

Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to *fulfil their potential.*



**BACK TO
SCHOOL
2023-24**

Amy
Year 10



Supporting children & young people with Down syndrome to *fulfil their potential*

Annual Report

2023 - 2024

Charity number 1182787

Board of Trustees



As part of our effort to ensure our leadership reflects the community we support, we aim for around half of our Board of Trustees to be family members of individuals supported by Stepping Stones DS. Their lived experience provides essential insight into the real-world challenges faced by the community we serve.

Equally important is the strategic input offered by trustees from outside our immediate network, which brings valuable external perspectives and broadens our collective understanding. Our Board reflects a wide range of professional backgrounds and skill sets, contributing to well-rounded and informed decision-making.

The 2023/24 Stepping Stones DS Board of Trustees

Chair Irene Arthur

Vice-Chair Josh McCormack / Diane Walters

Treasurer Rebecca Hitch

Secretary Laura Bryant

Others
Despina Papadimitriou
Jacky McKenzie
Liz Phillipou
Mike Wainhouse



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Website: www.steppingstonesds.co.uk
Email: enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk
Bank: Cooperative Bank

Charity number 1182787



@Stepping_Stones_DS



@steppingstonesds



@steppingstonesds



@Steppingstoneds

Report summary



We remain dedicated to empowering children and young adults with Down Syndrome to reach their full potential.

Through our tailored programmes and inclusive activities, we create opportunities for personal growth, learning, and joyful experiences.

At the heart of our work is our network of families and carers. Together, we form a family of families.



SSDS works in:

- North Hampshire
- West Surrey
- South West Berkshire

Our Key Values

- Community
- Opportunity
- Independence
- Inclusion

“Huge thank you to all those behind the scenes for helping to make all of this possible for our children and families.”

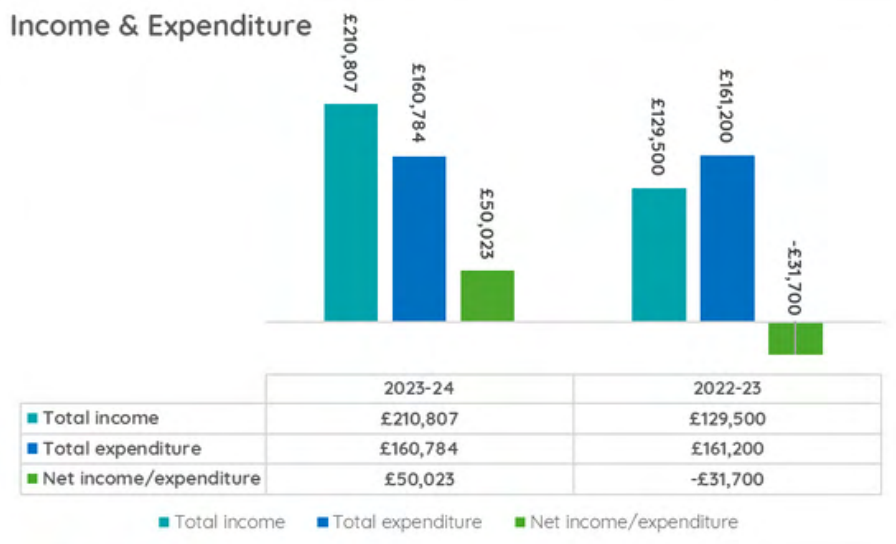
SSDS parent

Stepping Stones DS leads by example.

By providing meaningful support to children with Down Syndrome and their families, we aim to demonstrate how compassion, encouragement, and practical assistance can help individuals surpass expectations and thrive.

We remain politically neutral and are not a campaigning organisation.

Income & Expenditure



@Stepping_Stones_DS



@steppingstonesds



@steppingstonesds



@Steppingstones

Report from our Chair and CEO



“Progress is impossible without change”

It could be said that 2023–24 has been a game of two halves for Stepping Stones DS. The first half of the year went well with all our regular activities and services such as Dance, Tennis, and Stay and Play taking place as planned with fantastic community attendance across all services.

Our early development groups, schools outreach services, and 16+ communications groups also continued their vital work with our children and young people, and the wider Stepping Stones community was ably supported by the amazing Vik Ralfs as part of the Family Advisory Service. Fundraising was steady during this period with a number of new grants being awarded to Stepping Stones DS, and some fantastic community events and matched funding campaigns taking place.

However, the second half of the year was a little trickier as Stepping Stones DS faced a period of upheaval and change as we said goodbye (in different ways) to two important and beloved figures in our community, Alex Brewer, our previous CEO, and Irene Arthur, our Chair of Trustees. Alex’s appointment as a Member of Parliament for North East Hampshire in July 2024, and Irene’s sudden passing in the Summer of 2024, meant that as a Charity we had to navigate a period of uncertainty as we sought to appoint a new leadership team.

During this time, as we worked to appoint a new leadership team, our existing staff and trustees went above and beyond behind the scenes to ensure that all our activities, services, and events continued to run smoothly. Thanks to their efforts, the children, young people, and families we support were not affected by the changes taking place.

As we reflect on the past year, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our staff and trustees, and in particular, Michelle Slater and Josh McCormack, for their hard work, commitment, and dedication. Without their unwavering support and belief in the continued success of Stepping Stones DS, the transitions we experienced in the second half of 2023–2024 would have been far more difficult for both the charity and our community to navigate. They deserve a very big round of applause!

Though change can be difficult ultimately it can also be beneficial - bringing about growth through new ideas, opinions and innovation. As the new CEO and Chair of Trustees, myself and Diane are excited to take up our new roles and as team we are committed to ensuring that Stepping Stones DS is able to provide the vital educational, physical and social activities and services that are needed to support to our children and young people and their families for many years to come.

