

STORIES WITH SYMBOLS

England & Wales · Charity number 1193393

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2021-02-03

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 14 Hartwell Road
Ashton
Northampton
NN7 2JR

Phone 07736275235

Email info@storieswithsymbols.com

Website <https://storieswithsymbols.com>

Activities

Objects: FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT, TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF INDIVIDUALS, IN PARTICULAR, CHILDREN WITH SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (SLCN), IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ABROAD. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SPECIALIST RESOURCES, CREATED BY THE CHARITY, WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SKILLS.

Activities: Stories with Symbols create and share videos for children with language and communication difficulties, which promote book sharing and language learning. The videos are free to view.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£19	£233	-	-
2023-12-31	£1,202	£1,529	-	-
2022-12-31	£2,359	£1,909	-	-
2021-12-31	£3,008	£2,432	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Alexander Michael Rowe	Chair	2021-02-03
Katie Elizabeth Kennedy		2021-02-03
Samantha Rowe		2021-02-03

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Trustees' Annual Report

For the year ended 31st December 2024

30th October 2025

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Administrative details

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Registered charity number:	1193393 (England & Wales)
Principal address:	14 Hartwell Road, Ashton, Northampton, NN7 2JR, UK
Trustees:	Alex Rowe; Katie Kennedy; Samantha Rowe

Structure, governance and management

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Objectives and activities

The objective of Stories with Symbols is to advance the education of individuals, in particular (but not exclusively), children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), through the provision of specialist videos, created by the charity.

The videos are free-to-access and are designed from the outset for children with additional needs, to stimulate their interest in books and shared reading, while supporting the development of core communication, language and literacy skills.

Achievements and impact

As expected, the focus this year has been on quality over quantity.

- In 2024, Stories with Symbols centred its activity on two worthwhile collaborations that kept the mission visible while output slowed. Early in the year, the charity released *'That's not my dog'*, in a clear restatement of purpose: free, symbol-supported videos that help children with additional needs enjoy books and grow core language.

That's not my dog was produced with Support Dogs in Sheffield. The video pairs shared reading with real-world footage, helping children connect vocabulary to meaningful scenes from everyday life.

- The second video was our largest scale production to date, filmed in collaboration with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, based on *'That's not my fire engine'*. Filming took place on site at Mereway Fire Station in Northamptonshire, where presenter Katie explored a fire engine – inside and out. A 999 call was simulated, and the video followed the sequence of events from call handling at the operations centre to a full crew demonstrating an emergency call out. Functional Gestalt language phrases were included throughout the video and the feedback from NFRS was overwhelmingly positive.

- Overall volume was lower than in previous years, as reflected in the trustees' filing, but the year's two collaborations showed the charity's strengths: quality over quantity, purposeful partnerships, and content designed from the outset for children with speech, language and communication needs. The model remains simple and effective – pair an accessible book with symbol support and motivating real-world experiences.
- Meanwhile, The Stories with Symbols YouTube channel grew by almost 100,000 views to around 225,000 during 2024. The average daily number of views increased from around 150 in 2023 to around 270 in 2024. The number of subscribers grew by 400 to over 1,000.
- The charity continues to create large impact from virtually no budget. Due to the difficulty raising income in the current fundraising climate, as well as the personal and professional demands on trustees Katie and Alex – who both have full time jobs and young families – Stories with Symbols has no plans to make further videos during 2025.

Financial review

1. Position at the end of the period

- (1) Total income for 2024 was £19 and total expenditure was £233 representing an in-year deficit of £214.

2. Reserves

- (1) Stories with Symbols has no employees or ongoing financial commitments. Reserves of £200 are deemed sufficient to meet the charity's needs.

