



begin well

The Starting Blocks for Family Life

Begin Well Annual Report

2024-25



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Charity Information, Structure, Governance & Management

Registered Office

West Hill House
West Hill
WRAXALL
BS48 1PH

Email info@beginwell.org.uk

Website www.beginwell.org.uk

Trustees

Louise Hughes BSc(Hons) MBBS MRCOG
Karen Egitto BSc (Hons) SCPHN MSc
Elizabeth Thomas BA(Hons) PGCE (until end January 2025)
Katie Meredith BSc (Hons) (From 16 April 2024)

Volunteer Co-ordinator

Naomi Shaw (part time)

Charity Administrator

Cheryl Jenkinson (part-time)

Volunteer Lead Facilitators

Erica King - Barnstaple - Facilitator
Timi Booy - Bristol (Backwell) - Facilitator
Jess Higgins - Bristol (Field) - Facilitator
Sophie Milne - Bristol (Field) - Facilitator
Rosanna Wills - Exeter (Alphington) - Facilitator
Annie Milverton - Exeter (Alphington) - Cover Facilitator
Amy Davis - Exeter (Belmont) - Facilitator
Viki Fry - Exeter (Pinhoe) - Co-Facilitator
Katie Meredith - Exeter (Pinhoe) - Co-Facilitator
Emma Mitchell - Exeter (Trinity) - Facilitator
Jan Miles - Paignton (Bay) - Co-Facilitator
Anna Harris - Paignton (Bay) - Co-Facilitator
Trudy Warren - Plymouth (Chaddlewood) - Facilitator
Claire Wadsworth - Plymouth (Plymstock) - Facilitator
Kirsty Hammond - Sidmouth - Facilitator
Debbie Martin - Tiverton - Facilitator

Charity Structure

Begin Well is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (registered number 1190047), which was founded in 2018 and registered with the Charity Commission in 2020, in order to provide local antenatal courses based on an NHS model. Begin Well works to help pregnant women and their partners build a happy family life rooted in local communities.

The Objects of the charity are:

- 1.To preserve and protect the mental and physical health of pregnant women in particular, but not exclusively, through the provision of education, information, physical, emotional and spiritual support during pregnancy;
- 2.To preserve and protect the mental and physical health of parents in particular, but not exclusively, through the provision of education, information, physical, emotional and spiritual support during pregnancy.
3. The trustees meet at least four times a year to discuss relevant matters such as current operations, future courses, and funding.

Risk Management

The trustees have reviewed the major risks and have policies and procedures in place to mitigate these risks.

Trustees' Report

Statement of Public Benefit

The Trustees have complied with their legal duty under the Charities' Act to have regard for the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Fundraising and Communications

This year the charity's fundraising has included donations from individual donors, income from church partnerships' training fees, course handbooks and licensing agreements. This year the income raised from this has been £20,434 - an increase of £14,477 on 2023-2024.

This year we have started using a self-employed grant writer to assist us in our applications. This has been successful with 3 substantial grants being donated through their work.

We are fortunate to have a few individuals who continue to generously support the work. All individual donors are thanked personally, when possible, and also sent the regular newsletters and updates.

Further fundraising is done on an ad-hoc basis and by asking for donations from supporters and course attendees through newsletters and social media.

Financial Review (including Reserves Policy)

The total income of £20,434 of unrestricted funds has been received by the charity this year. Begin Well has no debts or other liabilities, and holds no reserves or investment assets. Begin Well aims to build sufficient reserves for between three and six months' operating costs.



Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the group and charity and of application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently; make judgements and accounting 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and 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.

Financial statements are published on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements, which may vary from legislation in other jurisdictions. The maintenance and integrity of the charity's website is the responsibility of the trustees. The trustees' responsibility also extends to the ongoing integrity of the financial statements contained therein.

Chair of Trustees' Report on the Work

This has been a year of growth for Begin Well. We have run 25 courses and supported over 500 parents to be across the South West.

We are very grateful for the continued generosity of our donors, for the hard work and commitment of our small staff team, and for the time and expertise of all our volunteers in our church partnerships.



Reflection on the last 12 months activity

In the last report plans were made for the next 12 months 2024-2025

- **Update of Training Materials**

- In 2024-2025, all Begin Well course materials were re-written, there was further filming of course videos and the handbooks for both parents and volunteers were updated. The new curriculum was launched in Autumn 2024.

- **Training of existing teams on new materials**

- All existing teams were trained to use the new materials, with over 70 volunteers attending our Training Update days in both Devon and Bristol.

- **Onboarding and training of new teams**

- We aimed to start courses in 5 new churches. In the end we managed to do this with 2 new churches in Bristol and 3 in Devon. This involved Safer Recruitment of all volunteers from those churches, and training of every team member.

