

Pledgeball Trustees Report and Financial Statements 2023-4

For the year 1st May 2023 - 30th April 2024

Legal and administrative information

Charity number: 1194263

Principal address: 77 Maple Road, Bristol, BS7 8RE

Trustees:

Nik Kieboom (Chair, resigned 05 November 2024)

Chris Duncan (appointed, effective 15 April 2024; Chair, effective 05 November 2024)

Mark Powell (Treasure, effective 11 January 2024)

Mark Doidge

Alex Piper (resigned 14 April 2024)

Katrin Schweigert (appointed, effective 22 November 2023)

About Pledgeball

Overview of our work

At Pledgeball we are sports fans driven by a passionate belief that we must protect where we play. We are a team of staff and volunteers working to engage football and sports fans on climate action and is catalysing wider structural change at clubs and within leagues.

Our core public engagement approach is to encourage fans to commit to low-carbon lifestyle pledges through a digital platform. Adopting the competitive spirit of sport, the cumulative carbon emission reduction of fans' individual pledges is quantified so that teams 'compete' on match days and on a league table throughout the season. Clubs' on-site and online publicity advertises the Pledgeball competition and thereby makes fans' support for climate action visible to each other. This visible demonstration of peer support for climate action addresses a key current public engagement barrier: the vast majority of people support climate action, but they believe that others do not.

Pledgeball's vision is to bring about a cultural shift that sees prioritising environmental sustainability become a social norm. Pledgeball does this by:

- Sparking climate conversations among fans and at clubs
- Encouraging fans to take sustainable lifestyle choices through its pledging platform
- Accelerating structural change by working with clubs, leagues and the wider industry.

Pledgeball works in two ways:

Football Fixtures: Each match day, Pledgeball encourages fans to make pledges in support of their team. Whilst teams compete on the pitch, fans compete virtually by choosing from a list of pledges. These range from using recycled toilet paper to installing solar panels making it possible for each individual independent of his/her financial situation to contribute. During the period of this annual report the Centre for Sustainable Energy was commissioned to cross check the carbon claims made in the pledges. The team of fans that pledges to save the most carbon emissions wins that fixture and their position in the Pledgeball League is determined by the cumulative amount they have pledged to save. Whilst any fan can pledge, Pledgeball is working with an ever-growing list of partner clubs and Supporters' Associations, including the likes of Birmingham County FA and Huddersfield Town Supporters' Association.

Pledgeball events: Anyone can apply to host an event. Events range from one-off classes to season-long projects, the event participants making sustainable lifestyle pledge(s) to enter, with the individual's CO₂e saving together with that of their fellow group members automatically calculated.

Aims and public benefit

The object of Pledgeball is to promote the conservation, improvement and protection of the physical and natural environment for the public benefit by:

- advancing education and increasing awareness amongst the community of the benefits of reducing carbon emissions and energy saving and effective ways to make such reductions and savings
- promoting amongst the community the reduction of carbon emissions and energy saving.

Detailed performance review

It was another successful year for Pledgeball in which we managed to increase the scope and impact of our work. We were able to grow our team and moved from being a volunteer-only organisation to having three full time staff, including our founder, Katie Cross, who was appointed as the organisation's first CEO.

Below we have reviewed our performance against the objectives set out in the 2022-3 Trustees Report

1) Integrate Pledgeball into professional league, developing, implementing and assessing strategy.

We integrated Pledgeball into the UEFA Champions League, 2024, which kicked off in March 2024 and continued until 1st June 2024. Over the course of this campaign we reached over 6.2 million fans, over 6,500 fans made pro-environmental pledges and we had an impact assessment carried out by a PhD student supervised by Prof. Lorraine Whitmarsh, MBE.

This confirmed the positive impact of Pledgeball and also provided valuable actions which we are now implementing.

2) Develop and implement strategy to increase uptake and impact amongst grassroots teams.

This has been ongoing. The partnership with Birmingham County FA continues and sees significant engagement and we also partnered with the Lawn Tennis Association to work with their grassroots venues. The LTA engagement proved more difficult, because of the lack of touchpoints with the tennis players, but the impact on those who engaged was very positive and triggered further operational changes at the venues.

3) Develop, implement and assess strategy for partnership with Football Supporters Association (FSA).

We reviewed this with the FSA, and whilst the partnership continues to be fruitful we will review again with our new Head of Commercial Operations to ensure that this works as efficiently as possible. We set up and now chair the FSA Green Working Group, which is hugely valuable as we begin to build a movement of fans.

4) Design Monitoring and Evaluation strategy to assess the impact of Pledgeball.

This has been done now but was not actually done within the time period because of resource and because we were commissioning researchers to assess impact of particular projects. During the time period, we had two pieces of academic research carried out to assess the impact of our work with Birmingham County FA and the LTA. This research found that 'Fans are more likely to adjust their daily consumption habits in response to their club's involvement in Pledgeball'.

5) Review and develop pledge list to maximise accuracy of CO2e data.