3. Income and expenditure account for year ended 31.12.2024

	Notes	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Income:			
Loans	1	-	1,000
Donations		19	-
Sale of assets		-	202
Grants		-	-
Total Income		19	1,202
Capital Expenditure:			
Equipment		-	1,179
Props		-	-
Total Capital Expenditure		-	1,179
Non-Capital Expenditure:			
Software		137	104
Consumables		-	150
Presenter fees		-	-
Insurance		96	96
Marketing		-	-
Professional fees		-	-
Expenses		-	-
Total Non-Capital Expenditure		233	500
Total Expenditure		233	1,529
Surplus/(deficit)		(214)	(327)
Brought forward		698	1,026
Balance C/Fwd		484	698

Notes

1. Trustee's loan from A. Rowe

4. Balance sheet as at 31.12.2024

	Notes	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	1	942	1,662
CURRENT ASSETS			
Balance in current account		484	698
LIABILITIES			
Loans		(2,000)	(2,000)
TOTAL NET ASSETS		(574)	361

Notes

1 25% per year amortisation of the following items:

Asset	Date purchased	Purchase Price (£)	Value 2024 (£)
RØDE Wireless Pro microphones	19/11/2023	394.99	197.50
Aputure Amaran 200X S lighting	18/04/2023	372.00	186.00
Smallrig RA-D85 lighting softbox	17/04/2023	114.66	57.33
Pixapro C-stand	07/04/2023	139.98	69.99
Neewer X12 Teleprompter	27/02/2023	157.59	78.80
EF-RF Lens adapter	30/03/2022	104.00	26.00
EOS R Camera	30/03/2022	1,308.99	327.25
TOTAL:			942.87

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Trustees' Annual Report

For the year ended 31st December 2023

23rd May 2024

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Administrative details

Registered charity name:	Stories with Symbols
Registered charity number:	1193393 (England & Wales)
Principal address:	14 Hartwell Road, Ashton, Northampton, NN7 2JR, UK
Trustees:	Alex Rowe; Katie Kennedy; Samantha Rowe

Structure, governance and management

Stories with Symbols is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) whose only voting members are its charity trustees. The charity trustees manage the affairs of the CIO and operate according to the Governing Document adopted on 3rd February 2021.

Objectives and activities

The objective of Stories with Symbols is to advance the education of individuals, in particular (but not exclusively), children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), through the provision of specialist videos, created by the charity.

The videos are free-to-access and are designed from the outset for children with additional needs, to stimulate their interest in books and shared reading, while supporting the development of core communication, language and literacy skills.

Achievements and impact

The charity's third year of operation was quiet compared with the previous two years:

- In the previous Annual Report, it was stated that “the outlook for 2023 will be a slower pace of video production, with an emphasis on quality over quantity”.
- A new video was published (‘Why should I brush my teeth?’), taking the total in the catalogue to 14. It featured a trip to the dentist and successfully demonstrated the concept of providing ‘social story’ style resources to support situations which some children find particularly challenging, while modelling useful language (e.g. “stop!”) which can be transferred to other situations in which self-advocacy is important.
- The research into neuroaffirmative practice and gestalt language processing continued and led to a review of the use of non-fiction, topic based books for our videos. A revised plan was developed with a slower pace of production, a return to simpler texts for the time being, but using the third section of the videos more flexibly and imaginatively to introduce more explorative language and concepts.

- Katie Kennedy began a new professional role at a special school, and Alex Rowe took on an additional voluntary role with nearby charity Autism Early Support. Both of these had a significant impact on video production during 2023, but were important causes which align closely with the values and objectives of Stories with Symbols.
- The partnership with Usborne continues, and producing videos to coincide with World Book Day was prioritised while resources were thinly spread.
- The Stories with Symbols team travelled to the charity 'Support Dogs' to film section 3 for the video, 'That's not my dog...', for the World Book Day 2024 video release.
- The Stories with Symbols YouTube channel grew from around 68,000 views to over 125,000. The average daily number of views remained consistent at around 150. The number of subscribers grew to 650.
- Four videos are planned for 2024, including 'That's not my fire engine...' which will include in section 3 a visit to a real fire station, a tour of a fire engine and a demonstration of the emergency response to a 999 call.

Financial review

1. Position at the end of the period

- (1) Total income for 2023 was £1,202 and total expenditure was £1,529 representing an in-year deficit of £327.
- (2) Trustee Alex Rowe loaned £1,000 to the Charity to cover in-year expenditure. The terms of the loan are 0% interest indefinitely.

2. Reserves

- (1) Stories with Symbols has no employees or ongoing financial commitments. Reserves of £200 are deemed sufficient to meet the charity's needs.

