

SEW POSITIVE
FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

ANNUAL REVIEW 2024/25





Sew Positive is a unique UK charity helping socially excluded people mend, repair, upcycle and repurpose textiles to calm the mind, improve mental health and wellbeing, and help our planet.



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ABOUT SEW POSITIVE

Charity Registration Number
1192682

Company Registration Number
CE022958

Registered Address
1 Fountain Lane, Haslingfield
Cambridgeshire CB23 1LT

Independent Examiner
Lisa King
Burdett King Accountancy Limited
8 The Hamiltons, Newmarket, CB8 0NF

CEO
Melissa Santiago-Val

Governance structure
Sew Positive is a Registered Charity (No:1192682) and a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered in England (CEO22958)

Trustees
Jane Webber (Chair)
Joseph Barker-Sherry (Treasurer)
Alison Heron
Judi Coe
Karin Read
Sarah McManus (Outgoing Chair)
Alex Collis (Outgoing Co-Deputy Chair)

SEWING FOR MENTAL HEALTH



BUILDING MINDFULNESS, CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNITY

Sew Positive's mission is to provide opportunities for socially excluded people in Cambridge and surrounding areas to nurture their mental health through free sewing workshops and courses.

We help people who experience health inequalities – intensified by poverty, trauma, mental illness, neurodivergence, or cultural barriers. We create welcoming, creative spaces that are accessible, non-clinical, and designed for those who feel excluded from traditional forms of care.





Most people we support have fallen through the gaps in the health system. We help them to learn new skills and feel part of a community, reducing the feeling of social exclusion. Rebuilding trust helps participants to integrate into society and invest in their own wellbeing.



WELCOME FROM OUR CEO



This 2024/25 Annual Review, which includes summarised financial figures, celebrates our fourth year as a charity, supporting people facing social isolation through sewing to support mental health and wellbeing.

This year our income has risen significantly despite a challenging landscape for small charities. Services and partnerships have continued to grow, in particular with CPSL Mind (Ashley Bunn CEO is pictured with me below) which is funding our pilot Men's Hems service through its Good Life Fund Plus.

We formed collaborations through the Influence and Participation Panel (pictured at the project celebration opposite), bringing together charities, the NHS and local councils to make health and care more accessible for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents.

Our collaboration with CPSL Mind would not have been possible without participation at this level and has allowed us to access funding from them using original funding via Cambridgeshire County Council.

Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS) – soon to become Support Cambridgeshire – offers excellent support and training, helping us recruit more volunteers through 'Volunteer Cambs'. Being members of the Small Charity Leaders Club and The Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) this year saw me able to access pro bono coaching via the Level 7 training programme at Cranfield University.











The ripple effect of our services has seen both volunteers and participants create exciting initiatives to support local people. For example, Adam (pictured below), one of our Men's Hems participants, is launching K2Tog – Knit 2 Together, a peer support volunteer-led knitting group. With 50,000 social media followers, Adam is helping us reach a much wider audience, both for funding and for connecting with those in need. As a small grassroots charity, this co-production approach ensures our work is informed by real experiences, improves our outcomes and keeps us firmly led by the community we serve.

Collaborations with businesses are increasingly vital.

Cambridge Design Rooms (Janet and David Scotcher pictured below) is a socially focused business offering a safe community space that sparks creativity, focuses on sustainability and delivers social experiences for everyone.





We've been partnering with them as a venue for some time, but it's so much more than that. We are able to store our equipment, sewing machines and materials there for free. More importantly, we have similar ethos, values and goals.

A major change this year has been the growing role of our volunteers, many with lived experience of our services, in shaping and supporting the charity. From organising volunteer engagement events and contributing to funding applications, to washing donated curtains, our volunteers are now involved in far more than sewing.

Our first Volunteer Engagement Day was facilitated by a volunteer, Hilary (pictured opposite at the event), who has considerable experience with this work in the charity sector.

I am delighted that our volunteers have been nominated for a King's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest honour a charity can achieve. With our trustees, they provide incredible direction, support and inspiration not just to me but to our participants and governance structure. I thank them all for their invaluable support and contributions.

Melissa

Melissa Santiago Val

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & TREASURER'S REPORT

Our income has risen significantly this financial year from £40,442 in 2023/24 to over £50,000 in 2024/25. This is a significant increase at a time of crisis in funding in our sector and reflects much hard work in applying for funding as well as the increased need for our services.

We have secured two-year funding through the new National Lottery Awards for All – increasing from £10,000 for one year to £20,000 over two years – ensuring our Sewcialise service is funded until March 2027.

As a major national funder, we value their recognition of the importance of supporting core costs. This kind of funding, alongside unrestricted income, enables small charities to stay resilient and avoid over-reliance on short-term project grants.







Cambridge City Council's United with Ukraine grant has been expanded to the Cambridge Resettlement Fund – allowing us to reach other refugees – and to South Cambridgeshire, overcoming the previous geographical barrier.

We've also increased our community fundraising income to over £4000. This came from the Cambridge University Fashion Show 2025, raising £1181.44, the Lush Charity Pot scheme in Cambridge which raised £476.77, along with a brilliant team of five Cambridge Half Marathon runners raising £2082.44 (Gabi is pictured at the finish line above), and several festive craft fairs.

