

B L A N K
C A N V A S

ANNUAL REPORT

2024/2025



PREPARED BY

Blank Canvas Trustees

Charity Number: 1182185

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



MARK TATE

Chair of Trustees

It has been a privilege to watch Blank Canvas grow and flourish in 2024. The Board of Trustees know that the continued rise of poverty and socio-economic deprivation faced by many young people in Redcar is tackled by the Blank Canvas staff and volunteers each week. We are also aware that the local church is beginning to grow in confidence in its mission to young people, led by Blank Canvas. That is why it has been so encouraging to see the mission of Blank Canvas grow this year as well as the infrastructure and finances to support and sustain this growth.

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS

This last year has been a wonderful time of youth work! We have seen engagement levels grow across all of our activities, however, it is the deeper work of our Advocacy Programme (YAFA) and the development of the DOXA Programme (faith based activities) that bring us joy on top of all that is happening.

Each year as we reflect, we celebrate the volunteers who turn up week in, week out for the young people of Redcar, their commitment and love for each person who walks through the doors of our safe spaces and other activities.

We have seen another year of provision and incredible generosity from our supporters and funders. Our staff team has expanded and we have seen our funding increase to allow us to sustain and develop new initiatives such as the DOXA Programme, Compass and our YAFA Programme.



**ABI & JONNY
HEDGES**

Founder and Directors

We are thankful for all that God has done this year and we are excited to continue to press on in our vision to create new stories of hope for young people in Redcar and beyond.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Objects of the charity

The charity is governed by a constitution as a charitable incorporated organisation. The charity's principal objects, as set out in its governing document, are:

The objects of Blank Canvas are:

1. The advancement of the Christian Faith. This will be achieved in particular but not exclusively by: working in partnership with local churches to provide youth and community provision. Working in partnership with local schools to provide education on the Christian faith. Creating a space for young people to explore issues of life and faith.
2. The prevention or relief of poverty for young people through their advancement in life and helping of young people by developing their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals.
3. The advancement of education by providing personal development programmes and courses for young people and by providing training and advice to those working with them.

In planning the activities the Trustees have applied the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission.

Financial Review

Total income received of £118,917 is a 70% increase on the previous year. Most of this increase is due to a higher number of grants received. In addition we have benefitted from more support from partner churches. There is more detail on grants and partner churches in the fundraising section later in this report. We are also very grateful to our individual regular donors who have supported our work during the year.

Payments in relation to charitable activities undertaken directly have also increased to £78,151 for the year. This increase reflects growth in the team to 4 staff members over the year.

The charity has increased cash funds at year end to £100,112 of which £35,688 is unrestricted.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have determined that the charity should aim to hold unrestricted cash of no less than £22,400 (which equates to about 3 months' of unrestricted expenditure) so that the charity could continue to operate should income and / or expenditure vary adversely.

At the year end, the charity held unrestricted cash of £35,688 and the charity is complying with its reserves policy.

Governance

Responsibility for setting policy and for making operating decisions rest with the trustees who meet regularly to monitor the activities of the charity. Responsibility for the day to day operation of the charity has been delegated to a senior management team led by the Director of Programmes and Director of Operations. New trustees are recruited and appointed by the existing trustees, by a majority vote.

Responsibilities of Trustees

Charity law requires us as Trustees to prepare financial statements for each accounting year which record the receipts and payments of the charity for the year.

We are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable us to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011.

We also have a responsibility to safeguard the assets of the charity and to take reasonable steps to prevent fraud or any other irregularities.

Approval

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

Mark Tate

Mark Tate (Sep 11, 2025 14:12:35 GMT+1)

Mark Tate: Chair of Trustees

Date: Sep 11, 2025



OUR VISION

VISION

Blank Canvas' vision is to **create new stories of hope** by giving every young person in Redcar the opportunity to know the **hope of Jesus** and to journey alongside young people in order to **respond to the barriers** which prevent them from flourishing.

SOLUTIONS

Safe Spaces: To provide safe spaces for young people to be known & belong.

Advocacy: To advocate for young people and their families, believing in their potential and equipping them to reach their goals.

