



Heart Wood TAR / financial statements 2024- 2025  
Charity Number 1182889

## **HEART WOOD**

**Annual Report  
and Financial Statements  
for the year ended 31 March 2025**



**HEART WOOD CHARITY**

**Reference and administrative information for the year ended 31 March 2025**

<b>Charity Number:</b>	<b>1182889</b>
<b>Trustees:</b>	<b>Sue James (Chair)</b> <b>Stephanie Ellis (Treasurer)</b> <b>Jonathan Joures</b> <b>Judi Perry</b>
<b>Principal Office:</b>	<b>12 Woodside</b> <b>Hexham</b> <b>NE46 1HU</b>
<b>Bankers:</b>	<b>Co-Operative Bank</b> <b>P.O. Box 48</b> <b>1 Balloon Street</b> <b>Manchester</b> <b>M60 1GP</b>  <b>Virgin Money</b> <b>Symington House</b> <b>7-8 North Avenue</b> <b>Clydebank</b> <b>G81 2NT</b>
<b>Independent Examiner:</b>	<b>Karen Rae</b> <b>Armstrong Watson</b> <b>15 Victoria Place</b> <b>Carlisle</b> <b>CA1 1EW</b>



## **HEART WOOD TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have prepared the annual report and financial statements in accordance with the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in January 2015.

### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

Heart Wood is a registered charity number 1182889. It was registered with the Charity Commission on 9 April 2019 and is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Its Constitution was adopted on 20 September 2018.

The charitable objectives of Heart Wood are "to improve the mental health of people with a focus on men in particular but not exclusively through evidence-based, person-centred counselling, psychotherapy and contact orientated projects delivered primarily outdoors."

The Charity adheres to the guidelines within the *Heart Wood Child/Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy* and all facilitators are required to undertake regular safeguarding training to the appropriate level.

#### **Governance**

The Management Committee comprises a minimum of three trustees, who are charity trustees for the purpose of charity law. Trustees are appointed by other trustees.

#### **Trustee Induction and Training**

A Trustee Information Pack is available to potential and new trustees. Potential trustees are invited to attend a trustee meeting to find out more about the workings of the Management Committee and the governance of the charity, after which they may feel better informed to make the decision to put themselves forward to become a trustee.

During a period of six months, potential trustees are introduced to the charity, their legal obligations under charity law, the content of the governing document, the trustees and the decision-making process, the business plan and financial performance of the charity. After six months, the current trustees will vote to invite the new trustee to be officially appointed.

Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate training events that will support effective conduct in their role.

#### **Risk Management**

Where appropriate, policies and procedures or systems have been put in place to mitigate the risks the charity might face. Significant external risks to funding, and the nature of funding across the Community and Voluntary Sector, have led to the development of a long-term strategic plan including the identification of priority activities in relation to income generation.

Policies and procedures exist to ensure compliance with health and safety of all staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries of the charity. This includes the provision of adequate insurance cover and risk assessment of all charitable activities. These policies and procedures are reviewed annually or more frequently, on change of circumstances, to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.



## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

### Public Benefit

In shaping the objectives for the year and in planning the activities, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'.

The charity provides group counselling in a nature setting for people, primarily in South-West Northumberland, suffering with poor mental health, including those with complex and enduring poor mental health.

The charity is working towards becoming a Centre of Excellence which provides training in the Heart Wood Approach.

## ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

### Men's Groups

#### March – August 2024

Heart Wood offered two Men's Groups running concurrently on eighteen Fridays at our Woodland and Lakeside sites at Minsteracres, DH8 9RT.

Each group was facilitated by a Lead Facilitator and two Co-Facilitators with a maximum attendance of 12 men per group.