See our full Report and Accounts on the Charity Commission website.

Looking ahead, we have been awarded two charity places per year for the London Marathon 2026 – 2029, which we hope will raise £2500 per runner per year too.

In the past financial year we featured on the cover of Fair Collective's report 'Breaking Point', highlighting the pressures the sector faces: sadly three vital creative health charities in our area have closed their doors.

If this trend continues, the safety net for our most marginalised communities will disappear. These closures aren't isolated; they reflect a national emergency. As highlighted in The Centre for Social Justice's 'Underfunded and Overlooked' report, 97% of charities shutting down across the UK are small charities like ours. There has also been a £4.6 billion reduction in the support available, severely limiting opportunities for funding applications.

It's therefore vital to prioritise diversifying our income streams, developing corporate partnerships and fundraising. This combination will provide an unrestricted income stream to give our charity resilience and sustainability.

Last year brought changes to our trustee board. Sarah McManus and Alex Collis stepped down and Jane Webber took on the role of Chair for the first time. We are fortunate to have a trustee team which truly understands our organisation. Our Treasurer Joseph is fundraising for the London Marathon 2026 (pictured below with one of our Half Marathon runners, Helen) and trustee Karin has also raised funds for us running the Manchester Marathon, as well as attending services to understand our participants' needs.







Our recent trustee Strategy Day, facilitated by Flóra Raffai from Fair Collective, found us taking a pragmatic approach and looking at data to improve our systems. As a small, committed team, our trustees are not distant decision makers. They are actively involved in our work, helping to steer strategy and support delivery.

During the next year we will be recruiting new trustees. We're looking for people who can make a significant hands-on impact in shaping our charity's future, with a particular focus on strong marketing and communications expertise, financial skills and corporate connections.

Sew Positive is already delivering positive outcomes for people who feel let down or re-traumatised by statutory systems. We offer an alternative route to tackle health inequalities through creativity, connection and co-production, resulting in a service culture built on authenticity, flexibility and trust.

OUR IMPACT 2025

SEW POSITIVE
FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH



2090 VOLUNTEER HOURS



DONATED BY 36 VOLUNTEERS



ACROSS 27 VENUES



120 SESSIONS AND EVENTS



1037 PEOPLE ENGAGED



864 INDIVIDUALS



TOTAL INCOME OF £50,020



17 FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS



6 HALF MARATHON RUNNERS



14 SEWING MACHINES SAVED FROM LANDFILL

OUR FEEDBACK SURVEY RESULTS

82% feel more socially connected and less isolated doing activities with Sew Positive*

87% feel doing sessions using sewing, creativity, stitching and nature, have had a positive impact on overall wellbeing*

80% gained skills to inspire and think about how we reuse textiles, having an impact on personal ownership of reducing textile waste*

20% of our work in 2024/2025 was with displaced Ukrainian refugees

100% are interested in taklng part in more Sew Positive services to support wellbeing*

77% report taking part in our services makes them feel more in control of managing health and wellbeing. They say Social Prescribing enables them to support themselves*

93% were very happy with tutors, volunteers and staff supporting them*

8 volunteers supported four services or more across the year, from one-off events to longer courses**

7 volunteers have been donating time to our charity for over two years**

**71 responses across 13 different services in 2024/25*
*** Volunteer survey responses of 28 volunteers in 2024*

THE ISSUES WE ARE FACING - 2025

HEALTH INEQUALITIES, MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL ISOLATION

Cambridge is the UK's most unequal city, with the disparity of wealth affecting health & life expectancy by 10 years. (1)

Inequalities in UK hospital admissions alone have an estimated cost of £4.8 billion year. (2)

More than 3.58 million people use mental health services in the UK. (3)

Loneliness and social isolation can be as bad for patients as chronic health conditions, putting people at a 50% increased risk of early death. (4)

Mind research has identified that 40% of GP appointments feature a mental health concern. (5)

Participants who engage in creative practices like traditional crafts report feeling less anxious and more emotionally balanced. These activities were not focused on finishing a task, but rather about being present in the process. (6)

Frequent knitters report feeling calmer, less stressed and more uplifted. Knitting promotes mindfulness, sparks creativity and even encourages social connection — whether through community groups or online forums. (7)

54% of Ukrainians (including refugees) have PTSD. (8)





TEXTILE WASTE & THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Repairing a hole in a wool jumper saves you 16kg CO2e of emissions – the equivalent of leaving a lightbulb on for 50 years. (9)

An estimated 336,000 tonnes of used clothing is discarded each year in the UK. (10)

Repairing a rip in a waterproof jacket saves 45kg CO2e of emissions – the equivalent of 300 washing cycles.(11)

Buying your next pair of jeans and t-shirt secondhand could help save the equivalent of 20,000 standard bottles of water. (12)

Keeping your clothes for an extra nine months can reduce their carbon footprint by 20-30%. (13)

Less than 1% of clothing gets made into new clothing. (14)





References: (1)Centre for Cities (2)Cambridge Public Health (3)NHS (4)The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (5)Mind (6)Science Direct (7)The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (8)The Lancet (9)Wrap and Sojo (11)Less Waste (12)Green Retail World (WRAP) Charity (13)Oxfam (14)Wrap

IT'S SO MUCH MORE THAN SEWING



Volunteering at Sew Positive is more than giving time; it's a fulfilling, two-way exchange of skills, care and support. Volunteers tell us it is also about boosting their own wellbeing as much as the people they support. From sharing a new stitch to seeing the direct impact of fundraising, our volunteers take pride in knowing their efforts make a real difference for people and the planet.







