



31 January 2023

Annual Report and Accounts

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Welcome

In order to care for ourselves, each other and our planet we need to feel the connections within and between us. Building communities around the experience of this return to our true nature creates respect and compassion for all life and our entire ecosystem.



We find ourselves as a species facing an existential crisis. UN Secretary-General António Guterres called the first Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, issued in August 2021, a “code red for humanity”, and said that “If we combine forces now, we can avert climate catastrophe.” His take on the follow up report is equally stark; calling it an “atlas of human suffering and a damning indictment of failed climate leadership.” The latest UN emission gap report concludes there is “no credible pathway” that would limit global warming to the 1.5°C set out in the Paris agreement and current strategy puts us on course for a 2.8°C rise by the end of the century. Human caused climate change has accelerated the global species extinction rate and contributed to a rising number of global natural disasters. We are seeing a loss of habitat, biodiversity, and the planet’s capacity to support human life. Natural disasters and food shortages will lead to increasing global migration as we start to see growing numbers of climate refugees.

With our project we aim to offer people a respite from the challenges they face and give them a space to reconnect with their own bodies, their local community and the natural world they belong to; to lay foundations for a more resilient and integrated food system and society. The therapeutic benefits of spending time in nature and coming together with a shared purpose have been widely documented and we are holding and creating a space for people to do just that. We are also improving local biodiversity and teaching regenerative growing practices that are essential to the survival of our species.

We are enormously grateful to the supporters and volunteers who have helped fill our local refugee food bank with fresh organic produce, and create a true community space. We have been able to host sessions with the local refugee community cooking, growing and smiling alongside our volunteers and run programmes teaching nutrition and food growing to local children from low-income families. This was all made possible thanks to the work of our supporters and volunteers.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of our journey this year.

Nick Grist
Chair

Our vision and strategy

Vision:

People living deeply connected vital lives with a clear sense of their role and responsibility in the human and more than human world.

Mission:

To create spaces that allow for sharing of skills, knowledge and ideas along with the experience of connection, purpose and integration with all beings.

Values:

- Respect (for ourselves, each other and the natural world)
- Connection (with our entire being, each other and the natural world)
- Vitality (physical, mental, spiritual and ecological)

How we will get there

We achieve our mission through:

1. organic food growing for the community and local food banks
2. sharing traditional skills
3. cooking
4. storytelling
5. nature connection
6. activities that foster vitality

We run volunteering sessions open to anyone in the local community with volunteers coming from across East and West Sussex ranging in age from 18 to 80.

We host sessions for the local refugee and migrant community and run workshops for marginalised groups.

Our project gives anyone the opportunity to enjoy the space we are creating and be a part of our organic food growing community.

What we have achieved this year

Development

We have the power. At the start of the year the solar panels were fitted and the lights went on in the workshop. As did the ever-popular hot water urn.



With starling numbers in steep decline, we decided to create a small village for them at the bottom of the plot. As starlings like to nest together it is important to have at least three boxes positioned close to one another. Unfortunately the coal tits did not get the memo and moved in pretty much as soon as the boxes had been installed.



Having fenced in the food forest last year we decided we needed to make a more inviting entrance and so erected an arch to welcome visitors into the new forest world we are creating. As always it is a chance to improve proficiency with the power tools and hand saws, remind us all of the measure twice cut once maxim and pose for an album cover when the work is done.



With a small amount of funding coming in we were also able to get some more fruit trees in the ground with quince, pear and apple all being planted by our volunteers.



With the plants now having established themselves in the wildlife pond the place was literally buzzing with dragonfly activity through the summer months and the frogs, toads and newts have all settled into their new accommodation:



Refugee and Migrant Community



As with last year the refugee and migrant community filled the garden with love and laughter, initially escorted by our project partners Voices in Exile but with increasing numbers joining our open volunteering sessions. Stellar volunteer Sailesh also officially became our refugee and migrant volunteer coordinator a job he took to like an old man to a hammock. He has chaperoned participants from central Brighton to the site and helped boost participation with his friendly manner, good humour and sensitive approach.

