



Talking News Federation

TALKING NEWS FEDERATION CIO

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PERIOD FROM 1 APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Legal and Administrative Information | A3 |
| From the Chair | A5 |
| Our Service | A6 |
| Our Impact | A6 |
| Independent Review..... | A6 |
| Governance and Management..... | A7 |
| Social Investment..... | A7 |
| Grant Making..... | A7 |
| Remuneration Policy for Trustees | A7 |
| Fundraising Statement | A7 |
| Public Benefit | A8 |
| Conflicts of Interest..... | A8 |
| Reserves Statement..... | A8 |
| Risk Management | A8 |
| Financial Review | A9 |
| Talking News Federation Accounts 2023-2024 | A11 |
| Independent Examiner's Report to Trustees of TNF | A16 |

Legal and Administrative Information

Talking News Federation CIO

Registered Office and Principal Address 145 Victoria Road, Swindon, SN1 3BU

Charity Number 1185913

President Peter White MBE

Vice President Mike Wood

Trustees
Amanda Reed (Chair) (elec 9 Oct 2021)
Richard Black (Treasurer) (elec 9 Oct 2021)
Heather Bolton (elec 9 Oct 2021)
June Little (elec 17 Sept 2022)
Alan Dunderdale (elec 14 Oct 2023)
Luke Howarth (elec 14 Oct 2023)
Daniel White (elec 14 Oct 2023)
Paul Ramsden (elec 9 Oct 2021, resig 14 Oct 2023)
Graham Hedley (elec 14 Oct 2023, resig 1 Dec 2023)

Independent Examiner
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From the Chairman

Our theme for last year was "Better Together" - we stuck to this goal and we delivered!!!

A huge thank you to all the trustees, volunteers, workers, suppliers, local societies, delegates, speakers, presenters, specialists and venues, who together have allowed us to achieve so much. We really are striving forward.

Achieved in this year

- National Conference and AGM in October 2023
- A Technology Specific Roadshow in Cheltenham in March 2024
- A Roadshow in Norfolk in June 2023 with further Shows developed for delivery in Preston and Falkirk in April and June 2024
- New TNF branded leaflets and pull up banners for use at events
- The new TNF Website went live
- Four recorded Winter Workshops available to view on our website
- Talkphone
- TNF Soundings
- My TN
- TNF archiving
- Supporting TNs in crisis whether opening, closing or just a helping hand
- TNF interactive map so listeners can find you fast on the website
- TNF's *Audio Technician* to visit, check and advise on your sound set-up
- Exhibiting at Sight Villages, Retina UK and Macular Society Events
- Development of TNF Social Media Presence
- Working on improving policy, guidance and "how to" guides
- TN Insurance from Insurance Brokers Verlingue
- Grant making to TNs
- Utilise HESK to ensure we respond to queries efficiently and effectively
- Liaising with Deafblind UK, RNIB, Blind British Sport, Retina UK, Guide Dogs, Blind Veterans, Visionary, British Wireless for the Blind, Macular Society

Please note - This is a non-exhaustive list and my sincere apologies if I have failed to mention work that has been achieved and not listed.

This year our theme is "**Challenging Assumptions**" - time to sit back and review all that we do. I am sure it will create some very open conversations and create new ideas that can further improve the quality of the work we do. From getting back to basics and questioning what we do and why, to interpreting policy and legislation, developing and understanding changes in technology. Knowing what the listeners want in the future will ensure that Talking Newspapers remain needed for now and in the future.

Amanda Reed
Chairman



About the Talking News Federation

The Talking News Federation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, run entirely by volunteers, with work overseen by a board of elected trustees. TNF's objectives are:

- to promote good practice and the efficiency and effectiveness of its member organisations for the benefit of blind or partially sighted people or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability that makes reading a strain
- to support, represent and develop the work of Talking News Organisations which undertake the systematic provision of news and other material by digital or analogue transmission throughout the United Kingdom
- to promote and assist the formation of Talking News Organisations throughout the United Kingdom.

Our service

The Talking News Federation exists to support and assist some 300 local Talking Newspapers throughout the United Kingdom to deliver local news and information in audio to blind, partially sighted and print disabled people.

Our impact

Local TNs and their listeners are at the heart of everything we do at the TNF. We endeavour to ensure the best quality service is delivered to our members.