Our volunteers and tutors are central to everything we do – we can only deliver our services thanks to their support, expertise, and dedication. This year they have donated 2090 hours of time to support our services.



We've introduced an Annual Volunteering Survey, have regular training days with sewing, a WhatsApp group and – as part of our new Volunteer Engagement process – we are introducing a 'buddy system' and other ways to improve volunteering with us. Part of our work means ensuring our volunteers have the references, DBS checks, training, logistics, management and supervision they need to thrive in our hive.









"Sew Positive is so much more than sewing. What they do is amazing; they are amazing. We want to celebrate them."





"Coming in as a new volunteer, the warmth with which I've been onboarded by other volunteers, staff and group members alike has been really beautiful."









FEEDBACK FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

"I am very grateful to my social prescriber for referring me to Sew Positive. I really feel it has helped my health. I'm no longer seeing a counsellor and I'm coping. I have seen the GP less since I've been on the course. My health issues won't go away but I feel like I'm coping and managing better with support of Sew Positive."

"I have been encouraged in such a compassionate way that I did not come across in over a decade of NHS mental health support in Cambridge... Sew Positive has been one of those rare places that I have been able to experiment with who I am... then take this to therapy and discuss it further."

"I feel I can be my neurodivergent self in these groups. I'm accepted, welcomed and encouraged. For the first time in my 51 years I can be myself within this group."

"I came through a mental health self-referral at my surgery... Therapy-wise I have since done two CBT courses, and they helped a bit, but I made a lot more progress when I was doing the Sew Positive sessions alongside therapy."

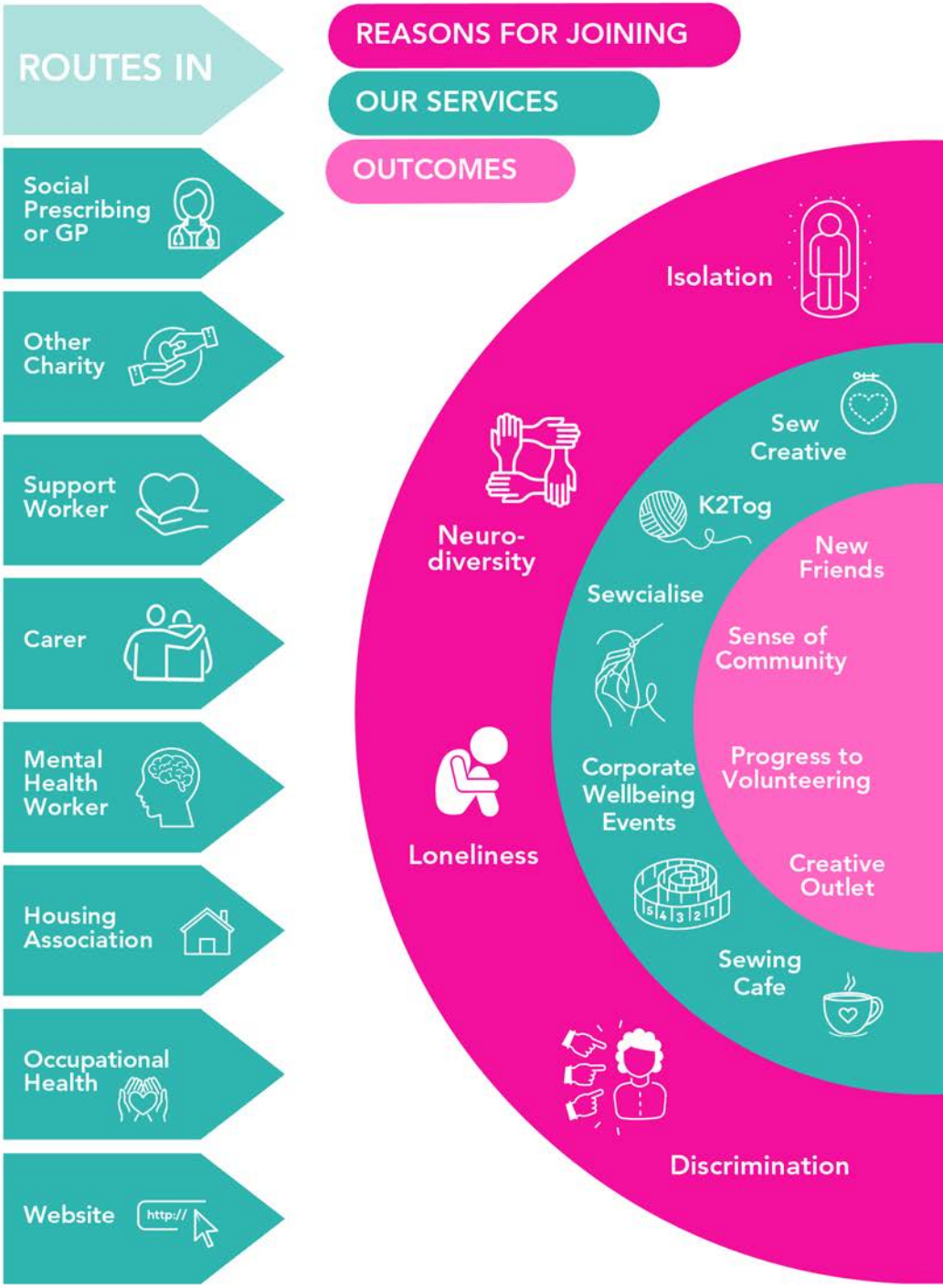
"Life can be incredibly tough at times. I've always considered myself a strong-willed and confident person – mentally one of the strongest in my circle. But recently, life has tested me in ways I didn't expect. From supporting my son through serious mental health struggles, and dealing with family members living with cancer at home – it's been overwhelming."

