,884</u>
	At 1 April 2022 £	Financing cash flows £	At 31 March 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>707,398</u>	<u>309,924</u>	<u>1,017,322</u>
Net debt	<u>707,398</u>	<u>309,924</u>	<u>1,017,322</u>

**SPARK SOMERSET**

England & Wales - Charity number 1179438

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# Accounts

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**SPARK SOMERSET**  
**(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

**CHARITY NUMBER: 1179438**

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2023  
REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND  
ADVISERS**

**Directors and Trustees**

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The directors of the charitable company ("the charity") are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees who served during the period and up to the date the accounts were approved are as follows:

Grahame Paine  
Emily Taylor  
Andrew Ridgewell  
Stephen Woollett  
Melanie Merrill  
Jeremy Martin (resigned 16 Mar 23)  
Tim Ayre (resigned Sep 22)  
Debra Drew (appointed 15 Jun 23)  
Victoria Offord (appointed 16 Mar 23)

The registered office for the period of this report is  
Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard  
Bowdens Farm  
Hambridge  
LANGPORT  
Somerset  
TA10 0BP

The bankers are Co-operative Bank (UK) Plc

The Senior Statutory Auditor is Mr Dave Tucker, Thompson Jenner LLP, 1 Colleton Crescent, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4DG.

The full name of the Charity is Spark Somerset. Charitable Incorporated Organisation, number 1179438.

## Structure, Governance and Management

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Spark Somerset, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, was incorporated on 3 August 2018. The operations of Spark Somerset moved from the charity South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) from 1 January 2019. The Board of Trustees made this decision for numerous compelling reasons, one of these being continued sustainability. Three trustees from SSVCA moved to become trustees of the new charity, Spark Somerset.

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee is appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. When a trustee has served the three-year term, they will retire from office at the subsequent Annual General Meeting and can then seek re-election. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. A procedure has been introduced for the induction and training of trustees. The trustees attend board meetings every three months.

The trustees delegate the overall management of Spark Somerset to the Chief Executive. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. The trustees regularly review their documented risk management policies.

## Objects of the Charity and Principal Activity

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The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. The structure and content of this report is designed to reflect the requirement to explain how the Charity has operated within that guidance.

### **Our Vision**

Voluntary action is thriving and effective in helping the people of Somerset to be healthy and engaged in their communities

### **Our Mission**

Spark Somerset is established to provide high quality support to voluntary and community sector organisations through direct provision of services

### **Our Values**

Spark Somerset is passionate about voluntary and community services that make a difference. We are committed to supporting other local voluntary sector organisations and where appropriate to provide services ourselves to achieve this.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers are pro-active and resourceful in seeking out solutions to challenges and act with integrity, always maintain a focus achieving benefit for those we serve. We pride ourselves in offering value to our beneficiaries through cost effective support that is both accessible and inclusive.

### **Our Core Activities**

#### **Support for voluntary and community groups**

- Setting up, governance
- Funding advice, business planning
- Support via our website, social media and also through our weekly e-bulletin
- Volunteer management, recruitment and retention
- Supporting partnerships and collaboration
- Training

- DBS checking service

### **‘Spark a Change’ Volunteer Service**

We run a volunteering brokerage service, engaging with local communities to improve the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering, matching individuals to a cause that matters to them. We also promote the value of volunteering and social action and work with local partners to ensure that it can flourish.

As well as supporting individuals to take part in social action, we encourage volunteering good practice amongst the groups with whom we work, providing guidance, support and training.

### **Voice of the Sector**

The Spark Somerset team represents the voluntary sector in a range of different forums, including these examples below:

- NHS Integrated Care Board
- Chair of Integrated Volunteering Steering Group
- Somerset People Board for Health and Social Care
- Neighbourhoods Board

As the independent infrastructure organisation in Somerset, we represent the local voluntary sector at community, District, County, Regional and National level. We also listen to the needs of the local sector so that we can shape and develop the support we provide accordingly.

## **Reserves Policy and Risk Management**

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It is the intention of the Trustees that the freely available reserves of the Charity should be sufficient to ensure the continuance of its activities, should there be an unexpected short-term adverse fluctuation in income. The Trustees consider that an appropriate level of free reserves is approximately three to six months' normal expenditure. This equates to approximately £181,000 - £362,000. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 there was a total of £493,211 of funding freely available for general purposes. The Trustees are satisfied that the long-term financial plans generate sufficient free reserves to satisfy its reserves policy over the coming 12 months and beyond.

The Trustees review the charity's Reserves Policy on an annual basis. This review is based on the future strategy and financial plans for the charity, as well as the environment which the charity is operating in at the time. The Trustees will make adjustments to the reserves based on this review and set them at a level that is deemed appropriate for the coming year. Reserve policy remains at up to six months in light of ever changing needs and funding.

Having reviewed the reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and taken into consideration the pending reduction in financial support from the public sector and the evolving unitary structure, the Trustees are satisfied that the current higher level is proportionate to the risks faced by the charity.

The Trustees have examined and addressed the financial risks to which the Charity is exposed and in association with its insurers, has mitigated those risks to the best of its ability.

## **Transactions and Financial Position**

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During the period the Charity incurred total expenditure of £924,724 (2022: £722,836) of which £903,046 (2022: £709,880) was directly charitable.

Over the year the Charity received income of £1,026,916 (2022: £872,358) leading to an overall surplus of £102,192 (2022: £149,522). The Balance sheet shows total reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 of £493,211 (2022: £391,019).

## Chair's Report

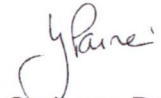
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We're delighted to share our annual report for 2022-23.

Our annual report shows you the wide range of services, projects and tasks we have been asked to be involved in over this period. It's about successes in many instances, yet also recognises where we have and will continue to improve – I hope that you will give feedback to us about what changes/improvement/new work you would like from the Spark Somerset team.

The report also shows where our team have been excellent, have shone through, have adapted and developed, and won new funding, which demonstrates the tenacity with which our charity pursues its aims.

Chair of Trustees



Grahame Paine

2022-23 has once more been a year of significant change in Somerset communities, the VCFSE sector – and at Spark Somerset. We feel we have risen to that challenge, being flexible and responsive to local need, a strong and insightful voice for the sector and a collaborative and innovative partner. During the year, our *Bright Sparks* team has been constantly adapting our organisation and ways of working to increase our resilience, learning and overall impact.

During this period, we undertook a strategic planning process, revisiting our vision and mission, to ensure that our work remains relevant.



**Our vision** is of a Somerset where anyone can make great things happen for their communities and **our mission** is to support and champion Somerset’s voluntary and community organisations to help change lives and build healthy, resilient communities. We’re passionate about the power of community to transform people’s lives and enhance their health and happiness. We have distilled our vision and mission into a simple and memorable phrase:

**Inspiring communities** is a statement that crystallises the essence of Spark Somerset. It defines what we do and reflects what our people and partners do every day to achieve the genuine results we aim for.

**Our values** really matter to us. They are the ideas and beliefs that unite and motivate us and that we aspire to embody through our work.

- ❖ **We are collaborative** - We help build strong partnerships, support effective connections and share knowledge to achieve the greatest impact in our communities.
- ❖ **We are empowering** - We value the wisdom in communities and take pride in sharing our collective knowledge and experience to encourage and enable others to develop the skills and confidence they need.
- ❖ **We have integrity** - We strive to build trusting relationships with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations (VCSE) so that we can advocate on their behalf, positively contributing to decisions, and ensuring that the sector is heard and valued as an equal partner.
- ❖ **We are responsive** - We proactively seek opportunities to learn, take time to listen, find creative solutions and adapt so that we, and those we support, can make a real difference to people in need.
- ❖ **We are inclusive** - We are approachable, friendly and open. We look to the future and explore new ways of doing things, with inclusivity and equity at our core.

Notably during the year, the impacts of Brexit, the war in Ukraine, Covid-19, together with major change programmes within the Somerset public sector, continued to be felt by the VCFSE sector. The UK cost of living crisis has a complex impact for many charitable / community groups from rising demand, reduced funding and increase energy and staffing costs. While the response for *Warm Welcome* programme is an example which shows a sector willing to respond to support Somerset residents, our engagement within the sector in the past 12 months shows there is a still significant risk to local provision.

The creation of the new Integrated Care Board in July 2022 and local government reorganisation in Somerset have meant an increase in focus on our partnerships with the public sector. 2022 also saw the emergence of the new VCFSE Engagement Framework and the first Somerset Assembly in November 2022. We also helped design the involvement of VCSFE groups within the new Local Community Networks and began work to form a Memorandum of Understanding between the VCFSE sector and the Integrated Care Board.

Given the challenges on the sector, and indeed on communities, we are mindful of the need for us all to continue to work together to build our resilience. At Spark Somerset, we have invested in a new CRM that

will enable us to monitor our impact more effectively and have also worked hard to build our own internal infrastructure so that we have the foundations in place for us to continue to thrive.

In relation to the sector itself, our response to the 2022 research, Reflect, Recover, Renew has continued this year. Over the coming months, we will be convening several working groups that will develop plans together to address the key co-produced priorities that arose from the research – depicted here. This work will also help inform the priorities for Spark Somerset going forward, to ensure that we remain relevant and responsive to the needs of the sector, now and in the future.

The sections below give more detail on our core work, encompassing 1) sector development; 2) funding support; 3) volunteering and social action; 4) voice, engagement and influence.



## 1 SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

### 1.1 121 SUPPORT FOR GROUPS

In the 12 months from April 2022 to March 2023, personalised guidance and support was given to **657 Somerset based VCFSE groups** through face to face meetings, phone, email and Live Chat. In addition, there were **588 DBS checks performed by Spark Somerset** on behalf of customers using the DBS service, of which approximately 50% were for volunteers and 50% were for paid members of staff. During the year we established **48 new DBS contracts** with groups.

Requests for our support are often led by financial need (the most frequent issue recorded) including from groups who have been self-sufficient who are now struggling to find funding post-pandemic and with cost-of-living increases. On the whole groups are aware of upcoming pressures and are trying to mitigate impact where possible. There is still a risk of VCFSE provision being significantly affected in the coming months.

We are also seeing an increase in number of groups looking for governance support, both in setting up but also a larger number of organisations looking to convert from their current legal structure to another. This is particularly evident with Community Interest Companies considering a change to be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

From September 2022 we responded to the recognised need in Somerset for improved **Safeguarding** training and development across the VCFSE sector. This was in part identified by Somerset Community Foundation during the grant application process. Our offer includes 'guided conversations and training, and assessing needs on a one-to-one basis. In six months, we supported 30 groups with more being referred in regularly. We are in the process of gathering feedback to help create published guidance and developing Spark's own training for staff to reflect the growing need for this.

#### Case Study - West Somerset Food Cupboard

Helping them to convert to a charity has paved the way for the Food Cupboard to grow, with the pantry recently celebrating their first anniversary in May 2023. As a result of this support, we have also set up a food resilience group in the Minehead area which is looking at food provision across the area and encouraging organisations to work together to ensure a clear pathway from food dependency to food resilience.

*"Creating a new charity and all that it entails, at the same time as setting up a new Local Pantry and continuing to provide emergency food parcels for people in crisis, felt very daunting to the dwindling committee and part-time co-ordinator at the West Somerset Food Cupboard in Alcombe, Minehead at the beginning of this year. We had the will, but there were gaps in our knowledge as well as limits on available time. Spark came to the rescue.*

*“Jenny’s advice and support was invaluable as we prepared a constitution, navigated the Charity Commission registration process, recruited trustees, applied for funds and set up the new Local Pantry which launched in May. Jenny listened to the challenges that we faced with understanding, went out of her way to find us the information we needed and offered equal measures of advice and encouragement. She went beyond just supporting this as a stand-alone project, proactively facilitating the development of the Minehead Area Food Resilience Forum, chairing the meetings, and supporting the development of a forward-facing action plan. We are very grateful for all the support that Spark have provided to us.”*

Ali Sanderson – West Somerset Food Cupboard



## 1.2 NETWORKING FORUMS & TRAINING

We know that the VCFSE sector really values the opportunity to connect with each other and access learning. Our forums and training are a rich source of information and expertise and provide groups with some much-needed time out of their day to share, learn, listen, network, and support each other.

During 2022-23 we provided **31 face-to-face or on-line events, attended by 692 people.**

- **8 training workshops**, attended by **107 delegates**, with topics including Trustee training; Mental Health Awareness; First Aid at Work
- **23 networking and learning events**, attended by **585 delegates**. These included:
  - six workshops for Somerset’s Volunteer Coordinators;
  - seven local forums open to all VCFSE groups
  - the *first* Somerset VCFSE Assembly;
  - the Somerset Mental Health Network; the Fundraisers Network and Grow for Good network.

## 1.3 ADDITIONAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES



### Warm Welcome

In response to the cost-of living crisis and continued post-pandemic recovery we supported the Councils’ priority to support greater community resilience at a hyper-local level. We were commissioned to lead the development of “Warm Welcome” spaces across Somerset during the Winter of 2022/23. The programme aimed to support community venues and groups opening their doors to people during the winter months, offering a welcoming place to keep warm without judgement. Working with partners we created the registration process, co-ordinated the support for venues wishing to help by providing expertise to help overcome any obstacles to opening such as funding, volunteers or policies. A total of **122 venues registered as a Warm Welcome**, a large proportion had set up something new to respond to the need in their community. These ranged from libraries to leisure centres, churches to schools and each venue had their own unique offer. This was a huge community effort and we are incredibly grateful to all those who came forward to provide support.

### Food Resilience

Alongside the Warm Welcome project, we are funded to develop the food resilience agenda in Somerset. This started towards the end of 2022 and will continue until Autumn 2023. This has involved the creation of a steering group and three task and finish groups looking at;

- Supply and Distribution
- Cooking Skills and Equipment
- Pathways to Food Resilience

Each group has a range of VCFSE and industry partners contributing to the conversation. There are a number of challenges facing groups and organisations working in this area, and we are looking at the challenges and identifying potential solutions with a view to contributing to a wider piece of food resilience work being led by Somerset County Council.

### **Open Mental Health – Community Engagement Project**

Our Open Mental Health Community Engagement Project started up in June 2022 – with 3 Community Engagement Workers embedded within communities; listening to groups and supporting them to address gaps in service provision. We have identified funding to create new or adapt existing projects, worked to reduce stigma, and upskilled staff and volunteers to welcome people, wherever they are on their mental health journey. This includes training them to deliver Five Ways to Wellbeing training - an evidence-based approach which helps people take simple steps to maintain or improve their mental health. To further advance their work, we recruited a pool of Open Mental Health Champions: members of underserved communities who can help to shape services and improve access for their peers.

### **Community Renewal Fund**

in the first quarter of 2022-23 we were involved in 3 different projects funded by the Community Renewal Fund. The fund was aimed at piloting innovation to boost the economy and help people into employment:

**Somerset Social Enterprise Partnership** – with School for Social Entrepreneurs, CCS and Somerset Community Foundation. There were 7 workshops offered, attended by 98 participants.

**Velocity Somerset** was a project run in partnership with Cosmic, aimed at improving digital skills of voluntary sector organisations. A series of workshops were offered and attended by 126 different organisations.

**Engage Somerset** was a project led by Seetec which supported people in 3 towns across the county who were not currently in work to improve their fitness and move closer to employment.

## 1.4 NEWSLETTERS, CAMPAIGNS AND ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the one-to-one support we provide for VCFSE organisations, we send regular bulletins and disseminate information and guidance via our website and social media.

### **Spark VCFSE Newsletter:**

- 1,894 subscribers (9% increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022)
- 11 general newsletters (news, events, funding opportunities)
- 6 targeted newsletters: job vacancies, Local Community Networks, social prescribing, Warm Welcome Somerset, the new VCFSE Assembly

*“Thank you for spreading the word about our Connect to Success programme. Both Martock Parish Council and Open Story Tellers contacted us due to the newsletter Spark put out!”*

Laura Batcha, Pluss

*“Your newsletter is amazing. We’re about to host our first Youth Climate Conference with the theme of Health and Wellbeing and it includes a lot of very useful links for Mental Health Awareness.”*

Sonia Kundu, Somerset Climate Action Network

### **Spark Somerset website [www.sparksomerset.org.uk](http://www.sparksomerset.org.uk) :**

- 30,159 users

- 107,666 page views. Top 5 pages visited: Jobs, Volunteer, News and events, Warm Welcome, Somerset Funding Portal
- The [Reflect, Recover Renew](#) report downloaded a total of 317 times.

## Digital and Media Campaigns:

### 1. Volunteers' Week (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022)

In Volunteers Week we featured volunteer case studies from across Somerset, highlighting the range of roles available and the benefits of getting involved. This led to:



- 4,400 impressions on Twitter
- A reach of 5264 on Facebook with 146 likes shares and comments.
- Eight people signed up to volunteer via Spark a Change.

We also [launched a video](#) co-produced with Deedmob the developers of the [Spark a Change](#) – Somerset's digital volunteering platform. This was a showcase for the support we offer, how the website can help recruit volunteers, and the benefits for those who get involved.

### 2. Trustees' Week (7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022)



In Trustees' week we shared inspiring stories of Trustees from across the county, including Karuna, a member of the Board at Climate Action Taunton:

*"I wanted to be proactive in response to the climate and ecological emergencies and feel that I am doing my bit to tackle the threat that we are facing."*

This led to: 1,800 impressions on Twitter; a reach of 1339 on Facebook and our content was liked, shared and commented on 125 times.

## 2 FUNDING

### 2.1 121 SUPPORT FOR VCFSE GROUPS

In the last 12 months, we have noticed a significant shift in the needs of VCFSE groups who are accessing our specialist funding help. Many are newly registered, or unregistered and require information and support on a wide range of fundraising topics, including the basics of fundraising, the requirements to be 'funding ready' and creative ways of setting up new or diversifying their income sources.

We have given advice and support across the following range of fundraising topics:

- grant writing to trusts, foundations, and the public sector,
- corporate partnerships,
- community and individual fundraising,
- trading income.

For many organisations and individuals we work with, this is their first step into the world of charitable fundraising, and so our approach focuses on development of quality skills and knowledge. Most of the applications we support are for smaller organisations seeking modest amounts – as they are the organisations who don't have the skills/capacity to access funding easily themselves.

**62 groups** received bespoke, 1-2-1 support. To date, bids submitted by these groups with support and advice from the funding team has resulted in **successful outcomes of more than £850,060**. This includes a successful partnership bid for £496,385 over 3 years to the National Lottery Community Fund between Spark

and the Somerset Youth Work Alliance. This bid was developed in partnership with 11 member VCFSE organisations and will offer significant benefit to these VCFSE groups and the wider youth work sector. As a large complex partnership bid, this required a significant amount of time and focus from Nov 2022-Feb 2023 from our specialist funding team.

