

LEEDS AFRICAN COMMUNITIES CHARITY TRUST (LACT)



ANNUAL REPORT & INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

The Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust (LACT) is a legally constituted, voluntary organisation in Leeds, West Yorkshire, established for the purpose of serving as the umbrella body for the diverse African community groups that are operating across the City.

It was registered with the UK Charity Commission on 20th October 2020 as a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**, and granted Charity Status Number **1191879** to *advance education for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively, by providing information, advice, and guidance for people of African origin or descent in Leeds; and prevent or relieve poverty for people of African origin or descent in poverty or need, due to their economic and social circumstances in Leeds by providing food items, clothing and toiletries; as well as advice and guidance in particular but not exclusively, for the public benefit in collaboration with other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty.*

The Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust, previously known as the Leeds African Communities Network, was born in 2019, after a series of meetings organised by a group of concerned Africans, who initially came together under the auspices of Councillor Abigail Marshall Katung to discuss the spate of xenophobic violence in South Africa against African migrants.

Our Values

We are a values-based organisation. Respect for human rights and the protection of personal and collective freedoms underpin our standards of behaviour, and we are strongly committed to upholding the following values:

Integrity: We strive to consistently do the right thing, guided by a strong personal and collective moral compass. We endeavour to be fair, honest and truthful in everything we do.

Accountability: We take our mandate seriously and engender accountability mechanisms in our decisions, behaviours and their outcomes, acting in the best interest of our members.

Respect: We inculcate self-respect and are mindful of the feelings, beliefs, views and cultural expressions of others, even when they differ from our own.

Altruism: We give of our time, expertise, talents and material contributions in pursuit of the greater good of others and will make the sacrifices necessary for the achievement of our goals.

Professionalism: We uphold the highest standards of behaviour and draw from our combined mastery of various fields to provide an exceptional service to our people.

Ubuntu: We work in the African spirit of Ubuntu, steeped in the understanding of the interconnectedness of all human beings. We merit collaboration, promoting the spirit of mutual respect as we take a holistic approach to delivering exceptional value to our people.

STRATEGIC AIMS

The Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust is striving to achieve the following:

To provide a dynamic, supportive and innovative service for the wellbeing of our African communities.

Be a catalyst for community cohesion and development.

To become the African voice – providing a larger and stronger participation and representation of all things African.

To promote good citizenship and make a positive contribution to society,

Draw attention to contributions made by the African diaspora, leveraging these for the empowerment of members and their communities.

To grow a strong and sustainable organisation in service to all members.

GOVERNANCE

In the financial year ended 31st March 2025, the Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust (LACT) was governed and managed by a Board of Trustees and co-opted members, comprising of:

Abdul Rashid Thomas (Sierra Leonean) – Chair

Victoria Ajayi (Nigerian) - Vice Chair

Lucy Ndlovu – Communications Officer (Resigned from the Board in 2024)

Sekou Toure (Ivory Coast Community)

Mohamed Dawo (Sierra Leone Progressive Union)

Yankuba Sawo (Gambian Community Association)

Paul Njoroge – (Kenyan community)

Ben Izuagie (Nigerian Community Leeds)

Brouch Boggon – (Zimbabwean Community Leeds) Secretary (Resigned from the Board in 2024)

Hawa Bah (Guinean community)

Aissatou Turay (Ivorian Community)

Mingson Mingina (Congolese Community Association) – Resigned from the Board in 2024

Mrs Kaddy Jabang (Gambian Community) - **Resigned from the Board in 2024**

The following community leaders joined the Board as new members in 2024/2025:

Jennifer Irabor – Nigerian (As LACT Safeguarding Officer)

Henriette Kenga - representing the Congolese Community as their elected Chair.

Innocent Tasara representing the Zimbabwean Community as their elected Chair.

Alie Mahgoub – Chair of Leeds Refugee Forum

Mr Jamal Ali – Chair of Eritrean Community of Leeds

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

In this financial year 2024/2025, the Board of Trustees and co-opted members, continued to provide oversight of and accountability for the funds received by the Trust. It also ensured that the activities of the Trust were consistent with the objectives that are stated in its constitution, as approved by the Charity Commission.

