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THE TELLING  
(CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)  
REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

CHARITY COMMISSION REGISTRATION NO. 1181802

# THE TELLING

## INDEX TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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The Trustees present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published in October 2019.

### *Objectives and Activities*

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charities Commission's general guidance on public benefit. This is borne out by deliveries of activities outlined in this report, which are in line with the main objectives of The Telling and the activities to deliver against those objectives.

The Telling aims to advance the arts and education for the public benefit. We do this through the promotion, support and encouragement of music and theatre by presenting performances, workshops, talks and recordings, often combining music and theatre and taking performances to places to reach people who do not usually access such performances.

We:

- a) give high quality performances, focusing on performances where music and theatre collide in interesting ways
- b) work with young people in schools and amateur performers, singers and instrumentalists from a variety of walks of life, enabling them to develop and improve their creative, dramatic and musical skills.

We perform across the UK and, alongside a series of engagements, run our programme of residencies, targeting places where there is little classical or early music touring which are currently Liverpool, Barrow Peninsula/South Cumbria, Lancaster, Manchester, Colchester, Folkestone, Conwy, Cardiff, Bedford and Wolverhampton.

We combine theatre, new writing, music (including early music, classical, world music, folk music and music-theatre) to reach people who are not usually attracted to classical concerts – but also to use music to heighten feeling, give insight to the drama, characters and/or plot or to cut against the plot in interesting ways.

## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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We perform in churches, theatres, art centres, pubs, church halls, community centres, taking performance deep into the heart of communities. We often perform in and around audiences and use costume, stage lighting and candlelight.

We engage a pool of leading directors, actors, musicians, lighting designers, composers and costume makers. Our Artistic Director, Clare Norburn has devised a new genre where music and drama collide. Her concert/plays have attracted **4-star reviews** in *The Times* and *The Guardian* and performances at **Bridgewater Hall, St George's Bristol, St Martin-in-the-Fields and LSO St Lukes**. The stage director we work with, **Nicholas Renton** directed Andrew Davies' BAFTA nominated *Mrs Gaskell's Wives and Daughters* for BBC TV and episodes of *Lewis, Musketeers, Silent Witness* and *George Gently*.

We have been on **BBC Radio's In Tune, Woman's Hour** and *Saturday Live* and performed for promoters including **Beverley Early Music Festival, Music at Oxford, Buxton International Festival, Lake District Summer Music, Brighton Early Music Festival, Newbury Spring Festival, Little Missenden Festival** and **Keele Arts**. We have released three CDs – all on the **First Hand Records** label.

### *Achievements and Performance*

This is the Trustees sixth report to the Charity Commission.

#### TOURING PERFORMANCES AND WORKSHOPS

##### Summary:

The Telling attempts to break new ground, where new writing by Artistic Director Clare Norburn and music collide. We tour high-quality, accessible and affordable productions: combining engagements by leading promoters with self-promotions in places that are often missed out on touring circuits, including building audiences and partnerships in Wolverhampton, South Cumbria, Conwy (North Wales), Bedford and Folkestone.

2024/25 saw us give 42 UK performances reaching over 3000 people and 4 workshops/outreach sessions including at **Beverley Early Music Festival, Newbury Spring Festival, Hallé St Peter's Manchester, Brighton Early Music Festival, Manchester Jewish Museum, Stratford Playhouse, Silsden Town Hall, Arena Theatre Wolverhampton, OSO Arts Centre Barnes, Portico Library Manchester** and **Stoke Newington Early Music Festival**. Alongside paid engagements, we are also unusual in the way that we fundraise to take performances to places which "miss out" in accessing touring circuits: so our tours are a mixed economy of guaranteed fees, box office splits and self-promotions, backed by reciprocal marketing partners on the ground. In 2024/25, we continued to fundraise and tour to our Residency places which otherwise miss out on accessing professional music and theatre touring. We also developed a new residency in Lancaster and built relationships with repeat venues **Silsden Town Hall** who offer us a guaranteed fee, and **OSO Arts Centre** in Barnes who operate a box office split and enabled our first week-long run.

##### Particular Achievements

In June 2024, The Telling won the prestigious **Audience Participation of the Year Award** organised by the **European Early Music organisation, REMA** for our *Songs and Stories* project in partnership with animator **Sarah Atter** and **Wolverhampton Refugee and Migrant Centre** in January and February 2024. Artistic Director, Clare Norburn travelled to Stockholm to receive the award and was invited onto **BBC Radio 3's The Early Music** to talk about the win (our second time on the show in 2024, following an hour-long feature on our work in March).

## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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In November 2024, The Telling toured our Charles Dickens show (written in 2023), *What the Dickens?*, which starred seven actor-musicians who all acted, sang, played instruments and danced – sometimes all at the same time! The show was the vehicle through which The Telling achieved its first week-long run, at OSO Arts Centre in Barnes, attracting three 4-star reviews and a 5-star review: “*a hauntingly brilliant exploration of one of literature’s greatest figures. It masterfully intertwines fiction and reality, giving voice to the women overshadowed by Dickens’ fame.*” – Pink Prince Theatre. Plus, the whole cast were invited on **BBC Radio 3’s *InTune*** to perform both music and dialogue excerpts from the show.



*The Telling performing What the Dickens? – photo Robert Piwko*

The **hallmark of our work** is our distinctive collision of music and drama. Our early programmes started with early music and drama, but we are increasingly expanding beyond that remit, whilst keeping our early music still in our repertory. The Telling’s programmes are written by Clare Norburn whose latter work takes inspiration from Brecht, often tearing down the fourth wall, and iconoclastic TV playwright, Dennis Potter, exploring the nexus between memory and the characters’ inner or fantasy lives, and harnessing music’s unique capacity to trigger memories and feelings. Several are political or provide commentary on current issues seen through the lens of the past. For example: celebrity culture and #MeToo are explored in *What the Dickens?* and *Into the Melting Pot* focuses on religious and cultural intolerance and the plight of refugees

“*Clare Norburn takes moments in history to make us understand the present more clearly*” Robin Soans, playwright

View a list of The Telling’s projects here: [www.thetelling.co.uk/programmes](http://www.thetelling.co.uk/programmes)

## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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##### Touring aims:

While we maintain a commitment to fundraise to take work to places which miss out (which means more expensive and higher risk self-promoted events), we will combine that funded work with paid engagements and box office split/shared risks to create a more sustainable model. In 2024/25, this included engagements at **Beverley Early Music Festival/NCEM, Newbury Spring Festival, Brighton Early Music Festival, Silsden Town Hall** (two performances) and multi-date runs at **OSO Arts Centre** in Barnes, and return visits and growing partnerships with **Arena theatre, Wolverhampton** and **St Edwards in Cardiff**.

The Telling's pioneering **Touring and Project fund** is our key overarching programme. Within this, our **Residency Programme** aims to build audiences by taking performances to places that "miss out". We aim to create **equal access for low-engaged communities** in areas of **economic disadvantage, where other performing arts organisations dare not tour**.

In the 2024/25 financial year, we grew audiences in the following places, which otherwise receive a limited touring or early music offer: **Manchester** (3 performances), **Liverpool** (2 performances), **Cardiff** (3 performances), **Bedford** (2 performances), **Colchester, Folkestone** (2 performances), **Conwy N Wales, Lancaster** (2 performances), **Wolverhampton** (2 performances) and **South Cumbria** (Ulverston).

We ran 5 touring projects which were:

1. ***Into the Melting Pot***: set in 1492 in a Spanish Christian/Muslim/Jewish community, a Jewish woman (played by Suzanne Ahmet (National Theatre, Chester Storyhouse)) is forced to leave. Her story is startlingly contemporary, with resonances to Windrush, Black Lives Matter & recent antisemitism, and is played out to a soundtrack of plaintive Sephardic songs & lively Cantigas which fuse medieval & Arabic instruments/styles, making early music accessible to a wider audience. **4 performances and 1 screening of the film adaption: May 2024.**
2. ***I, Spie***: the story of renaissance composer/lutenist John Dowland's (played by **Dominic Marsh** (Kneehigh Theatre)) brush with the Secret Service and how he manages to foil an Italian plot on the life of Queen Elizabeth I. **13 performances: June 2024**
3. ***What the Dickens?*** On his final Christmas Eve, Charles Dickens is "haunted" by the women he mistreated: his wife and mother of his ten children, Catherine Dickens and his secret young mistress, Ellen 'Nelly' Ternan, who force him to face his past, present and future. Can Dickens learn from them, repent - and be saved, as Scrooge was saved? **11 performances: November/December 2024**
4. ***The Telling Unchained including an at Christmas mini-series***: the Christmas edition of our popular alternative concert: a fun, relaxed and informal performance of early music mixed with folk, improvisation, jamming and plenty of audience participation – including in a pub, in Liverpool and at Portico Library in Manchester in December 2024 **3 performances: December 2024 plus for Walthamstow Music in the Village in July 2024 and Brighton Early Music Festival in October 2024**
5. ***Creating Carmen***: Prosper Merimée (Niall Ashdown (*Whose Line Is It Anyway? The Comedy Store Players, Improbable*)) has writers block when his leading character, Carmen (**Suzanne Ahmet**), turns up in his study, larger than life, with a band of musicians in tow and chaos in her wake... A collaboration project with CarmenCo. **10 performances: January/February 2025.**

Plus, we brought a one-off performance of our Lullaby Concert to Stoke Newington Festival in July 2024.