The diagnosis of a print disability, such as macular degeneration, can be disempowering. Many sufferers speak of the condition as isolating and upsetting, similar to a bereavement. Many listeners regard the service provided by TNs as a way to counter loneliness and an opportunity to continue to keep in touch with local news and information. The TN service impact across the UK can be summarised as:

- Almost 1,000 newspapers and magazines are recorded
- Over 20,000 listeners receive a regular local TN or magazine
- Some 9,000 volunteers deliver the service.

Independent Review

A TNF Independent Review is a friendly assessment of a TN's selected recording. The experienced review panel comprises the TNF review administrator, an audio technician, and two teams of four visually impaired listeners. TNF's aim in offering reviews is to act as a 'critical friend' to support TNs to provide consistently interesting and engaging local audio news to a growing number of listeners.

An Independent Review provides feedback on a TN's recording, as well as ideas and examples of great practice gained from reviewing other TNs. Working together in this way contributes to the achievement of TNF's aim.

No reviews were requested during the year under review.

Governance and Management

This Report covers the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

There are currently 6 TNF Trustees who meet at least quarterly to administer the charity. Every year one third of the Trustees is required to resign. However, Trustees may be nominated and elected for a subsequent term.

The Trustees are responsible for the process of succession planning to ensure that the Committee is always composed of members with the requisite experience and skills necessary to contribute to the life of the Charity and with the interests of Charity always in mind.

None of the Trustees has any beneficial interest in the Charity, nor receives any remuneration. The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity and are satisfied that systems are in place that offer reasonable mitigation of the major risks.

Trustee indemnity insurance is included in our insurance policies and has been in place throughout the year.

Social investment

All income received by the Charity is used solely for the benefit of members. The Trustees do not provide any social investment loans to individuals, charities or organisations.

Grant Making

No grants were awarded during the year.

Remuneration Policy for Trustees

The Charity's Trustees give of their time freely and none received remuneration in the year. Details of Trustees' expenses are in accordance with the TNF Allowances Policy on the TNF website.

Fundraising Statement

TNF does not currently conduct any proactive fundraising activity. We have never employed third party fundraisers nor engaged with commercial partners, bought or sold lists of personal data or mailing lists from any source.

Public Benefit

The Charities Act 2011 requires all charities to meet the legal requirement that its aims are for the public benefit. Two key principles should be met in order to demonstrate that an organisation's aims are for the public benefit: firstly, there must be an identifiable benefit and secondly that the benefit must be for the public or a section of the public.

The guidance issued by the Charity Commission includes "promoting the relief of those in need by reason of disability, financial or other hardship" and "the provision of leisure-time occupation in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom they are intended".

The Trustees confirm they have given due consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and are confident that the Charity has complied with these. The Federation's charitable objects fall within subsection 3 (l) of the Charities Act 2011 relating to the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage. The Trustees ensure these are carried out for the public benefit, through delivery of the Talking Newspaper service delivered by some 300 local Talking Newspapers for visually impaired and print disabled people within the United Kingdom.

Conflicts of Interest

As part of our governance process, Trustees are required to confirm annually whether they or any close member of their family has any business interests in any organisation or company which may result in a conflict of interest. Several trustees are associated with Member TNs.

Reserves Statement

The Annual Conference, which includes the Annual General Meeting, is TNF's major financial commitment. The maximum liability could be up to £25,000. To meet this potential liability, a designated fund of £10,000 is held alongside a similar level fund relating to the development/rescue of Talking Newspapers in the UK.

The Trustees consider a level of unrestricted reserves amounting to 50% of annual expenditure is realistic. The reserves held at the end of the Financial Year are significantly above the level needed by TNF due to the receipt of unbudgeted donations. Going forward, projects are being developed to ensure member TNs, and the VI Listeners they serve, will benefit.

Risk Management

The Trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- an annual review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the charity faces
- the establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate or remove those risks identified in the annual review; and
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise or manage any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise

Major risks are:

- a loss of confidence in the Federation resulting in a reduction in membership.
- the continued closure of local and regional print newspapers, bringing additional challenges to those providing local TN services.
- the closure of local TNs as a result of either/or the demise of the print newspaper or the difficulties of recruiting volunteers and leaders.

The risk is managed by maintaining close links with TNs, the provision of a Federation website to attract listeners and volunteers and contributing to the TN Talk chat forum where questions on technical, governance, copyright and related subjects may be posted and advice sought. TNF trustees and other volunteers organise training and support events and represent TNF and the whole TN constituency at events organised by other VI groups working with similar beneficiaries.

