



Forces Online CIO

Unit 5, Workshed Carriage Works
London Street, Swindon
Wiltshire, SN1 5DG.

Telephone: 0300 300 2288

Registered Charity: 1188955 (England & Wales) SC050678 (Scotland)



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 07 April 2020 Period start date. To 06 April 2021 Period end date.

Charity name: Forces Online CIO

Charity Registration Number: 1188955

Objectives and Activities

Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document (SORP reference Para 1.17.)

The purpose of the Charity as set out in the governing body is: "The Relief of Former Armed Forces Service Personnel, who are in need by reason of age, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage in particular but not exclusively by providing them with help and assistance and by offering them a sign posting service to expert support providers for their benefit".

Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts. (Para 1.17 and 1.19)

The main activity of the charity is the provision of forcesonline.org.uk which is the main charity website which displays Forces Online's contact details and Veterans Directory, with its United Kingdom wide County Page directory, where each county has a local community linked page with its own email. It is therefore possible to see where support requests are coming from by county.

The virtualhub.uk is a Covid19 safe online Veteran's portal, which is available for a minimum of 52 hours a week run by volunteers. The VirtualHub is utilised by the Welfare Team as a counselling and as a virtual drop-in tool, handling the full spectrum of veterans and family support issues and enquiries. The VirtualHub is further by departments for secure, safe meetings, training and general day-to-day administration of the charity.

The welfaresupport.net is the dedicated Forces Online Welfare Team website, which has a full online secure referral application form, guidance notes and welfare benefits which can be seen at <https://www.welfaresupport.net>. This is managed by the Head of Welfare Wendy Powell-Jones. Wendy has previously worked for the NHS as a qualified Senior Practitioner/Counsellor. Wendy is currently managing a

team of voluntary Counsellors and Welfare Workers who offer a wide range of services and support.

Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit (Para 1.18)

Forces Online CIO confirms that the three Trustees listed below have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit, and that due regard was discussed prior to the conversion of Forces Online CIC to Forces Online CIO moving from Companies House to the Charity Commission.

Additional information (optional)

Policy on grant making (Para 1.38)

Forces Online CIO policy for the financial year 2020/2021 for grant making. Currently managed by the board of Trustees and Head of Welfare. In year two the objective is to have in place/operational a grant management team consisting of a minimum three trustees (welfare, finance, Tom Howat Memorial Hardship Fund (THMHF), members)).

Policy on social investment including program related investment (Para 1.38)

Forces Online CIO does not have a policy on social investment including program related investment in its current financial year.

Contribution made by volunteers (Para 1.38)

Initially the Charity which was incorporated on the 7th of April 2020 had a small handful of volunteers including the Trustees, two of whom were engaged in developing the main forces online website. Additional tasks associated with the Trustees was to find volunteers for several key positions. In the current year of operations which has been severely restricted by the Covid19 pandemic. It was agreed by the trustees to recruit more volunteers for the online positions only, and form departments required to manage our front-line services.

During the year Forces Online recruited a Head of Merchandising, a Head of Welfare, a Head of Friendship, other operational positions such as Networking, Marketing, HR, Finance, etc. These were not successfully covered, in that these people did not have enough time to fulfil their roles. Other volunteers that have been around for a while within our social media administration are still casually helping. It is expected that some of the newer volunteers will move to Trustee positions. Volunteers are being recruited from all over the United Kingdom. The three starting trustees carried over from directorships of the CIC (Community Interest

Company) already headed up Legal, IT and Web Administration and managing VSC (Veterans Support Coordinators) Volunteers.

The Forces Online Founder has researched the main structural roles to move the charity forward which are:

- Management/Administration/Operations – In Place.
- Personnel and Human Resources - Ongoing
- Marketing, Communications and Campaigning - Ongoing
- Volunteer Management – In Place
- Policy Development and Research – In Place
- Fundraising – In Place
- Grants Officers/Advisors – Ongoing

Achievements and Performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole. (Para 1.20)

Prior to the Forces Online CIO registration, the director's decision was to close Holly Court and move all the operational activities online, with the volunteers working from home. In April 2020 the Veterans Virtual Hub was launched and initially setup to give help, support and guidance to veterans and their dependants in a Covid19 safe manner. The communication methods were reviewed and the 0300 300 2288 telephone number replaced the old 0845 number to make it cheaper for Veterans to communicate by phone with the team.

The LiveChat service provided by Chat Heroes (which is an external organisation that provides experienced operators to answer enquiries from the main Forces Online website and will be added to all future web sites within the group). The forcesonline.org.uk site has been slowly developed and monitored to increase the number of people using the service. The WebHQ team can see the region where people visiting the website are from.