Further bids from this period are pending, to a value of £234,000 and we expect to see the financial return of some of our work supporting other areas of income generation over a much longer period. We also helped with **60 general enquiries** to the funding team through different methods including emails, phone calls, and the live chat function. These enquiries often were general or one-off advice around a specific topic and did not require ongoing support.

*"I am very grateful to the Funding Team at Spark for support with the principles of bid writing and being available to ask questions around funding for The Red Brick Building. The team reviewed one of our bids and provided great feedback and has since signposted us to several funding opportunities resulting in a successful bid to provide us with a community gardener for 18 months."*  
Beverley, The Red Brick Building Company, Glastonbury

### 3 VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL ACTION

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In the past 12 months we have supported the following activity through Spark a Change, Somerset's digital volunteering platform:

- **572 new volunteers** registered to volunteer.
- **79 new groups** joined the platform.
- **356 volunteering opportunities** promoted.
- **346 volunteers** 'signed up' to an opportunity.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 there were **30,661 unique visitors to Spark a Change**, averaging over 2,555 per month. This is an overall increase of nearly 15% compared to the same period last year. As the platform is now more established, the rate at which new organisations and individuals are joining Spark a Change has slowed in the last 12 months. The volunteering team are focusing on thematic ways to focus and increase the numbers. This includes the recent addition of the Somerset Volunteer Pool and development of our offer to young people and for employer supported (corporate) volunteering.



#### 3.1 SUPPORT FOR ORGANISATIONS

We have supported **183** organisations with volunteering enquiries, **an increase of almost 25%** on the previous 12 months. Requests included help to establish corporate volunteering, help to make the most of Spark a Change, and recruitment and policy advice for the involvement of volunteers.

During the 12 month period we hosted 4 virtual and 2 face to face Volunteer Coordinator Forums. Themes and guest speakers have included social media, safeguarding, rewarding and celebrating volunteers, The Big Help Out, and future challenges and opportunities.

*"Thank you for today, the session was really helpful to me."* Deborah Cutler, Mind in Somerset  
*"Great virtual meeting today."* Jon Ducker, Haynes Motor Museum

#### Examples of enquiries and support:

- Somerset NHS Foundation Trust reached out for support and advice on how they could recruit volunteers who may be interested in their new '**volunteer to career**' initiative. The Spark team offered

guidance for use of the Spark a Change platform and offered advice on how to word adverts to attract volunteers.

- A charity who set up a refugee hub asked for some support on **policy writing**. We provided them with links to web-based resources that can help them write policies for their volunteers and offered examples of policy documents. We caught up with them to see how it was progressing and the group had successfully written their own volunteer policy and started to use Spark a Change to place adverts to recruit volunteers.

### 3.2 SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS TO ACCESS VOLUNTEERING

We provide personalised support to individuals to find a volunteering opportunity to meet their needs. We know that the majority of potential volunteers can self-serve using the easy and free volunteer finding facility on Spark a Change. This may not suit everybody, and we aim to help remove barriers to volunteering, or who may not (yet) have the skills to use the digital service.

In this 12-month period we provided one to one support to **51 individuals**:

Some examples of how we provide personalised support to people wanting to volunteer:

- B leads a charity supporting people with autism in Wells. B has autism also and struggles with her memory, so found setting her own opportunities up on Spark a Change confusing. The team met with her, in a neutral setting, face to face, to talk her through adding opportunities and to get her set up on Spark a Change.
- The Youth Justice Team for Somerset contacted us via a webform about a young person wanting to volunteer as part of their reparation (community service). C is 16 and needs to complete 30 hours of reparation activity, and particularly interested in care based work. Our team had a chat with Paddington Farm, near Glastonbury and ARK at Egwood, Merriott, to explore opportunities. Alongside further talks with the Somerset Youth Alliance and Duke of Edinburgh Scheme this initial enquiry is helping us to further develop our Youth Volunteering offer.

### 3.3 VOLUNTEERING DEVELOPMENT – COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Strategically our mission is to develop the diversity, quality and quantity of volunteering in Somerset. One way we do this is by convening the **Somerset Integrated Volunteer Steering Group** a partnership of public sector groups and larger health and care related Somerset based charities who involve volunteers. The shared vision is to have an 'ecosystem' within which volunteering thrives in Somerset by taking a strategic and collaborative approach. The terms of reference and membership of this group have been reviewed and updated to ensure we achieve our vision for volunteering in Somerset. Spark also works in partnership at an operational level – via engagement opportunities and by offering help and expertise for volunteer involvement and management alongside several public, private and VCFSE partners:

- The volunteering team was invited by the **Community Employment Hubs** to attend a Department of Work and Pensions 'Getting back into Employment' event in Taunton in July 2022 where they met potential volunteers and talked to them about how volunteering could benefit them.
- Attended **Strode College Freshers Fair** to demonstrate the benefits of volunteering to students (September 2022) with a stand and networked to promote volunteering and the benefits to young people aged 16-20 years.
- **NHS Somerset Vaccination Programme** Spark continued to provide support to the Somerset Covid19 Vaccination Programme during 2022-23. This included working closely and attending weekly meetings with the SFT Vaccination Operational Team to offer advice and support to individual GP surgeries for the recruitment of volunteers into a variety of roles to support the programme.

### 3.4 EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING

The last 12 months has seen an increase on enquiries and focus on corporate volunteering days, employer-supported volunteering and trustee roles. We have created a [dedicated page](#) for this on Spark a Change with some bespoke case studies and highlighted opportunities. Trustee roles were a big focus during Trustees Week (7-11 November 2022).

#### Case study: Lendology & Ark

Lendology, a CIC Based in Bradford-On-Tone asked if we could signpost them to a charity who would accept a group of employer-supported volunteers for a team day. We put them in touch with Ark at Egwood and the team carried out a volunteering day at their site near Crewkerne.

*“The work we completed for ARK gave us all such a sense of achievement and the ARK staff were so appreciative, we all left with a lovely ‘feel good glow’. It is a great place for a volunteering day”*

Lendology's Philippa Cooke, Business Support Lead

## 4 VOICE, ENGAGEMENT AND INFLUENCE

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This section highlights our strategic role for partnerships and engagement as the lead VCFSE infrastructure body for Somerset. Partnerships and collaboration are at the heart of what we do – and reflect strongly one of the key priorities identified in ‘Reflect, Recover, Renew’.

*“At a time when commissioning is so changeable and, with new funds and initiatives arising from Covid, so active, Spark is increasingly brokering relationships with relevant partners, such as the NHS, local councils, funders and key VCSE organisations. This increases funding into the sector, making it more strategically relevant, robust and sustainable.”*

Jon Shoesmith, CEO, Citizens Advice Taunton

### 4.1 THE NEW SOMERSET VCFSE ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

In April 2022 the Somerset Group of Charities co-created a proposal for a new **Somerset VCFSE Engagement Framework**, encouraged by the direction of NHS England for embedding the VCFSE into integrated care systems (ICS). By common consensus the new “Somerset VCFSE Engagement Framework” will be independent of any part of the Somerset eco-system and will exist to promote collaboration and learning across the sector and make it easier for the public sector to engage. The proposal outlined how VCFSE groups could engage with the ICB and centred around the creation of: -

- A new **Somerset Assembly** open to all VCFSE groups in Somerset. The inaugural meeting was held in November 2022 with 108 people attending. Four further meetings are planned for 2023-24 with a mix of in person and online venues which will focus on being a safe space to explore the difficulties and solutions to being a VCFSE organisation.

*“So good to have such a good variety of small groups and others here – really vital to hear all voices – thank you – more to come I hope!”*

Attendee of VCFSE Assembly

*“A great forum and good to see so many VCSE orgs here and a good starting point for people having a voice, that feel for whatever reason they do not have one at present. Thank you!”*

Attendee of VCFSE Assembly

- Support for **participation** in partnerships and programmes. Individuals from VCFSE organisations will be supported to sit on strategic boards and act as representatives for the sector. This includes Spark providing administrative support for finding the representatives, ensuring they are reimbursed and closing the feedback loop between the sector and the board. This will help to demonstrate that the *time* of VCFSE organisations is properly valued as well as ensuring the appropriate organisations are able to represent the sector.

- A **Strategic Alliance** which will be a version of the existing Somerset Group of Charities. Initially its remit is to be the first point of contact for the ICB (and other public sector partners) to engage strategically with the VCFSE sector in Somerset.

To help develop the new framework we have identified forums, partnerships, networks and alliances that already exist. This helps to know where collective voices already come together and how they might work with, or feed into Local Authority and NHS strategic and decision-making boards. In 2023-24, we will gain insight from the VCFSE sector (initially through our database) to find out where else there are collective voices.

## 4.2 VCFSE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SOMERSET PUBLIC SECTOR

Last year has again increased opportunities to involve the VCFSE in local leadership and decision making in Somerset, as well as providing services aimed at improving lives for people. The complexity of the issues and pace of change in our communities is requiring us all to find ways to work more closely together and be open to changing perspectives and cultures.

### **Somerset Integrated Care System and Integrated Care Board**

As part of the Engagement Framework outlined above in 4.1, we have continued to work alongside NHS colleagues to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will shape how we work together in partnership throughout the ICS, facilitating workshops for system-wide colleagues and co-producing the MoU alongside colleagues. It is hoped the new partnership agreement will be adopted in late spring 2023.

During 2022 we participated in a programme of workshops supporting the development of the ICS including approaches to 'Population Health Management' within primary care; the social prescribing framework; and system leadership competency framework. Our CEO, Katherine Nolan, represents the VCFSE sector on the ICB and ICS People Board.

### **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

We participated in the original consultation for LGR and also have a role on the Advisory Board during this period. As part of the Local Government Reorganisation, Somerset County Council undertook a consultation regarding Local Community Networks (LCNs) and Spark helped to engage VCFSE organisations to help shape the geography, role and purpose of LCNs. Spark provided feedback on the consultation process to make it as easy as possible for VCFSE organisations to participate. We hosted 2 webinars, circulated information throughout the process to the recipients of our newsletter (promoting drop-in sessions held across the county, links to the questionnaire and updates as the consultation happened). Spark also submitted a consultation response on behalf of the sector, as did the Somerset Group of Charities. We have also been working hard to align this work with the ICS engagement work, described above to avoid duplication of effort for the VCFSE and ultimately, more positive outcomes for communities.

## 4.3 ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

### **Somerset Mental Health Network**

We coordinate and support the **Somerset Mental Health Network**, previously known as the Mental Health Hub. The steering group for SMHN is made up of a range of key organisations in the county active in the field of mental health and has recently extended its membership.

During 2022-23 we:

- hosted 2 face-to-face networking events, facilitated 7 steering group meetings

- promoted the Orange Button Community Awareness Scheme which, to date, has over 700 people trained in suicide prevention / awareness.
- conducted an extensive training needs assessment of members



### Somerset Youth Work Alliance

The Somerset Youth Work Alliance is a collaboration of voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises formed in 2020. There are 15 active core members, who provide open access and detached youth provision, as well as a wider network of other

youth groups. The Partnership Agreement has recently been reviewed, updated with a vision and objectives to move forward in the coming year. The Alliance has also strengthened its foundations and agreed a Constitution and Terms of Reference to support growth and development in our next phase of work. The Alliance were the recipients of a recent Lottery grant and will continue to develop this important work.

### VCFSE Somerset Dementia Partnership

The Somerset Dementia Partnership was set up in June 2022 as part of a collaborative project between Health, Social Care and the Voluntary Sector to identify ways in which support for those living with dementia could be better aligned and delivered. The Partnership is coordinated and hosted by Spark Somerset.

The group includes over **60 VCFSE organisations** all delivering support to those living with dementia, their families and carers. The group meets monthly to discuss a range of issues facing those they support and to look at new ways of working. We convened 6 meetings from September 2022 – March 2023 which were attended by 43 individuals from 23 organisations. We also coordinated 13 Somerset Dementia Roadshows taking place across the County, starting in February 2023.

*"We always talk about joined up working but there always seem to be barriers to its success, this feels somewhat different, every voice matters, all experiences enrich our knowledge"* VCFSE Dementia Partnership member

## 5 ADDITIONAL FUNDED PROJECTS

### 5.1 SOCIAL PRESCRIBING – COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

Jenny Hartnoll has worked as a consultant for Spark since Jan 2023 with funding from the Lockwood Foundation. The funding agreement is that the consultancy role is to support organisations that are interested in 'connector' type work and to create links between Somerset and National Academy of Social Prescribing.

- Strengthened links between NASP and Spark Somerset. James Day, the NASP regional lead, is now chairing a new Social Prescribing Vision group that has been initiated and coordinated by Spark.
- The idea of Carers' Connectors is being explored to help carers to access community support
- Somerset Wildlife Trust, Somerset Public Health and the consultant are working alongside RSPB to develop Nature Prescriptions in Somerset.
- A 'how to guide' for areas wanting to implement connector training is being created by the consultant - as joint work between Frome Medical Practice and Spark.

### 5.2 DIGITAL INCLUSION AND WELLBEING – THE SPARK IT PROJECT

We created [Spark iT](#) to tackle all three areas of digital exclusion (devices, data, and skills/confidence/safety) for any Somerset resident who requires support, with the ultimate aim of improving health and well-being outcomes for service users. To date, the project has provided **1069 individual digital inclusion interactions**

across the county, from 1127 Digital Champion hours. The core offer of the project is to support people facing digital exclusion via referrals from healthcare and other professionals, who are then paired with a volunteer Digital Champion for support.



*“HomeStart is a local charity who provide support for families in the Minehead Area. Minehead Eye have a strong working relationship with the charity and have held events for the charity. We were approached by the manager who heard about our new role and she asked if we would go and help set up 10 new Chromebooks that they had been given.....They have been able to access the internet to search for jobs and find homes. Our working partnership with HomeStart has been improved and they have shared our project social media posts too which has enabled us to gain more clients at our digital cafes.”*  
Digital Champion (Minehead Eye)

### 5.3 SOMERSET CARERS SERVICE – COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT FOR UNPAID CARERS

Spark Somerset holds a sub-contract with the Community Council for Somerset for part of Somerset Carers Service developing community-based carer support in the community, mostly in the form of support and social groups. There are currently **22 groups operating across Somerset** with another 3 opening soon. These consist of 7 existing groups run by volunteers prior to Spark’s involvement, 12 entirely new groups and 6 that have required a higher level of intervention. We also host a regular evening online group. There are currently **30 volunteers** and grant funded activity instructors supported at various levels by Spark to run and support these groups.

### 5.4 THRIVING COMMUNITIES SOMERSET

Funded by the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) with match funding from Somerset County Council and the CCG, we have been working in partnership with health, art and nature organisations to run the Thriving Communities Somerset project. The project commissioned a programme of seven activities to support care home staff, 18–35-year-olds seeking employment skills, and individuals living with long-term health conditions and/or long-covid. Although this project has now come to an end, an independent evaluation was published during this period that made a number of recommendations. These recommendations seek to inform future multisector partnership working and improve the provision of social prescribing activities, reflecting the experiences of those who participated in the programme. We will be working with colleagues to progress this conversation with sector colleagues in order to address some of the challenges identified.

### 5.5 WELLBEING DIRECTORIES

In 2022-23 we continued to host and manage two online directories that provide useful information about community-based social prescribing activities.

**Wellbeing Sedgemoor** - <https://wellbeingsedgemoor.org/> - During the past 12 months the website had 1813 users and 4518 page views. Top 3 pages were: Directory; Visiting Health Team; Disabled Blue Badge

**Wellbeing South Somerset** - <https://wellbeingsouthsomerset.org/> - During the past 12 months the website had 9,552 users and 22,106 page views. Top 3 pages were: Directory; Older People; Social.

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 5/12/23 and signed on its behalf by:

  
.....  
G R Paine  
Trustee

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Spark Somerset (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising Charities SORP - FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

#### Basis for opinion

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

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

#### Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### Comparative information

The comparative information is unaudited.

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

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

#### Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities (set out on page 16), the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

#### Auditor Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

#### The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the charity through discussions with trustees and other management, and from our commercial knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the charity, including the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, taxation legislation, data protection, anti-bribery, employment, environmental, fire safety and health and safety legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management, reviewing licenses, certificates and relevant correspondence including the inspection of legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- reviewing correspondence with HMRC, relevant regulators and the charity's legal advisors.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.


A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Spark Somerset (continued)

#### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the trustees those matters we are required to state to trustees in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

  
.....  
Dave Tucker FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
For and on behalf of Thompson Jenner LLP, Statutory Auditor

1 Colleton Crescent  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4DG

Date: 15/12/23.....

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	3	180,800	-	180,800
Charitable activities	4	<u>272,299</u>	<u>573,817</u>	<u>846,116</u>
Total income		<u>453,099</u>	<u>573,817</u>	<u>1,026,916</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	5	(15,903)	-	(15,903)
Charitable activities	5	(329,229)	(573,817)	(903,046)
Other expenditure	6	<u>(5,775)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(5,775)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(350,907)</u>	<u>(573,817)</u>	<u>(924,724)</u>
Net income		<u>102,192</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>102,192</u>
Net movement in funds		102,192	-	102,192
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		<u>391,019</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>391,019</u>
Total funds carried forward	18	<u><u>493,211</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>493,211</u></u>

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	3	233,300	-	233,300
Charitable activities	4	<u>323,303</u>	<u>315,755</u>	<u>639,058</u>
Total income		<u>556,603</u>	<u>315,755</u>	<u>872,358</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	5	(12,956)	-	(12,956)
Charitable activities	5	<u>(394,125)</u>	<u>(315,755)</u>	<u>(709,880)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(407,081)</u>	<u>(315,755)</u>	<u>(722,836)</u>
Net income		<u>149,522</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>149,522</u>
Net movement in funds		149,522	-	149,522
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		<u>241,497</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>241,497</u>
Total funds carried forward	18	<u><u>391,019</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>391,019</u></u>


All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.  
The funds breakdown for 2022 is shown in note 18.

