

olike

Annual Report and Accounts

Reporting Year 2024/2025

Charity Number: 1181848



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Mission Statement

Alike's mission is simple: to take the loneliness out of cancer. We exist to help people impacted by cancer find community and belonging through digital spaces shaped by them, not just for them. Since the day our name was said out loud, we've been committed to shaping a world where loneliness isn't just another side effect of cancer.

Alike's History

Alike is a digital charity built by and for people living with or beyond cancer. We run the Alike app, a free platform on iOS and Android, where anyone (18+) with a cancer diagnosis can connect with people who understand what cancer actually feels like.

Alike is rooted in being lived experience-led. It was created by a two-time cancer survivor during his own treatment, and today 80% of our team, including our Board of Trustees, have lived experience of cancer, either personally or caring for someone close to them.

But lived experience isn't just a project or a work-stream, it's an ethos. It shapes everything we do. We chat, plan, and design alongside the people who use Alike. We don't claim to have all the answers, so we listen closely to voices from across the cancer community, especially those whose experiences are compounded by aspects of their identity.

Our story, purpose, and values matter deeply to us, which is why the community always comes first. It means everything we do reflects what people genuinely need, and what it's like to live with cancer in 2025 and beyond.

In some ways, we work like a tech startup: agile, iterative, and comfortable with taking risks. But we've also worked hard to build the structure that lets us do things properly, and to nurture meaningful partnerships that accelerate our progress. We launched our platform in 2021, and since then we've been building, testing, learning, and evolving, always with our community, and always with the ambition to do things differently.

We're not just connecting people. We're helping them feel more visible, more understood, and more like themselves. We're working towards a digital community that provides real, authentic peer support, any time, any place, any stage.





A Message From Our Chair...

Last year, I wrote that Alike was poised for an ambitious year ahead. In 2024/25, we made meaningful progress towards that ambition, strengthening the foundations of the charity and taking important steps forward in how we build, govern, and grow.

With funding from Macmillan Cancer Support, we brought in our first in-house engineering capacity and delivered a significant phase of platform development. This was Alike's first major development cycle since our initial launch, and it marked a significant step forward in our ability to deliver, learn, and evolve in real time. It gave us the opportunity to test our direction, respond to feedback, and better understand what it takes to grow a digital community with care.



We also strengthened our governance, welcoming two new trustees with deep expertise in technology, product, and trust and safety. Their appointment reflects the kind of organisation Alike is becoming: one that is community-led and deeply human, while also serious about safeguarding, oversight, and long-term delivery.

This year also brought valuable learning. The February relaunch marked a milestone, but it did not achieve the reach or momentum we had hoped for during the reporting period. Alongside the rising cost of maintaining the platform in its native build, this prompted honest reflection between the Board and senior staff. As Trustees, we supported a more deliberate approach, moving Alike from assumption-led development towards a clearer, needs-led strategy, with sustainability and reach built in from the start.

Alike continues to mature as an organisation. It remains warm, ambitious, and lived experience-led, while also becoming more focused and intentional in how it operates. The work ahead is significant, but the direction is clear, and the commitment of our Founder and growing team gives me great confidence in what comes next.



A Message From Our Founder...

In my progress statement last year, I shared a piece of advice that stayed with me: “This is a year for maintenance, not for growth.” At the time, it felt like permission to steady ourselves through a difficult economic climate and focus on keeping Alike fit for purpose.

What 2024/25 reminded me of is that some of the most important growth happens quietly. It happens when you invest in foundations, even when the work isn’t immediately visible. This year, we grew our team and strengthened our governance, bringing more product and engineering capacity in-house. We deepened partnerships across the cancer community, and we delivered an important phase of platform development, culminating in a February relaunch.

That relaunch was an inflection point. The improvements were well received, but it also surfaced some uncomfortable truths. We didn’t achieve the reach or momentum we had expected during the reporting period, and rising maintenance costs added further pressure. As the person responsible for delivery, I couldn’t justify scaling something that wasn’t sustainable long-term.

I’m proud that we didn’t ignore those early warning signs. Together with our Board and team, we made the decision to pause, reflect, and take a more considered approach to what came next. That is what building responsibly looks like, and it’s what our community deserves. Even as we focused heavily behind the scenes, our community continued to grow and engage. I’m grateful to our supporters, partners, and community for trusting our judgement and backing our commitment to do this properly.

The year ahead will build on what we’ve learned, with more clarity, more focus, and the same determination to help shape a world where loneliness isn’t just another side effect of cancer.





