



TRUSTEES'

ANNUAL REPORT

ZOOCO

1 APRIL 2023 - 31 MARCH 2024

CHARITY NUMBER 1186349

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ABOUT

ZOOCO

ZOO CO

Zoo Co is a multi-award winning theatre company based in Croydon. We became an **Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation** in Spring 2023. We make innovative, bold, electric live theatre for audiences across the UK and around the world.

At our core, we set out to make theatre which responds to what is alive in us as artists, and in our communities. We use bold, playful, highly visual, ensemble-led and democratic approaches to co-create our shows with the artists and communities involved. Our creative practice includes improvisation, Open Space, devising, and new writing.

We share this practice in every creative project, from our professional rehearsal rooms to our community projects. The Zoo Co Young Company is led by the Artistic Director, and co-creates ambitious studio shows alongside professional artists each year.

We believe that theatre is better when everyone is invited. We champion creative access, working with deaf and disabled artists as leaders on every project. We create all of our shows '**Relaxed as Standard**', and our productions strive to deliver creatively integrated access for deaf, disabled, neurodiverse audiences using integrated sign language, creative captioning, audio description and other technologies, responding to what is creatively enriching for the story, artists and audiences we are working with on each project.

We share our access practice through training, consultancy and advocacy in the industry, in Croydon and nationally. Most recently, we have been the Access Leads for This Is Croydon, London Borough of Culture 23/24, working across the programme to upskill and enhance the accessibility of the full creative programme. We have delivered access consultancy, provision and training for many partners, including the Barbican, StageOne, Liberty Festival, Talawa Theatre and Stanley Arts.

Zoo Co is generously supported by **Arts Council England**. We are also proud to have received funding from **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**, the **Foyle Foundation**, the **Vogue World Fund**, the **National Lottery Community Fund**, and the **Postcode Society**.

CHARITABLE AIMS

Our Charitable Aims are to advance public education and appreciation of the arts, in particular but not exclusively:

- Through the presentation of performances and the development of new work.
- By developing accessibility in the arts through innovative, tailored engagement programmes for marginalised groups or individuals in particular:
 - Young people aged 7-21.
 - Deaf and disabled audiences and participants.
- Through the provision of theatre in theatre venues or other performance spaces.

The Trustees are satisfied that Zoo Co continues to serve these goals to achieve public benefit during this period, in line with guidance from the Charity Commission.



MISSION

01

RELEVANT PRODUCTIONS:

To create highly innovative, relevant, ambitious and visual live productions for local and national touring, amplifying stories from marginalised people in our communities, using co-creation and community consultation.

02

ACCESS CHAMPIONS:

To champion access across all our activities, celebrating its immense creative and social impact and sharing our creative access methodology with the wider industry.

03

SERVING CROYDON:

To empower children, young people and adults in Croydon to be creative, using co-creation and community consultation to build programmes that are impactful and informed/ led by our diverse doorstep community.



PHOTO CREDIT DANNY KAAH

MODEL

We're in our second year of work testing this 4-stage model, showing how our work starts through development with our doorstep communities in Croydon and grows to have national and international impact from there. This report covers the 12 month period from April 2023 to March 2024, our first as an Arts Council of England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO).

ROOTING:

We continuously root more deeply into our diverse doorstep communities through conversation, events and training. We really get to know our community whilst providing opportunities for locals to design and participate in creativity at every stage of their lives. We ask lots of questions, and we listen to the answers. Our role as Access Leads for Croydon's year as Borough of Culture brought myriad opportunities to upskill local organisations in making their events more accessible. We founded the Access Library; a shared set of items that can be loaned out to improve access at cultural offerings. Our Young Company is led by Artistic Director Flo O'Mahony, with Croydon young people working year-round to co-create a new piece of work for performance. Our partnership with **CMA on the YPPF funded C3 programme** saw us working with young people, and young disabled adults in the borough to unlock their creativity, with disabled participants at our Access Studio creating short films, ending with a screening of their work.

AMPLIFYING:

From our rooting work, we create ambitious, high quality shows, amplifying stories relevant to our community with full creative power. We use community consultation, co-creation and research to inform development. Work premieres in Croydon, connecting communities with ambitious culture where they live that authentically reflects their experiences and brings locals together. 23/24 saw the development of *Night Shift* - a new, mid-scale production at our home venue Stanley Arts.

BRANCHING:

We tour productions nationally, sharing impactful stories beyond their roots; we develop relationships nationally with deaf and disabled communities. We loudly celebrate the artistic quality of accessible art nationally, with strong partnership working to maximise impact. In 23/24 our Branching work involved the touring of our children's show *Bossy*, and the return of our immersive children's engagement work with *Delight in the Woods*; 495 primary school students attended this immersive, outdoor experience at Box Hill National Trust.

CHANGE-MAKING:

We use our profile as creators of world-class, accessible productions to affect sector development and social change, contributing to a more inclusive cultural landscape where everyone is invited. 23/24 was a standout year for our Change-Making work: as Croydon's Borough of Culture partner for Access, we developed:

- [The Access Arts Croydon](#) website, featuring The Access Manifesto and a host of resources and support.
- Training and consultancy offered at no cost to cultural organisations across the borough, including the Access Weekender in June 2023.
- The Access Library - a lending library of kit to borrow to make cultural events more accessible.