Again, this year we ran our dedicated refugee and migrant sessions with Voices in Exile over the Spring and Summer.

In all we hosted over 45 refugees at our site. We grew food together, cooked up genuine feasts, planted trees, played games, whittled spoons, danced and laughed, a lot. **We had 12 people continue to come to volunteer sessions individually** after they built the confidence to come without a facilitator.





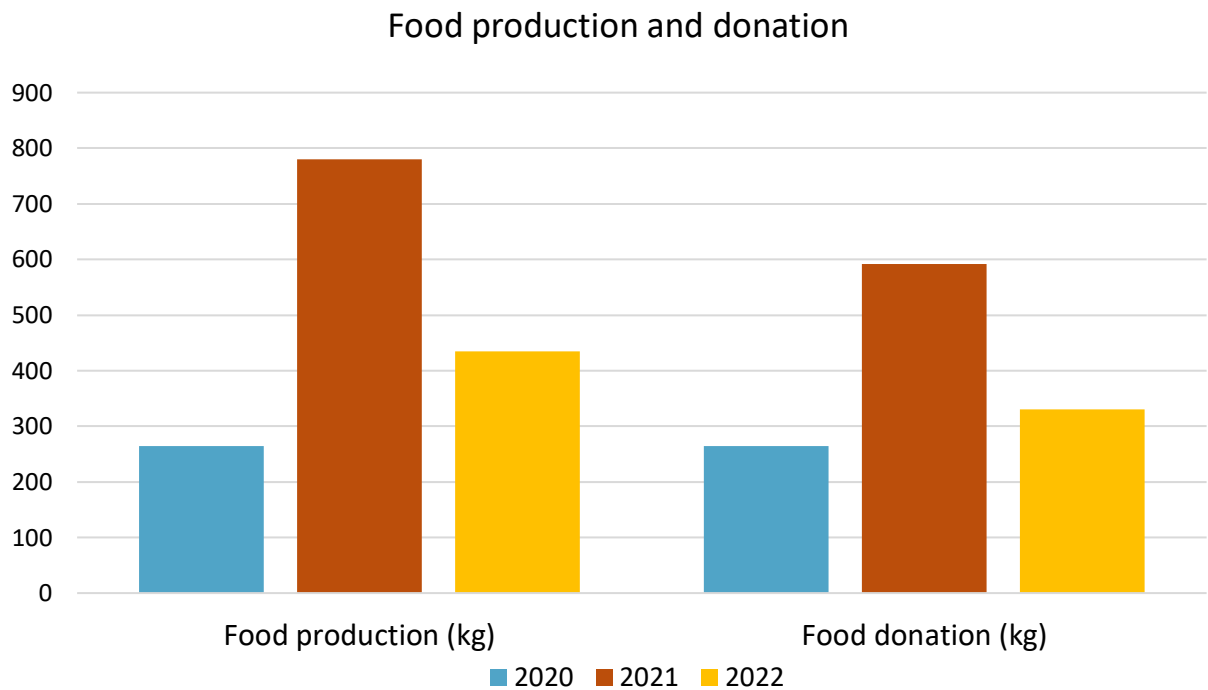
For refugee week we celebrated with a healing crystal bowl sound bath, whittling and dancing with our refugee community.



"We had a great time with you. Thank you for everything. It was fun spending time with you learning how to plant different plants, sharing food, talking and laughing together. We really had a nice time with you. Thank you again. Much love."

Harvest

2022 was another challenging year for food growers. As temperatures soared to the highest level since records began; we struggled to save many seedlings from wilting or crops from bolting. Prolonged drought underlined the need to secure funding for better water capture and combined with the heat decimated this year’s harvest, a situation reflected in the sector as a whole. In spite of this we still managed to produce food for our sessions our participants and the two food banks we support.