*Into the Melting Pot, Creating Carmen, I, Spie and What the Dickens?* were directed by **Nicholas Renton** (BAFTA-nominated *Mrs Gaskell's Wives and Daughters, Musketeers, A Room With A View, Lewis, Silent Witness*) and written by singer/playwright, **Clare Norburn**.



## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025



*The Telling performing Creating Carmen – photo Robert Piwko*

**LIVE WORKSHOPS:** While on tour, we capitalise on bringing high-quality artists to excluded communities around the country by offering music workshops to local communities. During the year, we brought our *Songs and Stories* project, inspired by *Into the Melting Pot*, to Manchester Jewish Museum in April/May 2024, in collaboration with acclaimed musician/animateur Sarah Atter. The participants recorded their creations which are available online ([www.thetelling.co.uk/mcr-songs](http://www.thetelling.co.uk/mcr-songs)) and a small exhibition was displayed at the Manchester performance of *Into the Melting Pot*.

In November 2024, 40 GCSE English students studying *A Christmas Carol* from Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Academy, Wolverhampton and 13 drama students from Moseley Park School, Wolverhampton attended the dress rehearsal of the show at Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, followed by a Q&A with the playwright, Clare Norburn. We received the following feedback from the teacher at OLSC: “*It was such a valuable experience for the students. It sparked lots of discussion on the way back on the impact of Dickens’ life upon the text. It helped to bring this time period to life for the students.*”

Then in December, playwright Clare Norburn and animateur Sarah Atter delivered two interactive workshops at OLSC to a further 80 GCSE students studying *A Christmas Carol* (different students to those that attended the dress rehearsal), to explore the characters of the novel to a deeper level through a mix of drama and music. “*it brought [the characters] to life and it showed us how they would really act*” – student feedback

## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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In addition, *What the Dickens?* was selected by EXTANT Theatre (who had partnered with Arena Theatre in Wolverhampton) to receive free support to make the show accessible to visually impaired audiences. During the rehearsal period, three of our artists (writer/singer Clare Norburn, actor/violinist Alex Knox and composer/keyboardist Steven Edis) received training from EXTANT Theatre's facilitators to present a Touch Tour and programme notes presentation ahead of the show. This means our team now has skills and experience that we can adapt to deliver future Touch Tours for visually impaired audiences.

In February 2025, CarmenCo (who we partnered with to perform *Creating Carmen*) brought their 'Pocket Opera' performance and workshop project to 45 pupils in Years 10, 11 and 13 at **Cardiff West Community High School**.

**Key artistic team:** Our creative team is led by Artistic Director **Clare Norburn** (playwright, producer and former soprano) who won the 2023 Colin Skipp Memorial Radio Playwriting Competition and was one of 7 writers, selected out of 400, for BBC/ACE-funded The Space's Pitch Perfect scheme to receive mentoring and be commissioned to develop a play with music for national BBC radio. Our regular acclaimed director **Nicholas Renton** cut his teeth in theatre, going on to direct at the RSC and then spent 30 years directing for the BBC and ITV, including being BAFTA-nominated for BBC TV's *Mrs Gaskell's Wives* and *Daughters*. Our lighting designer is **Natalie Rowland**. We work with a creative pool of:

- leading actors including **Alec Newman, Rachael Stirling, Danny Webb, Dominic Marsh, Clive Hayward, Karen Ascoe, Molly Lynch, Susan Tracy, John Sackville, Gerald Kyd, Suzanne Ahmet, Teresa Banham, Leila Mimmack** and **Niall Ashdown**
- acclaimed musicians including many who are early music specialists including **Emily Baines, Jean Kelly, Jamie Akers, Clemmie Franks, Heloise Bernard, Giles Lewin, Alison Kinder, Avital Raz** and **Maya Levy**.

#### Audience Feedback

We continued to receive moving feedback from workshop participants and the public about our work. This is just some audience feedback questionnaire responses we received:

#### **Into the Melting Pot**

*"It was magnificent and the story is as relevant today as it was in Spain in 1492."*

*"Thank you so much for a deeply emotional, timely body of work. I was mesmerised by the singing and instruments, and by the beautifully told but chilling story of persecution. You put your hearts into this and connected with the audience."*

*"Thank you for the wonderful show at Otley Courthouse last night. It evoked memories of an evening concert in the Jewish Quarter of Girona some years ago. Such a rich legacy of wonderful music rooted in all the upheaval and conflict. Thank you!"*

*"We found it mesmerising, The audience was spellbound by the incredibly powerful performances that transported us back over centuries. Just fantastic. .... Thanks."*

*"Fascinating, beautiful and informative tales like this are what we need more of in the North, and please visit Yorkshire again soon."*