Objectives and Activities

2024/25 was a year of significant growth for Alike. We doubled our staff base, increased our in-house capacity across product and engineering, strengthened governance, and took major steps towards building a platform that could scale sustainably.

Just as importantly, it was a year where we learned quickly and honestly, using real-world insight to shape our decisions and refine our direction.

Our work throughout the year focused on strengthening the foundations of the charity and the app, so that Alike could grow in a way that is safe, community-led, and built to last. That meant investing in the people, systems, and partnerships that allow us to build thoughtfully, not just quickly.

During 2024/25, our key activities included:

- Growing our internal capacity by bringing product and engineering expertise in-house
- Strengthening governance through strategic trustee recruitment
- Improving the management and sustainability of our platform through technical development
- Deepening partnerships with Macmillan Cancer Support, and community organisations
- Engaging with our community through user testing and activation events to ensure Alike continues to reflect real needs

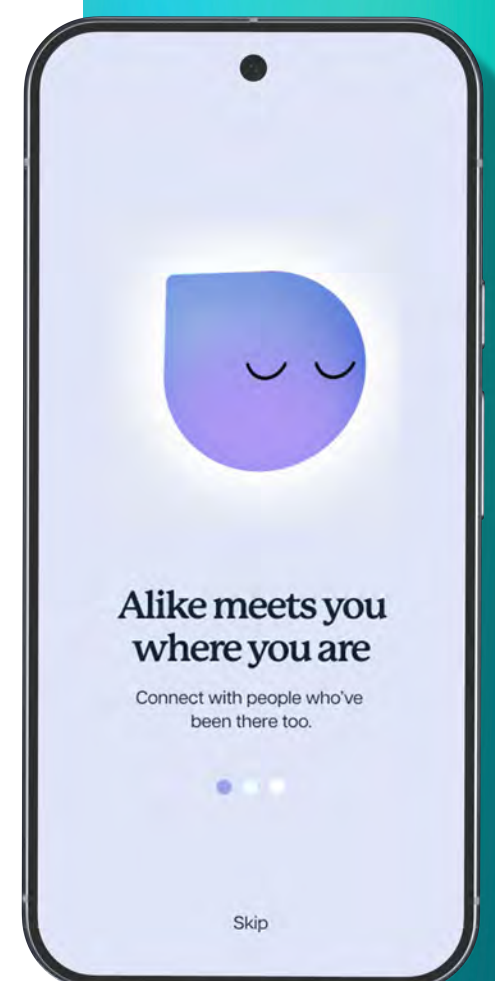
Summary of Activities

July 2024: Strengthening product direction through user insight

In July, we hired our Product Owner to strengthen the strategic direction of the Alike app. As part of this work, we partnered with Reason Digital to map user needs and validate our assumptions. This ensured our product decisions were grounded in real insight. This was an important step in Alike's growth. As we moved from early-stage momentum into long-term delivery, we knew we needed stronger foundations: clearer priorities for our app development, a more sustainable technical roadmap, and a deeper understanding of what people genuinely want from a digital cancer community.

September 2024: Building engineering capacity in-house

In September, through our funded partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, we recruited our React Native Engineer. This marked a significant milestone for Alike, bringing engineering expertise in-house so we could build and improve the platform more effectively and with greater consistency across iOS and Android.





For a small charity with ambitious goals, we needed to stop outsourcing development. Hiring in-house talent and capacity gave us the ability to improve the platform consistently and build in a way that supports sustainable growth.

Strengthening governance: recruiting trustees for the next stage

During the year, we also strengthened our governance by recruiting new trustees with skills aligned to our next phase of development. We welcomed Eshita Kabra, Founder and CEO of By Rotation, who brought expertise in building digital communities and product development, and Caz Millin-Brawn, a trust and safety leader with experience at TikTok, Instagram, and Meta, who strengthened our safeguarding and policy frameworks.

As Alike grows, governance becomes even more important. These appointments helped ensure we had the right oversight, challenge, and expertise to support our team, protect our community, and make long-term decisions with confidence.

