



Birmingham Talking Newspapers

for the blind & visually impaired (BTNBVI)

Registered Charity (England) No. 1185917

Trustees' Annual Report

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

Section A

Charity's principal address

Strangford
Lichfield Rd
Hopwas
Tamworth
B78 3AG

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

David Gowdy - Chair
Danny Collman - VC (South)
Rob Halley - VC (North)
Kath Collman - Secretary

Ian Alexander - Treasurer
Brian Sansom - Webmaster
Marion Dance
Alan Johnson (to Aug 2024)

Governance

BTNBVI is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose trustees are elected by its Members at each Annual General Meeting. Members are mainly the volunteers who produce the recordings each week.

BTNBVI is affiliated to the national Talking Newspapers Federation (TNF) and to Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)

Since 2020 BTNBVI has continued with the pattern of operations established by Birmingham Talking Newspaper Association (BTNA) over its 40 years providing a talking newspaper service.

Our trustees are mainly experienced senior volunteers but we do need to widen our skills base. We were successful in engaging several volunteers in a formal survey exercise, and were pleased to find significant in-house skills to undertake this work. A “more than reading” initiative has been effective in developing a volunteer team to develop publicity efforts

Charitable Objects

The object of BTNBVI is to relieve the blind or visually impaired in the Birmingham area by the provision of recorded material read primarily from newspapers and magazines.

In meeting its object and to provide public benefit, each week BTNBVI provides 3- 5 hours of recorded material which is distributed by post using USB memory sticks to blind and visually-impaired listeners across Birmingham. This is current material, mostly from local print newspapers, and therefore not readily accessible to visually impaired people.

Recordings can also be accessed via our website: www.btnbvi.org, via smartphones using the BWBF Talking News app and via Alexa or similar smart speakers. The service helps reduce social isolation and listeners often comment on the companionship of familiar voices “in the room”.

We continue to receive encouraging comments from listeners:

- Dear lovely people, Thank you for your entertaining Talking Newspapers. Unfortunately, this one appears to be blank;
- Please find enclosed cheque. Thank you for your prompt service;
- Thank you. This is my second BTN. Very informative and interesting. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this recording. Thoroughly enjoyed it;
- Please accept this £10 cheque. Thank you for all you do;
- Thank you for the Talking Newspaper. I do enjoy the articles and the History talk. I enclose a donation and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year;

and also a further significant bequest.

Section D

Performance

At year end we are serving fewer than the 300 listeners we had last year. Attention is being given to increasing our publicity efforts. The pattern of usage is often irregular rather than a constant weekly turnover.

A major disturbance across 2024-25 stemmed from the unexpected loss of the Alan Geale House [AGH] studio capacity which provided 50% of our operational capacity.

We were very pleased when the efforts of the South team identified new space in Bournville Village Trust [BVT] HQ building, available from June 2024. This is an excellent modern building, used free-of-charge, but lacks the storage space and single-user arrangements that were enjoyed in AGH. BVT staff have been exemplary in their welcome and support.

During the few months at the start of the year, before BVT was identified, the trustees considered the overall response and quickly agreed that BTNBVI could operate from one site if necessary, but struggled to translate that position to actuality. The obvious difficulty was the 50% redundancy implications for volunteers if one of the two centres closed. Trustees continue to review the position. From a governance position there is no justification for running an organisation that is twice as big as it needs to be, especially as the listener numbers decline.

One development that does need more people is the “more than reading” concept that encourages volunteers to support areas like publicity, training, listener contact. There is evident energy in areas like ECLO contact, but trustee support in terms of leadership and training is not yet secure.

Our long-running and repeated History programme material was replaced in Jan 2025 with a commercial podcast series (The Rest is History). Evaluation of this will be undertaken in early 2025-26 once people get used to the different format (a single female-voice enthusiastic lecture format has been overtaken by two “blokes” talking through the issues). So far we have seen criticism, both negative and positive.

Policy work continues, but slowly.

Progress in recruiting new trustees will be reported at the July 2025 AGM

Section E

Finance

The Treasurer has continued to improve our money management and is preparing a Gift Aid submission to HMRC.

At present income donations do not fully cover running costs, leaving a small annual deficit that is offset from reserves.

BTNBVI bank accounts are with The Co-Operative Bank. The arrangements have now bedded in with most transactions handled online.

Trustees are keen to see a higher return on reserves than the 2.8% pa currently being achieved

Section F
-
Section G

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature



Full name ALFRED DAVID GOWDY

Position CHAIR

Date 8 JULY 2025

Note: this report is presented in sections that align with the Charities Commission Trustees Annual Report CC16 template



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

BIRMINGHAM TALKING NEWSPAPERS
FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED (BTNBVI) 1185917

CC16a

CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/04/2024	To	31/03/2025
------------------------	------------	----	------------

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year 31/03/24 to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	3,809	-	-	3,809	5,720
Interest	918	-	-	918	655
Reclaimed under Gift Aid	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	4,726	-	-	4,726	6,375
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	4,726	-	-	4,726	6,375
A3 Payments					
P.O. Boxes	683			683	522
Sutton Studio Rent	2,040	-	-	2,040	2,040
Room hire. Other meetings	180			180	122
Email A/c hosting	50			50	91
Web site design & hosting	216			216	1,205
Zoom	-			-	144
TNF Subs Conf. fees	42			42	74
Travel Exp's	-			-	-
Insurance	252			252	240
Surveys. Listeners, Vols	-			-	-
Publicity	565			565	
Recording Equipment					1,627
USB Players, chargers	479			479	301
USB Sticks	57			57	-
Ink cartr's	179			179	222
Other Tech Equipment	-			-	325
Misc / Sundries	252	-	-	252	103
Accountancy fees	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	4,995	-	-	4,995	7,016
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	4,995	-	-	4,995	7,016
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 269	-	-	- 269	- 641
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	42,123	-	-	42,473	43,114
Cash funds this year end	41,855	-	-	42,204	42,473

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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Co-op current A/c	4,457		-
	Co-op savings A/c	37,398	-	-
			-	-
	Total cash funds	41,855	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			

	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	None	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	None		-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Studio equipment - USB copiers, laptops, mixers, microphones	General	10,000	Note 1
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-


	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	None		-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval



I. Alexander (Treasurer)

23rd July 2025

Notes:-

Most equipment is 4+ years old and has no formal book value.
Two laptops and one mixer were replaced prior to end 2021 at a cost of £900