Total food grown: 435Kgs
Food donated to food bank: 330Kgs
Food cooked and shared with participants: 105Kgs

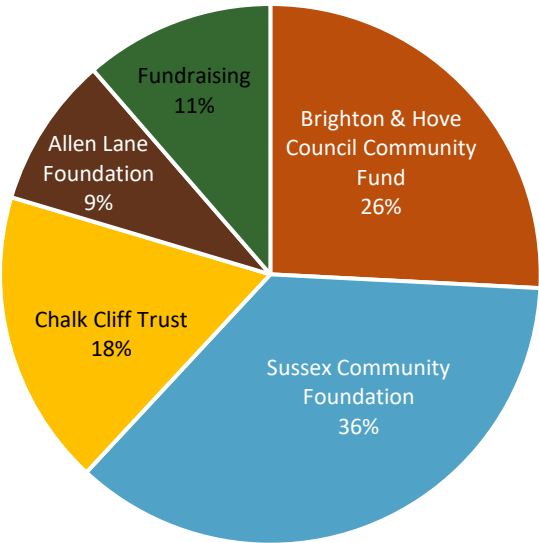
This year we were again donating harvests to the Voices in Exile food bank, and also to the cornerstone food bank. We also had food to give to our volunteers, participants and to use at our cooking sessions.

Financial summary 2022-23

Income

In only our second year as a registered charity we continue to build a strong financial platform from which to operate.

Where our income came from



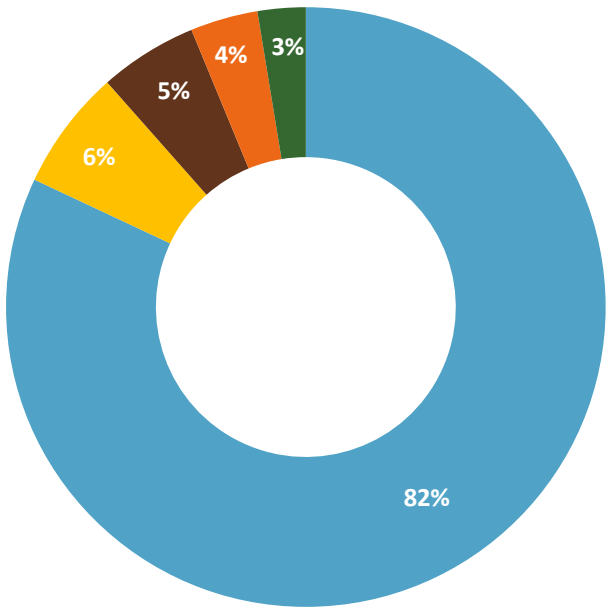
We managed to marginally increase our income from fundraising activities and corporate support. We remain heavily reliant on grants for much of our income and we are enormously grateful to the organisations that have supported us throughout the year and enabled us to achieve so much. To help us on our journey we were **awarded £24.5k in funding this year**, allowing us to develop our site, grow our food and host sessions with local volunteers and with the refugee and migrant community. Thank you to those funders who supported us this year:



There have also been many generous donations of materials, tools and time from our volunteers and supporters to whom we are eternally grateful for their generosity and their continuing support.

Hæckels® kindly chose us through 1% for the planet as their charity of choice this year with a very generous Christmas gift.

Where we spend our income



- Session Costs:**

Our focus was to ensure we ran as many volunteer and refugee and migrant sessions as possible. Costs here include elements such as transport and food items brought in to cook meals with our participants. Session workers were able to receive recompense and less of their time was donated this year. We ran 13 refugee sessions, a nutrition programme pilot and 61 volunteering sessions.
- Building materials:**

With significant work undertaken last year there was mostly cosmetic changes and minor improvements to the structures. All costs for the solar installation came from last year’s budget.
- Rent, insurance and office costs**

These have been kept to the absolute minimum with a competitive insurance policy secured through Social Farms and Gardens and a reasonable rate secured for our independent examiner for the accounting. Much of the administrative work for the project is still unpaid.
- Seeds and inputs**

As a certified organic grower, we can only use organic seeds and inputs such as compost. We save seed each year, and are increasing our capacity to produce our own compost. This year we have planted green manures and our food forest will be predominantly planted with perennials helping to keep these costs down.
- Tools and utensils**

As our sessions grew and our volunteer numbers swelled, we needed to ensure we had enough tools for everyone to get stuck in. We also needed utensils for cooking and preparing food. Many of these were donated but some had to be purchased.