3. Income and expenditure account for year ended 31.12.2023

	Notes	2023 (£)	2022 (£)
Income:			
Loans	1	1,000	-
Donations		-	527
Sale of assets		202	-
Grants		-	1,832
Total Income		1,202	2,359
Capital Expenditure:			
Equipment		1,179	1,413
Props		-	-
Total Capital Expenditure		1,179	1,413
Non-Capital Expenditure:			
Software		104	-
Consumables		150	-
Presenter fees		-	-
Insurance		96	96
Marketing		-	-
Professional fees		-	400
Expenses		-	-
Total Non-Capital Expenditure		500	496
Total Expenditure		1,529	1,909
Surplus/(deficit)		(327)	450
Brought forward		1,026	576
Balance C/Fwd		698	1,026

Notes

1. Trustee's loan from A. Rowe

4. Balance sheet as at 31.12.2023

	Notes	2023 (£)	2022 (£)
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	1	1,662	1,297
CURRENT ASSETS			
Balance in current account		698	1,026
LIABILITIES			
Loans		(2,000)	(1,000)
TOTAL NET ASSETS		361	(107)

Notes

1 25% per year amortisation of the following items:

Asset	Date purchased	Purchase Price (£)	Value 2023 (£)
RØDE Wireless Pro microphones	19/11/2023	394.99	296.24
Aputure Amaran 200X S lighting	18/04/2023	372.00	279.00
Smallrig RA-D85 lighting softbox	17/04/2023	114.66	86.00
Pixapro C-stand	07/04/2023	139.98	104.99
Neewer X12 Teleprompter	27/02/2023	157.59	118.19
EF-RF Lens adapter	30/03/2022	104.00	52.00
EOS R Camera	30/03/2022	1,308.99	654.50
Cayer BV30L tripod	08/09/2021	138.99	34.75
Cushion fillings (set decor)	21/10/2021	18.99	4.75
Yellow cushion covers (set decor)	21/10/2021	16.99	4.25
Cayer BV30L tripod	04/11/2021	111.19	27.80
TOTAL:			1,662.47

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Stories with Symbols

Trustees' Annual Report

For the year ended 31st December 2022

11th October 2023

14 Hartwell Road, Ashton,
Northampton, NN7 2JR

Registered charity no.
1193393

07736 275235
info@storieswithsymbols.com

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Administrative details

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Trustees:	Alex Rowe; Katie Kennedy; Samantha Rowe

Structure, governance and management

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Objectives and activities

The objective of Stories with Symbols is to advance the education of individuals, in particular (but not exclusively), children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), through the provision of specialist videos, created by the charity.

The videos are free-to-access and are designed from the outset for children with additional needs, to stimulate their interest in books and shared reading, while supporting the development of core communication, language and literacy skills.

Achievements and impact

The charity's second year of operation was productive and informative:

- 4 more videos were published, taking the total in the catalogue to 13.
- The partnership with Usborne continues and has become a very positive, collaborative relationship.
- In February, our two World Book Day videos were released in partnership with Usborne. Evie Pickerill (known by children as a main 'anchor' presenter of CBeebies) presented a Goldilocks story video as well as a companion activity video, designed especially for children with SLCN.
- The last of the filming for the World Book Day video for 2023 took place in December. This year, it is a topic video about the importance of brushing teeth, and includes an extended 'experience' of a neurodivergent child visiting a dentist for real.

- The Stories with Symbols YouTube channel grew from around 13,000 views to almost 68,000. The average daily number of views trebled from around 50 to 150. The number of subscribers more than doubled from 200 to 475.
- The Met Office series was more difficult to film than originally expected, and was the worst performing video on the channel by a large margin. On reflection, more filming time and resources were needed. Feedback also suggested that the language and delivery was not grown up enough for the audience who would likely be watching the videos. This has been taken on board and will inform our future choices and strategy.
- During autumn 2022, the Stories with Symbols team began an extended research project into neurodiversity affirming practice. This step change in knowledge and understanding has had a massive effect on the charity, as well as on the team's personal and professional lives. Additionally, we have come to appreciate that many viewers will be 'Gestalt Language Processors' (GLP) – a way of acquiring language in chunks, or scripts, rather than building sentences from single words. Combined, these will inform future content.
- A grant of £1,831.67 was awarded by ARG West to Stories with Symbols for future video projects. It was used to purchase a second camera and fund professional speech and language therapy research time (see Financial review note 2) in order to inform and improve future content.
- The charity continues to be run by its team of three trustees. There are no plans to grow that team, and due to professional and family circumstances, the outlook for 2023 will be a slower pace of video production, with an emphasis on quality over quantity.