The VirtualHub has been adopted for training and administrative duties and open for veterans and their dependants to drop-in daily and during a couple of evenings a week. The VirtualHub is recognised by and listed on ASDICs website. Asdic.org.uk. This can be accessed via a PC, Laptop, Phone, Tablet and a Facebook Portal device which needs very little technical knowledge.

The welfaresupport.net is a dedicated Forces Online Welfare service web site which was launched to provide access to FOL welfare systems. The team under the management of Wendy Powell-Jones formed the service which can be accessed on or offline with a referral process that is

accessible to beneficiaries, their dependants, close military friends and other armed forces community organisations. The services provide support for veteran's dependants (including spouses, children and parents). This service has received referrals in from other organisations regarding family support and veteran's themselves some of whom are currently members of COBSEO cobseo.org.uk

The Welfare team has been busy developing various services and since its start in January 2021 to date has had 94 live cases, 7 have been complex Military PTSD. Out of the 94 cases, 79 of these were veterans with the remaining being dependants. The VirtualHub environment and other communication methods have been employed by the Welfare Team.

The ages of and service status of people asking for help and support has been 18-90+, from all three services.

All three active websites within the Forces Online service now have LiveChat on them provided by Chat Heroes and is very responsive in that we strive to engage with people contacting LiveChat within 20 minutes of receiving the enquiry or support request. Welfare has provided risk and first response training to our VirtualHub operators. Forces Online provides support for veterans and their dependants across the whole of the United Kingdom, and our current list of beneficiaries bears testament to this. With the cooperation of both the VirtualHub and Welfare Support the organisation has spoken to actual veterans in hospitals, at their bedside.

On the main forcesonline.org.uk site services are slowly being developed to quickly answer and manage enquiries, we have many enquiries regarding medals, about family members/dependants of those that served the UK Armed Forces, pensions and other financial circumstances and hardship. Some self-help sections have been created on the main Forces Online website, such as medals forcesonline.org.uk/military-medals where Forces Online is working in partnership with medal-locator.com for specialist medal loss and found advice. Other sections include forcesonline.org.uk/tracing-family-records.

In all our enquiry-based communication's we use our extensive knowledge and expertise to give very concise and professional based answers. All welfare requests are directed to our own in-house welfare team through the welfaresupport.net/referral link, where a full assessment of needs may be conducted by the welfare team to find the best possible support outcome, some of which occasionally get sign-posted to other professionally approved organisations. Our extensive documents relating to care and support first shown to the Charity Commission in the application to convert our CIC to a CIO has been adopted as the guiding welfare document. Appendix 2.

There is a media pack which can be accessed at Appendix 3.

It is expected that Forces Online CIO will make an application to join Cobseo <https://www.cobseo.org.uk> following this annual report being published following their guidance of running the charity for at least 12 months with a first return and accounts filed with the charity commission.

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period (Para 1.21)

The charity founder, Len initially pledged to keep the charity afloat in any lean periods. Working in Covid19 restricted conditions was initially hard when the Charity was formed. Forces Online CIO converted from Forces Online CIC and all the resources and assets were transferred to the charity. Since then, there has been opportunities to fund some of the various activities through Facebook, PayPal, Amazon, Merchandise, and some smaller donations and support from the social media members groups. One of our directors/trustees, David, has been involved in the plight of Commonwealth soldiers legally challenging their right to live in the United Kingdom with heavy financial penalties and funding was raised for the legal team of the Commonwealth8.

The funding granted by Forces Online and thus gained Grand Aid. The income from fundraising and other services has been greatly reduced because of Covid19 (reduced our development and growth where in reality we have more demand for our services). The trustees realised that whilst there is plenty of opportunity for Grant Funding however, most of the organisations require a minimum of one/two years filed accounts.

The trustees have worked hard on the structure of the charity, and it was agreed to start the formation of the grant funding department at the start of year two.

Appendix 1 – Statement of Accounts.

Append

Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held (Para 1.21)

Appendix 4

The Forces Online Reserves Policy.

Amount of reserves held (Para 1.41)

An amount of £2,000 was agreed in the trustees meeting on the 21/04/2021. Currently where there is a short fall in the interim period it was agreed that the Founder Len would provide any financial assistance with money earned through his current employment.

Details of fund materially in deficit (Para 1.41)

None.

Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern (Para 1.41)

The current concerns are the continued uncertainties that the current Covid19 pandemic cause.

Additional Information (optional)

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising (Para1.47)

At the start of the year of the Charity Forces Online applied to various giving sources including eBay, PayPal, Facebook and Amazon, all of which were successful and small monthly donations were granted to the charity.

<https://www.forcesonline.org.uk/funding> Forces Online is listed on the Funding Regulators website Appendix 5.

During the previous year Forces Online (2019-2020) had worked in Scotland under the CIC constitution. In various locations throughout Scotland at Shopping Centres to raise awareness and the organisation profile. Following the conversion to a charity Forces Online applied to OSCR to register in Scotland and this was confirmed on the 21st January 2021.