Financial performance

Now in our second year of operations we have significantly reduced reliance on individuals donating time and personal tools and equipment. After a challenging start to the year and the ongoing cost of living crisis we were delighted to secure the level of funding we did. The charity needs to generate more income to remain sustainable. We also need to grow our reserves to help us weather uncertain times and further unanticipated challenges.

Income

Income for the year was largely in the form of one-off grants. We continue to look at diversifying the income streams we have and ways in which the charity can generate income through courses and the sale of produce and products. We will still devote time and resources to securing additional grants but hope to reduce our reliance on grant funding as we develop the charity.

Costs

Our costs this year took a step towards a more accurate reflection of the amount of time and resources dedicated to the project in order to deliver the services we have. We are still partially reliant on individuals devoting time, energy, resources and the use of their tools and equipment without financial recompense. Our intention is to continue increasing our income to enable us to fully remunerate all individuals working for the charity.

Net Assets

The charity's net assets position improved over the course of the year due to improvements made to existing structure including the addition of solar panels and a plumbed sink in the workshop.

Reserves

The purpose of the reserves policy for the charity is to ensure the stability of the delivery of our mission, sessions, employment and ongoing operations of the charity.

Unrestricted general fund reserves are intended to provide an internal source of funds for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, unanticipated loss in funding or uninsured losses. The reserves are not intended to replace a permanent loss of funds.

The current target minimum for unrestricted general fund reserves is equal to three months' average operating costs, including all recurring, predictable and unavoidable expenses. It is our intention to build our reserves as we grow our expenditure and ideally increase the reserves to cover six months of operation.

Our principal risks and uncertainties

The board of directors identify risks, assess potential impact and review mitigating actions. The directors update the board of trustees on significant risks for the charity. The trustees have examined risks and established systems to mitigate the significant risks facing the charity.

Generating Income

This is an ongoing concern for the charity as it is currently heavily reliant on grant funding. Resources are being allocated to fundraising and the development of an income generation strategy that will diversify the sources of income for the charity.

Partnerships and external relations

We work cooperatively with other organisations to be able to support people and create impactful change. This can mean that we are sometimes managing different sets of expectations and that we are reputationally associated with other organisations. We will continue to carefully assess the potential consequences of entering into partnerships before doing so and ensure that key relationships are managed by an experienced team.

Loss of key personnel

As a small charity the loss of a senior team member would have a dramatic impact. Policies, process and information dissemination are all in place to reduce the requirement on any one individual. We are also prioritising funding for key roles within the organisation so everyone can be fully remunerated for their time and contribution to the project.

Relationship with local council

We operate on land rented from the local council and continue to work closely with them to ensure we are effectively communicating the value of our work and that our charitable objects are clearly seen and understood by them to align with their vision for the site and the local community. We are enormously grateful to them for their enthusiastic support for our project and continued funding.

Public Benefit Disclosure The trustees confirm they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives, and in planning future activities. The trustees refer to public benefit throughout this report.

Plans for the year ahead

We start our third year of operations in a strong financial position, with improved facilities, equipment and infrastructure. We are keen to build on the strong foundation created in our first two years and expand our activities into new areas.