Local Church: To equip the local church community to be a welcoming & championing voice for young people.

Innovate: To consistently and creatively re-imagine the provision required to achieve our vision.

OUR TEAM

Over 2024-2025 the Blank Canvas team has grown to 4 staff members and one seconded team member and throughout the year, a fantastic team of 20 volunteers have supported the work of Blank Canvas through Youth Clubs, Workspace, Sunday Night Live, Sports Weeks and other activities. Alongside the volunteers, a team of trustees continue to govern Blank Canvas, ensuring Blank Canvas follows its charitable objectives and provides a public benefit.

STAFF TEAM

Abi Hedges: Director of Programmes and Co-Founder

Lizzie Walsh: Senior Youth Worker

Steve Cassy: Youth Worker: Engagement

Carol Petit: Youth Worker: YAFA

Jude Graham: Youth Intern

TRUSTEES

Mark Tate: Chair of Trustees

Jonny Hedges: Operations Trustee and Co-Founder (Resigned February 2025)

Tim Theobalds: Treasurer

Daniela Reiter: Safeguarding Trustee

Revd Bridget Woodall: Trustee

Kristian Shephard: Trustee

TEAM HIGHLIGHT || Michelle

I've been volunteering with Blank Canvas since 2024 and provide meals at Workspace and Sunday Night Live every week, monthly meals at Youth Club and cater for the Shindig.

I love being part of the team and love that Christians from across Redcar are working together for young people.



OUR IMPACT

KNOWING THE HOPE OF JESUS

2024 saw the launch of the DOXA programme, a faith based set of activities that allow young people to explore the Christian faith. This speaks to one of the two key visions for Blank Canvas. The DOXA Programme also seeks to provide one of our solutions in supporting and equipping the local churches to be a welcoming and championing voice for young people in Redcar.

At the first ever weekend away, 13 young people visited Wydale Hall for fun, faith and friendship, with an Alpha course launched after this, attended by many of the group.

Following the completion of Alpha in the winter, Sunday Night Live was launched in January to provide a space for young people to eat together and explore the Christian faith in creative and meaningful ways.



One young person being baptised by Blank Canvas team members in a local church.

One local church through Blank Canvas support has established a Sunday morning provision for young people who have joined the worshipping community, with a small group of young people attending and exploring other local churches .

2024 has seen many young people in Redcar begin to explore and find faith.



Project Sessions Delivered

190



DOXA Programme Hours

198+



Check-in's for sessions

2000+

REMOVING BARRIERS

We're thrilled that 2024 was another year of hosting safe spaces where young people can come with the confidence that they will be spaces they can have fun, build relationships, engage in positive activities and be listened to and supported. Our Redcar East Youth Club has seen rapid growth over 2024 as young people continue to invite their friends. Leaders at Redcar West Youth Club have shared what a joy it is to see some of the young people we have been working with for a number of years grow so much in confidence and have such brilliant, trusting relationships with so many of the team - a testament of the power of consistency in youth work! Workspace continued to be a space where young people can get the support they need to get their school work done with access to laptops, WIFI and other resources. Gathering



together at the end of the evening for what we call our 'family meal' that the young people have helped to prepare is also a notable highlight!

Blank Canvas has also put on Holiday Activities during October Half Term and the Easter holidays and were really encouraged to see a huge growth in confidence of the young people attending as they gave new sports a go and cheered each other on. This same theme was noticeable at the after-school Sports week we ran in March with support from Greenacre's Church Texas.



Advocacy Sessions

160



Minutes of Youth Work

22,698



Meals given to young people

750+



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: YAFA

Supporting young people on a 1:1 basis through mentoring, intentional relationship building with their family and wider support networks and supporting them to set and work towards goals that that want to achieve has been where some of our most impactful youth work has taken place this year. As young people are supported and celebrated to achieve goals that feel important to them here's some of the things we regularly see:

- Improvement in their mental health and wellbeing
- An increase in their own confidence and abilities to make positive changes in their life
- A high level of resilience when met with future challenges
- Young people who feel safe to share the real things they are facing

8



Young people met
with weekly or
biweekly

5



Young people
finished the YAFA
programme

100+



Drinks shared
together

OUR STORIES



AMY*

After being part of Blank Canvas activities for two years, Amy attended the weekend away and decided to give praying a go, she discovered God answered her prayers and couldn't believe that maybe what the Blank Canvas team had been sharing for them could also be true for her.