# Spark Somerset

## (Registration number: 1179438) Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	13	21,437	-
Tangible assets	14	<u>5,089</u>	<u>6,431</u>
		<u>26,526</u>	<u>6,431</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	15	280,166	117,456
Cash at bank and in hand	16	<u>1,017,322</u>	<u>707,398</u>
		1,297,488	824,854
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	17	<u>(830,803)</u>	<u>(440,266)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>466,685</u>	<u>384,588</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>493,211</u>	<u>391,019</u>
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>			
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds		<u>493,211</u>	<u>391,019</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	18	<u>493,211</u>	<u>391,019</u>

The financial statements on pages 21 to 41 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 5/12/23 and signed on their behalf by:

  
.....  
G R Paine  
Trustee

## Spark Somerset

### Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash income		102,192	149,522
<b>Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items</b>			
Depreciation	6	<u>4,308</u>	<u>4,047</u>
		106,500	153,569
<b>Working capital adjustments</b>			
Increase in debtors	15	(162,710)	(71,620)
Increase in creditors	17	44,787	17,255
Increase in deferred income		<u>345,750</u>	<u>96,973</u>
Net cash flows from operating activities		<u>334,327</u>	<u>196,177</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of intangible fixed assets	13	(21,437)	-
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	14	<u>(2,966)</u>	<u>(737)</u>
Net cash flows from investing activities		<u>(24,403)</u>	<u>(737)</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		309,924	195,440
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		<u>707,398</u>	<u>511,958</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		<u><u>1,017,322</u></u>	<u><u>707,398</u></u>

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

#### 1 Charity status

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales.

The address of its registered office is:

Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard  
Bowdens Farm  
Hambridge  
Langport  
Somerset  
TA10 0BP

#### 2 Accounting policies

##### Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

##### Basis of preparation

Spark Somerset meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

##### Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

##### Income and endowments

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

##### Donations and legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised on a receivable basis when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

##### Grants receivable

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### **Deferred income**

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

#### **Expenditure**

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

#### **Raising funds**

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.

#### **Charitable activities**

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

#### **Grant provisions**

Provisions for grants are made when the intention to make a grant has been communicated to the recipient but there is uncertainty about either the timing of the grant or the amount of grant payable.

#### **Governance costs**

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees meetings and reimbursed expenses.

#### **Taxation**

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

#### **Intangible assets**

Intangible assets are stated in the Balance Sheet at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment. They are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost.

#### Amortisation

Amortisation is provided on intangible assets so as to write off the cost, less any estimated residual value, over their useful life as follows:

Asset class	Amortisation method and rate
Computer software	20% straight line

#### Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Computer equipments	33% straight line

#### Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

#### Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

#### Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### Borrowings

Interest-bearing borrowings are initially recorded at fair value, net of transaction costs. Interest-bearing borrowings are subsequently carried at amortised cost, with the difference between the proceeds, net of transaction costs, and the amount due on redemption being recognised as a charge to the Statement of Financial Activities over the period of the relevant borrowing.

Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and similar charges.

Borrowings are classified as current liabilities unless the charity has an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting date.

#### Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

#### Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

### 3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total funds £
Donations and legacies;		
Donations	14,764	14,764
Grants, including capital grants;		
Grants and gifts	166,036	166,036
<b>Total for 2023</b>	<b>180,800</b>	<b>180,800</b>
<b>Total for 2022</b>	<b>233,300</b>	<b>233,300</b>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### 4 Income from charitable activities

	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total 2023 £</b>
Provision of Advice, Training & Support	<u>272,299</u>	<u>573,817</u>	<u>846,116</u>

	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total 2022 £</b>
Provision of Advice, Training & Support	<u>323,303</u>	<u>315,755</u>	<u>639,058</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### 5 Analysis of expenditure

	Cost of raising funds	Provision of advice, training & support	Support costs	Governance costs	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Wages and salaries	15,903	297,851	325,384	11,475	650,613	551,371
Other staff costs	-	31,413	11,707	-	43,120	19,054
Disclosure and barring service costs	-	48,556	-	-	48,556	10,285
Project equipment and other costs	-	(1,500)	-	-	(1,500)	9,855
Premises and other costs	-	9,024	20,560	-	29,584	27,727
Computer and software costs	-	8,717	4,054	-	12,771	11,222
Marketing, PR and events costs	-	1,908	14,436	-	16,344	10,983
Legal, insurance and professional	-	-	2,774	8,525	11,299	13,343
Consultancy costs	-	13,725	9,029	-	22,754	39,878
Grant payments	-	59,073	-	-	59,073	17,812
Other costs	-	17,997	14,113	-	32,110	11,306
	15,903	486,764	402,057	20,000	924,724	722,836
Support costs	-	402,057	(402,057)	-	-	-
Governance costs	-	20,000	-	(20,000)	-	-
Total expenditure 2023	15,903	908,821	-	-	924,724	722,836
Total expenditure 2022	12,956	709,880	-	-	722,836	-

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### 6 Other expenditure

	Note	Unrestricted funds General £	Total funds £
Audit fees			
Audit of the financial statements		5,775	5,775
<b>Total for 2023</b>		5,775	5,775

#### 7 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2023 £	2022 £
Audit fees	5,775	-
Depreciation of fixed assets	4,308	4,047
	4,308	4,047

#### 8 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year.

#### 9 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Staff costs during the year were:</b>		
Wages and salaries	591,404	507,130
Social security costs	46,665	34,140
Pension costs	12,544	10,100
	650,613	551,370

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2023 No	2022 No
Employees	27	27
	27	27

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £228,593 (2022 - £184,350).

#### 10 Independent examiner's remuneration

	<b>2022</b> £
<b>Other fees to examiners</b>	
Examination-related assurance services	900
All other services	2,700
	3,600
	3,600

#### 11 Auditors' remuneration

	<b>2023</b> £
Audit of the financial statements	5,775
	5,775

#### 12 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

#### 13 Intangible fixed assets

	<b>Other intangible asset £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Cost</b>		
Additions	21,437	21,437
At 31 March 2023	21,437	21,437
<b>Amortisation</b>		
At 31 March 2023	-	-
<b>Net book value</b>		
At 31 March 2023	21,437	21,437
	21,437	21,437

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### 14 Tangible fixed assets

	<b>Computer equipment £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Cost</b>		
At 1 April 2022	12,420	12,420
Additions	2,966	2,966
Disposals	(510)	(510)
At 31 March 2023	14,876	14,876
<b>Depreciation</b>		
At 1 April 2022	5,989	5,989
Charge for the year	4,308	4,308
Eliminated on disposals	(510)	(510)
At 31 March 2023	9,787	9,787
<b>Net book value</b>		
At 31 March 2023	5,089	5,089
At 31 March 2022	6,431	6,431

#### 15 Debtors

	<b>2023 £</b>	<b>2022 £</b>
Trade debtors	271,042	100,734
Prepayments	7,839	5,416
Accrued income	-	10,306
Other debtors	1,285	1,000
	280,166	117,456

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### 16 Cash and cash equivalents

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Cash at bank	<u>1,017,322</u>	<u>707,398</u>

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

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Trade creditors	21,026	9,317
Other taxation and social security	13,351	9,453
Other creditors	21,511	-
Pension scheme creditor	-	2,164
Accruals	22,373	12,540
Deferred income	<u>752,542</u>	<u>406,792</u>
	<u>830,803</u>	<u>440,266</u>

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Deferred income at 1 April 2022	406,792	309,819
Resources deferred in the period	720,553	406,792
Amounts released from previous periods	<u>(374,803)</u>	<u>(309,819)</u>
Deferred income at year end	<u>752,542</u>	<u>406,792</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### 18 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<i>General</i>				
Unrestricted funds	391,019	453,099	(350,907)	493,211
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project	-	129,670	(129,670)	-
Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	29,988	(29,988)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project	-	15,000	(15,000)	-
CRF Engage Somerset	-	6,314	(6,314)	-
CRF Social Enterprises	-	15,933	(15,933)	-
CRF Velocity	-	47,767	(47,767)	-
Somerset County Council - Mental Health Hub	-	15,227	(15,227)	-
Rethink Mental Health Illness	-	148,025	(148,025)	-
Arts Council - Thriving Communities	-	22,237	(22,237)	-
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers	-	5,553	(5,553)	-
Somerset County Council - Dementia Training	-	3,156	(3,156)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Dementia Alliance	-	27,100	(27,100)	-
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Dementia Roadshows	-	4,451	(4,451)	-
NHS Somerset CCG (Yeovil) - Engagement and Communications Delivery Plan	-	1,500	(1,500)	-
Lockwood Charitable Foundation - Health and Wellbeing in Somerset	-	9,384	(9,384)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - ICS Engagement	-	10,000	(10,000)	-

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
NHS Somerset CCG - ICS PHM Programme	-	25,000	(25,000)	-
Somerset County Council - Reflect, Recover, Renew	-	27	(27)	-
South Somerset District Council - Rural Recovery Projects	-	10,117	(10,117)	-
SASP - The Together Fund	-	1,081	(1,081)	-
Somerset County Council - VCFSE Partnership Support	-	5,562	(5,562)	-
Somerset County Council - VCSE Partnership Engagement Model	-	2,238	(2,238)	-
Sedgemoor District Council - Social Prescribing	-	5,854	(5,854)	-
Somerset County Council - Warm Spaces - Food Resilience	-	24,633	(24,633)	-
Somerset County Council - Youth Work Alliance	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
Somerset County Council - Training	-	7,000	(7,000)	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	-	573,817	(573,817)	-
<b>Total funds</b>	391,019	1,026,916	(924,724)	493,211

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<i>General</i>				
Unrestricted funds	241,497	556,603	(407,081)	391,019
<b>Restricted</b>				
NHS Somerset CCG - Integrated Volunteering	-	30,850	(30,850)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project	-	58,900	(58,900)	-
Symphony Health Care - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	11,418	(11,418)	-
Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	25,981	(25,981)	-
National Lottery Grant	-	24,623	(24,623)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project	-	9,360	(9,360)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - GP Helper	-	2,566	(2,566)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Covid Booklet	-	9,942	(9,942)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - County Research Project	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Somerset County Council - County Research Project	-	15,000	(15,000)	-
CRF Engage Somerset	-	1,216	(1,216)	-
CRF Social Enterprises	-	9,492	(9,492)	-
CRF Velocity	-	13,178	(13,178)	-
NHS Somerset - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	19,868	(19,868)	-
Somerset County Council - Mental Health Hub	-	9,500	(9,500)	-
Rethink Mental Health Illness	-	2,454	(2,454)	-
Arts Council - Thriving Communities	-	20,636	(20,636)	-
Somerset County Council - Thriving Communities	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
Take Art - Thriving Communities	-	1,000	(1,000)	-

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
NHS Somerset CCG - Vaccination Volunteers	-	7,815	(7,815)	-
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers	-	20,835	(20,835)	-
Somerset County Council - Dementia Training	-	6,121	(6,121)	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	-	315,755	(315,755)	-
<b>Total funds</b>	241,497	872,358	(722,836)	391,019

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:-

Arts Council – Thriving Communities - to improve and increase the range and reach of arts and nature-based social prescribing activities in Somerset

CRF Engage Somerset - 6 month project to promote social inclusion and combat poverty, with an underlying key aim to support people towards and into employment.

CRF Social Enterprises - A programme of support and networking for social enterprises (both established and aspiring) to support in their development and long term sustainability.

CRF Velocity - A digital inclusion project accessible to all voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in Somerset, offering fully funded training, support and investment

Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker - For the development of Health & Wellbeing partnerships

National Lottery Grant - To build collaboration between local community groups/charities for sustainability

NHS Somerset – Social Prescribing Link Worker – For the development of Health & Wellbeing activities and support services in east South Somerset

NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project - Improving access to physical, mental and social care by reducing digital poverty across Somerset

NHS Somerset CCG - Integrated Volunteering - Set-up of Spark a Change and supporting ongoing volunteering needs

NHS Somerset CCG – Vaccination Inequality - work with VCSE groups to help more people to access their COVID-19 Vaccination or booster.

NHS Somerset CCG – Dementia Alliance/Dementia Road shows - to provide dementia support roadshows

Rethink Mental Illness - partner in Open Mental Health VCSE Alliance - chair of partnership board, provision of countywide volunteering infrastructure support and admin support for grants programme

Somerset Community Foundation – County Research Project - 'Reflect, Recover, Renew: investigating the impact of Covid-19 and creating a shared vision for the future of the VCSE in Somerset'

Somerset Community Foundation - Covid Booklet - Advice and guidance to help local community groups re-start their activities

Somerset Community Foundation - GP Helper - Covid 19 support to vulnerable patients across South Somerset

Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project - building a stronger partnership of youth activity providers in Somerset

Somerset County Council – County Research Project – 'Reflect, Recover, Renew: Investigating the impact of Covid-19 and creating a shared vision for the future of the VCSE in Somerset'

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

Somerset County Council - Dementia Training - Work with VCSE groups to enhance the skills, knowledge and understanding about memory loss and dementia

Somerset County Council – Mental Health Hub - coordination of peer support network for VCSE organisations working in mental health

Somerset County council – Thriving Communities – to improve and increase the range and reach of arts and nature-based social prescribing activities in Somerset

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers - Short term to support vaccination programme and longer term 'bank' of volunteers

Symphony Health Care - Social Prescribing Link Worker - For the development of Health & Wellbeing partnerships

Take Art – Thriving Communities – to improve and increase the range and reach of arts and nature-based social prescribing activities in Somerset

NHS Somerset CCG (Yeovil) - Engagement and Communications Delivery Plan - To support engagement and consultation for the Clinical Commissioning Group

Lockwood Charitable Foundation - Health and Wellbeing in Somerset - Supporting health and wellbeing activity in Somerset and linking in with UK-wide work via the National Association for Social Prescribing (NASP)

NHS Somerset CCG - ICS Engagement - Supporting the voluntary sector to engage with the emerging Integrated Care System as part of the NHS England "Imbedding VCSE in the ICB"

NHS Somerset CCG - ICS PHM Programme - Supporting the VCSE to engage in the Population Health Management Program in the ICB.

Somerset County Council - Reflect, Recover, Renew - To support the development of the 5 key priorities identified by the Reflect, Recover, Renew survey report

South Somerset District Council - Rural Recovery Projects - A project to assist rural communities in South Somerset in their recovery from Covid and to build future resilience to be able to meet future challenges such as the current Cost of Living crisis

SASP - The Together Fund - To support the mental health and wellbeing of unpaid carers and the people they care for.

Somerset County Council - VCFSE Partnership Support - Match Funding for a partnership post to support engagement of the VCSE in the local government reorganisation

Somerset County Council - VCSE Partnership Engagement Model - Supporting the development of a VCSE partnership engagement model

Sedgemoor District Council - Social Prescribing - To provide a social prescribing support service to the South Somerset West area

Somerset County Council - Warm Spaces - Food Resilience - To develop and co-ordinate a warm spaces programme during winter 2022/23 and to work with stakeholders through task and finish groups to improve food resilience

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

Somerset County Council - Youth Work Alliance - To support and develop the Somerset Youth work Alliance

Somerset County Council – Training - Delivery of an agreed mental health and wellbeing training programme to develop knowledge, skills and attitude of staff, VSCE and community groups linked to covid recovery

#### 19 Analysis of net assets between funds

	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total funds at 31 March 2023 £</b>
Intangible fixed assets	21,437	-	21,437
Tangible fixed assets	5,089	-	5,089
Current assets	723,671	573,817	1,297,488
Current liabilities	(256,986)	(573,817)	(830,803)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>493,211</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>493,211</b>
	<b>Unrestricted funds General £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total funds at 31 March 2022 £</b>
Tangible fixed assets	6,431	-	6,431
Current assets	512,558	312,296	824,854
Current liabilities	(127,970)	(312,296)	(440,266)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>391,019</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>391,019</b>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

#### 20 Analysis of net funds

	At 1 April 2022 £	Financing cash flows £	At 31 March 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	707,398	309,924	1,017,322
Net debt	707,398	309,924	1,017,322
	At 1 April 2021 £	Financing cash flows £	At 31 March 2022 £
Cash at bank and in hand	511,958	195,440	707,398
Net debt	511,958	195,440	707,398

**SPARK SOMERSET**

England & Wales - Charity number 1179438

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# Accounts

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**SPARK SOMERSET**  
(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

**CHARITY NUMBER: 1179438**

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2022  
REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND  
ADVISERS**

## **Directors and Trustees**

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The directors of the charitable company ("the charity") are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees who served during the period and up to the date the accounts were approved are as follows:

Grahame Paine (joined 21 March 2022)  
Emily Taylor  
Andrew Ridgewell  
Kristy Blackwell (resigned Dec 2021)  
Stephen Woollett  
Melanie Merrill  
Alexandra MacNeil (resigned Dec 2021)  
Jeremy Martin  
Tim Ayre (resigned Sep 22)

The registered office for the period of this report is  
Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard  
Bowdens Farm  
Hambridge  
LANGPORT  
Somerset  
TA10 0BP

The bankers are Co-operative Bank (UK) Plc

The Independent Examiner is Mr Dave Tucker, Thompson Jenner LLP, 1 Colleton Crescent, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4DG.

The full name of the Charity is Spark Somerset. Charitable Incorporated Organisation, number 1179438.

## Structure, Governance and Management

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Spark Somerset, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, was incorporated on 3 August 2018. The operations of Spark Somerset moved from the charity South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) from 1 January 2019. The Board of Trustees made this decision for numerous compelling reasons, one of these being continued sustainability. Three trustees from SSVCA moved to become trustees of the new charity, Spark Somerset.

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee is appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. When a trustee has served the three-year term, they will retire from office at the subsequent Annual General Meeting and can then seek re-election. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. A procedure has been introduced for the induction and training of trustees. The trustees attend board meetings every three months.

The trustees delegate the overall management of Spark Somerset to the Chief Executive. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. The trustees regularly review their documented risk management policies.

## Objects of the Charity and Principal Activity

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The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. The structure and content of this report is designed to reflect the requirement to explain how the Charity has operated within that guidance.

### Our Vision

Voluntary action is thriving and effective in helping the people of Somerset to be healthy and engaged in their communities

### Our Mission

Spark Somerset is established to provide high quality support to voluntary and community sector organisations through direct provision of services

### Our Values

Spark Somerset is passionate about voluntary and community services that make a difference. We are committed to supporting other local voluntary sector organisations and where appropriate to provide services ourselves to achieve this.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers are pro-active and resourceful in seeking out solutions to challenges and act with integrity, always maintain a focus achieving benefit for those we serve. We pride ourselves in offering value to our beneficiaries through cost effective support that is both accessible and inclusive.

### Our Core Activities

#### Support for voluntary and community groups

- Setting up, governance
- Funding advice, business planning
- Support via our website, social media and also through our weekly e-bulletin
- Volunteer management, recruitment and retention
- Supporting partnerships and collaboration
- Training

- DBS checking service

### **‘Spark a Change’ Volunteer Service**

We run a volunteering brokerage service, engaging with local communities to improve the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering, matching individuals to a cause that matters to them. We also promote the value of volunteering and social action and work with local partners to ensure that it can flourish.