Financial Review

The accounts for the year under report – 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 – have been Independently Examined.

Our sustaining source of income is Membership Subscriptions from local Talking Newspaper organisations in the UK. This year, 10% fewer TNs renewed their membership than for the previous year. This reflects the continuing reduction in the availability and content of local newspapers as well as the increasing age of volunteers and listeners. There are ongoing issues with member TNs failing to update the TNF contact database so renewal messages may not be received and also TNs are not fully informed about the new services developed by TNF.

A major source of income this year was a legacy from an individual who was deeply involved in the formation and development of TNAUK and TNF for which we are deeply grateful.

Total Income for the Year was £59,935.

TNF has developed several services to help TNs to support their Listeners. All these services are free to members and can be accessed now by calling TNF Enquiries. TNF has invested over £3,000 to create the services and free delivery to members will incur ongoing costs. The services are:

- TNF Soundings
- TNF TalkInfo
- MyTN Websites
- Studio in the Cloud
- TNF TalkPhone

The IT equipment supporting the TNF Communications and Database services at our Swindon Office and in the Cloud has been updated and expanded at a cost of over £5,000 and should provide a stable ICT operating base for several years. Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind continued to deliver administrative support both to TNF and to TN members during the period.

The AGM and National Conference was held in Coventry with Delegate Pricing set to reflect the restricted financial ability of many TNs. Consequently, TNF supported the event to the

extent of over £2,000. Once again, the event was available to TNs online through the excellent audio-visual equipment and production team of TNF Volunteers.

In addition to the continuing series of Online Winter Workshops, TNF developed a series of Roadshows around the country with a general event in Norfolk and a technical event in Gloucestershire. These events were offered to member TNs at a 50% discount on the venue Day Delegate Rate and were reasonably well attended. TNF invested over £11,000 in the Roadshows and, although there was capacity for more TN representation, the resulting mingling of delegates was above expectations.

Trustees continued their practice of alternating meetings between physical and virtual gatherings. No applications to the Member's Grant scheme were received.

Overall, TNF registered a surplus of £9,046 after deducting the Conference and Event deficits totalling £16,606.

Talking News Federation Accounts 2023-2024

The period covered is from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 (excluding Conferences)

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

2023-24

2022-23

£

£

Receipts

Membership

| | | |
|---|----------|----------|
| Membership Subscriptions for the year 2022-2023 | - | 9,594.00 |
| Membership Subscriptions for the year 2023-2024 | 5,538.00 | 4,686.00 |
| Membership Subscriptions for the year 2024-2025 | 420.00 | - |

Donations

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Donations – General | 40,548.90 | 63,799.87 |
| Donations – Restricted | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Other Income

| | | |
|----------------|----------|--------|
| Service Income | 914.00 | 0.00 |
| Bank Interest | 2,793.07 | 549.05 |

TOTAL RECEIPTS

50,213.97

78,628.92

Payments

Administration

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Office Administration Costs | 4,492.21 | 4,069.47 |
| Office Equipment | 5,623.24 | 0.00 |
| TNF Insurance | 1,510.17 | 1,451.46 |
| Finance Charges | 67.12 | 72.00 |
| Trustees Meetings | 2,168.47 | 3,983.67 |
| Archiving | 109.29 | 149.15 |
| Outsource Costs | 1,500.00 | 1,524.49 |
| | 15,470.50 | 11,250.24 |

Services

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Direct TN Support | 2,400.00 | 2,494.52 |
| Exhibiting at Events | 2,276.87 | 1,201.84 |
| TNF Soundings | 533.07 | 1,000.68 |
| TNF TalkInfo | 1,262.62 | 276.04 |
| MyTN Project | 951.00 | 0.00 |
| Studio in the Cloud | 379.05 | 0.00 |
| TalkPhone | 204.48 | 0.00 |
| TNF Website and Social Media | 489.17 | 1,220.52 |
| Promotional Material | 252.19 | 2,521.70 |
| TN Development and Training | 0.00 | 18.00 |
| | 8,748.45 | 8,733.30 |

Governance

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Subscriptions | 223.00 | 0.00 |
| Independent Examination 2021-2022 | 119.94 | 100.05 |
| | 342.94 | 100.05 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| TOTAL PAYMENTS | 24,561.89 | 20,083.59 |
| SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR | 25,652.08 | 58,545.33 |