The Board is the Executive Team that oversees the strategic management as well as day-to-day running of the Trust. Currently, these are all appointed volunteers drawn

from various communities, bringing their expertise together to manage the affairs of the Trust.

Many of the Board members listed above are elected chairpersons or representatives of their respective African community organisations in the city.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024/2025 FINANCIAL YEAR

In addition to receiving funding for the management of ongoing projects - discussed below, LACT received new funding this financial year to develop and deliver a Community Social Integration Project.

The aim of the project was to bring together residents of the Little London Community from across diverse backgrounds, discuss the history of the community and the extent to which lives in the community have changed.

Many of those who took part in the group discussions grew up in the community in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. School children from the local primary school discussed their lived experiences, and the changes they would like to see implemented for the community to become better integrated.

At the end of the project, a video was produced capturing highlights of the wide-ranging discussions, views and opinions about the meaning of community cohesion and how it can be achieved in a multi-cultural community.

It is hoped that the video can be used by local schools as part of their learning materials on civic and social education.

The Little London Community Food Pantry Project

A key objective of the Little London Food Pantry Project is to improve the quality of life for people in the community, by helping to minimise the impact of the rising cost-of-living on people's health and well-being.

The project is operated from a converted 40 feet shipping container, located in the car park of the Little London Community Centre. It is managed by the Chairman of the Leeds African Communities Charity Trust, with the assistance of volunteers, including Local Ward Councillors.

The Food Pantry is a membership-based service. Members pay a one-off membership fee of £1, along with a weekly contribution of £4 (paid every Friday) towards the costs of running the pantry. In return, they receive a bag of groceries and other non-food items which would normally cost about £30 to £40 in the supermarkets.

In this financial year ended 31st March 2025, the number of people receiving groceries and essential non-foods household items at the Little London Community Food Pantry dropped from over 1,800 to about 1500.

This decline was the result of the decision of the pantry management to end its city-wide service, to focus primarily on residents of the Little London, Woodhouse and city centre ward, due to reduction in funding.

In this financial year also, the management of the Food Pantry ended its groceries purchasing contract with Rethink to reduce spending on stock.

Since January 2025, the pantry management started giving £5 Aldi shopping vouchers to service users to help supplement their weekly household shopping and give them freedom of choice. This decision will be reviewed at the end of 2025.

The Food Pantry Welcome Space Project

Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) continued to fund the Welcome Space project delivered by LACT at the Little London Community centre. The welcome space provided free refreshments every Friday, between 10am and 2pm - including hot meals, for service users and their families.

The aim of the welcome space project is to help build community cohesion and promote social inclusion, by bringing together, people of diverse social backgrounds to interact, share stories and experiences. This has helped to combat isolation and loneliness, as well as improve the mental wellbeing of people in the local communities.

Digital Inclusion Project

In November 2024, The Leeds African Communities Charity Trust received a £9,500 capital grant from 100% Digital Leeds (Leeds City Council) to buy laptops and tablets, and IT accessories for the purpose of setting up and delivering IT training at the Little London community centre, to increase digital inclusion for the people living in the community and surrounding areas.

Fifteen laptops, eight tablets and one charging station storage cabinet were purchased for the project in January 2025.

Increasing digital inclusion and participation will give people more equitable access to online services and resources. It will enable people to use digital tools and technology to increase their independence and their ability to make informed choices.

It will also increase people's ability to access a wide range of opportunities that may be available exclusively online, or which may be cheaper or more cost-effective if accessed online.

Due to limited access to the community centre, LACT has only been able to run the digital awareness training sessions on Fridays, during its food pantry opening hours (11am-2pm).

This has had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the project, as most service users are prioritising their food collection, rather than skills training.

LACT has also found it difficult to find volunteers to deliver the training. Due to lack of funding, it has not been possible to employ a paid IT trainer.

Fourteen people attended the training in this financial year, as plans are made to increase participation in 2025/2026.

The Little London Climate Action Project

In March 2024, the Leeds African Communities Charitable Trust and Together for Peace (T4P), jointly agreed to bring the Little London Climate Action Project to a close.

LACT refunded all underspend to T4P, after acting as the employer for the Project Worker and managing the project funding on behalf of the community-led project Steering Group.

The project finally ended in June 2024.

Listening Well Project

LACT continued its work in helping Voluntary Action Leeds in delivering its Listening Well project, by gathering the views and opinions of community residents using the food pantry, about their community.