As well as supporting individuals to take part in social action, we encourage volunteering good practice amongst the groups with whom we work, providing guidance, support and training.

### **Voice of the Sector**

The Spark Somerset team represents the voluntary sector in a range of different forums, including these examples below:

- NHS Integrated Care Board
- Chair of Integrated Volunteering Steering Group
- Somerset People Board for Health and Social Care
- Neighbourhoods Board

As the independent infrastructure organisation in Somerset, we represent the local voluntary sector at community, District, County, Regional and National level. We also listen to the needs of the local sector so that we can shape and develop the support we provide accordingly.

## **Reserves Policy and Risk Management**

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It is the intention of the Trustees that the freely available reserves of the Charity should be sufficient to ensure the continuance of its activities, should there be an unexpected short-term adverse fluctuation in income. The Trustees consider that an appropriate level of free reserves is approximately three to six months’ normal expenditure. This equates to approximately £181,000 - £362,000. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 there was a total of £391,019 of funding freely available for general purposes. The Trustees are satisfied that the long-term financial plans generate sufficient free reserves to satisfy its reserves policy over the coming 12 months and beyond.

The Trustees review the charity's Reserves Policy on an annual basis. This review is based on the future strategy and financial plans for the charity, as well as the environment which the charity is operating in at the time. The Trustees will make adjustments to the reserves based on this review and set them at a level that is deemed appropriate for the coming year. Reserve policy remains at up to six months in light of ever changing needs and funding.

Having reviewed the reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 the Trustees are satisfied that the current level meets the requirements of the charity.

The Trustees have examined and addressed the financial risks to which the Charity is exposed and in association with its insurers, has mitigated those risks to the best of its ability.

## **Transactions and Financial Position**

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During the period the Charity incurred total expenditure of £722,836 of which £709,880 was directly charitable.

Over the year the Charity received income of £872,358 leading to an overall surplus of £149,522. The Balance sheet shows total reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 of £391,019.

## Chair's Report

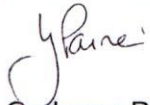
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We're delighted to share our annual report for 2022-23, the year that the pandemic seemingly began to recede yet still impacted many in their lives. So, it has been for the work of community groups and volunteers around our County as they ensure their support is given where it's needed.

Spark Somerset has maintained momentum in gaining funding so that they can continue to support charities and community groups around the County, whilst playing an increasingly important representative role, advocating on behalf of the VCSE sector. The Somerset Group of Charities, Open Mental Health, the Youth Work Alliance and our new Integrated Care Board, among others have all benefited from the strategic input provided by our CEO and her strong team. Yet all organisations are grappling the challenge of attracting experienced staff to undertake the many vacant roles across the VCSE sector at the moment. In the meantime, our teams continue to respond to rising demand due to a range of reasons, including the cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine and increased pressure on health and social care. I am grateful for every effort given during these unprecedented weeks and months.

Our annual report shows you the wide range of services, projects and tasks we have been asked to be involved in over this period. Its about successes in many instances, yet also recognises where we have and will continue to improve – I hope that you will give feedback to us about what changes/improvement/new work you would like from the Spark Somerset team. The report also shows where our team have been excellent, have shone through, have adapted and developed, and won new funding, which demonstrates the tenacity with which our charity pursues its aims.

Chair of Trustees



Grahame Paine



The impact of Covid, the war in Ukraine, unprecedented pressure on health and social care, Brexit, fuel poverty, mental health challenges and the cost-of-living crisis are all putting enormous pressure on our VCSE sector in Somerset. Organisations across the board are reporting soaring demand and are often struggling with the complexity and severity of issues they are dealing with. In addition, the development of the Integrated Care System and the move to a unitary authority are external factors that are causing some trepidation for many VCSEs, as they face an uncertain future.

The Spark team have continued to respond to this demand, providing vital support to hundreds of VCSE groups, recruiting almost 1000 new volunteers using the Spark a Change platform, and amplifying the voice of the sector to commissioners and decision makers as we navigate these challenging times.

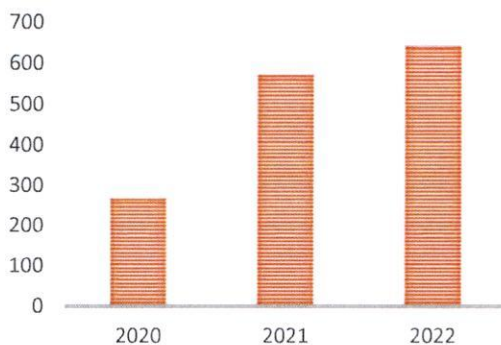
Our work still involves an element of 'firefighting,' as we respond to both the needs of our communities and the many challenges that have arisen this year – but we also ensure that we are scanning the horizon for future opportunities and take a proactive approach wherever we can.

The VCSE infrastructure funding that we receive from our key statutory partners is absolutely vital to our work. It enables us to attract project funding for other complementary work such as Thriving Communities, Covid Community Champions and Open Mental Health. We have diversified our income considerably, and are developing our paid-for services, as well as attracting some project funding. However - without this core funding, we would find it extremely difficult to be sustainable. This funding forms the basis of everything we do and enables us to realise significant economies of scale and achieve better outcomes for Somerset communities.

## SECTOR & PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**Support the establishment and growth of VCSE groups, improve their effectiveness and governance, and demonstrate impact. Develop collaboration and partnerships to address local and strategic priorities**

### NUMBER OF GROUPS RECEIVING 121 SUPPORT



In the 12 months from April 2021 to March 2022, **one to one advice and support has been given to 644 groups.**

The team continue to see an exponential growth in demand for support, as demonstrated in the graph here. Certainly, our expansion to providing support countywide from April 2020 and the demand created by the pandemic is instrumental in this.

However, this considerable rise also points to significant unmet need within our communities. As a result, with existing resource it's often difficult to balance our desire to be proactive around specific issues such as food resilience and the Ukraine crisis, with the growing demand for day-to-day support from groups.

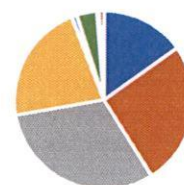
There were **428 DBS checks performed** on behalf of customers using the DBS service, of which approximately 50% were for volunteers and 50% for paid staff.

Many groups come to us with a variety of needs and we often need to spend time working with them on more than one issue.

We also responded to 228 online chat enquiries. Top tagged topics were funding, volunteering and DBS.

*Additional case studies and testimonials from each District can be found in the Appendix.*

### Type of support



- Governance
- Funding
- Volunteering
- Collaboration
- Legal
- Community events
- Covid 19
- Training

### Case Study: Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign

This group came to us needing advice on a funding application and their governance structure and help with interviewing for a staff member when they were successful in their funding bid.

*“After two years of running the BACC group, it had become obvious that in some areas we were in need of support & encouragement. In a conversation with Leigh Redman (Bridgwater Town Mayor and Councillor) he suggested talking to the Spark team with respect to our poor communications setup and the need for some major funding advice. As I have already mentioned to some people, my initial thoughts were; do we need to yet again get involved in ‘more’ meetings, more connections and contacts. Contacting Spark will just take up more of our precious time!*

*“To cut a long story short, I could not have been more wrong. Since making connections with the Spark team members, they have from the outset been really encouraging and supportive. They have given us lots of their time & wisdom freely. Emmaline initially connected us with other groups of interest and has been really*

*encouraging to us and other groups at the Bridgwater Community Forum. Amelia has given us lots of funding advice and information and together we have applied for a significant grant from the HPC Community Fund, in which we were successful.*

*“Hayley provided her wisdom and encouragement at numerous BACC/Spark Zoom meetings. She also recently gave up some of her own time to help us with our interviews for a new BACC admin/support person position. On behalf of myself & the BACC team, please accept our heartfelt thanks for all your support”.*

## FORUMS, TRAINING & EVENTS

We know from talking to groups – and according to the findings of our research, outlined later in this report – that the VCSE sector really values the opportunity to connect with each other. Our forums and training are a rich source of information and expertise and provide groups with some much-needed time out of their day to share, learn, listen, network, and support each other.

The subject matter for our training workshops and forums is always shaped by the needs of the VCSE, as well as responding to the changing context around us.

**During this period, we held 92 events, attended by 1352 people.**

Some examples of our events are as follows:

### **Older People Forum**

This new Forum, set up in July 2021, is for groups supporting older people from all over Somerset to network, share ideas and resources and seek advice. Topics discussed have reflected the issues and concerns of the attendees. We have had speakers on dementia, funding, digital inclusion and Somerset County Council's new Think Travel website. Guest Chairs included the CEOs of SASP and Age UK Somerset.

### **Growing/Food Forums**

Food resilience has clearly been a significant and growing issue during this time. Following on from the Food Forums, which brought together community fridges, food banks and other emergency food providers during Covid, in December 2021 we restarted the 'Grow for Good' forum in partnership with Somerset Community Food. This forum has brought together growing projects and groups from across Somerset to enable information sharing and peer support and encouragement. With a focus on inviting projects to speak at each forum we have this year heard from initiatives including Axbridge Community Allotments, Wild Roots Field Project, Plotgate Community Farm and Roots Connections CIC.

### **Becoming Dementia Friendly – Infrastructure Support Project**

We know from our day-to-day work that groups sometimes lack the skills or confidence to make their services/activities available to individuals who have specific, additional needs. Through our 'Becoming Dementia Friendly' project, supported by development funding from Adult Social Care, we engaged with staff and volunteers from 30 groups across the county. Seven training and learning sessions were delivered including 3 Dementia Awareness half day sessions (delivered by Alzheimer's Society national trainer); 2 Introduction to Adult Safeguarding sessions (with a Dementia focused Q and A session) and 2 discussion groups focusing on signposting, funding options, and hearing direct from two experts by experience.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Partnerships and collaboration are at the heart of what we do. All of our work – face to face, events and online – seeks to encourage collaborative working. Many of the forums above have a clear focus on partnerships e.g. the Connect Forums, Grow for Good, Mens' Sheds, Food Forums etc.

Due to the growth of this work, we recruited a VCSE Partnerships Manager in October 2021, who has strategic oversight for this work. Key new developments include:

- **Somerset Mental Health Hub** relaunched December 2021; funded by Public Health, Spark are now facilitating the Hub which seeks to provide networking, partnership and learning opportunities for Somerset VCSEs that support mental health.
- **Somerset VCSE Equalities Network** – still in its early stages, we are establishing this group to support and embed VCSE practices and policies related to equality, diversity, and inclusion. We have had individual meetings with key stake holders and 'thought leaders' including Diversity Voice, 2BU and Compass, and have established a steering group to help shape this work and take it forward.
- **Dementia Alliance Network** – we were successful in gaining funding from the CCG to support more collaborative working between dementia organisations. Spark will host a post for a VCSE Dementia Alliance Co-ordinator (starting in June 2022) to support stronger engagement between the public sector and VCSE, involving a broader range of VCSE participants.

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*"Spark have been a great asset to our organisation in so many ways. It's been great to see the Mental Health Hub established again as it brings the charity sector together in a non-judgmental way, allowing us to express ourselves in a safe environment. We are able to share a wealth of information across the board, Spark do such a great job by facilitating. Sara, the new VCSE Partnerships Manager, is a great asset to Spark."*

***Bridget Harvey, Service Director, Heads Up***

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Other key partnership activity includes:

- **Response to Ukrainian crisis** - Since late February Spark has been working with the Resettlement Team at Somerset County Council and CHARIS Refugees to look at how the VCSE sector in Somerset reacts to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Spark has been supporting CHARIS in setting up Community Hubs across the county to offer a safe, community-based support hub for Ukrainians arriving in Somerset and their hosts. We are also leading on the ESOL/Language provision needed in partnership with CHARIS, Diversity Voice, Somerset Skills and Learning and Diverse Communities.
- **Somerset Youth Work Alliance** - Since March 2021 we have been holding regular meetings to bring together youth work providers in the county to explore ways in which joint working could strengthen and develop the current offer for young people in the county. Up to March 2022, thirteen meetings have been held, trust and confidence in the venture have grown and a core group of 10 organisations from across the county have now signed an agreement for an initial 6-month period to work together to take this forward.  
As a direct result of this work, a professional training offer for youth workers in the county has been re-established and 20 youth workers are currently taking part in training leading to the Level 2 Award or Level 3 Diploma. Bursary funding of £12,000 from DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) has been brought into Somerset to help fund this, along with a contribution of £2500 from Somerset Community Foundation which has made the training affordable for smaller youth work groups in a difficult year. The Alliance continues to meet and develop, and we are now actively supporting them to find funding for a co-ordinator and to establish a youth work conference in the County this autumn.

- **Open Mental Health** (where we chaired the VCSE Alliance until March 2022) continues to go from strength to strength and is being viewed as a model of good practice, both in Somerset, and nationally. In February 2022, we successfully secured a new role within Open Mental Health where we will be leading an exciting new project that will be looking at addressing barriers to access for underserved communities. We will be working with a range of communities of interest to find out what the barriers are, identify gaps, and then work with other Open Mental Health colleagues to address this.
- **Consortium approach to support commissioning of Children's Homes** - We acted as an independent central point of contact for VCSE organisations who wished to form a consortium to apply for a contract to provide residential care and therapeutic education to children in Somerset. We supported the County Council by convening two partnership meetings, liaising with interested partners, and asking clarification questions of the commissioners on behalf of the group.

## FUNDING SUPPORT

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**Identify and promote funding opportunities and facilitate collaborative approaches to maximise funding for Somerset organisations; develop VCSE groups' capacity and expertise to secure external funding**

### SUPPORT FOR GROUPS

Our wider Voluntary Sector Advice team – the Advisers in each District - often provide guidance to groups around suitable funding opportunities. In addition, we have developed a specialist Funding Team, comprising a Funding Manager and a team of expert associates, who can provide additional in-depth and strategic fundraising support.

From April 2021 to March 2022 the Voluntary Sector Advice Team and Funding Team at Spark Somerset have directly supported Somerset VCSEs to raise **£736,805**.

A key focus of our work, particularly over the last 6 months, has been supporting groups to address key issues around sustainability of funding. Many groups are reliant on grant funding, and this was particularly prevalent during the pandemic, with a wider availability of grant funding available, and limited options for community-based fundraising due to restrictions. Being reliant on one source of funding threatens the future sustainability of groups, particularly as Covid funds are closed, and competition for other remaining grant streams continues to rise rapidly.

Another key challenge for groups is raising unrestricted income to cover their core costs. To address this, we have been working to increase awareness and understanding of full cost recovery budgeting, as well as looking at alternative ways to fund core costs through diversifying their income. We have supported groups to develop ideas and income from digital fundraising, corporate fundraising, community and individual fundraising, trading/income generation and membership. Many of these funding streams have longer times to see tangible results but will ensure groups have access to more sustainable funding in the future.

Additionally, along these lines of 'future proofing' funding for organisations, we have been looking in detail at donor journeys and impact measurement. This is supporting groups to collect and convey information that will support future fundraising endeavours.

### PARTNERSHIPS - FUNDING

We continue to take a strategic approach to funding in Somerset, seeking opportunities to develop partnerships and support collaborative working. Some highlights are as follows:

**Introduction of our new 'Meet the Funder' sessions launched** with the National Lottery in June 2021. 20 VCSEs from across Somerset coming together for an informal, friendly introduction to the National Lottery with an extended Q&A session with the aim to encourage relationship building. A follow-up session took place in October with the Clark's Foundation, with 27 attendees. We hope to build on this programme in the coming year.

**Worked with the two NHS Trusts to co-produce a proposal to NHS Charities Together** (Captain Tom money). This has resulted in more than £250k being made available to fund grassroots projects that support young peoples' mental health and carers. Spark brokered a conversation between the NHS Trusts and Open Mental Health

**Community Renewal Fund** - Spark have been a partner in three separate partnership bids as part of the Community Renewal Fund.

- Velocity – a digital based project which aims to offer workshops and training to organisations to help improve their digital skills. These workshops range from short 2-hour sessions through to a 5-week course for leaders. Spark have been working with Cosmic to promote the workshops across the sector and encourage organisations to take part, we have reached out to more than 200 different organisations.
- School for Social Entrepreneurs – a partnership between SSE, Somerset Community Foundation, Somerset Social Enterprise Network and Spark. We have delivered a series of workshops aimed at new or recently established social enterprises to help build their skills and knowledge. There have been 3 face-to-face workshops in Chard, Taunton and Bridgwater with a further 3 online sessions looking at business planning and income generation.
- Engage Somerset – a project based in three locations across Somerset aimed at inspiring a healthy change, predominantly among those not currently in work. Spark have been working in Chard to promote the offer to local groups, schools and other organisations across both Chard and Ilminster to encourage sign up to the programme, we have been in contact with 43 groups around the area

## VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL ACTION

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**Stimulate social action; supporting volunteers and encouraging businesses and individuals to take a greater role in their communities.**

Our Volunteer Service continued to feel the impact of the pandemic in 2021-22, notably due to the successful Somerset Vaccination Programme which absorbed considerable capacity, and the continued restrictions on elements of volunteering within the community. Demand for help and advice increased steadily throughout the year with more and more groups reopening and thinking more strategically in terms of their volunteering offer. We are increasing our use of customer data to identify trends and opportunities / needs.

**During the year, we supported the following activity via Spark a Change (self-help, online):**

- **624 volunteers applied for a volunteering opportunity through Spark a Change**
- **114 new groups joined Spark a Change for the first time**
- **415 volunteering opportunities were promoted via Spark a Change**

In total, we currently have 4120 volunteers and 4997 organisations registered on Spark a Change.

### SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS

During the year we gave individual support to 75 people looking for a volunteering opportunity or with

enquiries (for example: *does volunteering affect benefit payments?*).

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*"I just wanted to say thank you very much for your email and your help. Having looked through the options you highlighted I contacted Age UK Somerset, and I've have started their befriending scheme (the walk & talk). I've completed one, and I've got another one booked in this week. I just hope the weather holds up for us! Thanks again, I really appreciate the time you took to help me."*

**(Age UK volunteer, Nov 2021)**

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A successful bid jointly with Cosmic to the Community Renewal Fund means we can increase development of the platform, with a particular focus on support for emergency and micro volunteering. This work will be completed by June 2022. We plan to promote Spark a Change as an easy to use, local volunteering hub for any and every community in Somerset over the coming year.

The following themes have benefitted from a special focus during the year;

**Trustee recruitment** – we ran two training events – one for new trustees and one for groups seeking to recruit trustees. For Trustees week in November 2021, we created a number of case studies and promoted these widely on social media. We set up a dedicated page for trustee opportunities on Spark a Change and increased our web-based content with top tips and hints to attract new trustees.