Diane Walters
Chair

Kirsten Williams
CEO

In Loving Memory
Irene Dzifa King Arthur



1976 - 2024



Our beautiful Chair and SSDS mum, Dzifa (Irene) Arthur very sadly and unexpectedly passed away in August 2024. Irene, beloved wife to Dominic, devoted Mum to Cerys and Cruz, and a pillar of our Stepping Stones DS family; Irene's presence touched us all deeply, and her sudden departure has left a profound impact on everyone fortunate enough to have known her.

Irene was a remarkable woman; intelligent, professional, and compassionate. Despite her already full schedule, she gave generously of her time and energy to lead our Board of Trustees with unwavering dedication. As Irene once expressed, "I lead the Board to ensure that decisions made are in the best interests of Stepping Stones DS and that they promote good governance."

Irene's commitment to our community was deeply rooted in her personal journey as a mum to Cruz, who is 7 and has Down syndrome. Irene found great fulfilment in "serving, offering my member perspective, and leading the Board of Trustees towards a growth-oriented future that maintains the interests of our children and young people."

Reflecting on the charity she so passionately led, Irene once said, "Thanks to Stepping Stones DS, we have and continue to enjoy incredible support ranging from crucial therapies for our son, learning opportunities for our family, enviable social activities to healthy and valuable friendships. They are an Earth Angel." This was the charity Irene championed, the one she nurtured, and the one that continues to support countless families.

In Loving Memory

Irene Dzifa King Arthur



1976 - 2024



Our community came together to honour and celebrate the life of Irene and to leave heartfelt messages especially to Dominic, Cerys and Cruz:



“ Such a beautifully kind and selfless woman.
We are incredibly saddened to hear of her passing.
Our love and thoughts are with Dominic and the children. ”

“ In my memory, Irene has always been friendly and warm, especially towards new faces like us! We are sorry to hear this news. Sending prayers and comfort during this tough time. ”

“ This is such desperately sad news, Irene was a ray of light that brightened a room.
My heart goes out to Dom, Cerys and Cruz. ”

“ Such a shock to hear a lovely family dealing with such a tragedy please pass on our love and let Dominic know we are thinking and praying for them all. ”



Irene's legacy of kindness, leadership, and love will forever remain in the heart of the Stepping Stones DS family.

A year in figures

Stones DS parents
rated our services

4.76

out of 5

We were pleased to note that our services remain highly rated, with the average rating of our services being 4.76 this year.

"We have only been members of Stepping Stones DS for a year, but already feel welcomed and supported by the charity - thank you!"
- SSDS parent

We welcomed

9

new families to
Stepping Stones DS

130

families attended our
social events
throughout the year

We supported

77

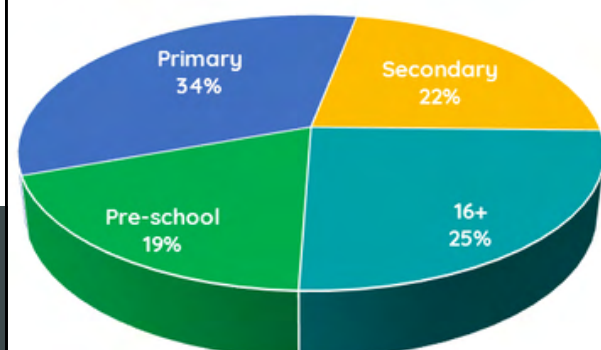
pupils in both
mainstream and special
schools

31

young adults attended
fortnightly
communication groups

"It's just nice to meet other families that are on the same page we are. It's also great to talk with parents further along in their Down syndrome journey and the activities are always fun for our daughter."
- SSDS parent

% in each age group



The mainstream outreach service was rated an average of 4.98 out of 5 by our families.

Our families



New Families

This year, we welcomed 9 new families to Stepping Stones DS. We are delighted to expand our community, supporting families with individuals under 25 who have Down syndrome in our region.

By providing our services free of charge, we strive to ensure that everyone with Down syndrome, along with their siblings, parents, carers, and professionals, can access the necessary support to fulfill their potential. This approach promotes equality within our community, and we are thrilled to witness its ongoing growth.

“So lovely meeting with other parents and children and finding a safe space to share our joint experiences.”

-SSDS Parent



Stay and Play

With so many new families, our much-loved Stay and Play coffee mornings have been buzzing. This monthly meet-up was where we began and continues to be at the heart of Stepping Stones DS.



“These are my favourite, a relaxed friendly atmosphere and an opportunity to be able to vent and really be heard, as well as get and give advice and reassurance to others.”

What we do:

Early Development Groups



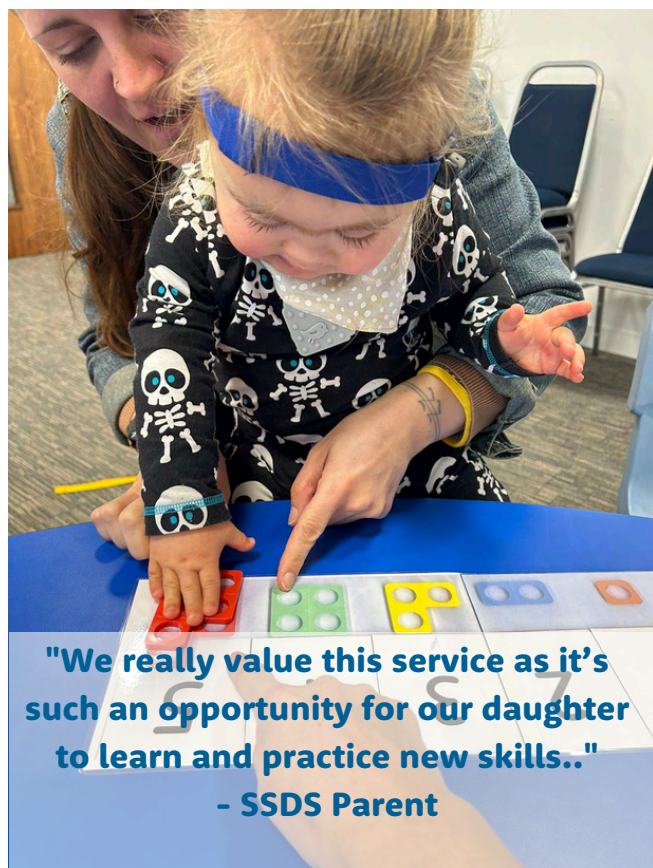
Early Development Groups

This year 29 of our pre-school children attended monthly Early Development Groups.

Delivered by LETS Go!, Early Development Groups are designed to empower our children with Down syndrome, providing them with the tools and skills they need to thrive.

These groups are one of the first steps in our little ones' educational journeys - covering a range of key areas including communication, speech, language, reading, memory & play.

Groups also provide an opportunity for our parents to form a support network, sharing their experiences, joys and concerns.



"We really value this service as it's such an opportunity for our daughter to learn and practice new skills.."
- SSDS Parent



"I love that it's small groups so not too overwhelming. It's helped us understand more on how to help our son learn and hopefully start talking."
- SSDS Parent

Age range	4 months to 4 years
Number supported	29
Frequency	monthly

"The groups have been a brilliant opportunity to meet with other parents in a small group and share openly the highs & lows. Plus receiving useful tips, advice and reassurance. It has given us additional activities to practice at home."
- SSDS Parent

What we do:

Social Communication Groups

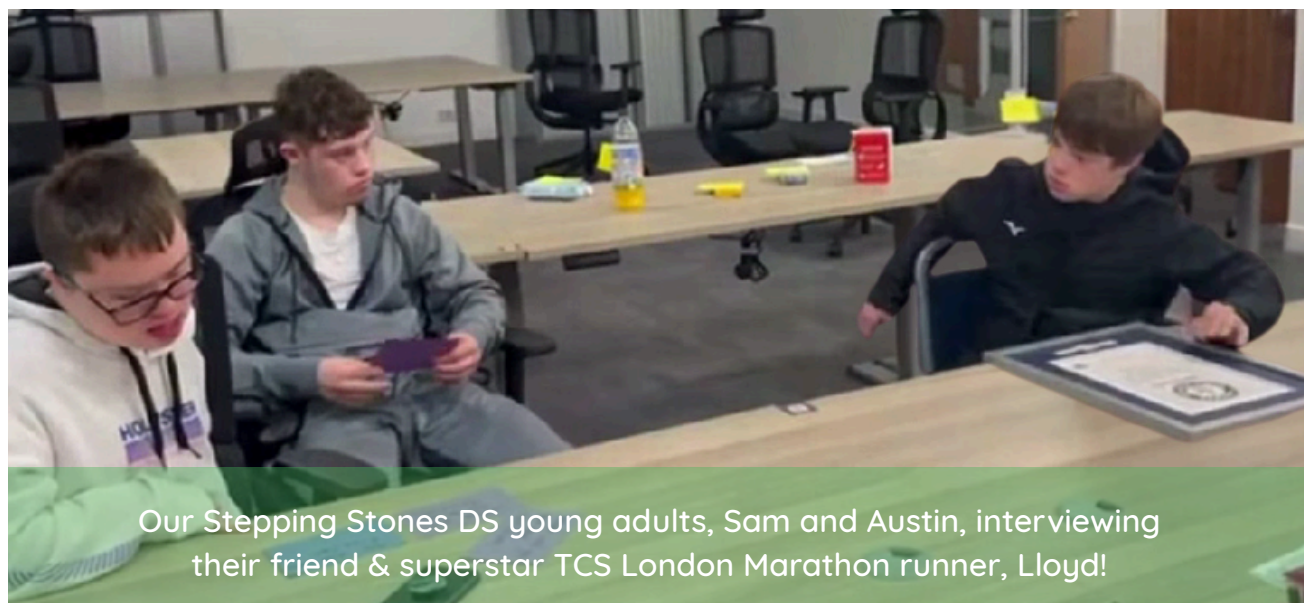


Social Communication Groups

The young adult groups, run by LETS Go! enable our young adults to explore all aspects of social communication in a safe and inclusive environment.

Groups have a speech and language focus and target understanding of what makes a good communicator, how individuals can help the listener to understand, and how to advocate for yourself. We use a range of methods in the group to build confidence and success in fun and motivating activities.

These groups provide an opportunity to extend friendships out of school through activities designed to practise and develop social conversation skills.



Our Stepping Stones DS young adults, Sam and Austin, interviewing their friend & superstar TCS London Marathon runner, Lloyd!

Age range	16 to 24 years
Number supported	31
Frequency	fortnightly

"The comms group is very important. It helps with social skills in everyday settings. They cover a large number of topics and learn ways to interact and communicate. "
- SSDS parent

What we do:

Get Moving



Secondary+ Age Tennis

The ever popular fortnightly tennis club, run by coach Andy Warry, was attended by 37 young people in Year 7 and above . Classes help our children to build strength, coordination and confidence while having a lot of fun.