National and Regional Conferences

Coventry AGM & Conference 2023
East Anglia Roadshow 2023
Cheltenham Technical Roadshow 2024

Accounting Period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

| | 2023/24 £ | 2022/23 £ |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Receipts | | |
| Delegate Fees | 9,303.00 | 5,518.00 |
| Exhibition Stands | 419.00 | 93.00 |
| Sponsorship | 0.00 | 3,000.00 |
| TOTAL RECEIPTS | 9,722.00 | 8,611.00 |
| Payments | | |
| Venue and Accommodation | 24,951.45 | 9,835.22 |
| Speakers/Gratuities | 1,088.77 | 768.44 |
| Stationery/Telephone/Postage/Travel | 37.68 | 877.15 |
| Audio-visual Systems | 250.13 | 600.00 |
| Planning & Oversight | 0.00 | 275.00 |
| TOTAL PAYMENTS | 26,328.03 | 12,355.89 |
| (Deficit) on Conferences for the year | 16,606.03) | (3,744.89) |
| Brentford AGM & National Conference 2022 | | (2,240.97) |
| Cheltenham Roadshow 2023 | | (1,503.92) |
| Coventry AGM & National Conference 2023 | (2,121.73) | |
| East Anglia Roadshow 2023 | (4,288.55) | |
| Cheltenham Technical Roadshow 2024 | (7,235.75) | |
| Preston Roadshow 2024 (venue deposit) | (2,960.00) | |

Summary of Financial Results

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

| | 2023-2024 | | | 2022-2023 |
|---|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | General Fund | Designated Fund | Restricted Fund | Total Funds |
| Total Incoming Resources | | | | |
| Membership Activities | 50,213.97 | - | - | 50,213.97 |
| National/Regional Conferences | 9,722.00 | - | - | 9,722.00 |
| | 59,935.97 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 59,935.97 |
| Total Resources Expended | | | | |
| Membership Activities | 21,231.67 | - | - | 21,231.67 |
| National/Regional Conferences | 26,328.03 | - | - | 26,328.03 |
| TNF Soundings/TalkInfo/Training | 0.00 | - | 3,300.22 | 3,300.22 |
| | 47,599.70 | 0.00 | 3,300.22 | 50,899.92 |
| Net Incoming/Outgoing Resources | 12,376.27 | 0.00 | (3,300.22) | 9,046.05 |
| Fund Balances B/Fwd. 1 April 2023 | 99,578.85 | 26,984.36 | 21,894.22 | 148,457.43 |
| Fund Balances C/Fwd. 31 March 2024 | 111,955.12 | 26,984.36 | 18,564.00 | 157,503.48 |
| | | | | 148,457.43 |

Summary Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

| | 2024 | | 2023 | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | General Fund | Designated Fund | Restricted Fund | Total Funds |
| Funds | | | | |
| Unrestricted Funds | 111,955.12 | - | - | 111,955.12 |
| Designated Funds | - | 26,984.36 | - | 26,984.36 |
| Restricted – Ronald Sturt Fund | - | - | 6,132.18 | 6,132.18 |
| Restricted – TNF Development Fund | - | - | 12,431.82 | 12,431.82 |
| | 111,955.12 | 26,984.36 | 18,564.00 | 157,503.48 |
| | | | | 148,457.43 |

Note 1

Note 2

Represented By Cash at Bank

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| CAF Bank Cash | 2,110.27 | 9,607.48 |
| CAF Bank Gold | 27,813.29 | 5,082.92 |
| NatWest Bank | 11,412.05 | 9,651.79 |
| Shawbrook Bank 60 Days' Notice | 116,167.87 | 124,115.24 |
| | 157,503.48 | 148,457.43 |

[Signature]

TRUSTEE/CHAIR

21 September 2024

[Signature]

TRUSTEE/TREASURER

21 September 2024

Note 1 Designated Funds

- A) £10,000 to underwrite the National Conference as large deposits are now demanded by the venues
- B) £10,000 to support our TN development/rescue role
- C) £6,984.36 to support Talking Info

Note 2 Restricted Funds

The Trustees have clarified the potential uses of the Ronald Sturt Fund with the Donors and it will be used to support the establishment of TNF Soundings and Training delivered to member TNs.

The TNF Development Fund has been created from donations by the Sussex Coast Talking News and Wigan Metro Talking News to fund the creation/rebuilding of TNs in areas where there is a need but where there is no local TN.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF TALKING NEWS FEDERATION

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages A11 to A15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.