**Corporate Volunteering** – During the year we have continued to encourage employers to support volunteering activity within their workforce. Key activities included:

- Development of an employer assisted volunteering page on Spark a Change and helping Somerset VCSE groups to promote their opportunities to employers.
- Supporting Charlie Bigham's and matching them with 4 VCSE organisations to carry out a volunteering day of activities for around 100 of their employees in July 2021.

*"Chloe has been amazing in connecting us with local charities ..."* **Lauri Duncan, Charlie Bighams**

- SCC has supported 2 organisations throughout the year with around 40 employees taking part in group volunteering activities.
- Harmony Fire spent the day at Ark at Egwood in 2021 with a team of 15 volunteers carrying out some practical work at their site.

Siobhan Kelly, Harmony Fires' Events Coordinator explains why they chose corporate volunteering as a team building activity; *"We wanted to carry out a volunteering day as it fitted perfectly with our charitable foundations' ethos of supporting social and local communities and providing young people with opportunities. Helping at ARK seemed the perfect way of combining a team building day with doing good in the local community"*.

**Young People's Volunteering** – Over the year we have discussed various aspects of involving young volunteers in our regular forums for volunteer coordinators and refreshed our web content of guidance for groups. We have established a dedicated page on Spark a Change for opportunities (including Duke of Edinburgh awards) suitable for young people and are working to increase the number of published opportunities.

## SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERING ORGANISATIONS

In addition to the general support provided to groups by the Voluntary Sector Advisers, our Volunteering team offer **specialist advice on volunteer management, recruitment and retention to 138 groups.**

Requests from groups include:

- Guidance on good practice for recruiting and managing volunteers (notably trustees)
- Help with specific issues e.g., policies for GDPR or safeguarding, lone working and risk assessments
- Guidance on managing projects affecting or involving volunteers

Some feedback from customers on using Spark a Change:

*“Chard Watch recently advertised 2 opportunities on Spark a Change and very quickly received interest and managed to fill the vacancies. Spark a Change offers an effective means of recruiting volunteers. It is easy to interact with potential volunteers through the messaging system and the ability to share the opportunity direct to social media pages is a useful feature. Chloe has been really helpful and answered any queries I have had. We have just added some new roles to the site and are hoping to have a similar success with these!”* **Leonie Girling, Chard Watch, April 2021**

### **Training, learning and peer support for Volunteer Management / Coordination**

- Four Volunteer Coordinator Forums were held in June, September, December 2021, and March 2022 attended by 58 people in total. Meetings provide space for discussion of key issues affecting volunteering offering peer support and development e.g., recruitment, training, risk assessments.
- We communicate with a network of over 110 coordinators and plan to introduce a newsletter later in 2022, while further enhancing our web-based content of best practice guidance.
- Workshop for social enterprises involving volunteers in partnership with Community Council for Somerset – Somerset Social Enterprise Network.
- Workshop for managing volunteers as part of community resilience – for Somerset Prepared event
- Bespoke workshop for new volunteer managers for SWAN Advocacy.

### **SPECIAL PROJECTS - VOLUNTEERING**

**Covid Vaccination Centre Marshalls** - Overall, since the start of the programme in December 2020, Spark Somerset has enabled many hundreds of residents to access opportunities to help get Somerset vaccinated, working closely with NHS and other partners. As well as offering Spark a Change as the ‘front door’ for applications we have also been on hand throughout the programme to help site management teams support and manage their volunteers at the main county sites, GP-led sites and community pharmacies.

**Open Mental Health – Volunteer Buddies** – This project ran from January 2021 to March 2022, aiming to support people to take up volunteering with mild to moderate mental health needs as a way of improving their mental health. The project involved the recruitment of Volunteer Buddies who were trained and supported by Spark Somerset and matched by a referral process to a potential volunteer. During this time 8 people were supported by 5 buddies. While it proved to be a really popular idea in principle with highly positive outcomes for the people involved, our evaluation concluded that the scheme should end, and the learning used to inform future work.

**Case Study:** David joined Spark Somerset as Volunteer Buddy and was paired with a volunteer seeking support. David has lived experience of poor mental health and was keen to help others in a

similar situation. As the project has ended David is now considering training as a peer supporter within Open Mental Health.

**Covid Champions and Vaccine Buddies** - Working with the Public Health team at Somerset County Council, Spark recruited and supports a network of 100+ people to be **Covid Community Champions**.

**Support to community-led Carer Support groups**

(sub-contract from the Somerset Carers Service). We support the volunteers who arrange and lead carers' support groups across the County. As with Active Living Group, carers' groups were greatly affected by the pandemic and consequent restrictions for meetings. We appointed a new project lead in August 2021 who has supported an increasing number of groups to reopen and offer peer support and some brief respite for local carers. By March 2022 we have helped 10 groups to re-start and helped to create 8 new groups, with a further 4 underway. We also run a regular on-line forum. A key area a focus is to find ways to increase access to group support for carers, one example was to establish an activity group running in parallel for the 'carer for', allowing the carer to attend the support group.

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*"It helped me to feel safer as it gave me more knowledge and up-to-date information which in turn helped me to help family and friends in a more knowledgeable and confident manner. This was useful because it meant that family and friends trusted me more and due to that trust made them consider the vaccination programme in a positive light."*

**Covid Community Champion, January 2022**

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## VOICE, INFLUENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

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**Improve and support communication and collaboration within and between sectors; strengthen the voice and influence of the sector to shape and design policy and delivery; act as independent advocate for Somerset's VCSE sector**

As public sector services across the country reach out to the VCSE sector through formal health and care strategies, the range, speed and scale of collaboration is increasing – and Somerset already has a firm foundation on which to collaborate further. However, it is crucial that the VCSE sector has a strong voice to share concerns, is able to contribute strategically as equal partners, and is funded adequately to do so. Spark perform this advocacy work through a number of fora.

## VCSE & THE PUBLIC SECTOR: BRIDGING THE GAP

This area of our work has increased exponentially during the last 12 months, primarily due to the imminent introduction of Local Government Reorganisation and the Integrated Care System. Both these processes present huge opportunities for the VCSE, but also challenges.

Spark is the VCSE representative for the development of the new ICS and LGR and we have been working hard to support both areas of work, in consultation with the VCSE, but also to attempt to align both workstreams, in an attempt to avoid duplication and overlap for the sector.

As the ICS becomes a legal entity in July 2022, we have been working initially with NAVCA (national umbrella body for infrastructure charities) and colleagues from the Somerset Group of Charities to develop a costed proposal regarding ICS/VCSE engagement, which will allow NHS and social care colleagues to have a simple route into the VCSE, enabling more effective partnership working, communication and commissioning. It will also create a framework whereby the wider VCSE have a stronger voice and can participate more easily in service design and decision-making.

Spark are also representing the VCSE on the Advisory Board for this transformational work, that will see Somerset move to a unitary authority. We ran a workshop on the VCSE at a conference for Town and Parish Councils and will continue to work with partners to ensure that the VCSE is integrated into the new model. In particular, we are keen to influence and support the development of the Local Community Networks. We are currently working with the LGR Programme Board to align the VCSE/ICS Engagement model, mentioned above, with the vision and aspirations of the local authority, so that they too can benefit from the approach that we, as a sector, have developed.

## CONSULTATION

We consult with the sector through our daily work and use these conversations to shape and adapt our services. Our team, based in the community, gather intelligence face to face and via our forums and bespoke events, and we consult through digital means on a regular basis.

### **Reflect, Recover, Renew**

During this period, our consultation work focussed on this research project which aims to identify the strengths of the VCSE Sector in Somerset and understand what it needs to thrive in the future. We were supported by a steering group comprising Somerset County Council, Somerset Association of Local Councils, Somerset Community Foundation, Frome Town Council, Community Council for Somerset, Diversity Voice and Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership.

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*“Spark have been working hard over this past year to strengthen the community infrastructure in Somerset. The ever-growing demand for a more holistic community offer for the health of our residents in Somerset means that strengthening this infrastructure is important - and advocating for this cultural shift to connect people to community rather than clinical services has really taken shape with their hard work.*

*“Alongside this, Spark play a key role in co-ordinating our key county charities through the Somerset Group of Charities which has allowed strong connections, collaborations and insights to be easily captured during the last turbulent year.*

*“SASP are delighted to work with Spark on a number of work streams including volunteering and Open Mental Health and look forward to a continued strong and positive relationship in the years to come.”*

**Jane Knowles, CEO of Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership**

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*“I thought that the recent Spark visioning session was very well done and really demonstrated the work you are all doing to look at how Spark moves forward and the potential for the voluntary sector to make changes in how we work together and communicate with each other.”*

**Patricia Roche, Headway Somerset**

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Throughout the process, led by an independent academic researcher, we brought together a diverse range of voluntary and community organisations from across the county to develop a shared vision. The process consisted of:

- A survey (150 participants)
- 13 focus groups (including themed sessions with anchor organisations; equality, diversity and inclusion, etc.)
- 24 interviews with VCSE leaders
- 2 visioning sessions, attended by VCSE leaders and key stakeholders

We will be using these themes that were identified to develop an action plan, in consultation with VCSE colleagues. This will prove useful for us, as a sector, to identify shared priorities and work together to find solutions. Also, by developing a VCSE strategy, albeit a simple and broad-brush approach, it will ensure that we can participate more effectively in 'system' meetings, knowing that this has been co-produced. Furthermore, we will also be using the findings of this research to inform our own strategy at Spark Somerset, which is currently being refreshed.

## SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PRESCRIBING ACTIVITY

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### **Support and develop formal and informal volunteering opportunities; communication of health and care-related topics; develop and maintain networks with VCSE groups and other stakeholders involved in social prescribing**

The majority of our work enables VCSE activity, which in turn creates a thriving eco-system for social prescribing activity – as reflected in most of the case studies and testimonials provided throughout. Most VCSE organisations can be described as supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities in some way. Some additional specific examples that are linked more strongly with health are as follows:

- Developed a Health and Wellbeing Forum in the Rural Practice Network Area
  - bringing together a wide range of organisations, both health, statutory and VCSE who are concerned with the population's health and wellbeing in a broad range of ways.
  - Over 40 VCSE organisations from small village-wide groups to large area-wide organisations
- Funding obtained from SCF (£30,000 over 3 years) to start young carers support group and activities at the Balsam Centre in Wincanton. Lockdown meant that everything started very slowly but a group started in January 2022, with 8 young carers meeting fortnightly, with trips and activities and a residential planned at the Magdalen Project near Chard in August 2022.
- Collaboration with Queen Camel Parish Council to develop a broad programme of weekly and monthly activities for all residents of the village –Goldies singing group, coffee mornings, a Dementia Friends information session, bingo, film nights have begun and and talks are in hand to start a weekly board games group, weekly Flexercise group and weekly IT support through SparkIT for tuition on use of devices, as well as social events such as barbeques and trips out.
- Collaboration with Carymoor, the health coach and memory café at Castle Cary, and Wincanton's Memory Lane group. Plans in place for a fortnightly session for people living with dementia and their carers – most activities outdoors, conservation, nature-based, art & crafts, etc

Other related projects include:

### THRIVING COMMUNITIES SOMERSET

Funded by the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) with match funding from Somerset County Council and the CCG, this successful project has had national recognition. We worked in partnership with health, art and nature organisations to run the Thriving Communities Somerset project, to strengthen and grow the social prescribing networks across the county. The project commissioned a programme of seven activities to support care home staff, 18–35-year-olds seeking employment skills, and individuals living with

long-term health conditions and/or long-covid. The activities have supported over 200 people across the County and produced five short films documenting the impact of the work.

## WELLBEING DIRECTORIES

We continue to host and manage two online directories that provide useful information about community-based social prescribing activities. Undoubtedly, Covid has had an impact on these resources, not least because many of the activities promoted on the directories have had to cease. Despite this, usage has remained steady and we envisage this increasing as we emerge from the pandemic and activities re-start.

## SPARK IT

The Spark iT digital inclusion project aims to reduce digital poverty by providing one-to-one digital training, a device loan system, and a business-hours telephone helpline. Since launching in July 2021, Spark iT has recruited eleven volunteer digital champions and has supported over one hundred digitally excluded clients, receiving referrals from families, charities, Village Agents, and health care workers.

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

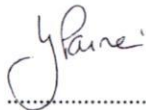
The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 08/12/22 and signed on its behalf by:



.....  
G R Paine  
Trustee

## Spark Somerset

### Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Spark Somerset

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022 which are set out on pages 19 to 35.

#### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees of Spark Somerset 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 Spark Somerset'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

Since Spark Somerset's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

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 Spark Somerset as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting 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.



.....  
Dave Tucker FCCA  
Independent Examiner  
The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Thompson Jenner LLP  
1 Colleton Crescent  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4DG

Date: 10/01/23.....

## Spark Somerset

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	3	233,300	-	233,300
Charitable activities	4	<u>323,303</u>	<u>315,755</u>	<u>639,058</u>
Total income		<u>556,603</u>	<u>315,755</u>	<u>872,358</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	5	(12,956)	-	(12,956)
Charitable activities	5	<u>(394,125)</u>	<u>(315,755)</u>	<u>(709,880)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(407,081)</u>	<u>(315,755)</u>	<u>(722,836)</u>
Net income		<u>149,522</u>	-	<u>149,522</u>
Net movement in funds		149,522	-	149,522
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		<u>241,497</u>	-	<u>241,497</u>
Total funds carried forward	15	<u><u>391,019</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>391,019</u></u>
	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	3	133,694	30,000	163,694
Charitable activities	4	<u>250,545</u>	<u>174,088</u>	<u>424,633</u>
Total income		<u>384,239</u>	<u>204,088</u>	<u>588,327</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	5	(18,290)	-	(18,290)
Charitable activities	5	<u>(280,336)</u>	<u>(204,088)</u>	<u>(484,424)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(298,626)</u>	<u>(204,088)</u>	<u>(502,714)</u>
Net income		<u>85,613</u>	-	<u>85,613</u>
Net movement in funds		85,613	-	85,613
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		<u>155,884</u>	-	<u>155,884</u>
Total funds carried forward	15	<u><u>241,497</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>241,497</u></u>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The funds breakdown for 2021 is shown in note 15.

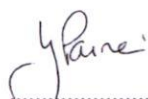
The notes on pages 22 to 35 form an integral part of these financial statements.

## Spark Somerset

(Registration number: 1179438)  
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	6,431	9,741
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	12	117,456	45,836
Cash at bank and in hand	13	<u>707,398</u>	<u>511,958</u>
		824,854	557,794
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	14	<u>(440,266)</u>	<u>(326,038)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>384,588</u>	<u>231,756</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>391,019</u>	<u>241,497</u>
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>			
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds		<u>391,019</u>	<u>241,497</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	15	<u>391,019</u>	<u>241,497</u>

The financial statements on pages 19 to 35 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 08/12/22... and signed on their behalf by:



.....  
G R Paine  
Trustee

The notes on pages 22 to 35 form an integral part of these financial statements.

## Spark Somerset

### Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash income		149,522	85,613
<b>Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items</b>			
Depreciation		4,047	1,787
		153,569	87,400
<b>Working capital adjustments</b>			
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	12	(71,620)	21,408
Increase in creditors	14	17,255	6,792
Increase in deferred income		96,973	194,024
Net cash flows from operating activities		196,177	309,624
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	11	(737)	(10,153)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		195,440	299,471
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		511,958	212,487
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		707,398	511,958

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### 1 Charity status

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales.

The address of its registered office is:

Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard

Bowdens Farm

Hambridge

Langport

Somerset

TA10 0BP

#### 2 Accounting policies

##### Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

##### Basis of preparation

Spark Somerset meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

##### Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

##### Income and endowments

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

##### *Donations and legacies*

Donations and legacies are recognised on a receivable basis when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

##### *Grants receivable*

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### *Deferred income*

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

#### **Expenditure**

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

#### *Raising funds*

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.

#### *Charitable activities*

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

#### *Grant provisions*

Provisions for grants are made when the intention to make a grant has been communicated to the recipient but there is uncertainty about either the timing of the grant or the amount of grant payable.

#### **Governance costs**

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees's meetings and reimbursed expenses.

#### **Taxation**

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

#### **Tangible fixed assets**

Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

#### **Depreciation and amortisation**

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

<b>Asset class</b>	<b>Depreciation method and rate</b>
Computer equipments	33% straight line

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### **Trade debtors**

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

#### **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

#### **Trade creditors**

are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### **Borrowings**

Interest-bearing borrowings are initially recorded at fair value, net of transaction costs. Interest-bearing borrowings are subsequently carried at amortised cost, with the difference between the proceeds, net of transaction costs, and the amount due on redemption being recognised as a charge to the Statement of Financial Activities over the period of the relevant borrowing.

Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and similar charges.

Borrowings are classified as current liabilities unless the charity has an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting date.

#### **Fund structure**

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees's discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

#### 3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations	11,852	-	11,852
Grants, including capital grants;			
Grants and gifts	221,448	-	221,448
<b>Total for 2022</b>	<u>233,300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>233,300</u>
<b>Total for 2021</b>	<u>133,694</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>163,694</u>

#### 4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Provision of Advice, Training & Support	<u>323,303</u>	<u>315,755</u>	<u>639,058</u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Provision of Advice, Training & Support	<u>250,545</u>	<u>174,088</u>	<u>424,633</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### 5 Analysis of expenditure

	Cost of raising funds	Provision of advice, training & support	Support costs	Governance costs	2022 Total	2021 Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Wages and salaries	12,956	335,425	196,653	6,337	551,371	411,750
Other staff costs	-	12,467	6,587	-	19,054	12,241
Disclosure and barring service costs	-	10,285	-	-	10,285	6,565
Project equipment and other costs	-	9,855	-	-	9,855	653
Premises and other costs	-	7,985	19,742	-	27,727	16,066
Computer and software costs	-	7,320	3,902	-	11,222	9,830
Marketing, PR and events costs	-	6,736	4,247	-	10,983	8,472
Legal, insurance and professional	-	1,972	2,156	9,215	13,343	4,925
Consultancy costs	-	34,810	5,068	-	39,878	28,083
Grant payments	-	17,812	-	-	17,812	-
Other costs	-	2,536	8,770	-	11,306	4,129
	<u>12,956</u>	<u>447,203</u>	<u>247,125</u>	<u>15,552</u>	<u>722,836</u>	<u>502,714</u>
Support costs	-	247,125	(247,125)	-	-	-
Governance costs	-	15,552	-	(15,552)	-	-
Total expenditure 2022	<u>12,956</u>	<u>709,880</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>722,836</u>	<u>502,714</u>
Total expenditure 2021	<u>18,290</u>	<u>484,424</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>502,714</u>	

Of the total expenditure, £400,081 (2021 - £298,626) was unrestricted and £322,755 (2021 - £204,088) was restricted.