The Forces Online CIO merchandising department which is based in Wednesfield (West Midlands) was formed in 2021 and became new source of funding.

During the Covid19 Lockdown periods two other websites have been developed which has served to increase the awareness of the charity; the Covid safe <https://www.virtualhub.uk> and the <https://www.welfaresupport.net> dedicated Welfare site.

Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted (Para 1.46)

Nothing in this period.

A description of principle risks facing the charity (Para 1.46)

The principle risks facing the charity are financial and welfare of our operational teams (during this pandemic) are our largest risks.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of Charities Trusts

Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter) Para 1.25

Not Applicable

How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO) Para 1.25

The charity is constituted as a CIO <https://myfol.uk/cioconstitution.pdf>

Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees (Para 1.25)

7th April 2020 – 7th April 2021 it was decided that the three directors from the conversion from the Community Interest Company to the new CIO will become Trustees of Forces Online CIO. Next year the organisation will open its doors to new trustees and the implementation of a wider membership system. The CIC directors will take up the position of trustees for Forces Online CIO from April 2021.

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees (Para 1.51)

During the year the trustees introduced new people into the operational structure on a probationary period. The volunteers ranging from welfare, merchandising, accounts, HR and Administrative included policy makers whom, assisted the trustees in forming the departments required to support veterans and their families across the whole of the United Kingdom. The volunteers will be considered for trustees' applications after April 2021.

Forces Online has an online application process, which conducts checks on references and DBSs. People connecting with the organisation are expected to complete a minimum three-month probationary period and sign a

confidentiality agreement before any contracts relating to voluntary employment are issued.

During the latter part of the year training on risk and first response was available and utilised by personnel working in Welfare-VirtualHub. The training was conducted by the Head of Welfare.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity Name – Forces Online CIO

Other Names the Charity Uses – Forces Online

Registered Charity Number 1188955

Charity's principal address Unit 5 Workshed Carriage Works, London Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 4GW.

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

Trustee Name	Office if any	Dates acted if not for the whole year	Name of person (or body entitled to appoint trustees)
Len Chappell	Founder/Chair/Voluntary CEO		Len Chappell
Michael Emm	Trustee/Voluntary Assistant CEO		
David McMullen	Trustees Voluntary Head of Legal Services		

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustee report above:

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature

Full Name: Leonard William Chappell

Position: Chair during April 2020 – April 2021

29th December 2021

Appendixes

Appendix 1 – Financial Statement

The accounts were input by Mr L Chappell on-a-daily basis into a Sage Accounts Program.

Mr Keith Shields has prepared and audited financial returns for Forces Online CIO period April 20 – April 2021 as attached and certified 29th December 2021.

Accounts Here

Appendix 2 - <https://myfol.uk/forcesonlinecioaimsmaster.pdf>

Appendix 3 – <https://www.forcesonline.org.uk/mediapack>

Appendix 4 - <https://myfol.uk/reservespolicy.pdf>

Appendix 5 - <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/directory/forces-online-cio>

Period Year to Date 2020 31 March

Sales

Donations	13219.96	13219.96
Grants	38872.50	38872.50
Fund Gener	23727.79	23727.79
Charitable A	1163.78	1163.78
	76984.03	76984.03

Purchases

Charitable E	52002.89	52002.89
Cost of Chal	307.76	307.76
	52310.65	52310.65

Direct Expenses

Charitable E	10933.69	10933.69
Cost of Func	-27.91	-27.91
Cost of Func	12500.76	12500.76
	23406.54	23406.54

Gross Profit/(Loss):	1266.84	1266.84
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Overheads

Support Cos	-4680.20	-4680.20
Support Cos	445.67	445.67
Support Cos	2429.50	2429.50
Support Cos	86.00	86.00
Support Cos	89.00	89.00
Managemer	41.00	41.00
Managemer	591.86	591.86
	-997.17	-997.17

Net Profit/(Loss):	2264.01	2264.01
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Examination by KTR Shields



Jan 25, 22

Period Year to Date 31 March 2021

Fixed Assets

Office Equi	683.33	683.33	
	683.33		683.33

Current Assets

Bank Accou	1470.68	1470.68	
	1470.68		1470.68

Current Liabilities

	0.00		0.00
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Current Assets less C	1470.68		1470.68
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Total Assets less Curi	2154.01		2154.01
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Long Term Liabilities

Creditors :	-110.00	-110.00	
	-110.00		-110.00

Total Assets less Total	2264.01		2264.01
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Capital & Reserves

P & L Accou	2264.01	2264.01	
	2264.01		2264.01

Examination by KTR Shields



Jan 25, 22



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Forces Online CIO

On accounts for the year
ended

April 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1188955

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/01/2021**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:

Date: 25/01/2022

Name:

Mr. K.T.R. Shields

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Address:

29 Ida Road

Skegness, Lincolnshire

PE25 2AU

Section B

Disclosure

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

I used the Reasonableness test 1st to ensure that the charity cost of goods reflect their revenue. My findings were that while purchase for resale were relatively low the revenue was fair for the current Covid climate.
I also assessed the collections and payments procedures from fundraisers, this was addressed as a are that needed more security procedures and monitoring this has been implemented by the trustees.