OUR CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS (2025/2026)

Mr Abdul Rashid Thomas – Chairman

Mrs Victoria Ajayi – Vice Chair

Mr Yankuba sawo – Assistant Treasurer

Dr Mohamed Dawo – Chair of Sierra Leone Community

Ms Aissatou Toure – Ivorian Community

Mr Paul Njoroge – Kenyan Community

Henriette Kenga – Chair of Congolese Community

Mr Sekou Toure – Ivorian Community

Mrs Hawa Bah – Guinean Community

Dr Innocent Tasara – Chair of Zimbabwean Community of Leeds

Mr Jamal Ali – Chair of Eritrean Community of Leeds

Dr Jennifer Grace Irabor – Safeguarding Policy Officer

Ms Sarata Sawo – Gambian Community

Mr Ben Izuagie – Chair of Nigerian Community of Leeds

Mr Alie Mahgoub – Chair of Leeds Refugee Forum

Ms Joetrice Kangbai – LACT Secretariat

OUR GRAND PATRON

Lord Mayor of Leeds (2024/2025) – Councillor Abigail Marshall Katung

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS – 2024/2025

INCOME & EXPENDITURE	2023/2024	2024/2025
OPENING BALANCE - 1 APRIL	29,291.00	15,787.23
LEEDS CITY COUNCIL GRANT	4,007.43	22,817.50
LEEDS CHRISTIANS CHARITY - HSF	14,950.00	7,100.00
VAL - WELCOME SPACES ONWARD GRANT	4,550.00	4,250.00
T4P - CLIMATE ACTION		

	10,716.26	-
FOOD PANTRY SALES	9,302.48	-
DONATIONS - SERVICE USERS		6,194.92
REFUNDS	343.52	
LORD MAYOR DINNER		1,380.00
BARCA - GRANT		
OBLONG WELCOME SPACE GRANT	1,500.00	750.00
VAL LISTENING WELL	1,100.00	-
VAL HSF FOOD PANTRY	2,000.00	20,000.00
LEEDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION GRANT	-	2,500.00
DOMA CULTURAL EVENT GRANT		2,000.00
BANK INTEREST RECEIVED		306.55
TOTAL INCOME AT 31 MARCH	77,760.69	83,086.20
EXPENDITURES:		
LACT ADMIN		2,254
PANTRY STAFF ADMIN		2,664
SOCIAL INTEGRATION (STORYTELLING PROJECT) ADMIN		11,958
FOOD PANTRY SALARY	3,288	
CLIMATE ACTION SALARY	8,705	-
PANTRY VOLUNTEER EXPENSES	200	-
FOOD PANTRY GROCERIES	21,199	9,243
FOOD TRANSPORTATION	2,461	2,370
FOOD VOUCHERS		2,987
CONTAINER PURCHASE/CONVERSION	13,191	0
PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE	123	289
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT / HOSTING	460	252
LACT PUBLICITY		295
ZOOM LICENCE	245	314

COMMUNITY EVENTS		300
CLIMATE ACTION PURCHASES		
MEETINGS - FOOD / DRINKS	175	100
ACCOUNTING PACKAGE TRIAL	13	
PANTRY FIXTURES & FITTINGS	761	630
PANTRY CAFÉ	280	320
PANTRY SIGNBOARD	411	
PANTRY DESK/CHAIRS	180	
PANTRY BANNER	150	
PANTRY LAPTOP PURCHASE	457	
PANTRY CLEANING	220	997
PANTRY COSTS - OTHER		191
LORD MAYOR DINNER		1,380
PARENT TODDLER GROUP SALARY/EXPENSES	164	
VAL - WELCOME SPACES	3,000	1,750
CLIMATE ACTION - UNDERSPEND REFUND	5,989	
CLIMATE ACTION EXPENSES	302	
TELEPHONE, PRINTING, POSTAGE, STATIONERY		291
OTHER SUNDRY EXPENSES		65
DIGITAL INCLUSION COMPUTERS		9,464
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	61,973	48,114
SURPLUS INCOME AS AT 31 MARCH	15,787.00	34,972.49

SIGNED EXTERNAL EXAMINAR:

Mrs Miatta Tucker (MA Econs)