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### 6 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2022 £	2021 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	<u>4,047</u>	<u>1,787</u>

#### 7 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year.

#### 8 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Staff costs during the year were:</b>		
Wages and salaries	507,130	380,415
Social security costs	34,140	24,180
Pension costs	<u>10,100</u>	<u>7,555</u>
	<u>551,370</u>	<u>412,150</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2022 No	2021 No
Employees	<u>27</u>	<u>21</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £184,350 (2021 - £215,310).

#### 9 Independent examiner's remuneration

	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Other fees to examiners</b>		
Examination-related assurance services	900	1,140
All other services	<u>2,700</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>3,600</u>	<u>1,140</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### 10 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

#### 11 Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>		
At 1 April 2021	11,683	11,683
Additions	737	737
At 31 March 2022	<u>12,420</u>	<u>12,420</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
At 1 April 2021	1,942	1,942
Charge for the year	4,047	4,047
At 31 March 2022	<u>5,989</u>	<u>5,989</u>
<b>Net book value</b>		
At 31 March 2022	<u>6,431</u>	<u>6,431</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>9,741</u>	<u>9,741</u>

#### 12 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	100,734	20,271
Prepayments	5,416	4,565
Accrued income	10,306	20,000
Other debtors	1,000	1,000
	<u>117,456</u>	<u>45,836</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### 13 Cash and cash equivalents

	2022	2021
	£	£
Cash at bank	<u>707,398</u>	<u>511,958</u>

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

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade creditors	9,317	4,425
Other taxation and social security	9,453	7,253
Pension scheme creditor	2,164	1,851
Accruals	12,540	2,690
Deferred income	<u>406,792</u>	<u>309,819</u>
	<u>440,266</u>	<u>326,038</u>

	2022	2021
	£	£
Deferred income at 1 April 2021	309,819	115,795
Resources deferred in the period	406,792	309,819
Amounts released from previous periods	<u>(309,819)</u>	<u>(115,795)</u>
Deferred income at year end	<u>406,792</u>	<u>309,819</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### 15 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<i>General</i>				
Unrestricted funds	241,497	556,603	(407,081)	391,019
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
NHS Somerset CCG - Integrated Volunteering	-	30,850	(30,850)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project	-	58,900	(58,900)	-
Symphony Health Care - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	11,418	(11,418)	-
Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	25,981	(25,981)	-
National Lottery Grant	-	24,623	(24,623)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project	-	9,360	(9,360)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - GP Helper	-	2,566	(2,566)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Covid Booklet	-	9,942	(9,942)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - County Research Project	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Somerset County Council - County Research Project	-	15,000	(15,000)	-
CRF Engage Somerset	-	1,216	(1,216)	-
CRF Social Enterprises	-	9,492	(9,492)	-
CRF Velocity	-	13,178	(13,178)	-
NHS Somerset - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	19,868	(19,868)	-
Somerset County Council - Mental Health Hub	-	9,500	(9,500)	-
Rethink Mental Health Illness	-	2,454	(2,454)	-
Arts Council - Thriving Communities	-	20,636	(20,636)	-

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Somerset County Council - Thriving Communities	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
Take Art - Thriving Communities	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Vaccination Volunteers	-	7,815	(7,815)	-
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers	-	20,835	(20,835)	-
Somerset County Council - Dementia Training	-	6,121	(6,121)	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	-	315,755	(315,755)	-
<b>Total funds</b>	241,497	872,358	(722,836)	391,019

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
<i>General</i>				
Unrestricted funds	155,884	384,239	(298,626)	241,497
<b>Restricted</b>				
NHS Somerset CCG - Integrated Volunteering	-	36,500	(36,500)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project	-	6,838	(6,838)	-
NHS Somerset CCG - Core	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Symphony Health Care - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	31,605	(31,605)	-
Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	31,128	(31,128)	-
Mendip District Council - Core	-	25,000	(25,000)	-
Somerset County Council - Covid 19 Emergency funds	-	19,336	(19,336)	-
National Lottery Grant	-	12,212	(12,212)	-
Yeovil District Hospital - Voluntary Sector Support	-	11,000	(11,000)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Covid 19 Emergency funds	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Training	-	4,800	(4,800)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project	-	640	(640)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - GP Helper	-	184	(184)	-
Somerset Community Foundation - Covid Booklet	-	58	(58)	-
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers	-	9,787	(9,787)	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>204,088</u>	<u>(204,088)</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>155,884</u>	<u>588,327</u>	<u>(502,714)</u>	<u>241,497</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:-

Arts Council – Thriving Communities - to improve and increase the range and reach of arts and nature-based social prescribing activities in Somerset

CRF Engage Somerset - 6 month project to promote social inclusion and combat poverty, with an underlying key aim to support people towards and into employment.

CRF Social Enterprises - A programme of support and networking for social enterprises (both established and aspiring) to support in their development and long term sustainability.

CRF Velocity - A digital inclusion project accessible to all voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in Somerset, offering fully funded training, support and investment

Mendip District Council - Core - Funding of core charitable activities

Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker - For the development of Health & Wellbeing partnerships

National Lottery Grant - To build collaboration between local community groups/charities for sustainability

NHS Somerset – Social Prescribing Link Worker – For the development of Health & Wellbeing activities and support services in east South Somerset

NHS Somerset CCG - Core - Funding of core charitable activities

NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project - Improving access to physical, mental and social care by reducing digital poverty across Somerset

NHS Somerset CCG - Integrated Volunteering - Set-up of Spark a Change and supporting ongoing volunteering needs

NHS Somerset CCG – Vaccination Inequality - work with VCSE groups to help more people to access their COVID-19 Vaccination or booster.

Rethink Mental Illness - partner in Open Mental Health VCSE Alliance - chair of partnership board, provision of countywide volunteering infrastructure support and admin support for grants programme

Somerset Community Foundation – County Research Project - 'Reflect, Recover, Renew: Investigating the impact of Covid-19 and creating a shared vision for the future of the VCSE in Somerset'

Somerset Community Foundation - Covid Booklet - Advice and guidance to help local community groups re-start their activities

Somerset Community Foundation - GP Helper - Covid 19 support to vulnerable patients across South Somerset

Somerset Community Foundation - Training - Covid 19 Online Training for VCSE sector

Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project - building a stronger partnership of youth activity providers in Somerset

Somerset County Council – County Research Project – 'Reflect, Recover, Renew: Investigating the impact of Covid-19 and creating a shared vision for the future of the VCSE in Somerset'

Somerset County Council - Dementia Training - Work with VCSE groups to enhance the skills, knowledge and understanding about memory loss and dementia

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Somerset County Council – Mental Health Hub - coordination of peer support network for VCSE organisations working in mental health

Somerset County council – Thriving Communities – to improve and increase the range and reach of arts and nature-based social prescribing activities in Somerset

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers - Short term to support vaccination programme and longer term 'bank' of volunteers

Symphony Health Care - Social Prescribing Link Worker - For the development of Health & Wellbeing partnerships

Take Art – Thriving Communities – to improve and increase the range and reach of arts and nature-based social prescribing activities in Somerset

Yeovil District Hospital - Voluntary Sector Support - Funding of core charitable activities

#### 16 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	6,431	-	6,431
Current assets	512,558	312,296	824,854
Current liabilities	(127,970)	(312,296)	(440,266)
Total net assets	<u>391,019</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>391,019</u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	9,741	-	9,741
Current assets	280,398	277,396	557,794
Current liabilities	(48,642)	(277,396)	(326,038)
Total net assets	<u>241,497</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>241,497</u>

## Spark Somerset

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

#### 17 Analysis of net funds

	At 1 April 2021 £	Financing cash flows £	At 31 March 2022 £
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>511,958</u>	<u>195,440</u>	<u>707,398</u>
Net debt	<u>511,958</u>	<u>195,440</u>	<u>707,398</u>

	At 1 April 2020 £	Financing cash flows £	At 31 March 2021 £
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>212,488</u>	<u>299,470</u>	<u>511,958</u>
Net debt	<u>212,488</u>	<u>299,470</u>	<u>511,958</u>

#### 18 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

**SPARK SOMERSET**

England & Wales - Charity number 1179438

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# Accounts

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**SPARK SOMERSET**  
**(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

**CHARITY NUMBER: 1179438**

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2021  
REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND  
ADVISERS**

**Directors and Trustees**

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The directors of the charitable company (“the charity”) are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees who served during the period and up to the date the accounts were approved are as follows:

Rachel Cooper (resigned from 16/9/20)  
Andrew Ridgewell  
Kristy Blackwell  
Stephen Woollett  
Melanie Merrill  
Alexandra MacNeil  
Jeremy Martin  
Tory Offord (appointed 18/05/20 resigned 22/12/20)  
Tim Ayre (appointed 11/03/21)

The registered office for the period of this report is  
Units 3 and 4, The Courtyard  
Bowdens Farm  
Hambridge  
LANGPORT  
Somerset  
TA10 0BP

The bankers are Co-operative Bank (UK) Plc

The Independent Examiner is Mr Dave Tucker, Thompson Jenner LLP, 1 Colleton Crescent, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4DG.

The full name of the Charity is Spark Somerset. Charitable Incorporated Organisation, number 1179438.

## Structure, Governance and Management

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Spark Somerset, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, was incorporated on 3 August 2018. The operations of Spark Somerset moved from the charity South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) from 1 January 2019. The Board of Trustees made this decision for numerous compelling reasons, one of these being continued sustainability. Three trustees from SSVCA moved to become trustees of the new charity, Spark Somerset.

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee is appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. When a trustee has served the three-year term, they will retire from office at the subsequent Annual General Meeting and can then seek re-election. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. A procedure has been introduced for the induction and training of trustees. The trustees attend board meetings every three months.

The trustees delegate the overall management of Spark Somerset to the Chief Executive. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. The trustees regularly review their documented risk management policies.

## Objects of the Charity and Principal Activity

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The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. The structure and content of this report is designed to reflect the requirement to explain how the Charity has operated within that guidance.

### **Our Vision**

Voluntary action is thriving and effective in helping the people of Somerset to be healthy and engaged in their communities

### **Our Mission**

Spark Somerset is established to provide high quality support to voluntary and community sector organisations through direct provision of services

### **Our Values**

Spark Somerset is passionate about voluntary and community services that make a difference. We are committed to supporting other local voluntary sector organisations and where appropriate to provide services ourselves to achieve this.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers are pro-active and resourceful in seeking out solutions to challenges and act with integrity, always maintain a focus achieving benefit for those we serve. We pride ourselves in offering value to our beneficiaries through cost effective support that is both accessible and inclusive.

### **Our Core Activities**

#### **Support for voluntary and community groups**

- Setting up, governance
- Funding advice, business planning
- Support via our website, social media and also through our weekly e-bulletin
- Volunteer management, recruitment and retention
- Training
- DBS checking service

### **Spark Volunteer Service**

We run a volunteering brokerage service, engaging with local communities to improve the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering, matching individuals to a cause that matters to them. We also promote the value of volunteering and social action and work with local partners to ensure that it can flourish.

As well as supporting individuals to take part in social action, we encourage volunteering good practice amongst the groups with whom we work, providing guidance, support and training.

### **Voice of the Sector**

The Spark Somerset team represents the voluntary sector in a range of different forums, including these examples below:

- Chair of Open Mental Health VCSE Alliance
- Chair of Integrated Volunteering Steering Group
- Somerset People Board for Health and Social Care
- Community Resilience Partnerships Group
- VCSE Emergencies Partnership

As the independent infrastructure organisation in Somerset, we represent the local voluntary sector at community, District, County, Regional and National level. We also listen to the needs of the local sector so that we can shape and develop the support we provide accordingly.

## **Reserves Policy and Risk Management**

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It is the intention of the Trustees that the freely available reserves of the Charity should be sufficient to ensure the continuance of its activities, should there be an unexpected short-term adverse fluctuation in income. The Trustees consider that an appropriate level of free reserves is approximately three to six months' normal expenditure. This equates to approximately £126,000 - £252,000. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 there was a total of £241,497 of funding freely available for general purposes. The Trustees are satisfied that the long-term financial plans generate sufficient free reserves to satisfy its reserves policy over the coming 12 months and beyond.

The Trustees review the charity's Reserves Policy on an annual basis. This review is based on the future strategy and financial plans for the charity, as well as the environment which the charity is operating in at the time. The Trustees will make adjustments to the reserves based on this review and set them at a level that is deemed appropriate for the coming year. During the year the Trustees decided in light of the pandemic to increase reserves to up to six months in light of ever changing needs and funding.

Having reviewed the reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 the Trustees are satisfied that the current level meets the requirements of the charity.

The Trustees have examined and addressed the financial risks to which the Charity is exposed and in association with its insurers, has mitigated those risks to the best of its ability.

## **Transactions and Financial Position**

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During the period the Charity incurred total expenditure of £502,714 of which £484,424 was directly charitable.

Over the year the Charity received income of £588,327 leading to an overall surplus of £85,613. The Balance sheet shows total reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 of £241,497.

## Chair's Report

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Welcome to our annual report for 2021-22, a quite extraordinary year.

It would be a mistake to begin with anything other than an expression of deep gratitude to the team at Spark for their response to the Covid 19 crisis. This must be swiftly followed by a vote of thanks to the magnificent voluntary sector of Somerset. The demands on our sector increased overnight in a way that none of us would have imagined and was met with energy and immediacy.


Spark has been there to support local organisations with training, with fundraising advice and sometimes just a cuppa and a chat. After the initial wave of volunteers supporting their friends and neighbours, next came the welcome news of vaccinations, swiftly followed by the unbelievable task of coordinating the volunteer response.

Nothing could have thrown into clearer focus the role of our sector in our functioning, kind communities. Amongst all the loss and pain of this year, we should all sleep slightly easier in the knowledge that our neighbours and our local groups are there when we need them. Often in the background, Spark's local and regional support, coordination and facilitation underpins so much of this activity.

It is a crucial message that our communities can step up and will step up, not only in times of crisis but on a day to day basis, and this is possible only with the right infrastructure support and the crucial recognition that our sector is the backbone of these community responses.

I have been most impressed by the role that innovation has played in the response to the crisis. We have been supporting things at a neighbourhood level, as well as driving collaboration and new alliances in county wide delivery. Even at the toughest points this year, Spark has never stopped reaching for new and better ways of doing things, bringing energy and vision to new ways of working and getting new partners around the same table to deliver better, localised support for the people of Somerset.

Whatever the future holds, this year has shown beyond doubt, the desire and ability of communities to support each other. Please enjoy our report.



Alex MacNeil

Chair of Trustees

29<sup>th</sup> November 2021



2020 has been a year like no other. The effect of COVID-19 on people and communities across Somerset, and indeed the world, has clearly illustrated how in touch local groups and charities are with the wants and needs of their communities. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of local knowledge, adaptability, and timely response to community needs that the sector is known for.

Somerset is fortunate to have a strong and committed VCSE sector, with a diverse range of charities, community groups and social enterprises. Embedded within their communities, the majority of VCSE organisations in Somerset tend to work at a very local level. They are adept at accessing hard to reach and vulnerable groups; able to advocate on their behalf and provide practical and emotional support. When the pandemic hit in March 2020, community groups across the County – formal and informal - networks, neighbours and social enterprises, rallied round to help people in need. At a time of crisis, the VCSE and 'community action' really came into its own.

As an infrastructure charity, our job is to enable, support and encourage. We do this through:

**Development** – Working with local communities to create and develop ways to meet the needs and aspirations of people in Somerset

**Support** – Encouraging local voluntary organisations and community groups with tools, information, training, and practical expertise, so they can be the best they can be.

**Volunteering** - Encouraging voluntary action to develop and thrive, by supporting people in Somerset to be healthy and engaged in their communities

**Representation** – Making the case for, and speaking as the trusted voice of the voluntary community, with local councils, NHS, government and others.

**Networking** – Bringing people together from all kinds of voluntary and community groups, to make connections, share what they do and support each other

**Partnerships** – Connecting with local initiatives and partners, and working together on local projects to share knowledge and resources for the benefit of the community, voluntary organisations and community groups.

We have been overwhelmed by the response throughout the past year and it has been a real privilege to work with voluntary groups and communities throughout this time.

## Our response to the pandemic

Over the past 12 months, our team have stepped up to provide a range of additional support, in response to the pandemic. The following gives a snap-shot of our additional work:

### Volunteering

- We supported the **Somerset Vaccination Programme**, recruiting volunteers and providing volunteer management advice to Primary Care Networks and Somerset Foundation Trust,
- Working with the Public Health team at Somerset County Council, Spark recruited and supported a network of **Covid Community Champions**; sharing the latest information to help their communities to stay happy and healthy.
- **Developed a Volunteer Pack** containing guidance for Covid-19 groups:  
<https://www.sparksomerset.org.uk/sites/default/files/u5/Spark%20Somerset%20Volunteer%20Pack%202020.pdf>
- Produced a **thank you video for Covid-19 volunteers** across the county. Viewed by 1000+ users on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Elc0ddBotj0>

### Support for Covid groups

- Supported the network of 100+ Covid support groups, by offering help and advice to manage volunteers and provide local help to communities.
- Establishment of a **central point on our website** to offer quick and easy access to all the latest guidance and best practice guidelines for newly emerging Covid19 response groups.
- Establishment of an **online chat facility** on our website to make it easier for groups to contact us directly, and signpost people to information on the website.
- Development of a series of **online webinars** on key topics of immediate concern for groups – ‘In at the Deep End’ and ‘Alternatives to Handling Cash’
- **Facebook group for COVID-19 Group Coordinators**, providing a space for them to network, address challenges, and share ideas and peer support.
- We established a **confidential telephone support service for COVID-19 Group Coordinators**, delivered by a qualified coach currently seconded to work with Spark.
- Administered a **Covid-19 Essentials Fund** (£1,000) for small unconstituted Covid-19 support groups to apply to for basic essentials. This was particularly aimed at groups with immediate need who didn't have an official bank account.
- Ran a **Forum for Food Banks**, in partnership with The Trussell Trust
- Worked with partners from CCG and the Local Pharmacy Committee to trouble-shoot issues related to **pharmacy deliveries** and volunteers.

## Supporting VCSE organisations to develop and thrive

During this period, one to one advice and support has been given to 573 groups.

As of 1 April 2020, we became a Countywide charity and provided services across the whole of Somerset. Our Voluntary Sector Development team consists of a place-based Adviser in each District, supported by the wider team.

Many groups come to us with a variety of needs, and we often need to spend time working with them on more than one issue. Support provided includes support with start-ups, governance, business planning and volunteer management.