"Great opportunity to socialise and good for coordination and exercise."
- SSDS parent



"Many years ago our son was reluctant to participate. Now he speeds in, loves coming and encouraging others to join in. "

Secondary+ Age Dance

36 young people join our fortnightly dance classes for those in Year 7 and above run by Stopgap Dance. Highly popular, these classes encourage creativity and self-expression as well as fitness and coordination.



What we do:

School Outreach



Mainstream Outreach

We fund the provision of support, advice, and evidence-based learning strategies to staff and parents, ensuring schools have the tools to create inclusive environments for children with Down syndrome. Outreach, delivered by the LETS Go! team, empowers teachers and pupils. It serves to foster confidence and equip educators to support children with Down syndrome alongside their typically developing peers.

40 pupils were supported via the mainstream outreach programme.

"The Let Go support for our daughter has been one of the main reason's she's settled in so well. The help has been invaluable to both her and the teaching staff. It's provided a fantastic foundation for our daughter to thrive."
- SSDS parent

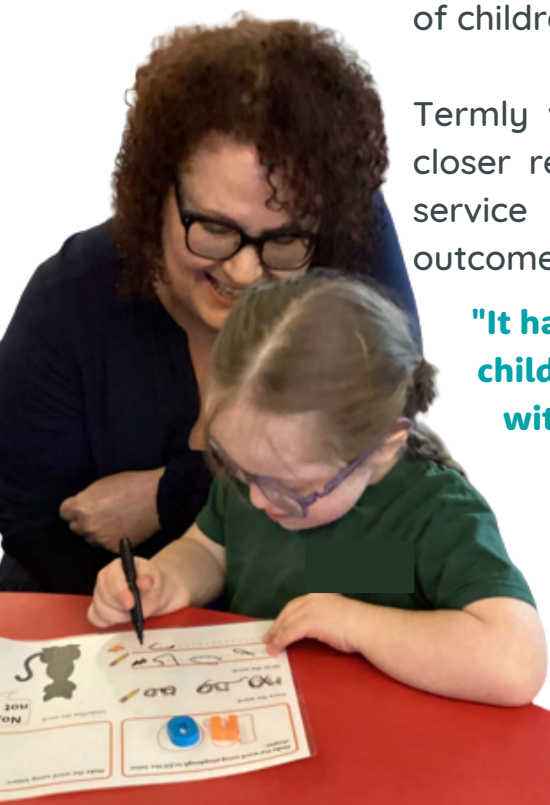


Special School Outreach

The Special School Outreach Service continues to grow in the number of children we support and remains one of our core offerings.

Termly visits by Down syndrome expert, Vik Ralfs, have fostered closer relationships between the schools and our community. This service equips teachers with strategies to enhance the learning outcomes and school experiences for children with Down syndrome.

"It has not only given us an independent insight into our child's school day, but also really supported his teacher with ideas for how the team can help him access the curriculum."
-SSDS Parent



In Sept we delivered a training day in supporting children with Down syndrome in primary schools.

37 pupils were supported via the special school service this year.

What we do:

Family Advisory Service



Family Advisory Service

This was the 2nd year of our Family Advisory Service, delivered by Vik Ralfs.

The Family Advisory Service is designed to offer practical and emotional support to our parents, grandparents, and adult siblings of children and young adults with DS. This more formal service sits alongside our informal network of families and is designed to complement the peer support networks that Stepping Stones DS has fostered since day one.

Topics families sought Vik's advice on included:



Feeling overwhelmed

Emotional advice

GCSE options

Finding a new nursery

Transition to college

Power of attorney

Communication

School selection

Behaviour

EHCPs

Bereavement

Occupational therapy

Disability Living Allowance

Puberty

Transition to adulthood

Relationships



"The call with Vik was fantastic. She was genuine and got exactly what I was saying. I came away feeling so reassured and supported."
- SSDS parent

What we do:

World Down Syndrome Day Event



Pledges from our community

Never will I ever...

"Never will I ever allow others to make a judgement of the ability of a person with DS."

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

Never will I ever...

pass GCSEs and entry level exams.

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Never will I ever...

Compete in Swimming Championships

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Never will I ever...

Complete work experience at Co-op

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Pledges from our community

Never will I ever...

"Never will I ever let comparison be the thief of joy."

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

Our World Down Syndrome Day 2024, held at the Lismoyne hotel in Fleet, on March 21st, was our biggest one yet! All of us at Stepping Stones DS were overjoyed to welcome nearly 100 amazing individuals, including Stepping Stones DS families, supporters, school staff, healthcare professionals, councilors, and members of our local community.

The highlight of our event was undoubtedly the remarkable presentations from three of our outstanding young adults in conversation with our specialist DS advisor, Vik Ralfs. Frankie, Lloyd, and George each shared their unique journey and accomplishments, reminding us all that with the right support and determination, anything is possible.

Stopgap Dance teacher, Nicky Norton, shared with us how classes empower our young people, enhancing physical skills, confidence, and social skills through dance.

We also had the privilege of hearing from Charlotte and Katharine, two of our parents, who shared their personal experiences of raising children with Down syndrome.

Our theme for the day, "Never Will I Ever", aligned with this year's global theme to #EndTheStereotypes. In the lead up to our event, we ran a hugely successful social media campaign where we shone a spotlight on the milestones our children and young people are reaching, and how they are dispelling the stereotypes.

Pledges from our community

Never will I ever...

"Never will I ever discourage people with Down syndrome from fulfilling their dreams."

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

Never will I ever...

ride a bike with confidence.

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Never will I ever...

Hear without hearing aids, talk and sing!

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Never will I ever...

successfully breastfeed my daughter Lila

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Pledges from our community

Never will I ever...

"Never will I ever assume that someone with DS can't do things other people can."