#### **I, Spie**

*"Husband, who isn't into early music, loved it"*

*"I had never enjoyed music earlier than 1600 but last night The Telling changed all that"*

*"so different to a normal concert"*

*"I came to the terrific performance of I, Spie in Folkestone and we spoke briefly. I just wanted to affirm that I'd love to help you with other [venue] suggestions. It's wonderful work you're doing - do put me on a mailing list!!"*



## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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*"My partner and I came to see the performance of I, Spie last night in Folkestone. What a thrilling and special performance it was - great script, consummate acting and some wonderful renaissance music to embellish and inform the story."*

*"Beautiful music, exquisite singing, clever plot and acting excellent"*

*"Exquisite musical performance brought to life brought to life with its ingenious dramatisation, clever dialogue and a spontaneous nature"*

*"Perfect combination of early music, drama and harmony"*



*The Telling performing I, Spie – photo Robert Piwko*

#### **What the Dickens?**

*"Totally absorbed... loved the pacy storytelling and the historical accuracy"*

*"I really loved the show. It was imaginative and engaging. Brilliant idea which brought together Dickens life, his work and music of the time . Rare to get such originality and entertainment in one production . Excellent standard of acting and music . Thank you"*

*"Brilliant show. I loved the energy and the singing. Interesting take on Dickens, which I didn't know about before"*

*"Superb storyline and well-crafted script. An exceptional and gifted writer at work here."*

*"The combination of music and storytelling is unique and beautifully and skilfully executed."*

*"It was great fun and such a clever idea. It was executed so well and all involved seemed to be relishing it - infectious so."*

*"Deserves to be on a much bigger stages and seen by many more people."*

*"Loved it. Brilliant in every way. Made me feel very pleased to have come and seen it. And impressed with all your talents!"*

## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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*"We thought the script and the acting were excellent. The musical numbers were also enjoyable. The whole story was ingeniously put together and linked with Dickens's life."*

*"It was fabulous. I loved the interweaving of the book text with the story, the use of the live music that was an equal partner to the words. Such an outstanding performance with a small cast. I truly can't think of anything I disliked. Perfect for the season as well."*

#### **The Telling Unchained at Christmas**

*"Really enjoyed it. Great range of instruments and different music. Audience participation great fun and felt very informal. Confident playing and singing."*

*"I loved the skill of the performers, the beauty of the music and the engagement of players with audience."*

*"Loved all of it. Intimate and involving performance"*

*"Really loved it. Participation was so uplifting, made me feel happier. Loved the Spanish tunes especially."*

*"Engaging, enjoyable, enthusiasm shines through. Beautiful sound & interesting historically. Impressive performance - great fun."*

*"Absolutely lovely. Clare has a beautiful voice and the harpist was superb. The programme was so beautiful and interesting. It was an unexpected privilege being at Clare's last singing concert - thank you."*

#### **Creating Carmen**

*"The plot was so original. The standard of musicianship and acting was phenomenal."*

*"Inspired, enlightened and in awe of the incredibly talented cast, bringing to life a highly original work"*

*"Great performance. Very entertaining"*

*"Fabulous evening. Wonderful entertainment. Thank you."*

*"It was excellent – the music, singing, acting and also the venue – very intimate and atmospheric. Thoroughly enjoyed it"*

#### **Marketing and press coverage**

In each of our residency locations we developed partnerships with venues and other arts organisations that helped us reach local audiences. We set up reciprocal marketing partnerships with local arts organisations at each of our tour locations, asking for their help in spreading the word and offering to return the favour.

We successfully use Facebook Ad campaigns; usually the highest percentage of audience members who fill in our feedback questionnaires say they discovered the event through Facebook. This in combination with reciprocal marketing with partners and a flyer distribution plan on the ground worked strongly together.

We also worked hard to secure local press coverage and secured **local BBC Radio** interviews with **BBC Merseyside** and **BBC Radio WM**. We mentioned under achievements that the entire cast of *What the Dickens?* was invited on **BBC Radio 3's InTune** to perform both music and dialogue excerpts from the show.

★★★★ *"a playful patchwork of references from across the centuries ... sure-footed, entertaining theatre ... an engaging Christmas outing."* - The Reviews Hub (November 2024) on *What the Dickens?* at OSO Arts Centre, Barnes

#### **SHARING OUR LEARNING WITH OTHER ENSEMBLES AND COMPANIES**

Given The Telling has an interesting formula for developing residencies in areas where there is little or no early music touring, we share our learning (both successes and failures) so others can benefit from our learning and explore how to tour and develop residencies themselves. We have been working with The Mancunium Consort on a project in late 2025 helping them develop fundraising and budgeting skills.

## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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#### *Financial Review*

Our income continues to grow, from an average of £60-70k up to 2022/23, to £136k in 2023/24, and then in the 2024/25 year under review, we achieved total income of £201,932.

Our reserves as of 31st March 2025 were £13,491, although £17,783 of this is restricted funds received in advance of 2025/26 financial year towards projects in that period. This was offset by a small deficit of £7,518 on unrestricted funds at the year end. This deficit on unrestricted funds was subsequently eliminated in the subsequent financial year through some unrestricted donations and a first application for Theatre Tax Relief.

#### *Reserves Policy*

The Trustees are acutely aware that, as a growing organisation, much more needs to be done in the ensuing years to increase the charity's reserves and have set a target of £20,000, this being roughly equivalent to either 3 months' running costs or the amount considered prudent to mitigate against potential financial risks (such as the last minute cancellation of a small-medium tour or engagement). The timetable for meeting this updated reserves target has been set at 3-5 years to allow time to build up this amount at a sustainable pace.

At the year end the total unrestricted funds was a deficit of £4,292 (2024 – a surplus of £3,226) which is short of the charity's policy.

#### *Going Concern*

The Trustees consider that, at the date of the signing of the Report and Accounts, the Charity is a going concern, based on their review of existing funds, secured income for future periods and expected cash flows. This takes into account the impact of the reduced level of grant from Arts Council England and the ongoing evolution of our business model.

#### **FUNDERS**

The model of our work is expensive and so, as well as the mixed economy of guaranteed fees from festivals and venues, box office splits and self-promotions, we rely heavily on fundraised income. ACE funding has proved hard to come by since the pandemic. In 2024/2025 we were lucky to secure an ACE grant of £17,777 towards *What the Dickens?* However, our main source of income is from trusts and foundations because, for a small arts organisation, we have particular skills in fundraising from trusts. The majority are small grants of £1000- £5000. We also run appeals to the public.

The Telling is most grateful to the individuals and organisations who supported the charity during the year. Without them we would have struggled to enable our programme. For a small organisation to have raised £59,160 from trusts in such a challenging context shows the importance and distinctiveness of our work and our ability to articulate that importance and to fundraise effectively.

All our funding has been toward aspects of our **Touring and Project Fund** to enable us to take performances, workshops around England, with a focus on places that miss out in being able to access most touring circuits. Since the end of the 2024/25 year, we are now exploiting opportunities, working towards an innovative model, working with partner artistic collaborators (CarmenCo on the project: *Creating Carmen* and young vocal ensemble The Mancunium Consort on *Breaking the Rules* in Autumn 2025). This means that in some cases, the partner can front the applications. This has the double benefit that these partner organisations can learn from our expertise, make connections with new funders and learn how to write applications, whilst also enabling The Telling to benefit from grants from trusts we could not approach, due to many of them asking for one, two or three-year gaps before you can reapply.

## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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#### **ASSESSMENT OF MAJOR RISKS**

The Trustees have considered risks to which The Telling is exposed and have established appropriate procedures to mitigate the impact of those risks. The outlook continues to be a challenging one. The main difficulties faced by The Telling and all other arts organisations is a perfect storm of rising costs, combined with the cost-of-living also impacting significantly on ticket sale income and making promoters risk-averse. However, we have learnt much about the challenges ahead which are likely to remain:

- a) A need for enhanced funding to mitigate losses due to fewer promoter engagements, reduced fees from promoters and reduced ticket income from self-promoted events
- b) A climate in which competition for funds (including from trusts and foundations) is fiercer than ever

Our future plans above detail how we have already made changes to the model of our work to involve more paid engagements alongside fundraising for our more risky residencies/self-promotions, which depend on ticket income and also an increase in working in partnership to share risk and fundraising. The increase in paid engagements will mitigate the risk, alongside plans to continue to build our fundraising, which continues to increase significantly year on year, despite these challenges.

#### ***Structure, Governance and Management***

##### *Governing Document*

The Telling is a charitable incorporated organisation and has no share capital. It registered with the Charity Commission on 30 January 2019 and is governed by its constitution. In the event of a winding up, while a member or within one year of ceasing to be a member, the member's liability is limited to £5.

##### *Management*

Managerially, Clare Norburn continued in her role as Artistic Director on a pro bono basis, supported by our General Manager Stephanie Pillinger. This management team, together with a focused and dedicated Board of Trustees, has continued the strengthening of the organisation with tight controls over all aspects of planning, including deciding on repertoire for programmes, scheduling, budgeting, and monitoring of financial forecasts.

Clare Norburn (who is also our playwright, producer and was a singer until her retirement in December 2024) oversees strategic and artistic planning, budgeting, fundraising and partnerships. Clare works approx. 2 days a week for The Telling on a pro-bono basis. She is paid for singing, producing and writing projects. She earns her living mostly from freelance fundraising.