- **Volunteer Conference**

- In January 2025 we held a day conference for all new and existing church volunteers. We invited Restore Charity (who work with domestic violence survivors) to speak. It is known that women in pregnancy and post-partum are at higher risk of domestic violence. This session equipped our volunteers with knowledge and skills on supporting pregnant women in this situation. We are grateful to Exeter Diocese for their support in hosting the conference day.



Reflection on the last 12 months activity continued...

- **Diversify and secure further funding streams**

- This year we have started to diversify our income and funding streams, and make plans to apply for larger grants.
- Trustees have reviewed the licence fee and made plans for 2025-2026 to ensure that it is financially in line with similar charities.
- Increased Administration support enabled Begin Well to chase all outstanding invoices and ensure all churches were up to date on payments.
- Individual donations continued to be part of our income stream, and we thank individuals for their generous support.
- Our income from grant making organisations and individuals increased this year due to the hard work and expertise of our fundraiser. Although this raised the staff costs, the investment resulted in a significant increase in our income from grants.
- Begin Well has started to use a QR code slide at the end of each course to make it easy for those who want to donate. We seek to provide each course for free to the prospective parents and to limit cash handling by individual course facilitators. The QR code has started to increase donations from participants who wish to express their thanks financially.

- **Build financial reserves**

- Begin Well has increased its income this year and has started to build limited financial reserves. The aim is to build reserves for 3-6 months of operating costs over the coming year.

- **Development of the Administrator role**

- The administrator role has expanded to include book-keeping to help with the smooth running of the charity finances.

- **Training and development of the Trustee board**

- Begin Well was a finalist in the 2024 Cinnamon Incubator programme (November 2024). This has been hugely beneficial to the Trustee board and the charity. As part of the Cinnamon Incubator programme we have received regular coaching sessions, a residential training programme (February 2025) and support from mentors.
- Active recruitment of new Trustees has taken place and we welcomed Katie Meredith to the board in April 2024.
- The Trustees would like to extend our thanks to Liz Thomas who has been a Trustee and supporter since the conception of Begin Well. She is stepping down to further support her family commitments and we are grateful to all that she has given to the charity over the years.

• Other Activities

- In March 2025 we ran a Begin Well Midwife and Healthcare Professionals Retreat. This was hosted by Reverend Claire Curtis in Tiverton, Devon. The NHS is a challenging place to work and this retreat gave time for the health care professionals who volunteer for Begin Well to recharge physically, spiritually and mentally.
- Begin Well was shortlisted and invited to be part of the Cinnamon Incubator Programme. This started in October 2024 and included a training residential covering topics such as replication, safeguarding, marketing, fundraising, using data and governance. We will have regular coaching sessions and hope that this external input will continue to strengthen the trustee and operational team.
- Begin Well was invited to take part in an interview with UCB radio to share the work which we are doing.
- We ran a midwife training event to train our volunteer midwives on the new material and to support them in its delivery.
- Begin Well was invited to the Bishops' Study Day in Exeter (November 2024) to share the work which it is doing and to inspire other churches to be involved.
- Begin Well took part in the Tree Fest at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. This was to raise awareness of Begin Well as we start to run courses in Bristol.



Highlights

"Just all of it really was brilliant!!! Has really taken away anxiety, made me feel more prepared and less scared, helped me realise how trustworthy midwives and medical teams are and made me feel in safe hands. Feel really excited now!"

"This is such a valuable thing to find freely offered within our community, it feels rare to have such an opportunity and I'm sure so many people benefit from it. I know friends in other areas of the country where there is no such provision so we feel really lucky. It was such an added bonus having kind and approachable people leading it."

"Left the course feeling a lot more confident about becoming a parent and how to handle a newborn! So grateful for the help and support"



Plans for the next 12 months 2025-2026

- **Onboarding and training of new teams**
 - As Begin Well grows we aim to start courses in 5 new churches over the next year. This will involve Safer Recruitment of all volunteers from those churches and training of every team.
- **Governance**
 - Begin Well will review its policies and guidelines and seek to sharpen its onboarding training, handbook and processes.
- **Update Day and Volunteers Conference**
 - In January 2026 there will be an Update day and conference for all new and existing churches.
- **Cinnamon Incubator Programme**
 - The Begin Well Trustee team will continue to be part of the incubator programme. This will involve regular coaching sessions and a training residential in February 2026.
- **Safeguarding**
 - As part of our participation in Cinnamon Incubator Programme we will have external safeguarding training, a safeguarding review and a report by the safeguarding organisation 31:8.
 - We will review our DBS provider and our safeguarding training to our teams.
- **Website Review and Refresh**
 - Our website has not been changed since the start of Begin Well. As part of our marketing we will update the website to make it more accessible and user friendly.
- **Diversify and secure further funding streams**
 - Begin Well will continue to diversify its income streams.
 - The two-year licence fee for churches who run Begin Well will be reviewed.
 - Begin Well provides all courses for no cost to the individual. However some attendees wish to donate money in appreciation. Begin Well will continue to provide QR codes and other methods of receiving donations from course attendees. We seek to be financially robust and to limit cash handling by individual course facilitators.
- **Strengthening Connections**
 - Over the next year Begin Well will continue to strengthen existing relationships and make new connections with other organisations working within the same field.