We also partnered with disabled movement director and writer Jack Norris on an ACE-funded project - *Memories of the Marshland* - investigating Visually Impaired accessible movement practice. This Creative Access Lab took place over a week in March 2024, with a public sharing at Jackson's Lane.

COMMUNITY

Founded in 2013 as a company focusing on making visually imaginative work, Zoo Co quickly learnt to blend our theatre practice with the community work we were involved in. In our show *Sirens* in 2018, we worked with a deaf actor and consultant for the first time, and created our first children's show, *Messy*, in partnership with the ADHD Foundation.

From there, our staff, casts and creative teams began to be majority deaf / disabled / neurodiverse, and we founded a charitable entity to enable us to better deliver that work. Now, our work focuses on empowering deaf / disabled / neurodivergent and young people to become autonomous decision-makers and co-creators of the work they are making.

In our 10th anniversary year, you find us striving for excellence in access provision, which is at the heart of all of our work. All performances have been Relaxed As Standard since 2016 and have had integrated BSL since 2018.

The year covered by this report was a hugely productive period for us:

- Our first year as an ACE National Portfolio Organisation.
- Key partners in Croydon's Borough of Culture celebrations.
- Produced *Night Shift* - an ambitious mid-scale show.
- Took time to reflect on and consolidate the Zoo Co process; the creative methodology behind all of our work.

We welcomed David Bellwood, Head of Access at the National Theatre, to our Board. We also recruited a freelance Producer to lead on *Night Shift*.

We strive to serve our local community in Croydon. Our status as trusted members of the Croydon arts community is evidenced with multi-year commissions from Croydon Music & Arts and our position as Access Leads for Croydon's year as Borough of Culture.



PHOTO CREDIT GLENN FOSTER

We're proud residents of Stanley Arts, alongside fellow NPOs Stanley Arts and Boundless Theatre, the incredible dance company Birdgang, furniture restorers, a graphic novelist, a reiki healer and a personal trainer!

It's incredible to be part of this diverse and bustling cultural hub for Croydon, in a heritage building moving through a beautiful, careful restoration to make it more welcoming and accessible for everyone.

Shared space offers all kinds of opportunities – we share freelance staff and expertise – in December we all undertook Carbon Literacy Training; sharing places on the course between organisations put it within reach for more people, geographically and financially.



This document outlines what we have achieved, what we've learnt, and how the charity continues to develop its processes, partnerships and reputation.

Hello,

Flo here, Artistic Director at Zoo Co. It is a privilege to reflect on this year's activity; our first year as a National Portfolio Organisation for Arts Council England. After a decade of being project-funded, and persevering through a global pandemic, this year feels like a real landmark year of activity in Zoo Co's journey - a year where we could truly begin to deliver our full potential driven by an ethos and mission that feels clear, urgent and exciting.

In terms of rooting, this year enabled us to get fully stuck into the fabric of Croydon's incredible creative community as we stepped up to London's Borough of Culture. We sat on the Steering Committee, we created a hugely ambitious mid-scale show, *Night Shift*, as part of the theatre programme, and perhaps most impacting of all, we were the delivery leads for access provisions across Borough of Culture. Fleur, Zoo co-founder and Creative Access Director, led the campaign, informed by the Access Advisory Group, which involved delivering training on our Access Weekender, offering 74 hours of free consultancy over the year, and the creation of Croydon's Access Library - a physical library of access equipment and tech that continues to be free-to-loan for any artists creating events in the borough and beyond. Fleur called on the Croydon creative sector to share an ethos of being 'realistic and brave' about access, providing the tools artists and organisations needed to upskill and learn how to implement this, and set a new standard for what can be achieved in terms of accessibility for Croydon, and for future Borough of Culture programmes.

At the beginning of the year we toured our fantastic children's show, *Bossy* by Cherie Gordon around the UK. An absolute highlight was watching two sold-out shows at the Southbank Centre, where audiences were so moved to see an authentic portrayal of deaf and Caribbean culture. We also delivered *Delight in the Woods* for the third time at Box Hill, reaching 495 children with this enchanting outdoor immersive programme.

Achieving NPO status also meant that we expanded our team, welcoming Amy Smith as our Executive Director. It has been transformative to witness the impact Amy's kind, proactive, wise and rigorous leadership has made on the way we work as a team, the culture in our office, how we work with our Board, and the way that this has enhanced the quality and depth of our creative outputs across the board for everybody we set out to serve - artists, audiences, participants.

Our creative focus for the year was to 'become the nerds of our own creative practice' - to allow ourselves time and space to hone our creative offerings, alongside our accessibility know-how. As a disabled-led organisation, it can be easy to feel as though our skills relating to accessibility are the only strings to our bow, but this focus gave our creative teams the encouragement to expand on both creative and access processes (which are inherently entangled, of course!).

As an Artistic Director, I have learnt the value of bringing more and more rigour into the ways we create our work. This goes beyond making sure there are the right access provisions in a room, to really celebrating and sharing the expectations we all have for achieving artistic excellence in everything that we do with the fantastic artists we work with.

