

The Fig Tree Project [Stonehouse]

[An Incorporated Charitable Organisation]

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2024

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Trustees

Catherine Thompson
Su Chard [From 25/05/2022]
Marc Chevalier
Rich Hamlin
John Thompson
Lia Tonkins
Irwin Wilson

Secretary

John Thompson

Treasurer

Marc Chevalier

Registered Office

Hillgrove
Verney Road
Stonehouse
GL10 2QD

Charity Registration Number

1183851

Solicitors

Leeper Prosser
High Street
Stonehouse
GL10

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank plc
1 Balloon Street
Manchester
M60 4EP

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Year Ended 31 March 2024

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Trustees' Annual Report 2021 - 2023

The Fig Tree Project is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation run in accordance with our Governing Document. Our Governance Structure comprises a board of trustees who are elected by the trustees for a three year term of office, which may be extended by subsequent terms. The board of trustees provide strategic overview of the work of the CIO, establish and maintain policies and guide the work and vision of the organisation.

The function of risk management lies with the trustees and is reviewed on a regular basis.

Charitable Objects and Objectives

The Objects of the charity as set out in our governing document are:

The advancement of the Christian faith in Stonehouse and the Severn Vale west of Stroud in such ways as the trustees think fit including through pastoral care and outreach into the community as a means of carrying out the mission and outreach work of the faith, for the benefit of the public.

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Achievements during the year 2023 - 24

Since first opening its doors to the public in July 2021 the Fig Tree has been open every weekday and Saturday, apart from short breaks at Christmas and Easter. In that time literally hundreds of different people of all ages and backgrounds have found it to be a place of welcome and friendship; a place for support at times of need. In the year covered by this report we have continued to grow in all ways, new faces have joined our leadership and our activities have continued to evolve.

The sale of greetings cards is main source of income and a vital part of the way that we meet the community. As well as the direct connections we make with those who come in to buy a card, so many more are able to make looking at cards an easy excuse to cross the threshold without feeling any pressure to join an activity. The Fig Tree model of working would not function without such an active and easy 'front door' for the public. A survey of customers in early 2024 confirmed this sense that our customers are very much a part of the wider Fig Tree community, and many see their loyalty as customers as their contribution to the success of the project. Our sales revenues continue to grow steadily and the quality of the cards on sale contributes to our success.

Voluntary donations have also continued to grow from both those who access our groups and others who are committed to the work we do. A 'regular supporter' scheme was launched in January 2024 offering a range of payment options which has also helped make us financially stable.

The focus of our work is through our activity groups which create a series of small communities where people come together with a common need or interest. Our 'Memory Cafe' and 'Dads and Children' groups are the only activities of their kind in the area, and all our groups have seen a steady turnover of members as children grow and families change. We especially pleased to see new networks and friendships developing and people moving between groups. Our Tuesday morning group which was initiated to support Ukrainians has widened into a general language support group for those for whom English is not a first language.

New activities have included our first cookery sessions - four week course led by a professional chef where attendees have learnt new skills. Sessions to help people

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plan funerals and for those seeking support after bereavement have also been popular.

None of the above would be possible without our team of volunteers who loyally serve the Stonehouse community through the Fig Tree from week to week. in the course of the year we have welcomed new faces as others have had to move on as their own circumstances have changed.

Priorities for 2024 - 2025

As we look ahead we are very conscious of the need to lay the foundations for a sustainable future for the Fig Tree, both in terms of workforce and finance. We have already started negotiations to extend our lease on the High Street premises and have no reason to believe that we will not be successful in this. More significantly we have begun to put in place plans to employ a part time co-ordinator which will allow us to develop all of our work further and build on the strengths we have identified. Our 'regular supporter' scheme is an important aspect of our funding projection and grants from other sources will also be sought.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

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Income:

Opening Balance 01 / 04 / 23: £ 19,075

Retail Sales 16,221

Donations 4,168

Other grants 5,525

TOTAL 25,914

Expenditure:

Rent 10,539

Insurance/fees 1,376

Cost of Sales 7,464

Consumables 605

Phone/IT 453

Other expenses 40

TOTAL 20,477

Net Cash Flow: + £ 5,436

Closing Balance 05/04/2024: £ 24,511


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The financial statements on page 6 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 29th November 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



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Irwin Wilson - Chair of Trustees