We had all of the pledge data reviewed and formalised by the Centre for Climate and Sustainable Energy (this actually was before Feb 22). We have also reviewed the pledge list with our researchers to make the display of them more user friendly on mobiles and desktop.

Challenges in 2023-4

The organisation's reach and reputation grew significantly in 2023-4, building on the strong foundations laid in previous years. With increased recognition and acknowledgement of the impact of our work we've had significant growth in opportunities for work and it was a challenge to ensure that we had the staff resources to be able to deliver on all of these opportunities to further our charitable aims. The team are all focused on ensuring that we have the financial and people resources in place to be able to make the most of new possibilities to deliver impact.

The limited budget assigned to addressing sustainability in sports organisations continues to be an issue. This sometimes means that where services are provided, often these have to

be charged lower than the commercial rate, so that we are still able to engage these communities on climate change and deliver on our objectives.

Future plans

We conducted a research-led review of our impact in mid-2024 and this has helped us to identify where we can further increase the impact of our work. This helped to inform the strategic planning process for the year 2024-5.

The Trustees have agreed the following priorities and objectives for 2024-5:

- 1) Increase impact:**
 - Implement recommendations from 2024 impact review
 - Develop and implement email marketing strategy to increase repeat pledges and support Pledgeball users on their sustainability journey
- 2) Grow our fan audience**
 - Increase number of first-time and repeat pledgers
 - Targeted media outreach
- 3) Grow our network**
 - Increase number of strategic partners
 - Increase number of contacts able to support our work
- 4) Ensure financial sustainability**
 - Develop strategic approach to fundraising
 - Strengthen commercial partnerships
 - Ensure resources in place to build staff team
- 5) Grow our brand**
 - Finalise communications and brand strategy
 - Ensure media coverage of Pledgeball's work and impact
- 6) Digital transformation**
 - Launch new website
 - Establish online community for Pledgeballers

Risk management

The trustees are responsible for oversight of the risks faced by the organisation. Trustees discuss risks as part of their regular meetings and in 2024-5 will develop a formalised risk register to capture major risks to the charities operations.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

Pledgeball is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission in April 2021 under charity number 1194263. It is governed by its constitution which was last updated in April 2021.

Organisational structure

Trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. Trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits. Trustees meet formally every three months and are responsible for decisions taken in relation to how it is run and its strategic direction. The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of Pledgeball.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The existing trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees but in so doing the trustees seek the views and recommendations of those involved in the day to day running of Pledgeball. The trustees believe this approach ensures that new trustees are respected members of their particular field of expertise and have an intimate knowledge of the sector. This ensures increased impact when meeting the aims of Pledgeball.

The Trustees conducted a skills and needs analysis in 2024, identifying areas for potential future trustee recruitment.

Induction and training of trustees

Following appointment, new trustees are introduced to their new role by the Chair and given copies of the governing constitution and publications from the Charity Commission such as 'The Essential Trustee'. This ensures that new trustees are aware of the scope of their responsibilities under the Charities Act and that they have the information about Pledgeball that they need to be effective. A refresher briefing on the role and legal duties of trustees was conducted in 2024.

Use of volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of Pledgeball, helping us to deliver our objectives and so, ultimately, our charitable aims. Alongside our staff of three people, volunteers are involved in supporting funding and partnership development, social media, research and impact assessment. We are incredibly lucky to have some very qualified volunteers on our team. All our trustees also give their time freely. To all of these volunteers we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks.

Financial Review

Principal funding sources

The Pledgeball model means there are 3 streams of funding: commercial partnerships, services provided and grants. The charity has been successful in growing its sources of funding across all streams over the accounting year. This additional funding has enabled us to build both the scope and penetration of our activities across our stated objectives.

At the end of the period Pledgeball held a cash balance of £53,366. These funds are earmarked to further advance our scope and penetration across our stated objectives.

Reserves policy

The Charity aims to hold a minimum reserve equal to approximately 3 months' worth of projected expenditure. The reserve at the period end, being the 30th April 2024, was £53,366. Three months of expenditure amounts to circa £30,000. However we have additional plans to expand and holding a surplus reserve is necessary to support this expansion.

Investment policy and objectives

The charity has no long-term investments. Our cash reserves are held in a charity bank account.

Plans for the future

Whilst much of our work is supported and undertaken by volunteers, we now have 3 members of paid staff who lead the numerous projects we're involved in. There are clear, comprehensive development plans in place to secure funding for the long-term viability and survival of Pledgeball.

Notes

The accounts have been prepared on an actual receipts and payments basis. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) we can confirm that:

- There are no guarantees given by the CIO, where any potential liability under the guarantee is outstanding at the date of the statement of assets and liabilities;
- There are no debts outstanding at the date of the statement of assets and liabilities which is owed by the CIO and which is secured by an express charge on any of the assets of the CIO.