I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to share this approach with artists across many deeply rewarding creative projects this year including *Risky Business* by Liv Elio, (co-created play with our Young Company), our mid-scale show *Night Shift* by Paula B Stanic with a fantastic deaf and hearing creative team, and on the Research and Development project *Memories of the Marshland* by Jack Norris, where for the first time, Zoo Co explored how to work in a creatively integrated way with **Blind** / Visually Impaired artists and audiences. There will always be more to learn, both in terms of access and as artists, and this year felt like an opportunity to get really curious and invested in how we develop these things in tandem - a reminder that disabled artists are artists first and foremost, and that together, we can make electric, live, bold theatre where everybody is invited.

Very best wishes



FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF ZOO CO CREATIVE LTD,

DECEMBER 2024

GRANTS

ZOOCO

AWARDED

Borough of Croydon and GLA (Large Ignite Fund)	£32,000
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (Creative Confident Communities Year 1 of 3)	£30,000
Vogue World Fund	£20,000
Foyle Foundation	£25,000
Postcode Society Trust (Funded entirely by players of People's Postcode Lottery)	£15,000
Croydon Music & Arts	£25,000



DONATIONS &

SALES

Delight in the Woods Spring 2023 Instalment 2	£11,005
Supporters Scheme, Individual Giving and Gift Aid	£1,812
Access Consultancy	£5,232
Other Consultancy	£650

BOROUGH OF CULTURE

Here's how we delivered on our role as Access Leads for Croydon's year as Borough of Culture:

BESPOKE 1:1 CONSULTANCY

Consultancy on making Croydon events more accessible

74

hours of free
consultancy
delivered to 17
different
organisations

ACCESS WEEKENDER

A weekend of free training events

67

arts & local
authority
workers
attended

ACCESS MANIFESTO

An ambitious and realistic manifesto for cultural organisations charting the way forward for access provisioning

41

organisations &
individuals signed
up 37 from
Croydon cultural
sector

ACCESS ARTS CROYDON WEBSITE

Website packed with resources and signposting

1,765

visitors Jan-
Mar 2024

ACCESS LIBRARY

Sharing kit to make events more accessible

35

loans of kit,
supporting
hundreds of
audience
members

EVENT ACCESS PROVISION

Providing outsourced access support to events

1

Welcome
Hub at
Liberty
Festival
coordinated

ACCESS ADVISORY GROUP

A working group for cultural organisations for the Borough of Culture, chaired by Zoo Co

5

meetings
chaired
through the
year

ACCESS WEEKENDER (24-25 JUNE, 2023)

Three months into Croydon's year as Borough of Culture, we organised the Access Weekender- a large-scale group training for anyone organising a cultural activity in Croydon during the Borough of Culture.

We welcomed representatives from the GLA, local Councillors and Council staff. Reach extended far beyond the Borough, with freelance delegates who also worked at Nottingham Playhouse, Dance Umbrella, and Dark Horse Theatre in Huddersfield taking part.

The spaces at LSBU's Croydon campus offered lots of scope to design the weekend in an accessible way, with two break-out spaces - one 'chatty', one 'quiet and sensory'. Each session was offered as hybrid, with people joining the livestream, supported by an online facilitator and live captioner.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY:

- Deaf Awareness with Rupal Chandi.
- Physical Disability and Brain Damage with Meg Fozzard.
- Neurodiversity Consultancy with Vijay Patel and Flo O'Mahony.
- Blindness and Visual Impairment Awareness with Yusuf Osman.
- Learning Disability and Autism Consultancy with Emma Selwyn & Katie Wheeler from Access All Areas.
- Access Management with Fleur Rooth from Zoo Co.



PHOTO CREDIT DANILO ZOCATELLI

FEEDBACK:

"I feel I have information I can leave with and apply to my daily life as well as professional work."

"It was really useful to hear from so many people with lived experience. It was useful to learn about accessibility in the context of theatre and the arts!"

"This was mind-blowing and super generous!"

"It was hugely inspiring, informative, and educational!"

EVENT ACCESS PROVISION FOR LIBERTY FESTIVAL

(1-3 SEPTEMBER, 2023)



Liberty Festival is the Mayor of London's flagship festival of high-quality work by deaf and disabled artists. We were proud to support audiences access to events, including managing the Wellbeing Hub as part of Liberty Festival 1 - 3 September. Flo and Fleur met new contacts in the Croydon deaf community, and strengthened ties with Drunken Chorus, Birds of Paradise, and other disabled-led arts organisations.



LIST OF ORGANISATIONS / EVENTS WHO RECEIVED FREE SUPPORT:

- Beeja Dance
- Birdgang
- Bold Mellon (Queer Joy Exhibition)
- Boundless Theatre
- CODA Croydon Operatic and Dramatic Association (Alice in Wonderland)
- Culture Croydon Network (Symposia)
- Croydon Council (Urban Rooms, A Very Croydon Christmas)
- Croydonites Festival
- Dance Umbrella
- David Lean Cinema (Relaxed Screenings)
- Drunken Chorus (Liberty Festival)
- Inventing South Norwood (Carnival of Invention)
- Museum of Croydon (Music Heritage Trail, and Rewind Exhibition)
- Petite Pantos (Jack and the Beanstalk)
- Raze Collective
- Savvy Theatre (Pinocchio)
- South Norwood Community Kitchen (community organising meetings)
- Spare Tyre
- Stanley Arts (Arcadia)
- Talawa Theatre (Recognition)
- The Place (Super Normal Extra Natural)
- Turf Projects



PHOTO CREDITS GLENN FOSTER

As part of the legacy of Borough of Culture, much of our offer is still available at no cost to Croydon organisations. We will continue to offer free Access Consultancy and use of the Access Library to Croydon organisations seeking support with their events throughout 24-25, and will continue to maintain the [Access Arts Croydon](#) website.