"Sew Positive has become my sanctuary – my mental escape and a place of healing. It's reminded me of who I truly am, and reconnected me to a special part of my identity: a tailor's daughter. Being here has brought back cherished memories of watching my father at his sewing machine, working hard and caring for me as a devoted single parent."

"I've been terrified of groups. This is the first place I felt like I belonged."

"Thank you, Sew Positive, and to all the incredible staff and volunteers. You've helped bring the zest back into my days. Your kindness, dedication and genuine passion go far beyond what's expected. The fact that you're volunteers speaks volumes about your heart and commitment. You've made such a difference."




ROUTES IN
Social Prescribing or GP
Other Charity
Support Worker
Carer
Mental Health Worker
Housing Association
Occupational Health
Website
http://
REASONS FOR JOINING
OUR SERVICES
OUTCOMES
Isolation
Sew Creative
K2Tog
New Friends
Sewcialise
Sense of Community
Progress to Volunteering
Creative Outlet
Sewing Cafe
Corporate Wellbeing Events
Neuro-diversity
Loneliness
Discrimination

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

We continue to discover the wide impact of our services on participants and volunteers alike, developing and co-producing further activities together.



OUR GOAL: Engaged communities who use sewing, upcycling and mending to improve creativity, mental or physical health and togetherness in a circular economy.

IMPACT

- Reduced Pressure on the NHS
- Reduced Health Inequalities
- Increased Volunteering
- Move Towards a Circular Economy
- Reduced Textile Waste
- Increased Self-Management of Health
- Recognition of Soft Skills & Sewing Skills

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

SEWCIALISE

Our flagship weekly service focuses on starting the week with mindful mending, hand sewing, upcycling or repairs for participants who are finding it difficult to engage and leave the house due to issues such as their health. The service was funded for three months in 2025 by Cambridge City Council Community Fund and PEM to ensure continuity of service while we re-applied to National Lottery AWA, which we have now been awarded to March 2027. Although the group is funded term-time only, volunteers take extra sessions over holidays at Cambridge University Botanic Garden using our free Community Group access membership to prevent further isolation.

The service has had such an impact on participants that we've been nominated for a King's Award for Voluntary Services by one of our funders, CambsCuisine, and three of our participants. The quotes on the right were given in response to Sewcialise and the nomination letter that these participants wrote together.



Oliver Thain, CEO of CambsCuisine wrote in his nominating letter:
"The ties between our fund and Sew Positive are strong. Mental health is becoming such an issue in our sector (hospitality) that we jumped at the opportunity to help."

Our participants say:

"Sewcialise has not only given me new skills in sewing, but I feel I have gained a new set of very supportive, lovely friends. After suffering from depression these groups have really helped my mental health. I feel uplifted now at the thought of starting new sewing projects."

"Sewcialise isn't just something to do for a couple of hours a week. It is a two-way community volunteers have created through providing practical and emotional support so we can all take part. They are a calm, patient and empathetic presence in every group, listening, helping and easing social insecurities. They are as happy to teach us how to do a French Knot as to listen to our worries. They support us to develop creative ideas whilst 'embracing imperfection' in both sewing and ourselves.

"Through volunteers, Sew Positive listens and hears us, so we can contribute and feel respected."

"I've spent a lot of time alone due to health issues and this activity is a brilliant way to get out and feel part of a community, being supported and supporting others."

















STITCHING WELLBEING INTO THE WORKPLACE

We've delivered bespoke workplace wellbeing sessions for a number of organisations. The aim of these sessions is to help thread creativity, calm, and connection into workplace culture.

We offer a mindful, hands-on experience that helps people unwind, reconnect, and thrive – without screens or daily pressures, just stitching and smiles. Through engaging in sewing activities, teams immerse themselves in mindful practice, which has been shown to reduce stress and promote mental clarity.

Sewing fosters a sense of calm and achievement, as participants see tangible results from their efforts. Furthermore, group sessions encourage collaboration, communication and problem-solving, making sewing a powerful tool for team building.

Unlike some wellbeing initiatives, sewing workshops offer something tangible – a finished product to take home. Whether it's a branded tote bag, an upcycled garment, or simple repairs and visible mending, such items serve as lasting reminders of the experience and the value businesses place on their employees' wellbeing.