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

What we do:

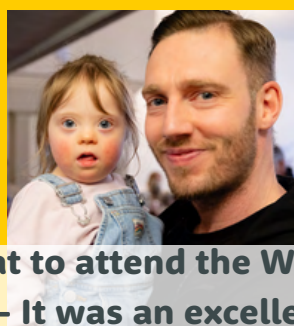
World Down Syndrome Day Event



The event made news headlines:



Whilst the primary goal of the event was to raise awareness and celebrate WDSD, all attendees were invited to take part in our 100 box raffle. Each box was £10 to play and winners were chosen at random from a tombola. With thanks to all the amazing prizes, kindly donated by local businesses, we were thrilled that the **raffle helped to raise over £800 at the event**. The support and generosity of the community mean the world to us.



"Was great to attend the World Down syndrome day and meet other families - It was an excellent day filled with love and inspiration!"

Social Activities



“We love going to the pantomime and attended the summer picnic for the first time. Always good to connect in person with other SSDS families who are now friends.”

Social activities

Over 130 families registered for this year’s social events, including our annual trip to the pantomime, our Christmas parties, and our summer picnic. Thank you to all the volunteers who help make these events such a huge success.

Summer Picnic and Secondary+ at Camp Mohawk

Mad House Christmas Party

Bowling Christmas Party

Pantomime



“Love the social activities. Meeting other families is such a support especially those further in their journey” - SSDS Parent



“Christmas and summer parties are a highlight. Knowing they are safely contained is such an anxiety relief and I feel able to relax and enjoy these events too. I also love all the activities. - SSDS Parent”



Thank you!

With huge thanks to our Grant and Trust supporters



The Baily Thomas
Charitable Fund



The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund: £10,000 towards school outreach



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION



Garfield Weston Foundation: £15,000 Core Costs (May 24 onwards)



Global's Make Some Noise: £15,000 - 1st of 4 instalments towards our Get Moving Programme

The Payne-Gallwey
Charitable Trust



The Payne-Gallwey Trust: £3,000 for core costs



Hampshire
County Council



Hampshire CC: £500 Adrian Collett - Training, £500 Alex Crawford- school outreach and £1,000 Elaine Still & Kim Tayloe summer parties

The Sir James Roll
Charitable Trust



The Sir James Roll Charitable Trust: £1,250 towards school outreach



The Syder Foundation: £2,000 towards 16+ Comms Groups

Thank you!

With huge thanks to our Grant and Trust supporters



BERKSHIRE
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



Berkshire Community Foundation:
£5,000 towards school outreach,
£5,000 Early years services



Tesco Stronger Starts and
Groundwork: £4,625 towards school
outreach



LOSELEY PARK

The Losely Christian Trust



The Losely Christian Trust: £3,000 -
Unrestricted funds

PGCT

Payne-Gallwey
Charitable Trust



Payne-Gallwey Charitable Trust:
£3,000 for core costs



Yateley & District
Lions Club



Yateley & District Lions Club: £610
towards school outreach



Hiscox Foundation UK: £6,000
unrestricted

Sydney Black
Charitable Trust



Sydney Black Charitable Trust: £500
towards Get Moving programme

Thank you!

With huge thanks to our Grant and Trust supporters



Surrey CC: £1,100 David Lewis - 16+ Comms Groups, £10,133 Richard Tear - I.T, website, uniforms



Masonic Charitable Foundation: £5,000 unrestrictions



BBC Children in Need: £7,000 -core costs



National Lottery Awards for All: £20,000 16+ Comms groups to 2026



Marjorie Jayne Charitable Foundation & the Peter Harrison Foundation via the Community Foundation for Surrey. £10,000 towards Early Years Services



Local Community Fund



Co-op Community Fund: £736.21 for 16+ Comms group

Thank you!

Thank you to our corporate partners and local businesses for supporting Stepping Stones DS.



- **Bracknell Forest Council** donated £235 from their Good Causes Recycling scheme.
- **Henderson Scott** raised £1,368 in donations as their chosen charity.
- **Rosemount Financial Services** for their ongoing support.
- **T&P Equestrian** 2 day Russell Pearson Memorial Show 2024 - donation from raffle across the 2 days. Raising £1,220.
- **Redfields Home of Garden & Living** for their santa's grotto tickets and donations from santa's grotto totalling £3108.50.
- **Groundworks, Tesco, and Tesco shoppers** for their votes and donations towards our school outreach services. Totalling £4,625
- **Aqua Compliance** held an internal lots of socks competition that raised £500.
- **Waitrose and Partners** for £1,000 towards Christmas parties.
- **Hogs Back Brewery** for raising £600 through their quiz night and raffle.
- **Knights of St Columba, Farnborough Council** chose to support us as 1 of 2 charities to receive £1,635 of funds raised during their annual country walk.
- **Funtime Dance and Drama** 273 children visited their Grotto at The Harlington on 22nd Nov, 2nd & 9th Dec. The grotto raised £1,102.38.
- **Paragon Banking Group PLC** quiz team won first place in the 2024 AFPA Trust Big Quiz, and choose to donate £5,500 of their winnings to support SSDS.

Thanks to those who supported us via local and national purchasing schemes including **EasyFundraising, Rushmoor Community Lottery, & Give as you Live.**

Lloyd Martin!