### Place-based Community Development Project

We were funded by the Lottery in late 2020 to recruit three place-based community development workers in Chard, Bridgwater and Taunton. We have had staff in place since January and they have been working in the local communities to build infrastructure and support the Covid-19 volunteering legacy. We've adopted a model already used in Yeovil called Yeovil Connect. A 'Connect' Forum has been established in each area providing a monthly opportunity for organisations to gather and exchange ideas, information, training and support. All the forums have a slightly different focus based on the needs of the area, but primarily we hope they will become self-sustaining and form the basis of on-going collaboration, sharing skills and volunteers and provide a platform for development and growth of the VCSE sector.

The other initiative we have rolled out is a dedicated page on Spark a Change for volunteers (e.g. Taunton Volunteers). This means that all the organisations that the lottery-funded staff are connecting with can list their opportunities in one place which really supports the place-based approach. Volunteers have the chance to try a number of things, allowing for cross fertilization and flexibility.

Over the last 5 months the community development workers have supported 115 groups to connect with one another, access further support and recruit volunteers.

### We ran 44 Forums during this period, with 628 attendees

Forums are an extremely popular and effective method of providing support, encouraging networking and disseminating information within the VCSE. In previous years, the vast majority of these events would have taken place face to face. During the pandemic, we have obviously had to adapt. In addition to training sessions focused on specific topics (see next section) we held a number of general networking and information Forums for

## A Case Study: Crewkerne Be a Good Neighbour Scheme

Crewkerne Community Church had just set up the community group 'Be A Good Neighbour' (BAGN) when Lockdown started. Like many groups, they quickly mobilised with volunteers delivering food and prescriptions to vulnerable people. They have a professional kitchen and started to use this to prepare meals but needed funding to continue this. They also wanted to start a befriending service

### How we helped

Penny worked with the group to apply for funding. BAGN did not think they could apply as they did not yet have their own bank account but with our support, BAGN applied and £2,500 was secured in April, with another application being made in October to extend the 150 meals a day service, twice a week, for 8 months. She also supported the group to explore options to become incorporated and linked them to the training she was organising in direct response to local demand. Their volunteers wanted better understanding of Mental Health when talking with or meeting the vulnerable people they support. 10 of their volunteers attended a half-day MHFA training we organised. Spark colleague Matt met with BAGN member, Angela, to discuss how their phone befriending service was operating, including dealing with safeguarding concerns and learning about local mental health services, and making stronger links with the Health Coaches at Crewkerne Medical Centre. Matt has also involved BAGN in a new local health & wellbeing forum, to connect with health & care and have a stronger voice on how services are delivered.

### What was the impact?

The funding has secured the medium-term future of the meals service; this is being used more by young families since people came off furlough and were made redundant. Our support also helped with continuity for the group as their leaders' availability kept changing over the period. Their volunteers are more confident when encountering Mental Health issues and understand boundaries to their role and other sources of help.

Representatives from Crewkerne BAGN are now attending general VCSE forums, enabling them to share learning and ideas with peers in other local groups and community resources.

Stephen Gray, leader of the group said "Spark Somerset's support has been very helpful in both securing funding and advising us on operating safely."

VCSE groups. Each District took a slightly different approach to this, depending on capacity and in response to local demand. Arising out of these forums came a clear need for some targeted forums, in addition to the geographic forums, to address common themes/problems.

### Food Forum

Monthly Food Forums commenced in January and three were held until the end of March. A total of 35 groups and representatives from across Somerset have attended with speakers including The Trussell Trust and NHS Somerset, as well as speakers from Spark Somerset helping to give advice and support on DBS checks, recruiting and managing volunteers and funding opportunities. The Forums have been well received and have been an opportunity for networking and information sharing to groups involved in the provision of emergency food across Somerset.

### Spark Training Programme

At the beginning of this period, we created a webinar series to address urgent knowledge needs in response to Covid.

**We ran 25 training workshops during this period, with 361 attendees**

Workshop	Attendees
Webinar 'In at the deep End'	56
Webinar 'In at the deep End' rerun	7
Webinar 'Organising and Supporting your Volunteers'	19
Webinar 'Tools to Help you Organise'	6
Webinar Finding Support from Home	17
Webinar Looking after Yourself Part 1	19
Webinar Looking after Yourself Part 2	8
Webinar Looking after People's Data	6
Understanding Mental health and Building Resilience	9
Managing Your Charity in a Remote Environment	7
Effective Volunteer Management	5
Improving your Charity's Reach and Marketing	12
Mental health First Aid	11
Adult Safeguarding	13
Mental health First Aid	15
Operating a Covid Secure Environment	19
Dementia Friends training	15
Emergency First Aid at Work	11
Mental health First Aid	11
Emergency First Aid at Work	8
Child Protection Basic Awareness	14
Finance training	8
Measuring Impact	21
Managing Volunteers	20
Trustee training	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>361</b>

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*"Thanks very much for the webinar this morning. It was really useful to have a professional's opinion on all of this stuff. I think a lot of us are risk assessing activities and writing policies and we're not always doing this from an informed place, other than following the news and some often quite opaque government*

As part of our Health and Wellbeing work, we also delivered 2 Community Connector Courses with a total of 41 attendees. Both were targeted at South Somerset communities – the first delivered for Abri staff/customers as part of our Take Part project and the second widely open to community groups in the district.

### Supporting funding and sustainability

During normal circumstances, the majority of groups come to us needing some kind of funding support. However, in the first part of the year, the support we have been asked to provide focussed significantly more on resilience, governance and adapting to Covid. Groups have necessarily focussed on emergency planning rather than longer term income generation plans.

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*“The support that we received from Spark Somerset, in regards to funding has been excellent and essential. Since our inception, Spark has regularly advised us of the funding options available and provided advice and guidance. We have also attended training. What has been particularly helpful is the option to contact the Spark team and seek help around a specific project. I have no doubt, that without the help, support and guidance of the Spark fundraising team, we would be in a very different financial position.”*

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However, in the latter part of this period, we have seen a marked increase in demand for funding support, as groups begin to turn their mind to recovery. The Spark Funding Team has maintained a free funding web site resource, funding-specific social media and managed regular communications alerting voluntary groups and charities to relevant and up to date funding opportunities. We have also supported organisations with advice on applying for funds, providing bespoke training and a bid assessment service.

Spark has recruited into two fundraising posts and since both members of staff joined (August 2020), strategic funding support has increased significantly with a

particular focus on accessing funding available from outside the County and help in assessing and developing organisational resilience. Spark has also recruited a small consultancy team able to work with the sector on a matched fund basis to write funding applications. We are still awaiting decisions on some funding applications. However, of the outcomes we are aware of, our Voluntary Sector Development and Funding teams helped generate more than £350,000 for Somerset groups.

Our support for the sector has become more strategic and active since August 2020 when our Funding Manager and Funding Officer started in post. This additional resource has provided vital specialist support and capacity to the Voluntary Sector Advice team. This is taking the form of advisory meetings, bespoke research for funding opportunities, grant application assessments, drafting of fundraising material, training and planning.

Spark also play a key role, working in partnership with Somerset Community Foundation, to develop a Funder’s Forum, where local funders such as the Community Lottery, Children in Need and Lloyds TSB Foundation, meet to discuss how they can work together more effectively to support Somerset groups

We have also supported numerous system-wide strategic bids, during this period, including:

- We coordinated a group to lead on a Thriving Communities bid – comprising Adult Social Care, CCG, Take Art and Somerset Wildlife Trust. We also used our networks to link in with other Somerset bids to this fund, to avoid duplication.
- We convened and supported a Somerset STP bid for Green Social Prescribing – working with Public Health, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, the CCG and Somerset Wildlife Trust.
- We supported an STP bid to the Health Foundation to develop an Innovation Hub – working with Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Somerset County Council, Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and South West Academic Health Science Network.

## **Promoting volunteering and social action**

This year can be best described as a year of transition – along with considerable disruption. We already had plans in place to update and develop our online offer, by investing in a new digital platform. Whilst Covid-19 brought many challenges for our organization and the wider community, it also precipitated many of these developments.

Many volunteering opportunities were curtailed due to Covid19 restrictions, together with wider impacts on the sustainability of VCSE organisations. However different ways of helping communities have also emerged notably an increase in on-line by telephone volunteering. There are many positive signs as we move into 2021-22.

## During the year, we supported the following activity:

- **3020 volunteers recruited**
- **383 groups signed up**
- **1112 volunteering opportunities promoted**

**Corona Helpers** – As part of the Somerset COVID-19 response a 'light' version of our new 'Spark a Change' platform – Corona Helpers – was made live in April which proved immediately successful. 1400 volunteers signed up to support 136 groups within a matter of weeks. We also supported 93 households who contacted us directly or via Corona Helpers to find local help to meet their immediate needs, often for help with grocery shopping and prescription collection.



**Spark a Change** – During the summer, we launched a new digital platform. The new platform offers greater functionality, ease of use and efficiency for both groups and potential volunteers. The system was made live in September 2020, including over 250 organisations and 450+ opportunities migrated across from the old system.

Some feedback from customers on using Spark a Change:-

- *“Spark A Change has been working really well for us and generating lots of new volunteers, which is great.”*
- *“It was reassuring to see how easy it is to change or add things too. A good set up, well done!”*
- *“We are grateful of all the prompt support from Spark staff when requested. I would feel very confident to recommend using the Spark a Change platform to gain valued volunteers.”*

Three Volunteer Coordinator Forums were held in July and November 2020 and March 2021, attended by 61 people. Meetings provide space for discussion of key issues affecting volunteering offering peer support and development eg recruitment, training, risk assessments. Volunteering has also been promoted at events for VCSE representatives (including volunteer managers).

## Somerset Vaccination Programme

Spark Somerset helped to recruit more than 1000 volunteers to support the Somerset Vaccination Programme, as detailed in the table above. We also supported the workforce team to manage and support their volunteers throughout the programme helping at the main county sites, GP-led sites and community pharmacies. We also fed into regional and national conversations around volunteering and took part in the Somerset Vaccination Programme Board.

## Special Projects

A number of special projects (externally funded) managed within the Spark Volunteering Service have continued to support and develop the VCSE infrastructure of Somerset, and some will run over the course of the next year, these include:

- Ran a Cuppa Campaign during Volunteer's Week 2020, where we secured donations, packed and sent out care packages and thank you cards to 2000 Covid volunteers during Volunteer's Week with support from staff and players at from Somerset County Cricket Club
- **Youth Volunteering** – two projects promoting participation in volunteering by young people through partnerships with Somerset schools and colleges. This work was significantly impacted by the national lockdown and will continue in a different form.
- **Covid19 volunteering legacy** – a range of support and guidance connecting Covid19 mutual aid groups, supporting their plans for future development and assisting with engagement with local public services. Development Worker in post from August for 12 months
- **Open Mental Health Volunteering Buddies** – Spark Somerset is hosting the Open Mental Health Volunteering Project, which includes establishing a buddy scheme for people with mental health difficulties to take part in volunteering and supporting the development of volunteering infrastructure across the partnership. A project officer started in post in mid-October initially for 12 months.

- **Supporting Carers** (sub-contract with the Community Council for Somerset). We supported the volunteers who in turn arrange carers' support groups across the County. As with Adult Living Group, carers' groups were greatly affected by the pandemic and consequent restrictions for meetings. Our team member makes monthly phone calls to keep in touch with volunteers and will be helping groups to re-open when this is possible.
- **Covid Champions** – Since October 2020, **99 people** have become Covid Community Champions; sharing the latest information to help their communities to stay happy and healthy. The work was commissioned by Somerset County Council Public Health team and delivered in partnership with SASP (Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership). This table shows which district applicants came from (not all of them went all to become Champions)



## Voice, Influence and Engagement

### Engagement

We consult with the sector through our daily work and use these conversations to shape and adapt our services. Our team, based in the community, gather intelligence face to face and via our forums and events.

We also engage significantly through online means and social media is a key communications tool for our charity. We continue to see our followers increase significantly. We use our social media channels to promote events, disseminate information and updates, consult with the sector and share good news. Our reach on social media increased considerably over the last year and we are increasingly using digital methods to communicate with communities. During the period of this report, we undertook several targeted consultations, including:

### Training survey

We undertook a detailed survey during September. Replies confirmed a clear, ongoing need for low cost, locally delivered training to address self-identified gaps in knowledge and expertise amongst the groups we support. We used this intelligence to inform our programme development. We successfully applied to Somerset Community Foundation for funding to support the training sessions to ensure we could offer these free or at a minimal administrative charge, so as to avoid any barriers to small groups attending at a time of such great need.

### VCSE State of the Sector Survey 2020

The 2020 Somerset VCSE State of the Sector Report is the second report of this nature commissioned through the VCSE Strategic Forum and builds on the work undertaken in 2016. <https://www.sparksomerset.org.uk/SOTS2020>

At the beginning of the year, a survey was sent to charities, community groups and social enterprises across the County. The findings have informed this second in-depth review of the state of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Somerset, which was published in June.

What was not anticipated at the time of this project being undertaken was the impact of COVID-19. This has brought both challenges and opportunities to the sector, and two follow-up surveys were conducted to help us better understand the impact locally. We included the results of all three studies in the main report.

Our sector continues to provide valuable services, activities and volunteering opportunities in Somerset. It is characterised by the enthusiasm and dedication of the people at its heart, and the remarkable response to the pandemic confirms our reliance on this strong, skilled and adaptable workforce.

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*As a medium sized charity it is vital that we stay ahead of the curve in relation to our understanding of, and engagement with, local and national policy agendas. These are increasingly complex and fast paced making my job as CEO even more pressured. Spark provide us, and others, with relevant and contextual intelligence and the support needed for our sector to connect and act together on local issues.*

*We recognise the importance of working across various agendas and of adopting "systems thinking". With the assistance we receive from Spark, we are better able to understand complex systems and improve the effectiveness of our actions within them.*

*Personally, I value the high calibre of personnel at Spark and I am very confident that the services are delivered to high standards. Voluntary sector infrastructure can be a tricky business and requires impartiality and credibility – two qualities evident in Katherine and her team's work.*

**Angela Kerr**  
**CEO, Citizens Advice South Somerset**

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## Voice and influence

Spark Somerset continues to play a key representative role in Somerset. Since we extended our services countywide in April 2020, our reach has increased significantly. Covid-19 has also undoubtedly shone a light on the value of the voluntary and community sector. Whilst this has had implications for our workload, it has enabled us to build strong relationships across the 'system' and ensured that the voice of the VCSE really is being heard. We represent the voluntary sector on the following groups, among others:

### Regional/National

- Local Liaison Lead for the VCS Emergencies Partnership
- NHS Responders
- SEVAG/AAVAG
- SW VCSE LRF (Local Resilience Forum)

### Countywide:

- People Board for Health and Social Care
- Somerset Group of Charities
- Chair of Open Mental Health (VCSE Alliance)
- Chair of Integrated Volunteering Steering Group
- Multi-agency Recovery Cell
- Men's Mental Health Steering Group
- Homelessness Reduction Board
- Local Nature Partnership
- Somerset Community Foundation Grants Panel
- Provider Development Committee (NHS Trusts)
- Social Prescribing Framework group
- Collaboration Forum (Systems leads from across the STP)

During the period of this report, some of the key highlights of our 'voice of the sector' role include:

- Spark Somerset has led and coordinated an **evaluation of the NHS Responders programme** which ran during the Covid pandemic on behalf of the Somerset system. The evaluation includes consideration of the future of responsive volunteering, as well as what took place in 2020-21 and focussed on South Somerset as the main research area. This review will be used to inform the design the future of responsive volunteering in the County.
- **Integrated Volunteering Steering Group** – we established and developed this group during 2020-21, holding bi-monthly meetings. There has been a keen interest from statutory and voluntary health and social care partners to work closely together to strengthen volunteering within Somerset and the group is developing priorities for the coming months as we move out of lockdown.
- **Supporting the VCSE workforce** – through our connections with the People Board and the Pastoral Care Cell, we are involved in emerging work concerning the support/CPD opportunities for the VCSE workforce, including emotional resilience and management/leadership. The Spark team are supported two Workforce Wellbeing initiatives that have training and staff development as a key element.
- **Somerset Group of Charities** - Spark continues to have a role as convenor and secretariat for this group, comprising 15 Countywide charities that support health and social care. The group, which meets monthly, provides vital peer support for members and is also key place where members of the VCSE sector can be consulted.
- **VCS Emergencies Partnership** – though our role as Somerset Local Liaison Lead on this national initiative, we are developing strong links with other regional infrastructure organisations and national charities. We will ensure that we bring any learning/capacity/intelligence back to Somerset, for the benefit of local communities.

## Strategic Development and Partnerships

Although the last 12 months has seen much of our focus on Covid-19 and emergency response, there have still been various opportunities for partnership working. Going forward, with limited resources available for the sector, an inevitable increase in demand and many VCSE organisations struggling to adapt and survive, we see the support of collaboration and partnership building being a key priority for our team.

During the period of the report we have supported the following key initiatives:

### **Open Mental Health**

Spark Somerset are playing a key role in this Alliance, as Chair. We also lead on volunteering and the coordination of a grant fund for community groups.

Through this work, we have undoubtedly supported strengthened relationships between the VCSE and health, specifically the CCG and Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

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*“Spark’s role has been key within the VCSE Mental Health Alliance. As a non-delivery partner this has put them in an invaluable position as Independent Chair. Just to mention three of the areas where they have really helped: their in-depth knowledge and understanding of partners, their skills in resolving conflict situations, strength of character and respect within the VCSE to hold this partnership to account. Well done, Spark!”*

Paula Blight – CEO SWEDA

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A key premise of this alliance is also the development of ‘generous leadership’, where we work together collaboratively to develop the sector in Somerset and support communities, not just to grow our own organisations.

Although undoubtedly challenging, given the range of services engaged in this alliance (ranging from very small local organisations to a very large national charity) we are keen to learn from this experience, with the possibility that we could replicate the model elsewhere. Indeed, Open Mental Health was shortlisted for a national award and was also received recognition in a national paper about collaboration, entitled ‘Rebalancing the Relationship’:

<https://publications.ncvo.org.uk/rebalancing-relationship-final-report/>.

### **Led on successful collaborative bid to the Thriving Communities Fund**

We coordinated a group to lead on a Thriving Communities bid – comprising Adult Social Care, CCG, Take Art and Somerset Wildlife Trust. We also used our networks to link in with other Somerset bids to this fund, to avoid duplication. £60k of funding came into Somerset as a result to support social prescribing activity around the themes of the outdoors and creativity, to mitigate the impacts of Covid.