- We will continue to donate harvest surplus to the food banks to ensure they have a fresh supply of local, organic, nutrient dense produce.
- We have funding to ensure our refugee sessions continue until July at the least and we are looking to secure further funding for the rest of the year.
- There is a good deal of work that goes into maintenance of the site and structures as well as ensuring the production and harvest of our crops and we will be continuing this work with the help of our volunteers throughout the year.
-
- Our website is developing and we are keen to add audio visual content and use the site to generate further donations and more volunteers for the charity
- We are planning to complete work on the cob oven this year and trial bread and pizza making workshops
- We of course need to continue to fundraise and will be putting time and resources into securing funds and opening new income streams
- Create different volunteering roles to enable those who have skills and experience to help with social media, fundraising and other administrative tasks

Subject to securing additional funds we are hoping to:

- We are actively fundraising to improve water harvest and irrigation across the site with droughts and poor mains supply we are keen to make a more resilient system, reducing reliance on mains water and so reducing core running costs.
- Tree felling – necessitated by ash die back and recent heavy winds we urgently need funds to reduce the height of some trees and fell damaged trees to maintain the safety of the site.
- We are hoping to plumb in an outdoor sink to allow for the washing of hands and utensils.
- We are hoping to develop the food forest bringing in additional plants to increase the site yield and diversity. We are also keen to add plants to the wildlife pond and create more habitats for reptiles and amphibians
- If we can secure funding, we would love to create raised beds on the site. For some participants accessibility is an issue and these beds remove the need for kneeling and bending over while working as well as being accessible to people in wheelchairs.

Thanks to our supporters

It has been another successful first year of operations for us as a charity with many happy memories. Much of that success is down to our incredible supporters. We have benefitted from the generosity, enthusiasm and expertise of many who have donated their time, tools, money and resources to the project.

Our promise to supporters

We care for each and every one of our supporters and in response to their generosity, we promise to:

- Safeguard their personal details
- Communicate transparently with them about the allocation of funds
- Treat them with respect, honesty and openness
- Take into account the needs of individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances or require additional care and support to make an informed decision
- Never put them under pressure to make or continue a gift
- Use their gifts for the purpose for which they are given, and spend donations so they have the most impact
- Respect their wishes and preferences
- Listen to them about how they want to be contacted and honour their choices
- Be receptive to feedback and use this to improve our processes and procedures
- Take appropriate action if they are unhappy with our services, and accept the authority of the Fundraising Regulator if we cannot resolve the issue

How we support our Volunteer Fundraisers

It is important to ensure that all our fundraising is conducted in an ethical way and we are committed to fair treatment of all our supporters. We work with our volunteer fundraisers who notify us that they are organising their own event in aid of Living Vital. We ensure they are provided with the appropriate information, support, resources, and acknowledgement. If we have not been notified in advance, we provide a receipt and acknowledgement after the donation has been made.

Volunteer fundraisers who are appointed by the charity must provide their contact details and two references before they are able to begin their roles. All volunteers have a designated point of contact with Living Vital and are supported in their role.

Our volunteers

We have been blessed throughout the year with volunteers aged 18 to 80 coming from across East and West Sussex. They are the wonderful people that have made our project possible and worked alongside our refugee and migrant community and fill our food banks with organically grown fresh produce. They have stood by us in the wind and the rain and humbled us with their dedication, enthusiasm and energy.



We welcomed over 75 different volunteers to the site on 60 volunteering sessions and many have become regular fixtures at our sessions. Together they gave us over 1,020 hours of their precious time. We were delighted to welcome Sailesh, Mahmut, Mo, Victor, Tang, Bella, Hoho, Asif, Claire, Karamoko, Barry and Ali from our refugee and migrant community to our open volunteering sessions. Our project is open to all and we have been delighted to welcome the LGBTQ+ community in increasing numbers this year.

Structure, governance, and management

Organisational Structure

Living Vital became a registered charity in England and Wales on 4 January 2021. Living Vital has been set up as a CIO using the foundation model.

Our constitution outlines the charitable purposes and the rules that govern the operation of the charity.

The charity's day-to-day activity is run and managed by the board of directors who report to the board of trustees. Trustees meet on a regular basis to set the vision, strategic framework, and discuss the budgets under which the charity operates.