"We worked with Sew Positive to deliver a slow-stitching sashiko wellbeing workshop for 28 employees. Helping small charities in our city is part of our policy to support local vulnerable communities. It was brilliant for employees to have a relaxing lunchtime activity, and to see our branded tote bags come to colourful life using mindful stitching"
Sarah Adams, Events and Hospitality Manager, Mills and Reeve LLP.

UKRAINE PROJECTS

Our Crewelwork project brought different communities together to share heritage, cultures and increase social connection.

We delivered an eight week Saturday course combining in-person delivery, video on demand and support by Zoom. This was funded by three separate grants plus corporate donations from both Appleton's Wool and The Crewelwork Embroidery Company.

The programme included 'Culture hours' integrated into sessions around 'Books,' 'Crafts' and finally 'Food'. We included a community lunch with shared food, by explaining traditions and origins of dishes.

"It helped me to understand more local culture and feel more comfortable here, given that it is my second year in this country. The atmosphere during the classes was very friendly. It's fascinating how people can open up and connect when they are embroidering something together. Some conversations I had and stories I've heard melted my heart."

With Ukrainian refugees still facing uncertain futures in the UK, we are starting to integrate our services together with other participants through matched funding, to improve opportunities for cultural exchange, improve English in a social setting, and give different participants the opportunity to offer peer support for what continues to be a group facing much trauma.



























In August 2024, we took participants – including Ukrainian refugees – to the Festival of Quilts at the Birmingham NEC for a day trip to see The Ukrainian Quilters' Association's *War. Peace. Future.* exhibition. It offered a moving, first-hand window into the realities of displacement and the hope for peace.

With combined funding from Cambridge City Council and CambsCuisine, we removed barriers of cost and access for families taking a trip for the first time, bringing together people from different cultures to share stories, build understanding and connect through the universal language of textiles.

"It was the way to connect to my homeland, to share something about Ukraine with the rest of the group and to see how they could connect with Ukraine and Ukrainian works just from looking at them."

"I have so much more understanding of what the feelings and emotions must be to be displaced by war now. And it's not something I have experienced or ever met people, until now, who have lived with this either. It was so moving. I had actual goosebumps. We were close to tears reading the stories and beautiful stitching. The work was outstanding…it was very powerful indeed."

"The Ukrainian quilt with the woman looking at the plane above her head was very touching. It was about dreaming and hoping for the best in the hardest moments of your life, and not giving up."

"I enjoyed the trip to the Birmingham Quilt Festival 2024 very much. I made some new friends and learned much about British culture."

ASSURA - ROSS STREET

Working with six different NHS GP practices, this service improved access to health services through combining therapeutic sewing and creative inspiration from outside spaces using the Botanic Garden. We worked with NHS Social Prescribers to tackle health inequalities faced across our city.

These sessions embedded co-production into our services, working with communities who find it difficult to engage with health services, and asking them to input their experiences of health engagement and creativity.

"Sew Positive has been one of those rare places that I have been able to experiment with who I am, what triggers emotions and what overwhelms me. The volunteers have been there to just be with me, walk next to me, just allow me space and engage in things that are important to me."

"I have subsequently been able to access other Sew Positive services after this course, including a Saturday Sewing Cafe (an all day event), and joining an eight week basic sewing skills course which meant working in a large group of 25 participants of mixed needs, cultures and nationalities, which I wouldn't have been able to do before."















MEN'S HEMS

In January 2025, we launched Men's Hems – a free weekly creative group for men facing mental health challenges. The group offers a welcoming space for men to learn mending, simple repairs and creative upcycling.

Funded through CPSL Mind's Good Life Fund Plus, this has greatly strengthened our collaboration with the charity. Men's Hems combines creativity, connection, and skill-sharing to support the Five Ways to Wellbeing. Participants may face isolation, family breakdowns or low mood, and the group offers both practical skills and a mindful, hands-on way to boost wellbeing.

The project challenges stereotypes – showing sewing is for everyone, while tackling textile waste, one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions. Our launch was supported on social media by former Sewing Bee S6 Quarter Finalist Mark Francis and his partners with the hashtags #WeSewToo and #BoysSewToo at the Stitch Festival. Our group is only funded to December 2025 as a pilot and we are looking to secure wider funding to meet the ongoing need for a service like this.

The impact is clear: Adam is launching K2Tog – Knit 2 Together, a peer-support group using knitting and crochet to connect communities, and has trained as a Mental Health First Aider. Another Men's Hems participant has completed Men's Health Champion training – showing how participants are leading change, challenging stigma and building mental health awareness.



"I had been through a long period of poor mental health when I started Men's Hems, and had been relying on unhealthy coping strategies.

"I'd cut off from family and friends and found the world a lonely and miserable place. Being able to go into a safe, considerate space where I could tentatively begin to socialise again while learning new skills has improved my wellbeing.

"The technical and creative sewing skills I have been learning have allowed me to not focus on the past, and find a sense of confidence and self worth. Thank you Sew Positive!"