Outside the Borough, these strands have become valuable income-generating activity for Zoo Co.

The connections made during Borough of Culture have been sustained in the new collective Culture Croydon; it's open access, with current key input from representatives from Turf Projects, Croydonites, Zoo Co, Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society, Birdgang, Stanley Arts and individual freelancers.

We're currently exploring as a group the best way for this consortium to be constituted and run.



As well as an outward-facing legacy, the intensity of the work during Borough of Culture led us to reflect on our strengths, and organise our Access Support work into three distinct strands:

- **Neurodiversity Awareness Training** - group training for workplaces
- **Access Consultancy** - currently free for Croydon organisations, income-generating beyond Croydon.
- **Event Access Provision** - building on the success of our support work at Liberty Festival

Neurodiversity Awareness Training was designed and created by the Creative Access Director and Access Co-ordinator during the winter, with the first booking availability in March 2024. In this piece of work, income-generation goes hand-in-hand with skills sharing.

Across all three strands, we aim to generate around £11,000 a year in earned income.

NIGHT

SHIFT

ZOOCO

FACTS & FIGURES:

Casts and Creatives	19
Audience	819
Performances	10

Night Shift premiered at Stanley Arts in November, following a multi-year development process. Written by award-winning playwright Paula B Stanic, co-directed by Brian Duffy and Flo, the production was a centrepiece of Croydon’s Borough of Culture year.

The play told the stories of night workers, and the night-time economy in Croydon - the delivery drivers, the medical staff, the emergency responders, the petrol station attendants, the DJs... the insomniacs. It featured a 50/50 deaf and hearing cast, and drew a local audience. It was generously supported by the Borough of Croydon and the GLA with a Large Ignite Fund.

You can watch the rehearsal trailer [here](#).

Night Shift featured our signature blend of BSL, spoken English, and Visual Vernacular with an ensemble cast of 9. We’re especially proud of the show’s reception by the local deaf community- audience feedback told us that the honest representation of deaf people going about their everyday lives was warmly welcomed.

We incorporated a wheelchair ramp into our set design to add levels to the set and allow access down to auditorium level for a wheelchair-using cast member. This development not only improved safety, but also gave us creative staging opportunities to play with.



ACROSS 10 PERFORMANCES, 3 STOOD OUT AS PARTICULAR CELEBRATIONS:

GLA GUEST NIGHT

We welcomed Night Czar Amy Lamé as our special guest – she spoke compellingly about social justice issues around low wages and poor health outcomes for night workers. We were joined by staff from the Culture Team and Night Time Strategy Team at the Greater London Authority, Croydon Council staff and local Councillors.

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE METINEE

We performed to a sold out audience of Coulsdon College students, Brit School students, and students from Sussex Uni taking a module in BSL and Deaf Culture Studies.

‘I thought the play was very inspiring as it faced major issues in society, and the lighting, the sound... it was giving. Continue what you are doing.’ – audio feedback recorded after that performance.

10TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

We used the *Night Shift* Press Night as a chance to celebrate a decade of Zoo Co, raising a glass to friends and colleagues old and new, and 10 years of hard work, learning and creativity.



PHOTO CREDIT AMY SMITH

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

WE USED THE PRODUCTION TO FURTHER DEEPEN OUR SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE:

- 80 costume items sourced second-hand via sites like Vinted. Costumes were donated to charity shops after.
- Props like cuddly toys and sleeping bags were loaned to the production by the staff team.
- Props and shoes were given away via Olio or sold.
- Sections of the large canvas backdrop were passed on to a Hackney artist for reuse.
- The programme itself was digital only; accessible via a QR code on the single sheet of A4 (black and white) freesheet.
- Catering for events and cast lunches was 100% vegetarian.
- Several cast members were housed in digs close to Stanley Arts, resulting in a lower carbon footprint from travel than otherwise.

INNOVATIVE EVALUATION:

We felt proud of the different ways we gathered feedback:

- Surveys - online and paper forms
- Chatterbox - our audio recording kiosk
- Filmed feedback
- Post-it notes

Allow a variety of methods, to let people feedback in the way that best suits them.

Night Shift Survey Data	194 Feedback Surveys (18% of our audience)
Impressed	94% (58% excellent, 36% good)
Local	63% had travelled less than 5 miles to be with us, with 43% travelling 0 - 2 miles. 20% of our audience walked or cycled to be with us.
Deaf/Disabled/Neurodivergent	25% deaf/disable/long term health condition, 35% neurodivergent
New to Our Work	66%
Art and Culture Regulars	73% answered that they attended more than 6 arts and culture experiences each year.

AUDIENCES DESCRIBED THE SHOW AS:



MEMORIES OF

ZOOCO

THE MARSHLAND

In March 2024, we partnered with disabled Movement Director and emerging writer Jack Norris on a Creative Access Lab to develop our practice around Visually Impaired (VI) Creative Access.