At the 36 sessions:

- 22 men engaged
- 9 were new to Heart Wood
- 14 of the men attended more than 50% of the sessions
- 50% of the participants used taxis provided for free

#### **Men's Groups stats overview**

Period of activity	March – August 2024
Sessions planned	36
Sessions delivered	36
Total men engaging	22
New participants	9
No. attending more than 50% of sessions	14
Total attendances	223

*"Where have you  
been?"*

*is different from*

*"Welcome back."*

**Participant  
2024**



Heart Wood Facilitators, 2024

*"I take my sister's dog for a walk, 3 or 4 times a week now ... My mind just switched off, but for some reason when I've come here, it's woken up ... All my family have noticed as well that I've changed ... And last week when I went to the doctors to see my doctor, even she said, she said "Ye what a difference."*

**Participant 2024**

## Connecting Sessions

### September 2024 – March 2025

The drop-in *Connecting Sessions* run throughout Autumn and Winter and provide an opportunity for new men to try out a group before the next Men's Groups start in the Spring.

#### **Connecting Sessions Stats overview.**

No of sessions planned	7
No of sessions delivered	7
Total no of men engaging	27
No. of new participants	10
No of men attending more than 50% of sessions	15
Total number of attendances	99



## Certificate Level Training Course 2024

Following the refurbishment of the Cottage and Office buildings within Minsteracres Walled Garden, we were able to offer our first residential CPD training programme between March – October 2024. The course offered 100 hours CPD over six residential weekends, for person-centred counsellors wanting to work therapeutically in nature, with experiences focusing on individual 'one to one' nature-based practices as well as nature-based group sessions.



We had four full paying participants and two places (funded by DRLFCT) for Trainee Facilitators.

Our three Co-Facilitators are attending two of the weekends to complete their training.

The DRLFCT grant also funded the costs for BSL interpreters who were supporting a participant.

*"A great opportunity to learn from gifted and experienced practitioners.  
They embody the very principles that they seek to teach."*

Bill, Training Certificate Participant 2024



## **Evaluation**

### **Qualitative Evaluation**

The Men's Groups Sessions were evaluated by an external evaluator and once again the outcomes confirm to us that we are achieving our aims in improving the wellbeing of vulnerable people in our society by offering something different to existing mental health services.

The evaluator noted feedback from participants about what they would like to change:

#### **- Frequency of Connecting Sessions**

*"Some participants struggle when the project moves to its Winter cycle of once a month, instead of the Summer cycle of one a week"*

*"Another participant reflected on the fact that if he misses a winter session, it could be two or three months before he is able to come again, just because he wasn't available on that day, so having to miss a winter session leaves a big hole in support for him."*

Heart Wood has now secured funding to run Connecting Sessions fortnightly in the 2025-2026 season.

#### **- Initial Session**

*"One participant reflected on how hard the first session had been for him and that it might have been made easier if he had a buddy or a mentor or a case worker he already knew who could have come to the initial session with him."*

New participants are invited to come along with someone to the first session. In addition, all new participants are offered a 1-2-1 session at the fire site prior to attending the first group session in order for them to meet a facilitator face to face and to familiarise them with the site.

#### **- Marketing Heart Wood sessions**

*"Participants would like to see more projects like this more widely available and more widely publicised."*

We intentionally don't promote our services too widely as we have a steady stream of enquiries and are limited in our capacity.

### **Quantitative Evaluation**

In order to meet the requirements of a funder, in June 2024 we undertook quantitative evaluation with 14 men who were attending a Men's Group session.

#### **Reasons for coming to Heart Wood**

100% couldn't find any other services who they felt could help them  
79% felt lonely and / or isolated  
79% wanted to meet other people  
100% wanted to be involved in something that was outside  
71% had had negative experience of other services  
86% have experienced past trauma and needed support  
93% felt sad / low / depressed  
93% struggled with excessive worry / anxiety  
57% thought about ending their own life

#### **Since coming to Heart Wood**

100% feel an improvement in their mental health  
93% have better relationships with others  
100% feel as if they belong to a community  
86% have a deeper understanding of nature, conservation and wildlife  
86% have seen improvements in their mood  
79% have improved their physical health  
79% have better self-esteem  
57% feel less likely to take their own life  
86% have seen an improvement in their confidence  
100% feel better about themselves  
100% have had better improvements to their mental health than they have from other services  
100% have made friends





### **Active Listening Training**

As part of our plan to embed person-centred ways of being throughout the organisation, staff and trustees undertook Active Listening training in this period. Active Listening is an empathic way of responding to someone's words and feelings and always trusting the speaker as the expert on their own experiencing.