Keith T R Shields 25/001/2022

Direction 1: Check whether the charity is eligible to have an independent examination.

- 1.1 The charity's turnover is below the £250,000 however it is over £25,000 on this basis Forces Online CIC is eligible for an independent review.
- 1.2 The charity's gross income and aggregate value of assets are below the threshold for audit for the reporting period (April 2020 -April 2021) and allows the trustees an independent examination.
- 1.3 The Accounts have been prepared on a Sage accountancy program on a receipts and payments basis. Where Trial balance and financial reports have been verified by me as an independent inspector.
- 1.4 This is not required by the charity as, verified by the accounts and the board of trustees. The charity does not pass the £1m threshold.
- 1.5 The charity at the point in time has no subsidiary branches to account for.
- 1.6 The charity has no branches to consider now.
- 1.7 The accounts are prepared receipts and payments basis using Sage accountancy software.
- 1.8 Mr K T R Shields is inspecting and reviewing the working from Mr L Chappell whom input the accounts to sage manages the Accounts/Banking (as C.E.O Founder Trustee).
- 1.9 Nil.
- 1.10 Bank statements have been verified against the sage accounts package for income.
- 1.11 The charity is below the Audit require threshold of £250,00.
- 1.12 N/A.
- 1.13 This is not registered as a company and as such not required.
- 1.14 N/A
- 1.15 The trustees elected at trustee meeting held in Dec 2020 to elect Mr K T R Shields to perform an independent examination, (under section 133).
- 1.16 I have verified that the charity is compliant in its needs to submit an independent examination as per the current thresholds for audit are not exceeded. These thresholds are currently set out in section 144 of the Charities Act.
- 1.17 NO requirement has been found to indicate a Financial Audit is required.

2 Direction 2: Check for any conflict of interest that prevents the examiner from carrying out their independent examination.

- 2.1 I can confirm I am acting as an independent examiner and as such am not a material donor to the charity.
- 2.2 I have not at any point influenced, or perceived to be influenced, by either close personal relationships with the trustees of the charity or by a day-to-day involvement in the administration of the charity.
- 2.3 N/A
- 2.4 I confirm that I am not involved in the day to day running of the charity have been invited as guest to the Trustee meeting in December 2021 & Jan 2022 to validate my position (as a Independent Examiner) & meet the Trustees.
- 2.5 I have verified the workings of the charity accounts input by Mr L Chappell.
- 2.6 I have under the instruction of the Chair & Founder prepared from the sage accounts & records the Statutory accounts 2020-2021. Said accounts have been reviewed & approved by the trustees.
- 2.7 I have pointed more useful methods of entry for the accounts.
- 2.8 I Do not consider myself to have any conflict in my duty as a Independent Examiner.
- 2.9 I have no close relationship to any member of the Trustee board.
- 2.10 No task has been delegated by me during this examination.
- 2.11 I comply with the requirements of section 145(1)(a) of the Charities Act 201.

Direction 3: Record your independent examination.

- 3.1 I can confirm I have kept Sage copies & notes on my accounting examination.
- 3.2 I will retain said records for a period of 6 years.
- 3.3 Working papers.

- 3.3.1 My communication with the trustees which confirms their appointment as the independent examiner
- 3.3.2 confirmation that the charity is eligible for the independent examination and that that an audit is not required by law,
- 3.3.3 A copy of charity's governing document.
- 3.3.4 My notes as to how any areas of concern identified have been resolved.
- 3.3.5 verification procedures used • where verification procedures have been used, details of checks or vouching carried out during the examination, the conclusions reached, and any areas of concern identified. (This was again confirmed y using Sage Audit & Banking records with Invoices for validity).
- 3.3.6 My conclusion & findings as reported.

Direction 6: Check that the accounts are consistent with the accounting records..

- 6.1 I find that the accounting procedure could be more secure in the field of collections as this is area that the security is not 100% Since discussions new security protocols & monitoring have been implemented.
- 6.2 Record of sales & Purchase receipts are held at the charity Head Office.
- 6.3 Nil
- 6.4 Manual records were compared to computerised records & Statements.
- 6.5 I have reviewed the Accounts software in doing so reconciled journal entries, to check the accuracy of the transactions entered against the source record or documentary evidence. A review of bank reconciliations.
- 6.6 No concerns were raised.