Accounts for period from 01/05/23 to 30/04/2024

Statement of Financial Activities for the period from 01/05/23 to 30/04/2024

Income	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Total	Funds £	Funds £	2024 £
2023 £			
Income from generated funds 29,064*	-	-	-
Income from charitable activities -	12,000	109,940	121,940
Total Income and Endowments 29,064	12,000	109,940	121,940

Expenses

Cost of generating funds 1,083	7,319	7,319	
Expenditure on charitable activities 21,800	69,537	69,537	
Total expenses 22,883	76,856	76,856	
Net Gains on Investments	-	-	-
Net Income 6,181	45,084	45,084	
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed asset	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	-	-	-
Net Income for the period 6,181	45,084	45,084	
Net funds carried forward 8,282	53,366	53,366	

This statement of financial activities includes all gains/losses and income/expenditure recognised in the period.

*this amount was incorrectly allocated last year and should have been under 'Income from charitable activities

Expenses for the period from 01/05/23 to 30/04/2024

Expenses	2024 £	2023 £
Costs of generating funds	7,319	1,083
Charitable Activities	69,537	21,800
Resources Expended Charitable Activities	51,798	15,336
Computer costs	3,665	4,929
Consultancy fees	-	1,350
Sundry expenses	14,074	185

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at the end of the accounting period

Assets	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £
Cash Funds	-	53,366	-

Other monetary assets	-	-	-
Investment assets	-	-	-
Assets retained for charities own use	-	-	-
Total	-	53,366	-
Liabilities	-	-	-

Independent Evaluation of Annual Accounts for the Charity Pledgeball for the period 1/5/2023 to 30/4/2024.

1 Check whether the charity is eligible to have an independent examination

[Independent examination of charity accounts: guidance for trustees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/independent-examination-of-charity-accounts-guidance-for-trustees)

The Charity is a CIO and has income of circa £122k, so therefore in excess of minimum amount of £25k that requires an Independent evaluation. The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis. There is no requirement within the charity's governing document that states a formal audit must be conducted

2 Check for any conflict of interest that prevents the examiner from carrying out their independent examination

[Independent examination of charity accounts: guidance for trustees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/independent-examination-of-charity-accounts-guidance-for-trustees)

I am able to undertake this independent evaluation as I do not have any of the following:

- I am not a Trustee, employee or donor of the charity.
- I do not serve on any sub committees of the charity.
- I do not have a 'close' relationship with any Trustees or other related parties.
- I do not have a significant financial or commercial relationship with the charity

3 Record your independent examination

See 6) below

4 Plan the independent examination

See 6) below

5 Check that accounting records are kept to the required standard

See 6) below

6 Check that the accounts are consistent with the accounting records

I met with the Treasurer for Pledgeball on Wed the 27th Nov 2024 and undertook the following:

Reviewed the Charity's governing document to confirm a formal audit wasn't required.

Reviewed the accounting records held by the charity. The records show a good level of detail for the number of transactions processed during 2023/24.

I reconciled the net position from the accounting records with the bank balances for the start and end of the accounting period. The records reconcile.

I reviewed how the expenses have been categorised within the accounts, noting the assumption that 10% of the CEO's time (and therefore expenses) is spent on 'Fund raising activities and the remainder relates to 'Charitable activities'. The categorisation within the accounts is appropriate.

I reconciled both the 'Brought forward' balance and the 'carried forward' balance with the bank balances. This also then reconciles with the cash assets shown within the balance sheet.

Whilst not relevant for this accounting period I have asked the Treasurer to keep the following points in view going forward.

- Importance of monitoring the VAT position on monthly basis to ensure Pledgeball register if they exceed the VAT threshold.
- Ensure compliance with the new Financial Control Policy introduced in May 2024, specifically
 - Retention of receipts for all expenses.
 - Ensure significant unbudgeted Expenditure is approved before committing.

7 If the accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and one or more related party transactions took place the examiner must check if these were properly disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

The accounts are not prepared on an accruals basis

8 Check the reasonableness of the significant estimates and judgments and accounting policies used in accounting for the types of fund held and in the preparation of the accounts

See 6) above relates to estimates over the split of the CEO's time (and therefore expenses) between a) Charitable activities and b) Funding raising activities

9 The examiner must check whether the trustees have considered the financial circumstances of the charity at the end of the reporting period and, if the accounts are prepared on an accruals basis, check whether the trustees have made an assessment of the charity's position as a going concern when approving the accounts Part.

I have reviewed a draft of the Annual report and note the statements covering the ongoing viability of the charity and the appropriateness of the reserves held at the year end.

10 Check the form and content of the accounts

See 6 above. In addition I have reviewed the format of the accounts is broadly in line with the recommend template issued by the Charity Commission.

11 Identify items from the analytical review of the accounts that need to be followed up for further explanation or evidence

I selected a sample of expense payments and requested details of these payments. These have now been provided.

12 Compare the trustees' annual report with the accounts

See 9) above. The commentary within the Annual report reflects the content of the Accounts

13 Write and sign the independent examination report.

I can confirm that there are no matters of material significance or any other relevant matters to report to the Commission.



Sign by Richard Beale on 07/01/2025

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