Amy was paired up with a mentor after the weekend to journey together as she explored faith and a few months later, on the sand dunes of Redcar beach, with a bonfire in the background, made a decision to follow Jesus.

After a year of mentoring, reading her bible and taking part in the DOXA programme, Amy is confidently sharing her faith with friends, family and others.

OLIVER*

Oliver has been attending Blank Canvas activities for 6 months, through getting to know his family and hearing his story we discovered life had been tough for Oliver and that he was being bullied at school and in his community. His confidence was low, he struggled to trust professionals and even in our spaces he would stick to the quiet spaces. Oliver has recently accepted YAFA support from one of the team which his family have shared is a big step for him and we're already seeing growth in his confidence through their work together.

*Real name changed



SAFEGUARDING



“Youth club - It’s full of nice people, genuine and caring people, they don’t judge me and are always there.” - Young person - 15 years old

Making Blank Canvas spaces safe is of the highest priority. Through preparation with our safer recruitment, training and risk assessments, during activities by making each space feel and be safe for all young people and then in our follow up, with parents, family, schools, external services and our safeguarding advisors, thirtyone:eight.

Our Safeguarding team continues to respond to concerns that are reported by volunteers and staff, alongside working closely with local secondary school safeguarding leads to provide wrap around care should any concern require this. Throughout the year Blank Canvas has made referrals to other charities and services in Redcar that would provide further care and support to young people in need.

In 2024, Blank Canvas provided a volunteer and staff team webinar delivered by thirtyone:eight in order to provide a space for training together as a team but also to bring in expert advice that would provide a space to answer questions, re-enforce previous training and collectively as a team discuss our processes and policies.

SUPPORTERS & FUNDRAISING

We are thankful for the work of Tim Theobalds who outworks the finances of Blank Canvas as Treasurer and for Jonny Hedges who has taken a lead on fundraising. During this financial year Blank Canvas has employed the services of Stewardship as payroll provider. **The trustees and staff are grateful and often overwhelmed at the generosity of supporters, both those who have given significant one-off donations and those who regularly give, to support the vision of Blank Canvas.**

This year our regular and one-off donations have increased as the ministry of Blank Canvas has grown and therefore we have been able to sustainably grow as a charity over the last financial year which you will see in the financial report later.

Blank Canvas raises money at various points throughout the year, whilst submitting grant applications that provide a key element of funds. We are grateful for all the support we receive from funders who partner with us in our vision for young people in Redcar.

GRANTS RECEIVED

- £12,500, The Joseph Rank Trust
- £26,000, The Lauderdale Trust
- £11,336, First Wooday Baptist Church
- £30,000, Magnify Foundation
- £5,000, Woodsmith Foundation
- £2,000, The Noble Charitable Trust
- £5,000 The Jack Brunton Charitable Trust
- £2,500, Tees Million
- £1,000, Dogger Bank Operators Fund
- £47.00, Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland

PARTNER CHURCHES

- £600, Kirkleatham Parish
- £2,750, St Paul's Ealing
- £1,500, St Michael's and St George's, High Wycombe

FUNDRAISING

- £1,061 raised through the Redcar Boxing Day Dip

OUR FUTURE

2025 AND BEYOND

As we look to 2025, we are excited that Compass will launch, in partnership with Youthscape, a bold intervention programme that seeks out those most at-risk and works to change their life trajectory.

We also will be running a second annual weekend away in May and hope that this will enhance and build on the work of the DOXA programme.