Guinness World Record breaking star and
London Marathon running champion

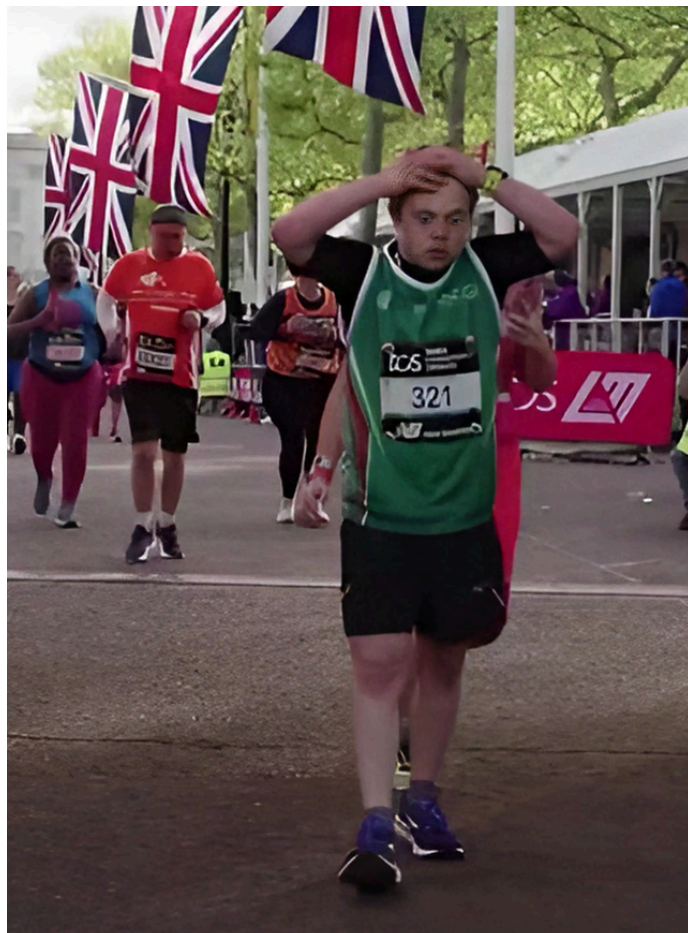
At 19 years old, Lloyd made history by being the youngest person with Down syndrome to complete the London Marathon, his drive and determination for this mammoth challenge, has been truly inspiring. Lloyd smashed his £5,000 fundraising target and raised over £10,500 (plus Gift Aid) for Stepping Stones DS.

This phenomenal amount will make an incredible difference to the families we support.



Lloyd ran the marathon alongside his mum Ceri. He completed his marathon in six hours, 46 minutes and 10 seconds, securing a new Guinness World Records title for the youngest person with an intellectual disability to complete the event.

Lloyd didn't just run; he captivated the crowds with his infectious energy, cartwheels, dance moves and astounding enthusiasm, making every step of the marathon a celebration of determination and joy.



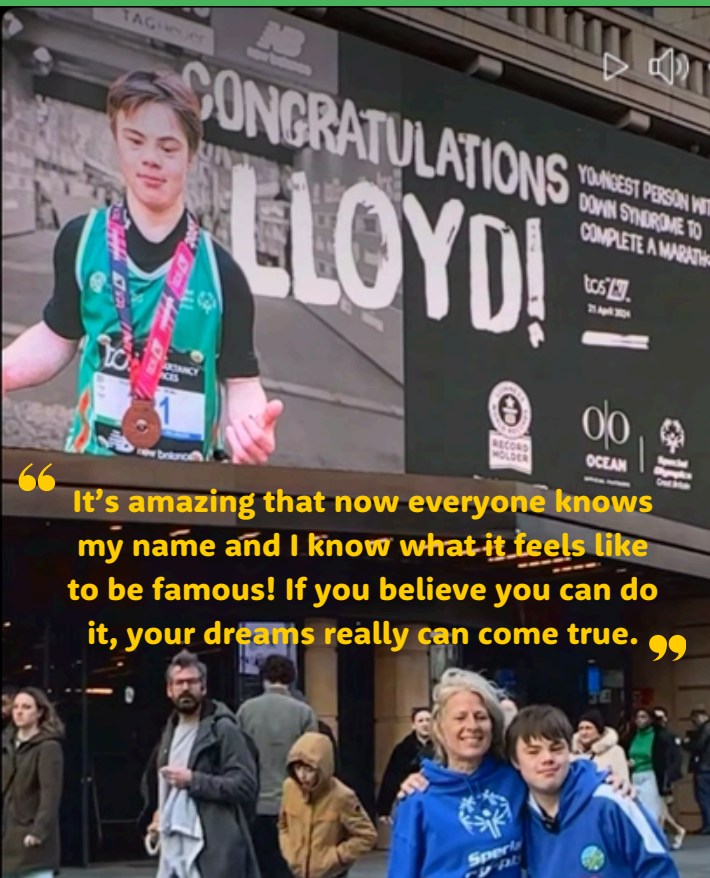
We are so proud of Lloyd, it's been wonderful to watch this amazing young man succeed in his London Marathon mission and become an inspirational role model for others.

Lloyd's journey was met with awe and admiration from all who witnessed his remarkable feat. His boundless energy and unwavering spirit serve as a reminder that with passion and perseverance, anything is possible.



Lloyd Martin!

Guinness World Record breaking star and
London Marathon running champion



Lloyds success made national headlines, London billboards, and wide spread social media coverage



“It’s amazing that now everyone knows my name and I know what it feels like to be famous! If you believe you can do it, your dreams really can come true.”

“The response has been absolutely incredible - what it means to other parents who’ve got children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

When we set out to do this we had no idea it was going to turn out like this, it was just Lloyds own personal goal and we couldn’t be more pleased that it has hopefully inspired and helped so many people.

-Cery, Lloyds mum



Thank you!

The Stepping Stones DS community went above and beyond again this year in their fundraising events.