Stephanie Pillinger, General Manager, has worked for The Telling since 2018, significantly increasing her skills each year. Steph oversees project management, logistics, marketing, press and works with Clare to support on fundraising and finances. She also attends some of the live shows. She works for The Telling 3 days a week.

The Telling engages freelance musicians, actors, directors, lighting designers, costume makers and other creatives on a project-by-project basis. All are paid on a freelance rehearsal and project-by-project basis, and none is a permanent employee of the charity.

##### *Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees*

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance of the charity. The Trustees are not artists involved in the charity's work.



## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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The Trustees undertake a skills audit to determine the skills to best support the objects of the charity. Trustees are recruited via an open recruitment process which is advertised in the arts and charity press/websites and through the charity's own website, social media and mailing list. A full Trustee pack is provided outlining the landscape in which we operate, our history and business plans. The Trustees may be appointed at the discretion, and with the approval, of the existing Trustees. New Trustees are briefed of their duties by existing Trustees and by the Artistic Director and General Manager who discuss the training needs of the new Trustee. New Trustees are encouraged to attend training on the responsibilities and role of a Trustee.

### ***Reference and Administrative Details***

*Charity registration number:* 1181802

*Principal office:* 168 Percy Road  
Twickenham  
TW2 6JF

#### *Trustees*

The trustees serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Catherine Magdalen Edis (Chair) (resigned 10 January 2025)  
Elizabeth Davies (Chair from 10 January 2025)  
Joanne McIntosh  
Chung Hin Chloe Lam (appointed 10 January 2025)

No trustee received any remuneration for services during the period, other than those disclosed in note 7, nor did they have any beneficial interest in any contract with the charity.

*Banker:* HSBC  
312 Seven Sisters Road  
Finsbury Park  
London  
N4 2AW

*Independent Examiner:* Barcant Beardon Limited  
Chartered Accountants  
8 Blackstock Mews  
Islington  
London  
N4 2BT



## THE TELLING

### TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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#### *Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements*

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

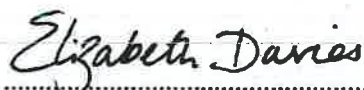
The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

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 2019 (FRS 102);
- 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 operational existence.

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

This report was approved by the trustees on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and signed on their behalf.



Elizabeth Davies  
Chair of Trustees

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF

THE TELLING

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I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 14 to 24.

### *Responsibilities and basis of report*

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

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

### *Independent examiner's statement*

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

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

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

14 January 2026

8 Blackstock Mews  
Islington  
London N4 2BT

  
Shu Fen Chung FCCA ACA  
BARCANT BEARDON LIMITED  
Chartered Accountants

## THE TELLING

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
<i>Income and endowments from:</i>					
Donations and legacies	3	59,160	91,906	151,066	96,647
Charitable activities	4	-	50,866	50,866	39,420
Total income and endowments		<u>59,160</u>	<u>142,772</u>	<u>201,932</u>	<u>136,067</u>
<i>Expenditure on:</i>					
Charitable activities	5	<u>41,377</u>	<u>150,290</u>	<u>191,667</u>	<u>143,930</u>
Total expenditure		<u>41,377</u>	<u>150,290</u>	<u>191,667</u>	<u>143,930</u>
<i>Net income/(expenditure) for the year</i>		17,783	(7,518)	10,265	(7,863)
Transfers between funds	11	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<i>Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year</i>		17,783	(7,518)	10,265	(7,863)
Total funds brought forward	11	<u>-</u>	<u>3,226</u>	<u>3,226</u>	<u>11,089</u>
Total funds carried forward	11	<u><u>17,783</u></u>	<u><u>(4,292)</u></u>	<u><u>13,491</u></u>	<u><u>3,226</u></u>

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

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

THE TELLING

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
<i>Current Assets</i>			
Debtors	8	4,624	5,780
Cash at bank and in hand		11,945	8,280
		<u>16,569</u>	<u>14,060</u>
<i>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</i>	9	(3,078)	(10,834)
<i>Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)</i>		<u>13,491</u>	<u>3,226</u>
<i>Net Assets/Liabilities</i>		<u>13,491</u>	<u>3,226</u>
<i>Funds</i>			
Unrestricted funds			
Restricted Funds	11	17,783	-
Unrestricted Funds	11	(4,292)	3,226
		<u>13,491</u>	<u>3,226</u>

Approved by the trustees on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and signed on its behalf.

*Elizabeth Davies*

Elizabeth Davies  
Chair of Trustees

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

## THE TELLING

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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##### **1.0 Accounting Policies**

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

##### **1.1 Basis of Preparation**

The Telling is a charitable incorporation organisation. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £5 per member of the charity. The registered office is 168 Percy Road, Twickenham TW2 6JF.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. 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 issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

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

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the 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) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

##### **1.2 Going Concern**

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties regarding the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern and have prepared these financial statements on this basis.