### **Youth Partnership development**

We have received a small sum of grant funding from SCF to explore and develop potential for a cross county youth partnership. Since the final loss of the County Council Youth and Community service in 2019/20 there has been no proper cross county structure in place to support the wide range of large and small youth work providers that exist. Spark has hosted the legacy resources and information on behalf of the county and continued to ensure that Basic Awareness Child Protection sessions were freely available to the sector and some First Aid provision too. However, with no formal arrangements for funding youth clubs and training youth workers there is an obvious need for development work to ensure shared resources and learning enables small clubs to continue to function safely.

Three group meetings have been held, with some 27 youth groups attending so far. Two working groups have also been established, looking at options for Accredited Youth Work training provision and possible models for Partnership Structures.

## **Health and Wellbeing Projects**

### **Social Prescribing**

We receive funding from two Primary Care Networks in South Somerset to host their Social Prescribing Coordinators. These team members work alongside the clinicians and health coaches in their respective PCNs, providing guidance around social prescribing activities and have a community-building role, linking with and developing local solutions to support community health and wellbeing. Key activities during this period include:

- Organised 4 Neighbourhood Forums for the South Somerset West PCN, bringing together Health & Community representatives. Focus has been on mental health services and tackling isolation.
- Organised 7 peer support forums for Health Coaches, with a guest speakers.

- Supported Ark at Egwood to develop their Therapeutic Volunteering offer – 60 places of 6 half-day sessions. Signposted to suitable funding and supported promotion once this was secured.
- Developed a GP Helper scheme. Ran a 6-month pilot in South Petherton during this period, shared lessons learnt and supported the rollout in other Practices. Awarded £2750 for DBS checks and volunteer expenses from SCF.
- Coordinated the South Somerset Wellbeing Directory.
- Worked in partnership with The Balsam Centre to secure a £30k grant to develop a new project for Young Carers.
- Started an online Carers support group in January, in partnership with CCS, with over 70 Carers attending.

### **Take Part: Health and Wellbeing Project, in partnership with Abri**

Funded by Abri, our Health and Wellbeing Worker, works alongside Abri residents to develop community-based activities to support their health and wellbeing. Highlights from the past 12 months include:

- Health and Wellbeing Survey to Abri residents - a survey was distributed to more than 1,500 Independent Living and Extra Care customers as well as promoted online to try and ascertain what types of activities customers would like to be involved with. We used the feedback to inform the development of new activities, as detailed below.
- Health and Wellbeing booklet – A special booklet designed by Spark Somerset to help South Somerset residents look after their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic. 1,622 copies were distributed to customers in Yeovil based Extra Care and Assisted Living schemes. 300 copies were also distributed in food parcels supplied by the Lord's Larder
- Love to Pedal – A collaboration with Abri and Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP), funded through Sports England's Tackling Inequalities fund. The scheme, which uses pedal exercisers, is being piloted in six of Abri's Extra Care schemes, combatting social isolation and encouraging older adults to get active. 36 pedal units have been purchased through the project (please note this is currently on hold)
- Cookbook – A new community cookbook was produced with help from Abri residents and in partnership with Abri, Zing Somerset and YMCA Brunel Group, to celebrate and share some of our favourite lockdown recipes.
- Westfield Community Garden – Ongoing support, particularly around community engagement and volunteering opportunities, is being provided to this local project that aims to reduce loneliness, empower residents and build strong community connections. Working in partnership with four members of Westfield Community Association and approximately ten local organisations and businesses

## **Looking ahead**

Although the future remains uncertain for many charities and community groups, our team continues to be passionate about supporting local VCSE organisations to be confident, resilient and to have the tools they need to thrive now and into the future. Never before have there been such demands our sector - distinctive and diverse, local VCSE groups support individuals in need who don't always require a formal 'intervention', are there for those who fall between the cracks and also work with people who are on the road to recovery.

The VCSE sector is often a crucial point of stability for our local communities. However, as the environment around us shifts in the wake of COVID-19, this stability is needed more than ever. Therefore, it is vital for the VCSE sector to be properly supported. In addition to the challenges we face as we emerge from Covid, we know that many charities and community groups have concerns about many other external factors too – the environment, digital divide, Local Government Reform, Brexit, development of the Integrated Care System - and have a sense of trepidation regarding how their organisation will fair in this uncertain future. Covid has shone a light on the importance of the VCSE sector – it is certainly not an overstatement to suggest that we wouldn't have got through the last year without it. Therefore, it is vital for the VCSE sector to be able to engage effectively and strategically with partners across the 'system' in Somerset to address the challenges that we all face.

We are undertaking a large-scale research project that review the impact of Covid on our sector and communities. We will use the result of this to inform our strategy going forward. We hope to have the results of this work in Autumn 2021. In the meantime, some key activities for the coming year include:

- Spark is recognised as a **strategic partner in the development of the Integrated Care System**, representing the VCSE. In the coming months, we will be working to ensure that the VCSE is firmly embedded in the development of the ICS and the new Clinical Strategy. We are also liaising with the CCG regarding the implementation of a Participation Fund, which will enable VCSE organisations to fully engage in meetings at a strategic level. We're proposing the Spark will have a coordination role for this funding, to ensure that VCSE organisations feel confident to represent the sector, but also that they have a mechanism for feeding information out to the wider sector.
- At the end of 2020, we began working in partnership with Barclays and the Somerset Foundation Trust to develop a project that seeks **reduce digital poverty across Somerset**. Its direct aim is to improve health care access to those who are currently digital excluded; by getting those digitally included we hope to see an improvement in their overall health and wellbeing. Spark iT launched in June 2021 and is already making positive progress. We also plan to support the development of digital skills within the VCSE sector.
- We will seek to ensure that **equality, diversity and inclusion** is considered and embedded throughout our work. We are also keen to support the wider sector to address this issue.
- We will continue to **build our Associate network** of experts who can provide extra capacity for our team, enabling us to respond effectively to increases in demand. We have already established a strong team of Associates with fundraising experience, but will see to build capacity across other areas of our work.
- We will be **reviewing and refreshing our digital presence, including our website** to ensure that it more effectively reflects the scope and breadth of our work and provides an enhanced user experience.
- We will work with partners to develop a **plan to address workforce challenges** that exist within the sector.

**SPARK SOMERSET**  
**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 29th November 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



.....  
Trustee

**SPARK SOMERSET**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SPARK SOMERSET**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021 which are set out on pages 18 to 23.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

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

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of Spark Somerset are not required to be audited under section 144 of the 2011 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

Since Spark Somerset's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of Spark Somerset as required by the 2011 Act; or
- 2 the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the accounts do not comply with the accounting 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.



Dave Tucker FCCA  
The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Thompson Jenner LLP  
1 Colleton Crescent  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4DG

Date: 29th November 2021

**SPARK SOMERSET**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2021**  
**(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)**

	Notes	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
<b>INCOME &amp; ENDOWMENTS FROM;</b>					
Donations	2	133,694	30,000	163,694	216,355
Charitable Activities	3	250,545	174,088	424,633	177,064
Other Trading	4	-	-	-	50
Investments	5	-	-	-	-
Other Income		-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME &amp; ENDOWMENTS</b>		<b>384,239</b>	<b>204,088</b>	<b>588,327</b>	<b>393,469</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON;</b>					
Raising Funds	6	18,290	-	18,290	19,046
Charitable Activities	7	280,336	204,088	484,424	325,516
Other Expenditure		-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>298,626</b>	<b>204,088</b>	<b>502,714</b>	<b>344,562</b>
<b>NET MOVEMENT BEFORE TRANSFERS</b>		<b>85,613</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>85,613</b>	<b>48,907</b>
Gross Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>85,613</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>85,613</b>	<b>48,907</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARDS</b>		<b>155,884</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>155,884</b>	<b>106,977</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARDS</b>	15	<b>241,497</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>241,497</b>	<b>155,884</b>

All activities derive from continuing operations.


There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above.

The notes form part of the financial statements

**SPARK SOMERSET**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31st MARCH 2021**

	Notes	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible Assets	12		9,741		1,374
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Debtors	13	45,836		67,243	
Cash at bank and in hand		511,958		212,488	
		557,794		279,731	
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	326,038		125,221	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			231,756		154,510
<b>Creditors falling due after more than one year</b>			-		-
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			241,497		155,884
<b>FUNDS</b>					
Unrestricted income fund	15		241,497		155,884
Restricted funds			-		-
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>			241,497		155,884

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on 29th November 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

  
 .....  
 Alex MacNeil  
 Trustee

**SPARK SOMERSET**  
**CASH FLOW STATEMENT**  
**AS AT 31st MARCH 2021**

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash income/(expenditure)		85,613	48,907
<b>Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items</b>			
Depreciation		1,787	156
Investment Fixed Assets		(10,153)	(1,530)
		<u>77,246</u>	<u>47,532</u>
<b>Working capital adjustments</b>			
Decrease/(increase) in debtors		21,408	(54,949)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors		6,792	(6,799)
(Decrease)/increase in deferred income		194,024	104,612
Net cash flows from operating activities		<u>299,470</u>	<u>90,396</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Interest receivable and similar income		-	-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		<u>299,470</u>	<u>90,396</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		<u>212,488</u>	<u>122,093</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		<u><u>511,958</u></u>	<u><u>212,488</u></u>

**SPARK SOMERSET**  
**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2021**

**1 Accounting Policies**

Spark Somerset CIO is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales. The Charity's registered number is 1179438 and its registered office is Units 3 & 4, The Courtyard, Bowdens Farm, Hambridge, TA10 0BP.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and following the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities and are in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (effective January 2019 and updated by Bulletin 1 effective February 2016) and the Companies Act 2006. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relative policy note.

**Basis of preparation**

SPARK Somerset meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

**Taxation**

The Charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a Charitable Company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly the Charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation and Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

**Going Concern**

The accounts have been prepared on the going concern basis. The Trustees have considered the available resources in light of the ongoing impact of Covid-19 when assessing the going concern basis for the preparation of these financial statements. The organisation continues to operate with strong cash reserves and the budget for the year ended March 2022 shows an increase in income and maintaining of reserves, which at the time of this report being issued, they are on track to deliver. Therefore there is no indication that the pandemic or any other material uncertainties, will impact the Charity's ability to continue.

**The Charity**

The Charity is a public benefit entity.

**Income**

Income from donations, grants and subscriptions is taken to the Statement of Financial Activity on receipt unless there is a Service Level Agreement or Contract in which case it is taken into account in the period to which it relates. Income is deferred if it relates to an activity being undertaken in a future accounting period.

**Resources Expended**

Resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis. Costs relating to a specific activity are allocated on the basis of usage on each project. Remaining support costs are apportioned on an appropriate basis e.g., staff time.

Governance costs include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees's meetings and reimbursed expenses.

**Tangible Fixed Assets**

Individual assets costing £500 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses. Equipment is depreciated over its estimated useful life of 3 years.

**Debtors**

Debtors are recognised at invoice value, less any provision for impairment.

**Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

**Creditors**

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any discounts due.

**Operating Leases**

The costs of operating leases are charged as they accrue.

**Pension costs**

A defined contribution pension scheme is operated. Pension contributions are charged in the year in which they are payable.

**Funds**

The designation of funds between Restricted and Unrestricted is reviewed by the Finance Committee and reported to the Trustees. Separate accounting records are kept for restricted funds.

2	Income from Donations	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
	Monetary Donations	5,299	-	5,299	64,095
	Grants & Gifts	128,395	30,000	158,395	152,260
	<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>133,694</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>163,694</b>	<b>216,355</b>
	<b>Total 2020</b>	<b>48,912</b>	<b>167,443</b>	<b>216,355</b>	

3	Income from Charitable Activities	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
	Provision of Advice, Training & Support	250,545	174,088	424,633	177,064
	<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>250,545</b>	<b>174,088</b>	<b>424,633</b>	<b>177,064</b>
	<b>Total 2020</b>	<b>77,514</b>	<b>99,550</b>	<b>177,064</b>	

4	Other Trading Activities	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
	Other Income	-	-	-	50
	<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50</b>
	<b>Total 2020</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50</b>	

5	Income from Investments	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
	Interest received	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-

6	Generating Funds	Activities undertaken directly £	(Note 8) Support costs £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
	Salaries	-	-	-	-
	Other Costs	-	-	-	-
	Support Costs	-	18,290	18,290	19,046
		<b>-</b>	<b>18,290</b>	<b>18,290</b>	<b>19,046</b>

Expenditure on generating funds was £18,290 (2020 - £19,046) of which £18,290 (2020 - 19,046) was unrestricted.

#### 7 Expenditure on Charitable Activities

##### Provision of Advice, Training & Support

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Salaries & employment costs	342,296	-	342,296	137,235
Freelance costs	10,651	-	10,651	6,358
Other costs	72,399	-	72,399	26,531
Support costs	-	50,069	50,069	152,519
	<b>425,346</b>	<b>50,069</b>	<b>475,415</b>	<b>322,643</b>

##### Governance

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Audit, accountancy and bookkeeping	1,550	-	1,550	1,640
Other costs	-	-	-	121
Support costs	-	7,460	7,460	1,112
	<b>1,550</b>	<b>7,460</b>	<b>9,010</b>	<b>2,873</b>

Expenditure on charitable activities was £484,424 (2020 - £325,516) of which £280,336 (2020 - £40,663) was unrestricted and £204,088 (2020 - £284,853) was restricted.

8	Allocation of Support Costs	Apportionment Method	Generating Funds £	Provision of Advice etc. £	Governance £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
	Salaries	Time Spent	16,899	45,732	6,823	69,454	133,951
	Staff costs	Staffing	706	1,911	361	2,977	9,010
	Finance Costs	Staffing	-	-	-	-	5,907
	Insurance	Staffing	273	740	110	1,123	1,838
	Office Costs	Staffing	412	1,114	166	1,692	11,244
	Advertising and promotion	Usage	-	572	-	572	10,727
			<u>18,290</u>	<u>50,069</u>	<u>7,460</u>	<u>75,818</u>	<u>172,677</u>

#### 9 Trustees Remuneration & Benefits

During the period no trustees received any remuneration or benefits.

There were no related party transactions with trustees in the period.

#### 10 Independent Examination

The independent examiner was paid £1,140 to examine these accounts.

#### 11 Staff Costs

	2021 £	2020 £
Wages & Salaries	380,015	251,309
Social Security Payments	24,180	15,711
Employer Pension Contributions	7,555	4,166
	<u>411,750</u>	<u>271,186</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 21 (2020 - 14).  
No employee received remuneration of over £60,000.

#### 12 Fixed Assets

	2021 Equipment £	2020 Equipment £
<b>Cost</b>		
As at 1st April 2020	1,530	-
Additions	10,153	1,530
As at 31st March 2021	<u>11,683</u>	<u>1,530</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
As at 1st April 2020	156	-
Provided for the period	1,786	156
As at 31st March 2021	<u>1,942</u>	<u>156</u>
<b>Net Book Value</b>		
As at 1st April 2020	1,374	-
As at 31st March 2021	<u>9,741</u>	<u>1,374</u>

#### 13 Debtors

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade Debtors	20,271	62,205
Prepayments & Accrued Income	25,565	5,038
	<u>45,836</u>	<u>67,243</u>

#### 14 Creditors

	2021 £	2020 £
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade creditors	4,425	2,865
Tax and social security	9,104	1,168
Accruals	2,690	5,393
Deferred Income	309,819	115,795
	<u>326,038</u>	<u>125,221</u>

#### Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents contributions payable by the charity to the scheme and amounted to £7,555. The amount due at the year end was £1,851 (2020 - £800)

15	Fund Accounts	Opening Balance £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Closing Balance £
	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	155,884	384,239	298,626	-	241,497
	NHS Somerset CCG - Integrated Volunteering	-	36,500	36,500	-	-
	NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project	-	6,838	6,838	-	-
	NHS Somerset CCG - Core	-	5,000	5,000	-	-
	Symphony Health Care - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	31,605	31,605	-	-
	Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker	-	31,128	31,128	-	-
	Mendip District Council - Core	-	25,000	25,000	-	-
	Somerset County Council - Covid 19 Emergency funds	-	19,336	19,336	-	-
	National Lottery Grant	-	12,212	12,212	-	-
	Yeovil District Hospital - Voluntary Sector Support	-	11,000	11,000	-	-
	Somerset Community Foundation - Covid 19 Emergency funds	-	10,000	10,000	-	-
	Somerset Community Foundation - Training	-	4,800	4,800	-	-
	Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project	-	640	640	-	-
	Somerset Community Foundation - GP Helper	-	184	184	-	-
	Somerset Community Foundation - Covid Booklet	-	58	58	-	-
	Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers	-	9,787	9,787	-	-
	<b>Total restricted Funds</b>	-	204,088	204,088	-	-
	<b>Total funds</b>	155,884	588,327	502,714	-	241,497

NHS Somerset CCG - Integrated Volunteering - Set-up of Spark a Change and supporting ongoing volunteering needs  
NHS Somerset CCG - Digital Inclusion Project - Improving access to physical, mental and social care by reducing digital poverty across Somerset  
NHS Somerset CCG - Core - Funding of core charitable activities  
Symphony Health Care - Social Prescribing Link Worker - For the development of Health & Wellbeing partnerships  
Milbrook Surgery - Social Prescribing Link Worker - For the development of Health & Wellbeing partnerships  
Mendip District Council - Core - Funding of core charitable activities  
Somerset County Council - Covid 19 Emergency funds  
National Lottery Grant - To build collaboration between local community groups/charities for sustainability  
Yeovil District Hospital - Voluntary Sector Support - Funding of core charitable activities  
Somerset Community Foundation - Covid 19 Emergency funds  
Somerset Community Foundation - Training - Covid 19 Online Training for VCSE sector  
Somerset Community Foundation - Youth Partnership Project - building a stronger partnership of youth activity providers in Somerset  
Somerset Community Foundation - GP Helper - Covid 19 support to vulnerable patients across South Somerset  
Somerset Community Foundation - Covid Booklet - Advice and guidance to help local community groups re-start their activities  
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust - Vaccination Volunteers - Short term to support vaccination programme and longer term 'bank' of volunteers

	Unrestricted Reserves £	Restricted Reserves £	Total £	2020 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>	9,741	-	9,741	1,374
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Debtors	5,953	39,883	45,836	67,243
Cash at bank and in hand	274,445	237,513	511,958	212,488
	280,398	277,396	557,794	279,731
<b>CREDITORS</b>				
Amounts falling due within one year	48,642	277,396	326,038	125,221
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	231,756	-	231,756	154,510
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	241,497	-	241,497	155,884

#### 16 Members' Liability

The charity is a private company limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the members is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

#### 17 Controlling entity

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

#### 18 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.