The trustees set the strategic direction of the organisation and are regularly updated on grants, budgets, activities, and fundraising. New initiatives are normally developed by directors in consultation with our participants and trustee working group, supported by an assessment of project needs. Trustees receive regular financial updates which form the basis of the routine financial monitoring. The charity works to ensure all stakeholders in the organisation are able to participate in its development. We listen to our client groups and many of the service delivery improvements come from our stakeholders.

Specific projects are managed by the directors who share regular project updates with stakeholders, including volunteers, staff, and trustees as appropriate.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The charity is managed by a board of five trustees selected because they strongly endorse the charitable objectives of the organisation and reflect its values. When selecting trustees, the charity aims to ensure there is a broad range of relevant skills.

Trustees are appointed after interviews with existing trustees and formal visits to the organisation to ensure that they understand our vision and values. Trustees are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks where applicable.

Our Details

Registered charity number:

1192957

Registered office:

Living Vital, Stanmer Organics, Stanmer Village, Brighton BN1 9PZ

Trustees:

Ms M Amoridge	(appointed 04 January 2021)
Mr N Grist	(Chair of Trustees from 04 January 2021)
Ms R Khan-Williams	(appointed 04 January 2021)
Ms R Limage	(appointed 04 January 2021)
Mr A Weston	(appointed 04 January 2021)

The trustees have not received any remuneration or reclaimed any expenses during the financial year for their work as Trustees. All members of the Trustee Board have given their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity.

In accordance with the conditions in, sections 185 to 188 of the Charities Act 2011, and in line with our Governing Document, Clause 6, one trustee Mr N Grist receives remuneration for services to the charity outside the services provided in his capacity as a Trustee. All remuneration is subject to the conditions set out in the Charities Act

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

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

The trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles outlined in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the latest guidance from the charity commission. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 02 August 2023

And signed on its behalf by:



N Grist – Chair of Trustees

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 January 2023

As a CIO with gross income less than £250,000 our accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds (£) 2023
RECEIPTS			
Grants			
Brighton and Hove Council		7,150	7,150
Sussex Community Fund		10,000	10,000
Allen Lane Foundation	2,500		2,500
Chalk Cliff Trust	4,900		4,900
Fundraising			
Corporate donations	650		650
General fundraising	2,319		2,319
Total	10,369	17,150	27,519
PAYMENTS			
Charitable Activities			
Session Costs	5,031	18,097	23,128
Building materials	701	1,131	1,832
Seeds and Inputs	1,028		1,028
Tools and utensils	300	430	730
Rent, Insurance and office	793		793
Accountancy and Insurance	700		700
Total	8,553	19,658	28,211
Net of Receipts/(payments)	1,816	-2,508	-692
Cash funds last year end	2,168	13,392	15,560
CASH FUNDS AT YEAR END	3,984	10,884	14,868

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at year end

	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)
Cash Funds		
	3,984	
		10,884
Total Cash Funds	3,984	10,884

	Details	Cost (£)	Current value (£)
Assets retained for charity's own use	Buildings and Fittings	8,600	6,969
	Seeds, crops and plants	300	240

	Details	Cost (£)	When Due
Liabilities	Prepayments – rent	185	June 2023

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 January 2023

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)'.

Going concern

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

Receipts

All receipts are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has access to the funds. Any 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.

Volunteers and donated goods and services

The value of services provided by volunteers is not incorporated into these financial statements.

Payments

Expenditure is accounted for on a payments basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Buildings and structures	- 10%
Fittings and fixtures	- 25%

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees. Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Contact Us



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www.livingvital.co.uk



**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES
ON THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS OF LIVING VITAL**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Living Vital for the year ended 31 January 2023.

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 all 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 the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



C R Tyler FCA DChA FCIE
F1 CRT Limited
Chartered Accountant
Flat 24, Wellingtonia Court
Laine Close
Brighton
BN1 6TD
Date: 14 Feb 2023