Annual Accounts

Statement of Activity

3 April, 2024-2 April, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
Income	
Accounts Package Overpayment Refund	123.00
Donations Received Through Stewardship	5,994.54
Grants from Trusts	8,300.00
Initial Training	540.00
Licence Fee	3,000.00
Monthly Giving Income	2,797.00
One-off Gifts	2,535.00
Sales of Curriculum Resources	1,576.00
Total for Income	£24,865.54
Gross Profit	£24,865.54
Expenses	
Accounts Package	246.00
Cinnamon Network Mentoring Programme	660.00
Course Books Delivery Costs	46.02
DBS Checks	399.84
Filming of Course Videos	4,058.75
Insurances	242.32
Printing of Course Books	3,036.20
Raising funds	1,020.00
Stewardship Wage Payroll Services	10,403.64
Subscriptions	5.00
Volunteer Training and Retreat Days	317.00
Total for Expenses	£20,434.77
Net Operating Income	£4,430.77
Net Other Income	
Net Income	£4,430.77

Annual Accounts continued

Statement of Financial Position

3 April, 2024-2 April, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
Fixed Asset	
Total for Fixed Asset	
Cash at bank and in hand	
Begin Well Current	7,621.96
Total for Cash at bank and in hand	£7,621.96
Debtors	
Current Assets	
NET CURRENT ASSETS	£7,621.96
NET CURRENT ASSETS (LIABILITIES)	£7,621.96
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	£7,621.96
TOTAL NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES)	£7,621.96
Capital and Reserves	
Opening Balance Equity	3,191.19
Retained Earnings	4,395.77
Net Income	35.00
Total for Capital and Reserves	£7,621.96

Annual Accounts continued

Notes to the Accounts

Begin Well (CIO) – Registered Charity No. 1190047

For the year ended 2 April 2025

1. Basis of preparation

These accounts have been prepared on the receipts and payments (cash) basis, which records income when received and expenditure when paid.

2. Reporting period

The accounts cover the period 3 April 2024 to 2 April 2025.

3. Funds

All receipts and payments in the period relate to the charity's unrestricted funds. No restricted funds were held or operated during the year.

4. Analysis of receipts (income)

Total receipts for the year were £24,865.54, analysed as follows:

- Barnstaple Licence Regular Giving: £420.00
- Begin Well Licence Fee (and Training): £1,665.00
- Gift through Stewardship: £5,994.54
- Grant Funding/Charitable Trusts: £8,300.00
- One off Gifts: £870.00
- Refund for overpayment: £123.00
- Regular Giving Donation: £2,377.00
- Sales: £5,116.00

5. Analysis of payments (expenditure)

Total payments for the year were £20,434.77, analysed as follows:

- Stewardship Wage Payment Services: £10,403.64
- Cinnamon Network Mentor Programme: £660.00
- DBS: £399.84
- Filming of Course Content: £4,058.75
- Insurances: £242.32
- Printing and Posting of Course Handbooks: £2,792.60
- Printing, Postage and Stationery: £115.62
- Publicity: £174.00
- QuickBooks Accounts Package: £246.00
- Raising funds: £1,020.00
- Subscription: £5.00
- Volunteer Training Day Costs: £317.00

6. Net receipts for the year

Net receipts for the year were £4,430.77 (receipts £24,865.54 less payments £20,434.77).

7. Bank and cash

At the year end, the charity held cash at bank of £7,621.96 (Begin Well Current).

Annual Accounts continued

8. Reconciliation of funds to cash at bank

Opening funds brought forward: £3,156.19

Net receipts for the year: £4,430.77

Additional income received (Barnstaple Church donation): £35.00

Closing funds carried forward (equal to cash at bank): £7,621.96

9. Trustees and governance

Trustees during the year were: Louise Hughes, Karen Egitto, Elizabeth Thomas (until end January 2025), Katie Meredith (from 16 April 2024).

The trustees met at least four times a year.

No trustee received remuneration for services as a trustee during the year.

Trustee expenses reimbursed during the year: £0

10. Related party transactions

Related parties include trustees, close family members, and any organisations they control.

The charity had no related party transactions during the year.

11. Employees

The charity had the following part-time paid roles during the year:

- Volunteer Co-ordinator: Naomi Shaw (part time)

- Charity Administrator: Cheryl Jenkinson (part-time)

Employment costs are included within Stewardship Wage Payment Services (see Note 5).

12. Commitments and contingencies

At the reporting date the charity had no material commitments or contingencies.

Book-keeping and Accounts Prepared by:

Cheryl Jenkinson, Charity Administrator

Accounts Agreed and Signed by:

Louise Hughes, Trustee

28th January 2026