The Brealey Family 21 in 21 Challenge

To celebrate World Down Syndrome day on 21st March, Scott, Sarah, Sophie and Sienna took part in 21 challenges from 1st March until 21st March, a challenge each day. Together they raised £1,641

Lyn', Nanny to Jack, had a tea and cake sale that raised £1,002



Victoria Nye raised £410 with a coffee morning



Hannah Sampson held a birthday BBQ celebration and raised £66.50



THANK
YOU
facebook.
BIRTHDAY
FUNDRAISERS
£5577



Thanks to
everyone
who took
part.

Thanks to
everyone
who
supported.

Thank you!

The Stepping Stones DS community saw some unique and fun fundraising ideas with support from friends and family.



Thank you

to Katharine, and her friends and family, for raising **over £2500** for Stepping Stones DS in a “Down The Hatch” fundraiser.



Everyone enjoyed prosecco, tea and nibbles, as well as chat, fun and fundraising!

Thanks to everyone who took part.

Thanks to everyone who supported.

Thank You Henry

who has utterly smashed his own sit up challenge raising over **£1000** for Stepping Stones DS



Henry's friendship with Chloe has inspired him to raise money for SSDS

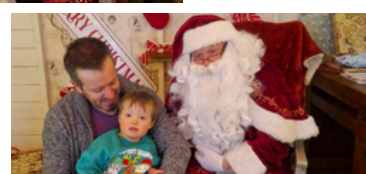
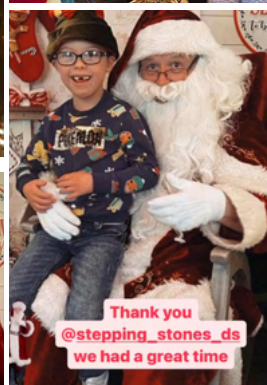
Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who helped at our community events, and to those who took part or donated.



Redfields Home of Garden & Living - Fleet welcomed our families to Santa's Grotto free of charge, plus Santa himself, in the spirit of giving, pledged to donate his appearance fees for the entire Christmas period to Stepping Stones DS. As if that wasn't enough, all profits from the Grotto were also gifted to Stepping Stones DS.

This overwhelming display of kindness and support is not just a gift to the families of Stepping Stones DS but a testament to the community spirit of Redfields. A heartfelt thank you to Redfields and Santa for making this magical experience possible.



In Nov 23
SSDS
Virtual Balloon
Race
raised
£78.96



From the 1st to 7th Dec, SSDS held our first ever Virtual Balloon Race!

Members and supporters designed their own balloon and tracked its progress over the week long race - Real weather data was used to track the online balloon entries.

This race was shared with other causes and the overall winner had a chance to win £100 cash prize.

Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who helped at our community events, and to those who shared their story for our campaign.



“From the initial shock in the early days when their stay and play sessions were priceless, to the monthly early development groups which we love going to.”



Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED! That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Jack.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Stepping Stones DS

Our social media Christmas campaign raised over £20,000 with a fund match donation from a truly generous individual.



“Sami is so lucky to be part of Stepping Stones DS. Over the years, she has had massive support – from early years groups to activities promoting physical development, and now help in reaching her educational goals. Thank you!”

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED! That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Sami.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Stepping Stones DS

#TwiceAsNice

Christmas Appeal Grand Total:

£20,122

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

Theo & Michelle's Story



Theo is our cheeky, loving & determined 3 year old who made our family complete in 2020!

Our journey started with the unknown, a fear of the future & feeling overwhelmed.

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Theo

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Stepping Stones DS

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

Theo has absolutely loved his monthly speech sessions which have given us so many ideas to be able to help Theo progress with his listening and communication!



Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Theo

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Stepping Stones DS

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!



Here's how a donation from you can help:

£35 will become **£70**

and could pay for Theo and one of his friends to attend an early development group - the first steps in their educational journeys.

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Theo

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Stepping Stones DS

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

The 10th of September 2021 was a day that changed our lives in the most amazing way.

Arabella Grace Knight, our third grandchild, was born at 18 minutes past 3 in the morning.



Diane's Story

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Arabella.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Stepping Stones DS

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

We have struggled as a family to find out the information needed to ensure that Arabella is getting the best support possible.



Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

Without the support & help of Stepping Stones DS we would be clueless. They don't have all the answers but what they do have is the ability to help you find them.

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Arabella.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Stepping Stones DS

10 days to go

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

“Without Stepping Stones DS we would still be floundering with no idea where to turn for help. They were the light at what seemed like a very long tunnel two years ago, & they remain our go-to today.”

66% raised of £10,000 target

£6,695



That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Stepping Stones DS

Thank you!

We would also like to thank all the local community groups who fundraised for us this year:



Day Lewis Pharmacy



Thank you to Laura Norton's mum Adele for having a lucky dip in her pharmacy and raising £173.30 in donations.



Thank You
to St Mary's Church
Coffee Shop in
Send, Woking
for raising
£310.70
at their coffee
morning on
17th June.



Thank you for
choosing SSDS.

Thank you to the many **schools and nurseries** who have fundraised for us.

FRIMHURST ENTERPRISES

Thank you Frimhurst Enterprises for your £300 donation to Lloyd Martin's London Marathon Fundraiser.

We love the ethos behind Frimhurst Enterprises' drive to create quality supported work for adults with learning disabilities within the community, providing career opportunities for people like Lloyd and his friends.

Following his incredible Guinness World Record Achievement Lloyd visited the team at Frimhurst Enterprises to show his World record for his London marathon and his gold medal from British Gymnastics Championships.

Lloyd showed off his cartwheels and splits, before joining the team in a short run to tea break.