Jack had approached Flo with a concept when he was part of the *Bossy* team as a Trainee. He wanted to develop *Memories of the Marshland*, a text-based script infused with physical theatre, centring two VI girls, that he'd written during lockdown. We were excited to learn about VI creative access, so we came on board over a week-long, ACE-funded creative experiment.



The Lab explored what new creative languages can emerge when usual methods of directing, generating and devising movement are not accessible. It was a radical development of Zoo Co’s accessible process.

It was also an opportunity to expand the communities that we work with, supported by Sam Brewer from Flawbored as a VI creative associate, consultation from Quiplash Arts, and VI creative, access and community consultants.

The Lab ran for two days at the Unicorn Theatre and four days at Jackson’s Lane, who generously donated space as Support in Kind for the project. It culminated in a sharing and panel discussion with the creative team and Amelia Lander-Cavallo from Quiplash.

FACTS & FIGURES:

Cast and Creatives	19
Audience	47
Digital Audience	3800

You can watch the Q&A and clips from the sharing [on our website](#).

YOUNG COMPANY

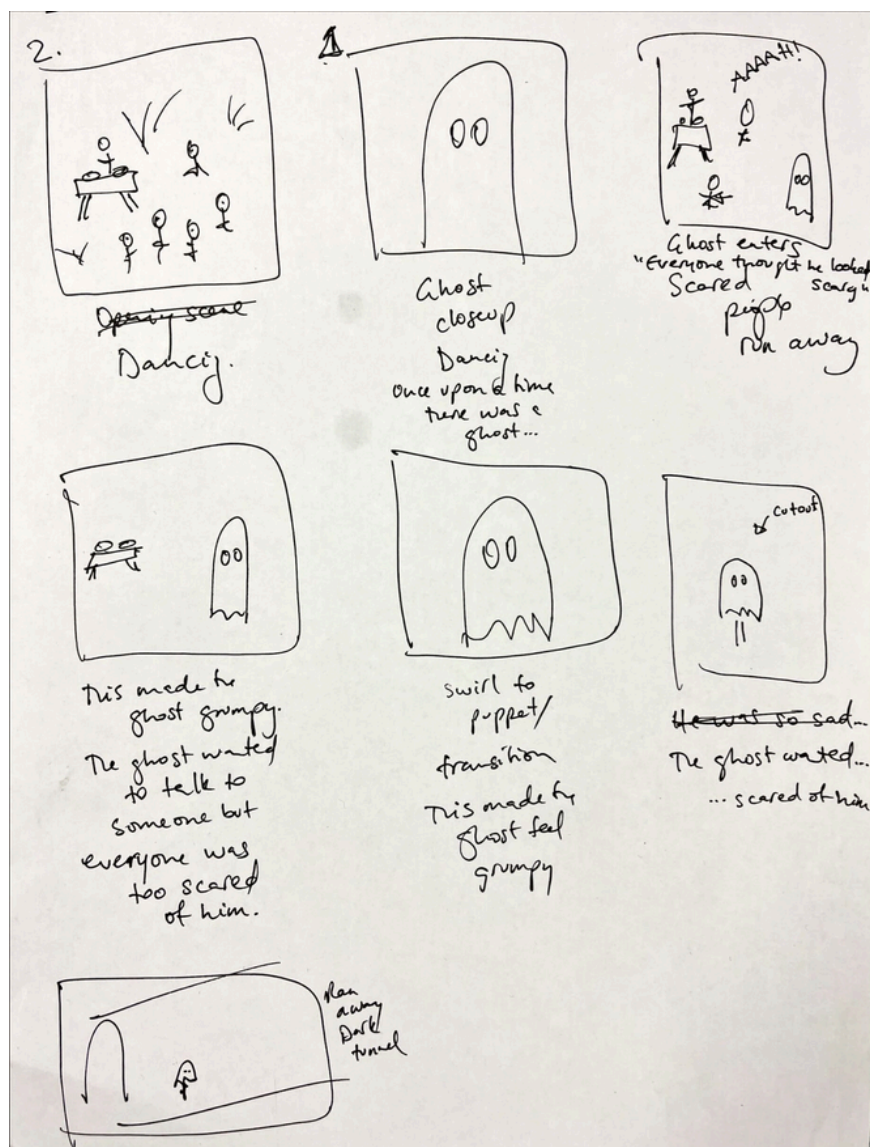
We continued to develop the Zoo Co Young Company through the year, culminating in our second full production, *Risky Business*, co-created with renowned punk playwright Liv Ello and the Company. *Risky Business* was staged at Stanley Arts following three terms of skills development and devising.

The show, a dystopian dark comedy set in a futuristic Risk Management Centre, is a rebellion against a world that stifles adventure. Our devising process is alive to the stories that our participants want to tell, and *Risky Business* came out of the idea that we treat young people as 'risk takers', and interrogating what that does for creativity, learning and courage.

Two short scenes were staged at the CMA Festival in the Park, with the full production presented over two nights at Stanley Arts at the end of July 2023 as part of Croydon's Borough of Culture programme.

YoCo is really feeling like it's coming into its own now, with regular, dedicated participation from young people every week through the school year. Our co-creation process is becoming a well-oiled machine, we're constantly inspired by the young people who show up to the work, and we're exploring ways to support them beyond YoCo by looking into early career employment pathways.