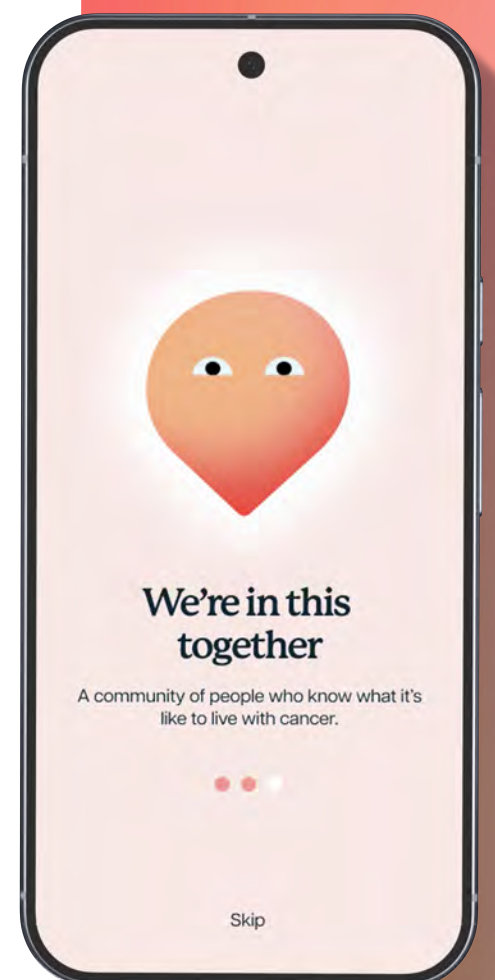
January 2025: Community Activation Day

In January, we hosted a Community Activation Day, bringing together community members, partners, and trusted voices from across the cancer space. The day created space for early feedback, honest reflection, and real-world insight into what people want from Alike now, not what they needed three years ago. It was also a reminder of something we never want to lose sight of: Alike exists because people need a space that feels safe, real, and human. The conversations we had reinforced the importance of building slowly and deliberately, and the event helped accelerate specific user testing and refinement in the weeks that followed.

February 2025: V2 Release

We chose to release Version 2 the app on World Cancer Day (February 4th) because, historically, it has been a strong opportunity for visibility and engagement. However, this time we struggled to cut through the noise. On a day when every cancer charity is competing for attention, we didn't have the in-house marketing and communications capacity to be as responsive and proactive as we needed to be. This was a valuable lesson. Moving forward, we'll avoid major feature launches on World Cancer Day, opting instead for quieter moments in the calendar where we can maximise meaningful engagement. World Cancer Day will remain important to Alike, but our focus will shift towards co-producing content with strategic partners, raising awareness and sharing audiences through collaborative marketing rather than publishing unilaterally.

The release marked an important milestone, but it also highlighted key challenges. Despite the improvements made to the platform, we did not have the marketing capacity needed to achieve the level of visibility and engagement we had hoped for during the reporting period, and the native build was becoming increasingly expensive to maintain.



This prompted a period of honest reflection between our Founder, team, and Board, and shaped a more intentional plan for what came next, based on what we learned.

End of year: Laying the groundwork for our next phase

As the financial year came to a close, based on what we had learned, we made the deliberate decision to pause, evaluate, and refine our direction. This early work marked the start of Alike's next chapter, including the foundations of a refreshed brand and the first steps towards a single, scalable codebase. For Alike, this was not a setback. It was part of building responsibly. We believe our community deserves a platform that is built for the long term, and our supporters value our willingness to be honest, take feedback seriously, and make the right calls, even when that means slowing down to do things properly.

Plan for the next 12 months

Over the next 12 months, our focus is on turning the learning and foundations from 2024/25 into stronger delivery and sustainable growth. This includes:

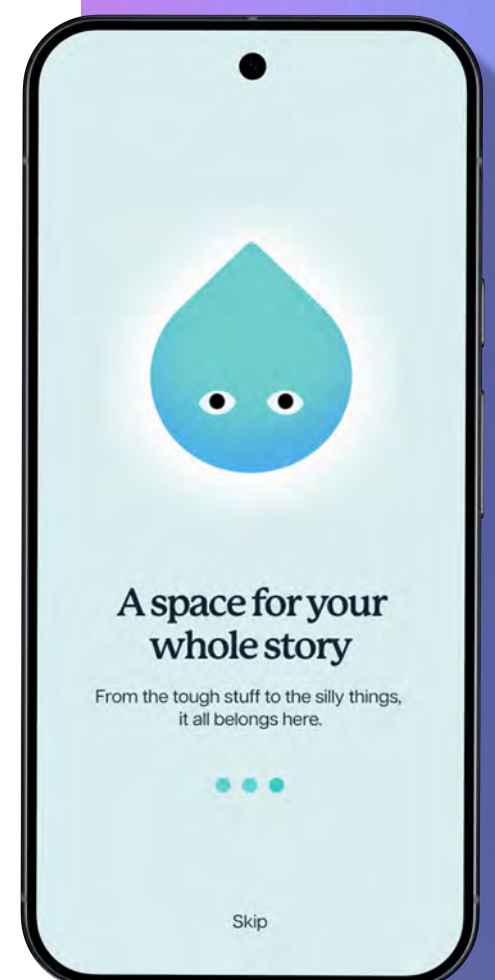
Executing our rebrand and launching a new website: We will roll out our refreshed brand identity and launch an updated website that brings consistency across everything we do. The website will act as a central hub for Alike, supporting community growth, donations, and partnership opportunities.