We have received funding to support a roll-out of this training to men who have expressed an interest in this in 2025-2026. We can see potential in offering more structured training to our participants and the benefit of sharing an understanding of our approach and resourcing their growing capacity to facilitate each other.

### **Organisational development**

The Trustees are continuing the process of reviewing our organisational structure and operation, including reviewing: the roles and responsibilities of Trustees; decision making and assigning sub-committees; risk management; and financial processes.

The charity's constitution Object has been updated as follows:

Previous:

*"To improve the mental health of people with a focus on men through evidence-based, person-centred counselling and psychotherapy projects delivered primarily outdoors."*

Revised:

*"To improve the mental health of people with a focus on men in particular but not exclusively through evidence-based, person-centred counselling, psychotherapy and contact orientated projects delivered primarily outdoors."*

### **Governance**

Stephanie Ellis resigned as a Trustee on 17 January 2025 after 4 years and 1 month service.

The Charity has undergone an audit of trustee and staff skills and experience and are in the process of appointing new Trustees.

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The charity remains grateful for the help and support given by charitable trusts and other sources of fundraising and donations. The charity also recognises the valuable contribution made by individuals and supporters.

**Total income, including these fees, grants, fundraising and donations, in the year ended 31 March 2025, was £124,336 (2023-2024: £93,627).**

#### **Grants received in financial year 2023-2024, for activity in this period (carried forward):**

David and Ruth Charitable Trust (£29,800) unrestricted grant

#### **Grants received in 2024-2025 for activity in this period:**

Ballinger Trust - £15,000

National Lottery Reaching Communities - £40,000

Shears Foundation - £10,000

Tynedale Lions - £500.00

Mental Health Concern (NHS) - £9,865

Screwfix - £3,380

Percy Bilton Charity - £747.00



Barbour Foundation - £3,000  
Arnold Clark - £100.00  
DRLFCT - £7,756 (of £33,474 grant)

**Grants received in this period with an amount carried forward for activity in 2025-2026:**

DRLFCT - £25,718 (of £33,474 grant)

**Total costs in 2024-2025 were £127,492** (2023-2024: £106,313).

**Total cash funds at 31 March 2025 were £29,475** (2024: £32,631) of which £3,757 was unrestricted (cash) and £25,718 restricted grant funding.

**Reserves Policy**

Heart Wood does not have any reserves at present.

The Trustees are creating a Reserves Policy for the period 2023 – 2026 as part of the three-year plan, with the aim to build a reserve of sufficient unrestricted funds to cover three months' operating costs, plus exit charges. This figure has been identified following consideration of the main financial risks to the charity once the staff are moved from short term freelance contracts to payroll. The strategy will be to build reserves through economies of scale wherever possible, suitable cost control, and seeking additional funding to meet essential expenses which underpin the provision of service. The trustees will regularly review the level of unrestricted reserves at Management Committee meetings.

**Grant Making Policy**

The Charity does not make grants.

**Investment Policy**

The charity holds no investments, other than reserve funds held in interest bearing bank deposit accounts, and as such has no formal investment policy.

**PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS**

- Continue to deliver our two *Men's Groups* running concurrently on Friday's at Minsteracres in Spring/Summer
- The drop-in *Connecting Sessions* in the Autumn/Winter will be increased from monthly to fortnightly.
- Pilot *Active Listening* training to men who have been participating in the Men's Groups
- Offer the Pre-Therapy International Network our space at Minsteracres to hold their annual network meeting plus offering a masterclass open to all therapists.
- Review our Training Certificate model so that it offers more flexibility to participants.
- Continue working towards becoming a Centre of Excellence in working therapeutically in nature in a client-centred way.
- Continue to explore ways to increase revenue streams for Heart Wood to make the charity more sustainable whilst not diverging from the core programme. This includes income from the Training Certificate and hiring out the new space at Minsteracres to other charities close to Heart Wood.
- Increase our focus on fundraising events to generate more income and raise the profile of Heart Wood.





## STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charity. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is not appropriate to assume that the charity will continue on that basis.

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

The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out under Legal and Administrative Information. In accordance with charity law, as the charity's trustees, we certify that:

- so far as we are aware, there is no relevant information of which the charity's examiner is unaware; and
- as trustees we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant accounts information and to establish that the charity's examiner is aware of that information.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by

SIGNED:

Sue James (Chair)

DATE:

12 November 2025



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Heart Wood

No (if any)  
1182889

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

Period start date  
01/04/2024


To

Period end date  
31/03/2025

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Grant - Ballinger Trust	15,000	-	-	15,000	15,000
Grant - Co-Op	-	-	-	-	2,337
Grant - DRLFCT	-	33,474	-	33,474	29,800
Grant - National Lottery	-	40,000	-	40,000	40,000
Grant - Mental Health Concern (NHS)	-	9,865	-	9,865	-
Grant - Percy Bilton Charity	-	747	-	747	-
Grant - Screwfix Foundation	-	3,380	-	3,380	-
Grant - Shears Foundation	-	10,000	-	10,000	-
Grant - Tynedale Lions	-	500	-	500	-
Grant - Barbour Foundation	-	3,000	-	3,000	-
Grant - Arnold Clarke	-	100	-	100	-
Donations Just Giving	30	-	-	30	78
Private Donations and Other Income	1,502	-	-	1,502	3,753
Earned Income	6,738	-	-	6,738	2,640
Gift Aid Claim	-	-	-	-	19
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>23,270</b>	<b>101,066</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>124,336</b>	<b>93,627</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>23,270</b>	<b>101,066</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>124,336</b>	<b>93,627</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Core Costs	5,333	20,404	-	25,737	24,931
Salary Costs	16,453	34,333	-	50,786	32,383
Costs of generating earned income	558	-	-	558	2,542
Evaluation	-	1,627	-	1,627	2,721
Connecting Sessions	-	6,795	-	6,795	5,208
Active Survival	-	-	-	-	14,337
Mens Group	-	25,740	-	25,740	24,191
Training	-	16,249	-	16,249	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>22,344</b>	<b>105,148</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>127,492</b>	<b>106,313</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>22,344</b>	<b>105,148</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>127,492</b>	<b>106,313</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>- 4,082</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 3,156</b>	<b>- 12,686</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>2,831</b>	<b>29,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,631</b>	<b>45,317</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>3,757</b>	<b>25,718</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,475</b>	<b>32,631</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Cash at bank	3,757	25,718	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>3,757</b>	<b>25,718</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds to nearest £</b>	<b>Restricted funds to nearest £</b>	<b>Endowment funds to nearest £</b>
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which asset belongs</b>	<b>Cost (optional)</b>	<b>Current value (optional)</b>
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which asset belongs</b>	<b>Cost (optional)</b>	<b>Current value (optional)</b>
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which liability relates</b>	<b>Amount due (optional)</b>	<b>When due (optional)</b>
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Print Name</b>	<b>Date of approval</b>	
		Sue James	12-Nov-25	

**HEART WOOD**  
**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Heart Wood (the 'charity')**

I report to the charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

**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 the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

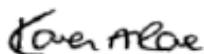
**Independent examiner's statement**

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

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for my own work or for this report.



Karen Rae FCCA, DChA

Dated: 12 November 2025

**Armstrong Watson Audit Limited**  
Chartered Accountants  
Dumfries