COLLABORATIONS & NETWORKS

Partnership working is central to our delivery. We collaborate with CPSL Mind, the NHS, Red Hen Project, Romsey Mill, Cambridge United Foundation, Sun Network, TEOM and many others. With CPSL Mind, we deliver Men's Hems and hope to expand Sewcialise, our flagship support group, which is at double capacity. CPSL Mind brings experience and funding through their 'Good Mood Cafés', while we provide a creative, grassroots route to under-represented communities. There is no duplication – only synergy and supporting each other to improve the lives of our communities.

Our CEO sat on a Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Panel of the local ICS (Integrated Care Systems in the NHS), as well as attending the Voluntary Sector Network Group, Men's Health Forum, the Cambridge Mental Health Network and With Purpose Network. We have given talks and presentations at events, including Metro Bank and the Voluntary Services Network. These networks enable us to connect community insight directly to system-level conversations and NHS strategy – building bridges between the statutory, charity and corporate sectors.

With CPSL Mind, we have supported press and media events for Mental Health Awareness Week and developed joint messaging around preventative wellbeing and creative health.





Together we developed a strong, values-based relationship enabling strategic growth. CPSL Mind provides federation infrastructure, safeguarding systems and peer support, allowing us to scale responsibly without overstretching our core team. For a small charity like us, it's also a highly cost-effective way to expand reach and resilience.

In a city where inequality is stark and services have disappeared, Sew Positive is a vital thread holding creative health support together. Our community knows us, trusts us and turns to us when other options run out. We are deeply embedded, widely connected and uniquely equipped to take this forward.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

We've been out and about spreading the word about our charity to engage with people who may need to access our services, to raise funds and to understand the communities in which we live and work.

The Grand Arcade's 'Let's Go Circular' Festival enables local companies and charities to highlight issues around textile waste and move towards a circular economy and we are delighted photographs of our workshops headlined the 2024 campaign materials. The festival won the Green Award in the Cambridge Independent Business Awards 2024.

In South Cambridgeshire, we had a festive stand at the Local Climate Action Fair to highlight textile waste, with our popular badge making activity using upcycled scraps to make into badges.

Our 'Charity Pot' event at Lush in Cambridge raised £476.77 and sold out of Charity Pots entirely.

We also take part in twice-yearly events from Cambridge City Council's Community Engagement team to unite voices and focus action. Themes have included impact measurement, event planning and tackling health inequalities, and we have attended with both volunteers and participants to help embed our co-production and participant-led approach.

Our festive sales came from village fairs in Haslingfield, Little Eversden and the Craft Fair at Phoenix Trust in Milton. We are looking for volunteers who are happy to take our stand to these weekend events on our behalf.

Our fundraising events have been a huge effort from our participants, fundraisers and volunteers. Together, they've packed cars, made items to sell and given support at weekends, raising over £4000 in unrestricted funding. This means we can deliver some one-off services or events, and also enables us to cover some of our core costs.








FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS

With more people turning to us as other services close, and with participants facing increasingly complex needs, we urgently need more funding to deliver our work.

Much of our income comes from the grants for which we must apply, but we are increasingly looking for partnerships with corporate organisations, for example becoming Charity Of The Year for a local business. We also welcome the opportunity to offer wellbeing services to companies which want to improve creativity and mental health in their teams.

Individuals are also encouraged to help us raise money. With sponsored running in the London Marathon over the next four years, we're hoping to raise significant funds. Please help to motivate our runners by making a contribution via our Just Giving page – or apply to run for us yourself!










Alongside financial help, Sew Positive is happy to consider offers of fabric and sewing machines to support our services, especially as we move towards measuring the CO2e impact we're making.

The amount of textiles we're offered can be overwhelming and it takes a lot of work to transform a pile of textiles into usable fabrics. We have to travel, collect, wash, dry, unpick and then store materials before we can even think about making them into something new. We don't generally need smaller fabric scraps or furnishing weight fabrics as we currently have plenty, but we do call outs on social media for what we need. Please follow us and use our website form for inquiries.

As for sewing machines, we can only accept nearly new Janome/John Lewis machines in good working order, preferably with accessories. We are also currently looking for a working Juki (or similar) industrial machine that can be delivered to Cambridge.

We are grateful to everyone who has helped support us through donations.

KEY FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS



We are hugely grateful for the financial support of our grant funding and business, collaboration and media partners, including those which have provided discounted or free venues to enable us to run our services. These allow us to carry out the work detailed in this report.

Sew Positive and the work we do would not exist without your help.

- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- BBC Radio Cambridgeshire
- Bermuda Community Rooms
- Cambridge Central Library
- Cambridge City Council
- Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS/Support Cambridgeshire)
- Cambridge Design Rooms
- Cambridge Radio
- Cambridge United Foundation
- Cambridge University Botanic Garden
- Cambridge University Fashion Show (CUFS)
- Cambridgeshire Community Foundation (CCF)
- CambsCuisine
- CPSL Mind
- Fair Collective
- Find Your Wild
- Grand Arcade Cambridge
- John Lewis Cambridge
- Metro Bank
- Mills & Reeve LLP
- NatWest Bank community rooms
- PEM
- Phoenix Trust
- Romsey Mill
- South Cambs District Council
- The Sun Network
- TEOM (The Expert on Ourselves)
- The Cole Trust
- The Crewelwork Embroidery Company
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The Red Hen Project
- Trumpington Stitchers



