Building the next phase of the Alike app: We will continue developing the platform with a stronger technical foundation, improved safeguarding, engaging features, and a more streamlined user experience. Our goal is to create a digital space that is safe, intuitive, and designed to support real connection at every stage of cancer.

Growing reach through partnerships, communications and campaigns: We will deepen our collaborations and implement both digital marketing initiatives and on-the-ground campaigns to connect with more people living with cancer. This will include:

- Stronger and more consistent presence of Alike on social media
- Podcast appearances by our Founder to share Alike's story and mission
- Strategic PR campaigns aimed at building awareness and driving user growth
- Collaborations with influencers and advocates within the cancer and healthcare community
- Partner-led activations to reach people in trusted, relevant spaces

This next year will build on what we couldn't fully deliver in 2024/25, not because the ambition wasn't there, but because we were still building the internal capacity needed to do it properly.





Financial Review

End of Year Cash Position

For the year ended 31st March 2025, Alike had total receipts of £183,780 and made payments of £256,285, resulting in net receipts of -£72,505. This gives total funds of £50,265 at year end to be carried forward, comprising £40,865 in restricted funding (to be spent in 2025/26 towards salaries) and £9,400 in unrestricted cash funds.

Following discussions and reflection on Charity Commission guidance regarding charitable reserves, the trustees adopted a revised reserves policy in 2025/26 of maintaining unrestricted reserves equivalent to four months of average monthly unrestricted expenditure. This provides sufficient time to adjust operations, secure alternative funding, or wind down activities in an orderly manner if required.

Based on our projected unrestricted expenditure for 2025/26 of £45,000, our reserves target was set at £15,000 (representing four months' cover of £3,750 per month). Our unrestricted reserves of £9,400 at 31 March 2025 therefore fell short of this target by £5,600.

Unrestricted expenditure includes insurance, legal and professional fees, office costs, communications and marketing, administrative software, bank fees, HR costs, and travel expenses. Salaries and programme costs covered by restricted grants are excluded from this calculation.

The trustees recognise that this shortfall reflects the challenging and highly competitive fundraising landscape for unrestricted funding. While we have been successful in securing restricted grants for core programme delivery and salaries, unrestricted income remains more difficult to source.

When reserves fall below the target level, the policy requires the Board to be notified immediately, review expenditure for potential savings, accelerate unrestricted fundraising efforts, and develop a reserves recovery plan with timeline. The trustees prioritised building unrestricted reserves during 2025/26 through targeted fundraising efforts whilst continuing to deliver our charitable objectives. Should reserves need to be deployed during a financial shortfall, this would trigger a review of operations and consideration of whether operational changes are required to ensure financial sustainability.

The reserves position is monitored monthly and reported quarterly to the Board, allowing for early identification of any concerns. We continue to manage our restricted funding carefully, aligning staff contracts with funding periods to minimise redundancy risk.

Independent Examiner's Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of ALIKE for the year ended 31st March 2025.

1. Responsibilities and basis of the report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act"). I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters.

2. 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- a) accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or;
- b) the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

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

Signed:



Nicole Gray
NG Community Accounting Services
Jubilee House, Lincoln Road
Doddington, Lincoln
LN6 4RS

26th January 2026



Receipts and Payment Accounts

Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025.