##### **1.3 Fund Accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor.

##### **1.4 Income Recognition**

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Donated services and facilities, including gifts in kind, are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.



## THE TELLING

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled. Donations received with imposed restrictions are classified as restricted funds,

Revenue grants are credited as incoming resources when they are receivable provided conditions for receipt have been complied with. Where grants awarded for specific concerts or events are received in advance of the performance, they are deferred so that concert and event costs align with related income.

Performance and outreach income is recognised in the period in which the activity takes place.

#### *1.5 Expenditure Recognition*

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Support costs are those costs incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements and are included in support costs.

Costs of raising funds are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

#### *1.6 Stock*

Stocks are CDs for sale and are stated at the lower of cost and estimated selling price.

#### *1.7 Debtors*

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

#### *1.8 Creditors and Provisions*

Creditors and provisions 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 and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount.

## THE TELLING

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 2.0 Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

#### 3.0 Income from Donations and Legacies

	Restricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Donations and gifts	-	74,968	74,968	19,444
Gift Aid	-	16,938	16,938	3,705
Grants	59,160	-	59,160	73,498
	<u>59,160</u>	<u>91,906</u>	<u>151,066</u>	<u>96,647</u>

- 3.1 Income from donation and legacies was £151,066 (2024 - £96,647) of which £59,160 (2024 - £73,498) was attributable to restricted funds and £91,906 (2024 - £23,149) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

## THE TELLING

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

3.2 Analysis of Grants	2025 £	2024 £
Angel Early Music	3,000	3,000
Arts Council England	17,777	25,195
Cockayne Fund	5,000	-
Colwinston Charitable Trust	8,000	6,000
Continuo Foundation	4,000	5,000
Gale Family Trust	1,000	-
Grimmitt Trust	1,200	1,000
Scops Arts Trust	-	7,500
Shores Charitable Trust	1,983	1,983
Sir John Fisher Foundation	-	7,000
The Darkley Trust	1,000	-
The Golsoncott Foundation	1,200	1,000
The Gwendoline and Margaret Davies Charity	2,000	-
The Hadfield Trust	-	1,500
The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation	2,000	-
The Hugh Fraser Foundation	2,000	-
The James Beattie Charitable Trust	1,000	870
The JTH Charitable Trust	500	-
The Marchus Trust	-	5,000
The Pear Tree Fund for Music	2,000	-
The Radcliffe Trust	-	2,000
The Souter Charity	3,000	3,000
The Victoria Wood Foundation	-	2,450
The W M Mann Foundation	1,000	-
Unity Theatre Trust	500	-
WE Dunn Trust	1,000	1,000
	<u>59,160</u>	<u>73,498</u>

#### 4.0 Income from Charitable Activities

	Restricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Promoters' fees	-	11,014	11,014	9,640
Box office and CD sales	-	39,852	39,852	29,780
	<u>-</u>	<u>50,866</u>	<u>50,866</u>	<u>39,420</u>

- 4.1 Income from charitable activities was £50,866 (2024 - £39,420) of which £nil (2024 - £nil) was attributable to restricted funds and £50,866 (2024 - £39,420) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

## THE TELLING

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 5.0 Analysis of Expenditure on Charitable Activities

Charitable Activities 2025	Activities undertaken directly 2025 £	Support costs 2025 £	Governance costs 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Artists	95,095	-	-	95,095
Venues	8,856	-	-	8,856
Lighting	15,541	-	-	15,541
Travel and subsistence	29,488	-	-	29,488
Marketing	13,929	1	-	13,930
Film and CD production	59	-	-	59
Project administration	6,432	16,451	-	22,883
Sundry expenses	2,237	-	-	2,237
Bank charges	-	578	-	578
Accountancy	-	-	3,000	3,000
	<u>171,637</u>	<u>17,030</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>191,667</u>

5.1 Charitable Activities 2024	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Governance costs 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Artists	64,430	-	-	64,430
Venues	7,036	-	-	7,036
Lighting	12,324	-	-	12,324
Travel and subsistence	14,422	-	-	14,422
Marketing	9,763	350	-	10,113
Film and CD production	342	-	-	342
Project administration	27,850	-	-	27,850
Sundry expenses	2,359	-	-	2,359
Bank charges	-	614	-	614
Accountancy	-	-	4,440	4,440
	<u>138,526</u>	<u>964</u>	<u>4,440</u>	<u>143,930</u>

- 5.2 Of the £191,667 expenditure in 2025 (2024 - £143,930), £41,377 (2024 - £110,676) was attributable to restricted funds and £150,290 (2024 - £33,254) was attributable to unrestricted funds.