Thank you!

Gifts In Kind



A huge thank you to UBC for the provision of our Fleet office space worth £60,000 in the past year.

Thank you to Water Babies for offering free of charge swimming lessons to some of our toddlers.



Thank you Farnborough 360 for giving 100 free family tickets to enjoy their soft play centre for the afternoon.

TONYHARTPHOTO

Thank you to photographer, Tony Hart, who beautifully captured the magic of our World Down Syndrome Day in some wonderful shots. He gave his time and donated all the copy right digital images of the day.



Video-Cameraman.co.uk
Mike Clarke

Thank you to videographer, Mike Clarke, who created Nicky Norton's video presentation for our World Down Syndrome Day event.

Thank you to our volunteers who have:

- Written birthday cards to all our children and young adults
- Coordinated our extra-curricular activities
- Provided specialist services free of charge
- Helped run our events



Stepping Stones DS
Sentinel House,
Harvest Crescent,
Fleet, Hampshire,
GU52 7ST
01252 417014

www.steppingstonesds.co.uk
enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk
Charity number: 1182787

We have been members for nearly 15 years and the services have been invaluable. Thank you.

SSDS parent

Thank you! The groups and activities make a huge difference to my daughter's life, progress, health and well-being.

SSDS parent



Financial review

Stepping Stones DS Income was £210.8k (2022/23: £129.5k). The increase from the previous year was due to an increase in Grants. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Baily Thomas Foundation, BBC Children in Need, Berkshire Community Foundation, Coop Community Fund, Garfield Weston Charitable Trust, Global's Make Some Noise, Hampshire Country Councillor Discretionary funds, Hiscox Foundation, James Roll Charitable Trust, Losely Park, Masonic Charitable Foundation, National Lottery Awards for All, Payne-Gallway Trust, Surrey Community Foundation, Surrey Country Councillors Your Councillor Community Fund, Syder Foundation, Sydney Black Charitable Trust, Tesco/Groundwork Stronger Starts Trust, Yateley Lions.

Total expenditure reduced slightly from the prior year to £160.8k (2022/23: £161.2k). The small reduction comes from cost of charitable activities.

Overall, there was a Net Income in the year of £50.0k (2022/23: deficit £31.7k). This demonstrates a significant turn around in our financial stability and is a result of the investment over the last 2 years in generating new income streams.

Principal Risk and uncertainties

Reserves policy

Stepping Stones DS reserves policy states that an emergency reserves fund held by the charity should be 3 months of the resources expended based on the next financial year expenditure budget.

Stepping Stones DS operates a flexible cost model, at this level the trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding while necessary action is considered to replace such funding or identify the activities that should be changed.

Going Concern

Our consolidated balance sheet remains strong. The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that, at the current time, adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees, therefore, take the view that the charity is a going concern.



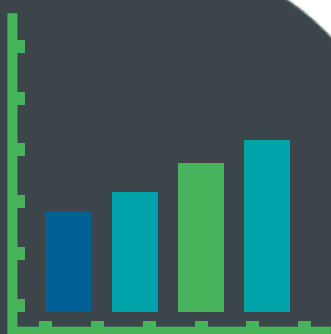
Financial review



Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2024

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
	£	£	£	£
Income from:				
Donations	76,544	75,987	46,620	41,882
Grants	127,454	48,716	64,183	10,010
Charitable Activities	4,441	4,584	5,177	4,601
Investments	2,367	209	475	2,510
Total income	<u>210,807</u>	<u>129,496</u>	<u>116,455</u>	<u>59,003</u>
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	25,613	24,770	18,819	6,668
Charitable activities	99,900	101,126	82,682	57,476
Support costs	35,271	35,334	29,709	26,324
Total expenditure	<u>160,784</u>	<u>161,230</u>	<u>131,210</u>	<u>90,469</u>
Net income /(expenditure)	50,023	-31,735	-14,755	-31,466
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	103,142	134,877	149,632	181,098
Total funds carried forward	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>





Financial review

Balance Sheet

As at 31 August 2024

	<i>2023-24</i>	<i>2022-23</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>2020-21</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Current Assets				
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
Net Current Assets	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
Funds:				
Restricted funds	64,277	4,933	41,397	6,937
Unrestricted funds	<u>88,889</u>	<u>98,210</u>	<u>93,479</u>	<u>142,694</u>
Total Funds	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 August 2024

	<i>2023-24</i>	<i>2022-23</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>2020-21</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Net Cash used in operating activities	47,656	-31,943	-15,230	-33,976
Interest from investments	<u>2,367</u>	<u>209</u>	<u>475</u>	<u>2,510</u>
Change in cash in the year	50,023	-31,735	-14,755	-31,466
Cash at beginnning of the year	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>	<u>181,098</u>
Cash at the end of the year	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>



Financial review

Notes to the financial statements

1.Accounting policies

a) Statutory Information

Stepping Stones DS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England. The registered office address and principal place of business is Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Cres, Fleet GU51 2UZ.

b) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Account and Reporting for 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) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been presented in Pound Stirling as this is the functional and presentational currency of the charity.

c) Public benefit entity

Stepping Stones DS meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

d) Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and all operations are continuing. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charities ability to continue as a going concern.

e) Income and Interest receivable

Income and Interest receivable are recognised when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity.

f) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probably that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Stepping Stones DS

On accounts for the year
ended

31/08/2024

Charity no
(if any)

1182787

Set out on pages

29-32

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/08/2024.

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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

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:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

15/06/2025

Name:

Victoria Radford

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Fcpfa, Maat, Cert-itmPF

Address:

7 orchard Mews, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2RJ

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

No matters of material concern to report