C3 short film storyboard

FACTS & FIGURES:

Attendances	240
Co-Creation Sessions	30
Performances & Screening	4

DELIGHT IN

ZOOCO

THE WOODS

This year saw a remount of our immersive children's show *Delight in the Woods*, in partnership with the charity Delight. This show, set in the woods at Box Hill National Trust, sees groups of children meet and help whimsical characters. The immersive, unfolding experience ignites the imaginations of the children and empowers them in their role as 'The Best Storytellers in the World'.

2023 was our last year for *Delight in the Woods*. We're proud of the magic of the experience - watching children receive an individualised poem from a character in the woods makes all of the trooping around in the rain worth it. Through seeing themselves reflected in the personalised poems, we hope *Delight* has been a spark that lets all the children taking part know that their stories matter.

FACTS & FIGURES:

Children Taking Part	495
Individual Poems Written	495
Classes Involved	12

BOSSY

TOUR

Our children's show, *Bossy*, headed out on the road in April 2023. *Bossy* celebrates British Caribbean and deaf identity, and premiered at Stanley Arts. It centres Beth, a girl on a quest to become the world's best leader.

We toured *Bossy* to 13 venues across the North, South East, and South West. The stories of Beth, her mother and grandmother were seen by over 1000 audience members, and served as the inspiration for a workshop about identity and role models that we ran in Croydon schools later in the year. Workshops, led by Fleur and frequent collaborator Sim Campbell, were attended by 420 primary school pupils.

FACTS & FIGURES:

Tour Venues	13
Audience	1136
School Workshop Participants	420

We learned a lot creating *Bossy* - from developing our co-creation practice, through to working out how to support trainees in a rehearsal room. A main takeaway from the process is that it's good to be ambitious and to try things out, but that we will get better results from focusing on One New Thing per production. We took that thinking into *Night Shift* and have committed to being incredibly clear about which New Thing we want to work on in every new project that we've started since.

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES & DEVELOPMENT

OUR WORKFORCE

At the beginning of the year, existing members of the team became employees alongside the Artistic Director - with the two new roles of Executive Director and Projects Administrator, Zoo Co now supports a payroll of five.

Freelancers are also key contributors to our day-to-day operations, and work with us across Producing, Fundraising and Access Co-ordination.

Our new status as an Arts Council NPO has encouraged greater rigour around our employment data:

HOW MANY PEOPLE WORK FOR US, AND WHO ARE THEY?

We contracted 55 freelancers

- 45% of these identified as deaf or disabled
- 31% of these identified as being neurodivergent
- 35% of these identified as being from the global majority

We had 5 salaried employees

- 60% of these identified as deaf or disabled
- 60% of these identified as being neurodivergent
- 100% identified as white

We had 5 Trustees

- 20% of these identified as deaf or disabled
- 40% of these identified as being neurodivergent
- 40% of these identified as being from the global majority

GOVERNANCE

We gathered in July for a Board and Staff Away Day, where we established long-term aims and dreams, and spent time together building the team. We look forward to holding these annually going forward.

In the winter, we undertook a Trustee Skills Audit, and learned we needed to focus future recruitment in these ways:

- Expertise in Fundraising, Marketing and Producing.
- Lived experience of deafness, disability and neurodivergence, and life as an artist working in UK theatre.

In Spring we met a wide range of candidates, and this has since led to the recruitment of three new Trustees, and our innovative Introduction to Trusteeship programme, where deaf and disabled people interested in learning more about becoming a Trustee are paid for their time to observe Board meetings.

We seek to open out our training offer to freelancers and Trustees wherever possible.

BSL (British Sign Language) Level 1 weekly classes began in Autumn 2023, and comprised employees, regular freelancers and Trustees. We are committed to offering all employees this level of sign language training, and meeting weekly to converse in a new language has strengthened ties between different roles across the organisation.

Carbon Literacy Training took place in December 2023, in a group session shared with Stanley Arts and Talawa Theatre staff. 80% of our employees are now certified Carbon Literate, with key freelancers like our Production Manager and Development Director also in attendance.

Anti-Racism Training took place in January 2024, delivered to employees and freelancers by our Trustee Ché Ramsden.

Safeguarding our Executive Director joined our Artistic Director at BSL Level 3, and became our Deputy DSL. Our Creative Access Director holds Level 2, with all other salaried staff and our freelance Access Co-ordinator holding Level 1.

Visual Impairment Awareness Training was delivered by Yusuf Osman in March 2024 to the full staff team, Support Workers and freelance creatives involved in Memories of the Marshland.

Individual staff members also undertook courses in **Audio Description**, **Understanding Autism**, and **BSL Levels 2 and 3**.

Associateships for the calendar year 2024 were offered to two key freelancers; we were able to offer a retainer equivalent to one day's work a month, and they spent time with us in R&Ds, pre-production show prep, and training days. This marked our response to the recent sector work listening to freelancers, and understanding the problems and barriers they experience: financial precarity, lack of training opportunities, lack of support and little sense of belonging. It also de-risks us in some key areas: artistic burnout, and difficulties sourcing freelance workers for projects. We look forward to an annual programme of Associateships.

SUSTAINABILITY

Ethical Banking In Spring 2024, we switched banks, moving from Metrobank over to Co-op and Charity Bank, in probably our most impactful sustainability action of 23/24.