Sew Positive CIO

Strategic Report

The trustees present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Financial review

Policy on reserves

Reserves

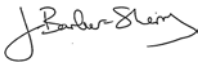
Donation income and income from events for businesses are our primary funding sources for our core fund -from which we support all of the organisation's fixed costs. As donated income cannot always be predicted, and the success of funding bids is not guaranteed, the trustess believe it is prudent for the charity to work towards a minimum reserve equivalent to three months expenditure. This will provide:

- the ability to meet unforeseen expenditure, including costs arising should Sew Positive be wound up (closedown costs, redundancy payments, return of grant funding);
- flexibility in achieving our objectives; and
- a financial 'cushion' until additional core funding can be secured.

We have a reserves policy as noted above but currently we do not have the liabilities that require reserve funding outside of our projects.

In accordance with the Charity Commission's guidelines, the Trustees review this policy annually and consequently manage the cash flow in an appropriately prudent manner. For this financial period, our income constitutes donations of £7,047 and grants of £42,973 giving a total turnover of £50,020 and a finishing balance of £14,990. In addition to this, we carry forward a £20,000 National Lottery grant which was awarded at the end of the financial year to fund Sewcialise during the financial years 2025-27.

The strategic report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 2 September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Joseph Barker-Sherry

Trustee

Sew Positive CIO

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

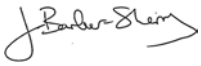
The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial 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 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 business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper 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 Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees 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.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 2 September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Joseph Barker-Sherry
Trustee

Sew Positive CIO

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Sew Positive CIO

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Sew Positive CIO for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of Sew Positive CIO 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 Sew Positive CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of Sew Positive CIO as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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 accounts to be reached.



.....

Lisa King
Burdett King Accountancy Limited

8 The Hamiltons
Newmarket
Suffolk
CB8 0NF

2 September 2025

Sew Positive CIO

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	2	5,209	-	5,209
Charitable activities	3	4,338	40,473	44,811
Total income		9,547	40,473	50,020
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		(1,457)	(144)	(1,601)
Charitable activities	4	(9,575)	(36,318)	(45,893)
Total expenditure		(11,032)	(36,462)	(47,494)
Net (expenditure)/income		(1,485)	4,011	2,526
Net movement in funds		(1,485)	4,011	2,526
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		1,829	10,635	12,464
Total funds carried forward	14	344	14,646	14,990

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies		623	-	623
Charitable activities		1,699	31,862	33,561
Other income		5,758	500	6,258
Total income		8,080	32,362	40,442
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities		(9,795)	(36,896)	(46,691)
Total expenditure		(9,795)	(36,896)	(46,691)
Net expenditure		(1,715)	(4,534)	(6,249)
Net movement in funds		(1,715)	(4,534)	(6,249)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		3,544	15,169	18,713
Total funds carried forward	14	1,829	10,635	12,464

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

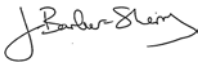
The funds breakdown for 2024 is shown in note 14.

Sew Positive CIO

(Registration number: 1192682)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	10	286	852
Current assets			
Debtors	11	-	1,500
Cash at bank and in hand	12	35,184	10,592
		35,184	12,092
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	(20,480)	(480)
Net current assets		14,704	11,612
Net assets		14,990	12,464
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds		14,646	10,635
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		344	1,829
Total funds	14	14,990	12,464

The financial statements on pages 5 to 17 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on ..... and signed on their behalf by:



Joseph Barker-Sherry
Trustee

Sew Positive CIO

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 Accounting policies

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the second edition of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis of preparation

Sew Positive CIO meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Income and endowments

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is regonised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with suffcient reliability.

Donations and legacies

Donations and legacies are recognised on a receivable basis when receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

Grants receivable

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Raising funds

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, the management of investments and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Grant provisions

Provisions for grants are made when the intention to make a grant has been communicated to the recipient but there is uncertainty about either the timing of the grant or the amount of grant payable.

Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

Governance costs

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees meetings and reimbursed expenses.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £200.00 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Computer equipment	33% straight line
Plant and machinery	25% straight line

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Borrowings

Interest-bearing borrowings are initially recorded at fair value, net of transaction costs. Interest-bearing borrowings are subsequently carried at amortised cost, with the difference between the proceeds, net of transaction costs, and the amount due on redemption being recognised as a charge to the Statement of Financial Activities over the period of the relevant borrowing.

Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and similar charges.