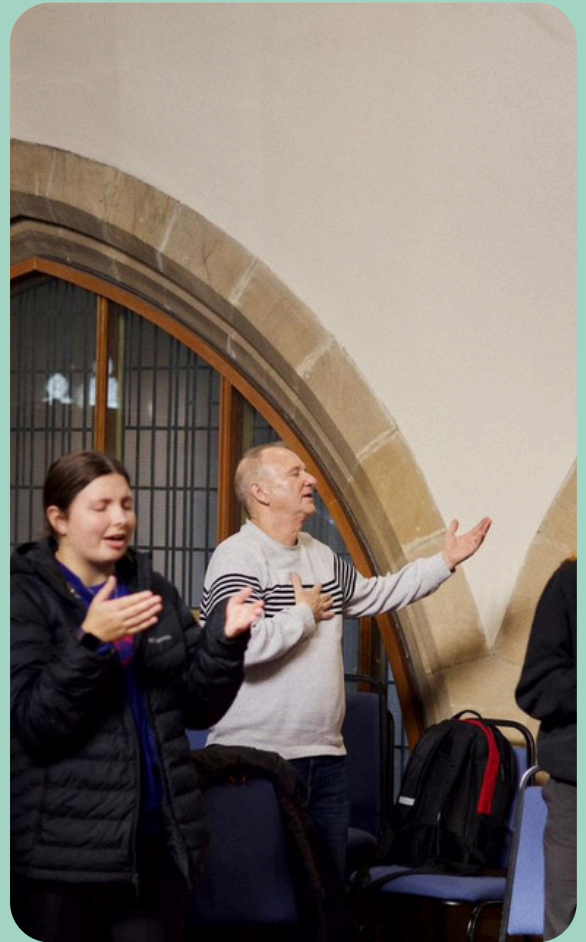
In spring 2025 the Growing Younger Programme will begin, providing support and accompaniment to local churches as they look to launch new spaces for young people to explore faith.

A BC HOME

As Blank Canvas grows, so does the need for space and time availability, in order to run activities, therefore it is within our future plans that Blank Canvas explores the acquisition of a permanent home.

Whilst our presence within local churches would remain, a dedicated Blank Canvas base would provide the opportunity to have daily drop-ins, meals and youth work.

Opportunities for further parent and family engagement during the school day would also be possible should a home be found in Redcar.



PARTNERSHIPS

Blank Canvas exists to support the local church and over the next year will begin to explore deeper partnerships with churches within Redcar and the wider Teesside area.

Through international partnerships our hope is that regular groups from the US will bring concentrated weeks of youth work across all our projects and in-turn will increase our engagement with young people, particularly in our Youth Clubs and Drop-In's.

CONTACT US



BLANK CANVAS



@youthblankcanvas



@blankcanvasyouth

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28-29 Esplanade, Redcar, TS10 3AE

Email

info@blankcanvasyouth.com

Website

www.blankcanvasyouth.com

Phone

07310 250352

BLANK CANVAS
LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE	The Palace Hub 28-29 Esplanade Redcar TS10 3AE
GOVERNING DOCUMENT	Constitution dated 15th May 2024
CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER	1182185
TRUSTEES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING THE CHARITY	Mark Tate Alice Lambert-Ellis (appointed May 2025) Kristian Shephard (appointed December 2024) Tim Theobalds Rev Bridget Ann Wodall Daniela Reiter Liz Gibson (resigned September 2024) Jonny Hedges (resigned February 2025)
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Sarah Crispin ACA Stewardship 1 Lamb's Passage LONDON EC1Y 8AB

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF

BLANK CANVAS

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Blank Canvas ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025 on pages 16 to 18 following.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the charity'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 2011 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 accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. 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.

Sarah Crispin

Sarah Crispin (Sep 16, 2025 16:54:28 GMT+1)

Sarah Crispin ACA
Stewardship
1 Lamb's Passage
LONDON
EC1Y 8AB

Date: Sep 16, 2025

BLANK CANVAS
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	2025	2024
	Notes	General Funds £	Designated Funds £	Funds £	£	£
Income receipts						
Donations		31,743	-	-	31,743	23,464
Gift aid receipts		517	-	-	517	1,029
Other grants		12,754	-	71,697	84,451	45,173
Event Income		675	-	680	1,355	428
Other		850	-	-	850	-
Total receipts		<u>46,540</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>72,377</u>	<u>118,917</u>	<u>70,094</u>
Payments						
Payments in relation to charitable activities undertaken directly	2	57,086	-	21,149	78,235	34,216
Total payments		<u>57,086</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,149</u>	<u>78,235</u>	<u>34,216</u>
Net of receipts / (payments) before		(10,546)	-	51,228	40,682	35,878
Transfers between funds	4	(96)	-	96	-	-
Net movement in funds		<u>(10,641)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>51,324</u>	<u>40,682</u>	<u>35,878</u>
Cash funds as at last year end		46,149	-	13,196	59,345	23,467
Cash funds at this year end	A	<u>35,508</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>64,520</u>	<u>100,027</u>	<u>59,345</u>

The notes on page 18 form part of these accounts.