Circularity In Jan 2024, we took inventory of our set and props in storage, and decided on what could go. We donated items to:

- Other theatre companies like Company Three, to use in their shows.
- Local schools (gardening equipment for forest school sessions, stationery, toys).
- Local people via giveaway sites like Olio as well as charity shops.

Some items were sold, generating a small amount of income.

Additional on-site storage space agreed with Stanley Arts for our Access Library allows a 'little and often' approach, where items can be stored temporarily as they're processed, has been crucial to our changed mindset in this area.

zooco

Thank You!

for reading our Trustees' Annual Report



Office and Mailing Address: **Stanley Arts, 12 South Norwood Hill, SE25 6AB**

Facebook / Instagram: **@wearezooco**

Artistic Director Flo O'Mahony: **flo@wearezooco.co.uk**

Executive Director Amy Smith: **amy@wearezooco.co.uk**

Interim General Manager Michelle Hudson: **michelle@wearezooco.co.uk**

Charity Registration No. 1186349

Company Registration No. 12089377 (England and Wales)

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Director: Mr P. Newman (appointed 6 August 2019)
Director: Mr D. Newman (appointed 11 April 2022)

Company Secretary: Mrs C. Newman
Mr D. Newman
Mr J. Newman
Mr C. Newman
Mr R. Newman
Mr M. Newman

ZOO CO CREATIVE LTD

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Charitable status: 1186349
Company number: 12089377
Principal office: 12 South Norwood Hill
London
SE25 6AG

Registered office: 12 South Norwood Hill
London
SE25 6AG

Company secretary: Mrs C. Newman
Mr D. Newman
Mr J. Newman
Mr C. Newman
Mr R. Newman
Mr M. Newman

Director: Mr P. Newman (appointed 6 August 2019)
Director: Mr D. Newman (appointed 11 April 2022)

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Mr F Akinmade	(appointed 6 August 2024)
(during the period or at date of approval)	Mr D Bellwood	(appointed 11 April 2023)
	Ms G Dickson	
	Ms E Claughton	
	Mr N Islam	(retired 9 October 2023)
	Ms J Pearce	(appointed 14 May 2024)
	Ms C Ramsden	
	Mr R Stephenson	
	Mr N Sweeting	(appointed 14 May 2024)

Charity number 1186349

Company number 12089377

Principal address 12 South Norwood Hill
London
SE25 6AB

Registered office 12 South Norwood Hill
London
SE25 6AB

Independent examiner Jon Harris, ACMA,
CGMA
Suite LP61812
20 Wenlock Road
London N1 7GU

Bankers Co-Operative Bank

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING
DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 March 2024**

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the period ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by 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) (effective 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

The charity's objects are specifically restricted to the following:

To advance public education in and appreciation of the arts.

The Trustees note a further successful year in the furtherance of the Objectives and have made a full report to the Charity Commission.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees, who are also the directors of the charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- 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 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 inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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 Companies Act 2006. They 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.

Structure, governance and management

- a. Governing Document: Zoo Co Creative Ltd is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association as well as published Health and Safety, Child Protection, and other documents to protect the vulnerable.
- b. The Charity functions at our registered office as well as in schools, theatres and other locations across the UK and Ireland.
- c. Appointment of trustees is conducted in accordance with the Articles.
- d. Organisation: The board of trustees administers the Charity. The day-to-day running of the company is managed by a small professional staff.

Accounting is managed by the professional staff and all financial documents are produced in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

Financial review

- a. Statement of Risk: The Trustees validate that all contracts, expenditures, financial plans, and business models used by the Charity are of sound financial sense and do not contravene any Health and Safety or vulnerable individuals' statutes or common practice.
- b. Over the course of 2023-24, Zoo Co has adjusted its model and company structure, from that which suited a project-funded company, to a model that suits a company regularly funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation for the period 2023 – 2026. We will now work towards maintaining an unrestricted reserve that reflects not less than three months' staff, admin, overheads and fundraising costs, + 10%. The Trustees acknowledge that adjusting this reserve to these levels will be a process spanning several years; it begins in 2023-24 and will take some time to be reflected in the actual outturn.

The Trustees have decided to maintain an unrestricted reserve at an amount equal to not less than four weeks' operating costs + 10% for 2023-24. The reserves are considered sufficient to safeguard against any temporary shortfall in income or any additional unforeseen overhead costs.

The Trustees aim to increase the unrestricted reserve to an amount equal to not less than two months' operating costs + 10% for 2024-25. By 2025-26 the Trustees aim to maintain an unrestricted reserve at an amount equal to not less than three months' operating costs + 10%.

- c. At year end, there was a surplus in the reserves of £151,498.
- d. Detailed cash flow projections and line-item expenditures are kept at all times of all transactions.
- e. Trustees review and approve all accounting documents produced by staff.
- f. The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report.
- g. An accountant is engaged to independently review and examine accounts at year end.

Public benefit statement

During the year we fulfilled our objectives, to advance public education and appreciation of the arts, in particular but not exclusively:

1. Through the presentation of performances and the development of new work
2. By developing accessibility in the arts through innovative, tailored engagement programmes for marginalised groups or individuals, in particular:

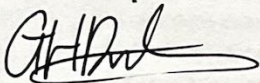
- Young people aged 7-21
- Deaf and disabled audiences and participants

3. Through the provision of theatre in theatre venues or other performance spaces The Trustees are satisfied that Zoo Co continues to serve these goals to achieve public benefit during this period, in line with guidance from the Charity Commission.