Receipts	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total 24/25 (£)	Total 23/24 (£)
Major Donors	-	115,000	115,000	115,000
Macmillan Cancer Support	-	40,000	40,000	-
Queen's Commonwealth Trust	-	-	-	20,000
Z Zurich Foundation	-	-	-	-
The Postcode Lottery Fund	-	-	-	25,000
The National Lottery Community Fund	-	-	-	9,500
Blackbaud	-	-	-	4,947
Roche	-	-	-	-
Other	30	-	30	9,183
Gift Aid	28,750	-	28,750	28,750
Total Receipts	28,780	155,000	183,780	212,381
Payments				
Service Development	-	-	-	3,892
App Development	580	16,620	17,200	-
Marketing and Communications	9,537	7,472	17,009	813
Raising Funds	756	-	756	174
Salaries and Wages	-	170,090	170,090	89,218
Freelance and Contractor Costs	9,019	-	9,019	9,392
Legal and Professional Costs	7,912	-	7,912	2,862
Independent Examination	385	-	385	1,136
Software Costs	7,131	-	7,131	5,742
Office Costs	4,648	2,798	7,447	7,634
Equipment	1,897	2,498	4395	-
Printing and Stationary	237	-	237	-
Telephone and Internet	1,258	-	1,258	-
Travel, Accommodation & Subsidence	6,194	-	6,194	3,492
Bank Fees	45	-	45	-
Trustee Expenses	1,165	-	1,165	1,319
Directors Loan	1,058	-	1,058	-
Subscriptions	762	-	762	1,255
Staff Training and HR	3,264	958	4,222	304
Sundry	-	-	-	32
Total Payments	55,848	200,437	256,285	127,266
Assets and Investment Purchases	-	-	-	-
Total Payments	55,848	200,437	256,285	127,266



Net Cash Inflow / Outflow	(27,068)	(45,437)	(72,505)	85,114
Balance brought forward	36,468	86,302	122,770	37,656
Balance carried forward	9,400	40,865	50,265	122,770

Statement of assets and liabilities for the year ended 31st March 2025

Cash Funds	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total 24/25 (£)
Bank Account	9,400	40,865	50,265
Totals	9,400	40,865	50,265

Movement in Funds

Unrestricted Funds	On the 01.04.24 (£)	Net movement (£)	Transfer between funds	Total 23/24 (£)
Business Reserve	36,468	(27,068)	-	9,400
Totals	36,468	(27,068)	-	9,400

Restricted Funds				
Wilson + Olegario Philanthropy	51,855	(16,714)	-	35,141
The National Lottery Community Fund	9,500	(9,500)	-	-
Blackbaud	4,947	(4,947)	-	-
Queen’s Commonwealth Trust	20,000	(20,000)	-	-
Macmillan Cancer Support	-	(5,723)	-	5,723
Totals	86,302	(45,437)	-	
Total Monetary Funds	122,770	(72,505)	-	50,265

Unrestricted Funds	Incoming Resources	Resources Expanded	Gain and Losses	Movement in Funds
Business Reserve	28,780	55,848	-	(27,068)
Totals	28,780	55,848	-	(27,068)



Restricted Funds				
Wilson + Olegario Philanthropy	115,000	131,713	-	(16,713)
The National Lottery Community Fund	-	9,500	-	(9,500)
Blackbaud	-	4,947	-	(4,947)
Queen's Commonwealth Trust	-	20,000	-	(20,000)
Macmillan Cancer Support	40,000	34,277	-	(5,723)
Totals	155,000	200,437	-	(45,437)
Total Funds	183,780	256,285	-	(72,505)

Assets retained for the Charity's own use	Assets retained for the Charity's own use	Cost (£)	Cost (£)
Computer Equipment	Unrestricted	3,577	3,130

Liabilities	Fund		-	Amount Due (£)
Employee Costs	Wilson + Olegario Philanthropy	-	-	1,039
Accountancy Service	Unrestricted	-	-	665

These accounts have been approved by the Alike Board of Trustees, and signed on its behalf by Alike's Treasurer on the 29th January 2026:

Naomi Rhodes
Treasurer, and Trustee of Alike



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

1. Accounting Policies

The Trustees have decided to adopt the Receipts & Payments method in preparing the Financial Statements. Therefore "Expenditure" does not include the accrual for the Independent Examiner's fee for the year.

The Trustees consider that this is appropriate for an organisation the size of ALIKE and ensures that the financial statements are easily understood by the members and other users.

All figures refer to the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

2. Trustees Remuneration and Expenses

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

A total of £1,165 was paid to Trustees to cover reimbursement of expenses incurred during the year and was paid in line with the charity expenses policy.

3. Independent Examiner's Remuneration

Examination of Financial Statements

	2025	2024
Cost (£)	390	385

4. Taxation

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

5. Guarantees

No guarantees were given by the CIO where potential liability under the guarantee is outstanding at the date of the statement.

6. Outstanding Debts

There were no debts outstanding at the date of the statement which are owed by the CIO and secured by an express charge on any assets of the CIO.