## THE TELLING

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

<b>6.0 Net Income/(Expenditure) for the Year</b>	2025	2024
	£	£
<i>This is stated after charging</i>		
Independent examiner's fee	3,000	4,440
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

### 7.0 Trustees Remuneration and Expenses

Clare Norburn resigned as a trustee on 21 September 2023. The following payments were made to her up to the date of her resignation. These payments were made in respect of services provided to the charity as a performer and writer, and as authorised by the governing document and the Trustees:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Performing/writing fees	-	6,140
Expenses reclaimed	-	35
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	-	6,175
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

No other members of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration or expenses during the year.

No trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity during the year (2024 – nil).

<b>8.0 Debtors</b>	2025	2024
	£	£
Prepayments	714	2,139
Accrued income	3,910	3,641
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	4,624	5,780
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

<b>9.0 Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year</b>	2025	2024
	£	£
Accruals	3,000	4,440
Deferred income	78	6,394
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	3,078	10,834
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>



# THE TELLING

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

### 10.0 Deferred Income

Deferred income comprises of monies received in advance for performances and events occurring after the year end.

	Total £
Balance as at 1 April 2024	6,394
Amount released to income earned from charitable activities	(6,394)
Amount deferred in year	78
Balance as at 31 March 2025	78

### 11.0 Analysis of Charitable Funds

#### Unrestricted Funds – Current Year

	Balance 1 Apr 24	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfers £	Balance 31 Mar 25 £
General funds	3,226	142,772	(150,290)	-	(4,292)

#### Unrestricted Funds – Previous Year

	Balance 1 Apr 23	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfers £	Balance 31 Mar 24 £
General funds	10,870	62,569	(33,254)	(36,959)	3,226

#### Name of unrestricted fund

#### Description, nature and purposes of the fund

#### General funds

The “free reserves” after allowing for any designated funds.

### 11.1 Restricted Funds – Current Year

	Balance 1 Apr 24	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfers £	Balance 31 Mar 25 £
Touring and project fund	-	59,160	(41,377)	-	17,783

#### Restricted Funds – Previous Year

	Balance 1 Apr 23	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfers £	Balance 31 Mar 24 £
Touring and project fund	219	73,498	(110,676)	36,959	-

## THE TELLING

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

<i>Name of restricted fund</i>	<i>Description, nature and purposes of the fund</i>
Touring and project fund	Funds raised specifically to deliver projects, to rehearse and tour those projects including developing audiences in places which do not otherwise access any or much touring performances.

At the year end the following funds are carried forward to be used in a future year:

	£	Purpose
Colwinston Charitable Trust	5,000	Welsh residency: May – Nov 2025
Gale Family Trust	500	Breaking the Rules performance in Bedford in Nov 2025
Shoresh Charitable Trust	1,983	Into the Melting Pot performances in May 2025
The Darkley Trust	300	Into the Melting Pot performance in Wales in May 2025
The Gwendoline and Margaret Davies Charity	1,000	Into the Melting Pot performance in Wales in May 2025
The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation	2,000	Into the Melting Pot tour & outreach: May 2025
The Hugh Fraser Foundation	2,000	Scottish performances: May 2025 – Feb 2026
The Pear Tree Fund for Music	2,000	Scottish performances: May 2025 – Feb 2026
The Souter Charity	3,000	Refugee outreach project: May 2025 & Hildegard tour: Sep 2025
	<u>17,783</u>	

11.2 The net transfer of £nil (2024 - £36,959) from general funds to the restricted funds represents additional funding towards the projects.

## THE TELLING

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 12.0 Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds – Current Year

	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Cash at bank and in hand	17,069	(5,124)	11,945
Other net current assets/(liabilities)	714	832	1,546
	<u>17,783</u>	<u>(4,292)</u>	<u>13,491</u>

#### Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds – Previous Year

	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	-	8,280	8,280
Other net current assets/(liabilities)	-	(5,054)	(5,054)
	<u>-</u>	<u>3,226</u>	<u>3,226</u>

#### 13.0 Related Party Transactions

Aside from trustee remuneration and expenses disclosed in note 7, one trustee had a close family member who had transactions with the charity during the year. The trustee's family member was paid £4,421 to provide musical services to the charity which includes being a composer, arranger and performing at shows. In the previous year a trustee's family member was paid £1,681 for designing costumes for the performers and related expenses. For each transaction, the trustees specifically met to discuss the engagement and payment to the family member, at which relevant trustee was not present. The remaining trustees felt that appointing this family member would save the charity money in comparison with going to a composer who did not know the Telling's work: and therefore, agreeing this limited period of work was to the benefit of the charity and its work.