BLANK CANVAS
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>		Restricted funds £	2025 £	2024 £
		General funds £	Designated funds £			
A Cash funds						
Cash at bank with immediate access		35,461	-	64,520	99,980	59,173
Petty cash		47	-	-	47	172
		<u>35,508</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>64,520</u>	<u>100,027</u>	<u>59,345</u>
B Other monetary assets						
Gift aid due to charity		1,668	-	-	1,668	-
Other debtors		941	-	-	941	-
		<u>2,608</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,608</u>	<u>-</u>
C Liabilities						
Falling due within one year						
Pension		110	-	87	197	-
Fee for Independent Examination		1,020	-	-	1,020	-
		<u>1,130</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>1,217</u>	<u>-</u>
D Assets retained for charity's own use						
				Fund to which asset belongs	Cost £	Current value £
Computers and IT				General	6,220	3,241
Furniture				General	1,154	901
Sports Equipment				General	366	307
					<u>7,740</u>	<u>4,449</u>

The accounts were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Tim Theobalds
Tim Theobalds (Sep 15, 2025 09:42:29 GMT+1)

Tim Theobalds

Date: Sep 15, 2025

Mark Tate
Mark Tate (Sep 11, 2025 14:12:35 GMT+1)

Mark Tate

Date: Sep 11, 2025

The notes on page 18 form part of these accounts.

BLANK CANVAS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis and comprise a statement that shows the charity's receipts and payments, a statement that summarises the charity's assets and liabilities and related notes. The accountancy profession have determined that only accounts prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards present a 'true and fair' view and, as these receipts and payments accounts have not (and cannot) be prepared in accordance with accounting standards, these accounts do not present (and are not intended to present) a 'true and fair' view of the charity's financial activities and state of affairs.

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are donations which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors; they include donations received from appeals for specific activities or projects.

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>		Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	General funds	Designated funds			
	£	£	£	£	£
2 Payments in relation to charitable activities undertaken directly					
Staff Costs (see note 4)	32,002	-	14,478	46,480	20,088
Activities	10,105	-	6,628	16,733	8,345
Premises	5,721	-	-	5,721	-
Independent examination	326	-	-	326	-
Office costs	8,932	-	44	8,975	5,783
	<u>57,086</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,149</u>	<u>78,235</u>	<u>34,216</u>

3 Transactions with related parties

Abi Hedges is married to trustee Jonny Hedges she was employed as Director of Programmes and was paid £18,702 (2024: £15,238) for serving in that capacity; this payment is permitted by the charity's governing document.

4 Movement of funds

	Opening balance	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Closing balance
	£	£	£	£	£
General funds	46,149	46,540	(57,086)	(96)	35,508
Restricted funds					
DOXA Programme	12,163	26,680	(20,280)	-	18,563
YAFA	500	5,150	(132)	-	5,518
Compass	-	10,500	(62)	-	10,439
Growing Younger	-	30,000	-	-	30,000
Feast of Fun	533	47	(676)	96	-
	<u>13,196</u>	<u>72,377</u>	<u>(21,149)</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>64,520</u>
Total funds	<u>59,345</u>	<u>118,917</u>	<u>(78,235)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>100,027</u>

The DOXA Programme is restricted funding towards faith based activities of Blank Canvas
YAFA is a restricted funding towards running one to one support mentoring for young people
Compass is restricted funding towards running an intervention programme for young people at risk of exclusion from school.
Growing Younger is restricted funding towards supporting local churches establishing intergenerational worshipping communities.
Feast of Fun is restricted funding towards school holiday activities