Financial review

1. Position at the end of the period

- (1) Total income for 2022 was £2,359 and total expenditure was £1,909, representing a surplus of income over expenditure of £450.
- (2) The charity paid £400 to its trustee, Katie Kennedy, for her professional time in her capacity as a speech and language therapist, in accordance with section 185 of the Charities Act and the Trustee Act 2000. Advice was sought from the Charity Commission beforehand and the following safeguards were put in place:
 - (a) Potential conflicts of interest were minimised:
 - (i) The trustee in question withdrew from the discussion and decision-making process surrounding the procuring of services relating to this project.
 - (ii) The decision to use the trustee's professional services (taken by the remaining quorum) was in the best interests of the charity because the trustee is a qualified Speech and Language Therapist who knows the charity intimately, and is the most qualified person to carry out the research.

- (iii) The number of trustees benefiting were in the minority on the board (one).
- (b) The payment was reasonable:
 - (i) This was a one-off payment for a one-off piece of research expected to take two working days. The fee agreed was £400 in total.
- (c) The fee was benchmarked:
 - (i) Three quotes were obtained for carrying out the research by other Speech and Language Therapy professionals; their day rates were approximately double the proposed payment to the trustee.
- (d) The conflict and the statements of compliance are hereby declared in the Annual Report for the year 2022.

2. Reserves

- (1) Stories with Symbols has no employees or ongoing financial commitments. Reserves of £200 are deemed sufficient to meet the charity's needs.

3. Income and expenditure account for year ended 31.12.2022

	Notes	2022 (£)	2021 (£)
Income:			
Loans		-	1,000
Donations	1	527	2,008
Grants		1,832	
Total Income		2,359	3,008
Capital Expenditure:			
Equipment		1,413	622
Props		-	69
Total Capital Expenditure		1,413	692
Non-Capital Expenditure:			
Software		-	165
Consumables		-	519
Presenter fees		-	300
Insurance		96	96
Marketing		-	152
Professional fees	2	400	-
Expenses		0	509
Total Non-Capital Expenditure		496	1,741
Total Expenditure		1,909	2,432
Surplus/(deficit)		450	576
Brought forward		576	-
Balance C/Fwd		1,026	576

Notes

1. Includes £25 of Gift Aid via HMRC.
2. See Financial Review 1 (2)

4. Balance sheet as at 31.12.2022

	Notes	2022 (£)	2021 (£)
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	1	1,297	317
CURRENT ASSETS			
Balance in current account		1,026	576
LIABILITIES			
Loans		(1,000)	(1,000)
TOTAL NET ASSETS		1,323	(107)

Notes

1 25% per year amortisation of the following items:

Asset	Date purchased	Purchase Price (£)	Value 2022 (-25%) (£)
EF-RF Lens adapter	30/03/2022	104.00	78.00
EOS R Camera	30/03/2022	1,308.99	981.74
Cayer BV30L tripod	08/09/2021	138.99	78.18
Cushion fillings (set decor)	21/10/2021	18.99	10.68
Yellow cushion covers (set decor)	21/10/2021	16.99	9.56
Zoom F2 microphone/recorder	03/11/2021	136.00	76.50
Cayer BV30L tripod	04/11/2021	111.19	62.54
TOTAL:			1,297.20

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Trustees' Annual Report

For the year ended 31st December 2021

18th August 2022

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Administrative details

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The videos are free-to-access and are designed from the outset for children with additional needs, to stimulate their interest in books and shared reading, while supporting the development of core communication, language and literacy skills.

Achievements and impact

This, the first year of the charity's existence, has been an exciting and productive one:

- Nine videos have been published, including two 'explainer' videos aimed at professionals wanting to understand more about the videos.
- A partnership agreement with leading children's book publisher, Usborne, was signed in July. This relationship has already proved to be incredibly positive and collaborative. It has enabled immediate access to the rights to make our videos without first having to secure permission on a book-by-book basis. It has also provided access to a very wide range of books, and to an established network of end-users in the nurseries and schools with whom Usborne already has a relationship.