Objectives and Activities

The Trustees have made a full report to the Charity Commission about objectives and activities.

The Trustees have approved this report.



Ms G Dickson
Trustee
12 November 2024

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
ZOO CO CREATIVE LTD**

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Zoo Co Creative Ltd for the period ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.


Independent examiner's statement

I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of CIMA, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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 financial statements to be reached.


Jon Harris, ACMA, CGMA, MA (Cantab.), FRSA

Suite LP61812, 20 Wenlock Road
London N1 7GU

Dated: 12 November 2024

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

			Unrestricted funds 2024	Restricted funds 2024	Total 2024	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted funds 2023	Total 2023
Notes	£		£	£	£	£	£	£
			===== (being 12 months) =====			===== (being 8 months) =====		
Income and endowments from:								
			0	0	0	453	0	453
			340,794	125,446	466,240	97,362	116,835	214,197
			19,157	0	19,157	53,903	0	53,903
			0	0	0	0	0	0
			77,800	0	77,800	78,934	0	78,934
			437,751	125,446	563,197	230,652	116,835	347,487
Expenditure on:								
	3		331,757	128,727	460,484	241,780	110,686	352,466
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds								
			105,994	-3,281	102,713	-11,128	6,149	-4,979
Fund balances at 31 March 2023 (31 July 2022)								
			31,341	17,444	48,785	42,469	11,295	53,764
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 (2023)								
			137,335	14,163	151,498	31,341	17,444	48,785

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 March 2024

Notes	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		0		0
Current assets				
Debtors	6	109,275		102,953
Cash at bank and in hand		108,487		26,154
		<u>217,762</u>		<u>129,107</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year				
	7	<u>-66,264</u>		<u>-80,322</u>
Net current assets/(liabilities)		<u>151,498</u>		<u>48,785</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		151,498		48,785
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year				
		0		0
Net assets/(liabilities)		<u>151,498</u>		<u>48,785</u>
Income funds				
Unrestricted funds		137,335		31,341
Restricted funds		14,163		17,444
		<u>151,498</u>		<u>48,785</u>

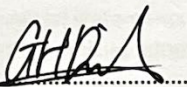
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the period ended 31 March 2024.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 12 November 2024.



Ms G Dickson
Trustee

Company Registration No. 12089377

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Zoo Co Creative Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is at 12, South Norwood Hill, London SE25 6AB.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by 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) (effective 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling , which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

1.3 Incoming resources

Donations, legacies, grants etc. are accounted for when due to the charity, where applicable, with their associated tax recoverable element.

Production income is credited to the statement of financial activities for the period in which the related production takes place. Fees received in advance of future productions are deferred. All other income is recognised when it is receivable.

No income is recorded net of expenses except where these are beyond the control or knowledge of the trustees.

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and represents amounts receivable for goods and services provided in the normal course of business, net of discounts, VAT and other sales related taxes.

(Continued)

1 Accounting policies

1.4 Resources expended

Resources expended are recognised in the period in which they are incurred except that production expenses are recognised in the period in which the production takes place.

Governance costs are those necessary for the charity to meet constitutional and statutory requirements and include any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities.

1.5 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Furniture and office equipment	20% reducing balance
Motor vehicles	20% reducing balance

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

1.6 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.7 Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE PERIOD ENDED
31 MARCH 2024**

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Charitable activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Activity costs	433,650	348,414
	<u>433,650</u>	<u>348,414</u>
Share of support costs (see note 4)	25,756	2,974
Share of governance costs (see note 4)	1,078	1,078
	<u>26,834</u>	<u>4,052</u>

Analysis by fund

Unrestricted funds	331,757	241,780
Restricted funds	128,727	110,686
	<u>460,484</u>	<u>352,466</u>

4 Support costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2024 £	2023 Basis of allocation
Sundry costs, travel, bank	25,756		25,756	2,974
Accountancy	0		0	0
Independent examination		1,078	1,078	1078 Governance

Analysed between				
Charitable activities	<u>25,756</u>	<u>1,078</u>	<u>26,834</u>	<u>4,052</u>

Governance costs include payments to the Independent Examiner of £1,078 including irrecoverable VAT (2023: £1,078)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

5 Trustees

Trustees remuneration for the year was 0. (2023: 0)
Trustees remuneration may comprise fees paid to Trustees, where they provide professional services to the Charity. No Trustee was paid to act as a Trustee.

6 Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	31,475	4,805
Accrued income	0	20,714
HMRC	77,800	77,434
	<u>109,275</u>	<u>102,953</u>

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Notes	2024	2023
		£	£
Trade creditors		15,808	24,942
Accruals		38,271	49,854
HMRC		12,185	5,526
Provisions		-	-
		<u>66,264</u>	<u>80,322</u>

8 Employees

The average monthly number of employees was 5 (2023:2). Total salaries and benefits paid to key management personnel were £66,292 (2023: £34,698) with no individual paid more than £37,923 (2023: £34,698).

9 Limited by guarantee

The charitable company is constituted as a company limited by guarantee. In the event of winding up the liability of the guarantors is limited to £1 each.