Borrowings are classified as current liabilities unless the charity has an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting date.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and legacies;	5,209	5,209	623
Donations from individuals	5,209	5,209	623

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Fundraising income	1,838	-	1,838	499
Grants	2,500	40,473	42,973	33,062
	4,338	40,473	44,811	33,561

	2025 £
Income from donations and legacies	5,209
Income from charitable activities	64,811
Total income received in the year	70,020
Income received in the year and carried forward	(20,000)
Total income per SOFA	50,020

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Grants received

Arnold Clark Fund		£ 500
CPSL Mind (Men's Hems)		10,000
Cambridge City Council (Festival of Quilts)		979
Cambridge City Council (United with Ukraaine)		13,000
Cambridge City Council (Sewcialise Jan -March 2025)		2,000
Cheshire Community Foundation		11,994
PEM (Sewcialise Jan -March 2025)		500
South Cambs District Council (Community Chest 2025)		2,000
The Cole Trust		2,000
The National Lottery Community Fund (Sewcialise 2025-27)		20,000
TOTAL GRANT INCOME		62,973
The National Lottery Community Fund (Sewcialise 2025-27) Deferred income	-	(20,000)
TOTAL GRANT INCOME PER SOFA		42,973

4 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Depreciation, amortisation and other similar costs		566	-	566	568
Grant funding of activities		-	4,217	4,217	-
Allocated support costs (see below)		8,064	32,101	40,165	45,643
Governance costs		945	-	945	480
		9,575	36,318	45,893	46,691

Allocated support costs

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Other Core costs £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Materials	14	3,941	-	3,955	3,391
Subcontractor costs	6,400	20,087	747	27,234	35,897
Training and conference costs	104	-	449	553	232
Venue	-	2,778	195	2,973	1,773
Insurance	-	-	485	485	187
Staff/volunteer costs	90	69	14	173	-
Volunteer expenses	103	743	155	1,001	-
Telephone	-	-	342	342	-
Computer software and maintenance	-	173	360	533	-
Printing, postage and stationery	10	-	39	49	-
Subscriptions	66	-	420	486	-
Advertising	861	602	281	1,744	-
Participant event	416	-	-	416	-
Legal and professional costs	-	54	167	221	-
	8,064	28,447	3,654	40,165	41,480

5 Analysis of governance and support costs

Governance costs

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Independent examiner fees	945	945	480
Examination of the financial statements	945	945	480

6 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year include:

	2025 £	2024 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	566	568

7 Trustees remuneration and expenses

8 Independent examiner's remuneration

	2025 £	2024 £
Examination of the financial statements	945	480

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

9 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

10 Tangible fixed assets

	Furniture and equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2024	1,854	1,854
At 31 March 2025	1,854	1,854
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024	1,002	1,002
Charge for the year	566	566
At 31 March 2025	1,568	1,568
Net book value		
At 31 March 2025	286	286
At 31 March 2024	852	852

11 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	-	1,500

12 Cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at bank	35,184	10,592

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Accruals	480	480
Deferred income	20,000	-
	20,480	480

14 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds				
General				
General funds	1,829	9,547	(11,032)	344
Restricted funds				
Restricted Funds	14,614	34,902	(28,231)	21,285
Government Grants	2,281	979	(4,433)	(1,173)
Core Costs	(6,260)	4,592	(3,798)	(5,466)
	10,635	40,473	(36,462)	14,646
Total funds	12,464	50,020	(47,494)	14,990

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds				
General	3,544	8,080	(9,795)	1,829
Restricted funds	15,169	32,362	(36,896)	10,635
Total funds	18,713	40,442	(46,691)	12,464

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Analysis of funds by grant / project

	Balance at 1 April 2024	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£
Corporate Wellbeing Events	1,431		(19)	1,412
The Red Hen Project	2,000		(1,800)	200
Cambridge County Council -Cultivate	1,781		(1,781)	-
Cambridge City Council with Ukraine Grants Programme -Sewing machines	(279)		279	-
South Cambs District Council (Community Chest 2024)	1,678		(1,678)	-
Cambridge City Council (UWU Crewelwork)	2,417		(1,037)	1,380
The National Lottery Community Fund (Sewcialise 2023-24)	8,033		(8,033)	-
The National Lottery Community Fund Eurovision -	274		(274)	-
The Evelyn Trust	(658)		658	-
Cambridge City Council (UWU Boro Bags)	163		(163)	-
Anglian Leisure Netherhall School (Power Up!)	500		(500)	-
Cambridge Community Foundation - Cambs Cuisine Fund	1,384		(1,384)	-
CPSL Mind (MHLDAP)		500	(500)	-
Cambs Cuisine Fund (Festival of Quilts)		500	(500)	
Cambridge City Council (Festival of Quilts)		979	(979)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation		11,994	(10,980)	1,014
Cambridge City Council (Sewcialise Jan -March 2025)		2,000	(2,000)	-
PEM (Sewcialise Jan -March 2025)		500	(78)	422
CPSL Mind (Men's Hems)		10,000	(1,322)	8,678
Cambridge City Council (United with Ukraine)		13,000	(3,169)	9,832
South Cambs District Council (Community Chest 2025)		2,000	(289)	1,711
Other	(6,260)	8,547	(11,944)	(9,657)
	12,464	50,020	(47,494)	14,990
The National Lottery Community Fund (Sewcialise 2025-27)	-	20,000	-	20,000
	12,464	70,020	47,494	34,990

15 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.







SEW POSITIVE
FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

sewpositive.org
SewPositiveCharity
@SewPositiveCharity
info@sewpositive.org



Our full Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25 can be downloaded from the Charity Commission website.

Sew Positive is a Registered Charity (No:1192682) and a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered in England (CEO22958)

Registered Office: 1 Fountain Lane, Haslingfield, Cambridge, CB23 1LT