Governance

Alike's Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers and duties. Alike is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), whose only voting members are its Trustees. This financial year marked a significant step forward in strengthening our governance. We developed and implemented a strategic trustee recruitment process, moving beyond personal networks to attract candidates with a broader range of skills and experience. This approach helped us widen our reach, bring in fresh perspectives, and ensure Alike is equipped to support our mission as we grow.

We welcomed two new trustees during this period:

- Eshita Kabra, Founder and CEO of By Rotation, bringing expertise in building digital communities and product development.
- Caroline (Caz) Millin-Brawn, a trust and safety leader with experience at TikTok, Instagram, and Meta, strengthening our safeguarding practices and policy frameworks.

Alike's Trustees are onboarded and trained by our senior leadership team and undertake a development plan overseen by the Chair of Trustees, concluding in an annual appraisal.

Administrative Details

Charity's name: Alike

Charity registration number: 1181848

Address of principal office: Soho Works, 180 Strand, London, WC2R 1EA.

Complaints policy: You can make a complaint by email at info@alike.org.uk

Names of Trustees on:

a) the date during the financial year in question and;

b) when the report was approved:

- Dr. James Parker (Chair)
- Rachel Priest
- Chris Clark
- Naomi Rhodes
- Caroline Millin-Brawn (appointed September 2024)
- Eshita Kabra (appointed September 2024)



Approval

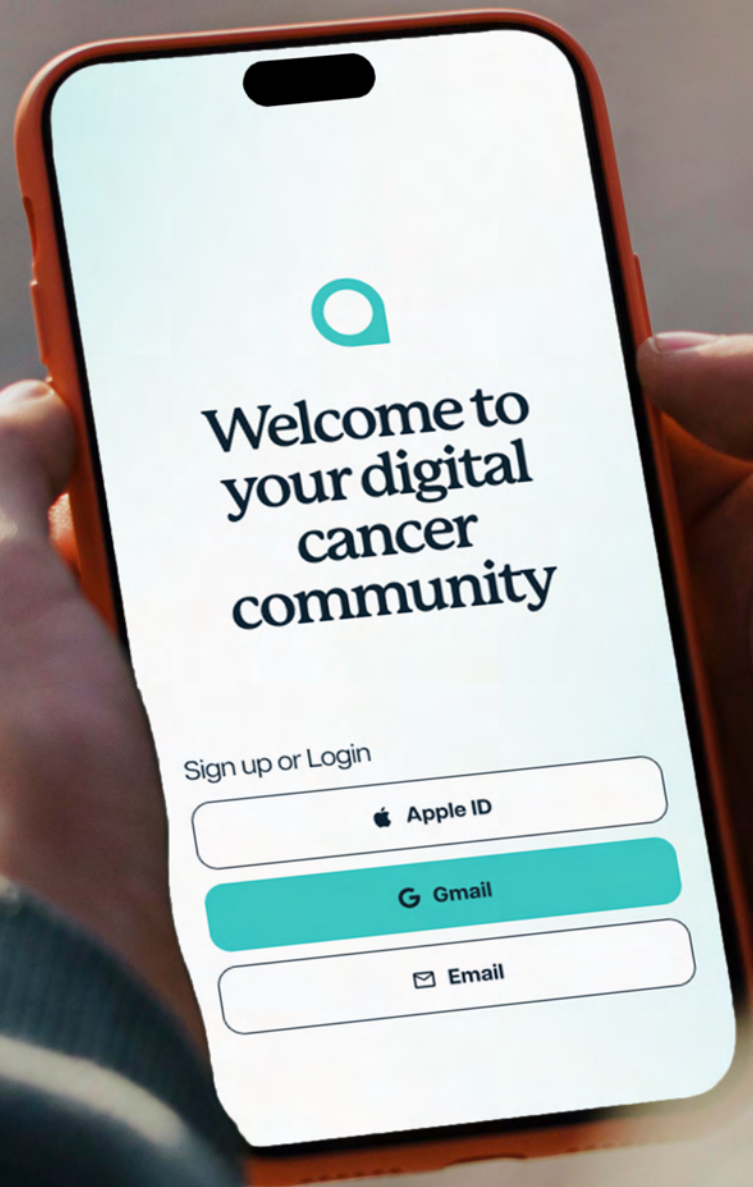
The Trustees declare that they have approved Alike's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:

Dr James Parker
Chair of Trustees

29th January 2026

Taking the loneliness out of cancer.



alike