For Usborne, the partnership represents a means of making some of their books more accessible and inclusive for children with language and communication difficulties.

The partnership does not oblige Stories with Symbols to produce videos at a specific rate or by specific deadlines, with the exception of a January 2022 deadline for producing a video based on 'Goldilocks' for World Book Day 2022 (which has already been completed and is awaiting approval from Usborne.)

Alex Rowe attended the Usborne 40th Anniversary conference in Telford on 11th September 2021 at which the new partnership was announced to a packed audience.

- The Stories with Symbols YouTube channel has had over 13,000 views, from countries all over the world, and currently has 200 subscribers. These include professionals in healthcare, schools and nurseries, each representing a significant number of target children. Eight videos are scheduled for publication in the first half of 2022, including the first videos arising from the new partnership with Usborne, and we expect the number of subscribers to increase as a result.
- The charity has begun producing videos for children with more developed language and communication skills, including primary school age children, covering non-fiction topics relating to the school curriculum. This was in response to demand for videos which were both developmentally accessible while still age-appropriate. For instance, a series of five videos are in production on the topics of weather and climate, filming having taken place at the UK Met Office in Exeter.
- Feedback on the videos produced by the charities so far has been extremely positive. Although the videos could be described as specialist or niche, a steady count of around 50 views per day indicates that the videos are in regular use. This number has been growing gradually throughout the year.
- The charity has developed close relationships with professionals in speech and language, as well as specialist teachers and senior school leaders across the country. Dialogue with these professionals has been central to the development of the new videos.
- As well as appearing in a number of local press articles, Stories with Symbols has featured as a 'Success Story' on the website of symbol maker, Widgit.
- Stories with Symbols is being used by NHS practitioners across the country. Director of Therapies for Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS called it "a really innovative and generous offer."
- Through visits to schools, we have seen – first hand – our videos being used as a learning resource. Often, they are used as a central focus around which other related activities are planned.
- A special school has chosen the video resources created by Stories with Symbols as the focus for a research project in 2022, evaluating the effectiveness of our videos on early literacy skills and engagement among children with additional needs.
- In May, Stories with Symbols took part in the Leicester City 'Local Offer Live' event, showcasing our work to professionals and parents/carers. We are now listed on the Local Offers for many different local authorities across the country.

Financial review

1. Position at the end of the period

- (1) Total income for 2021 was £3,008.12 and total expenditure was £2,432.24, representing a surplus of income over expenditure of £575.88.
- (2) Income includes trustee loans totalling £1,000 from Alex Rowe, to cover initial set-up costs. No interest is payable on the loan and it has no term.
- (3) Income also includes donations totalling £2,000 from Usborne Publishing. These donations are contributions towards the costs associated with making videos under the partnership with Usborne.

2. Reserves

- (1) Stories with Symbols has no employees or ongoing financial commitments. Reserves of £200 are deemed sufficient to meet the charity's needs.

3. Income and expenditure account for year ended 31.12.2021

	Notes	2021
Income:		(£)
Loans		1,000
Donations		2,008
Total Income		3,008
Capital Expenditure:		
Equipment		622
Props		69
Total Capital Expenditure		692
Non-Capital Expenditure:		
Software		165
Consumables		519
Presenter fees		300
Insurance		96
Marketing		152
Expenses	1	509
Total Non-Capital Expenditure		1741
Total Expenditure		2432
Surplus/(deficit)		576
Brought forward		-
Balance C/Fwd		576

Notes

1 Comprising £450 in travel expenses, £44 in subsistence and £15 in childcare.

4. Balance sheet as at 31.12.2021

	Notes	2021 (£)
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	1	317
CURRENT ASSETS		
Balance in current account		576
LIABILITIES		
Loans		(1000)
TOTAL NET ASSETS		(107)

Notes

- 1 25% straight line amortisation of the following items:

Asset	Date purchased	Purchase Price (£)	Value 2021 (-25%) (£)
Cayer BV30L tripod	08/09/2021	138.99	104.24
Cushion fillings (set decor)	21/10/2021	18.99	14.24
Yellow cushion covers (set decor)	21/10/2021	16.99	12.74
Zoom F2	03/11/2021	136.00	102.00
Cayer BV30L tripod	04/11/2021	111.19	83.39
		TOTAL:	316.61