

Pledgeball Trustees Report and Financial Statements 2024-5

For the year 1st May 2024 - 31st May 2025

Legal and administrative information

Charity number: 1194263

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

Trustees:

Chris Duncan (Chair)

Mark Powell (Treasurer)

Mark Doidge

Katrin Schweigert

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 catalyse wider structural change at clubs and within leagues.

We want to bring about a cultural shift where prioritising environmental sustainability becomes a social norm. We're doing 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.

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 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 Bristol City FC, Birmingham County FA and the Football 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. This facility is used by a number of professional rugby clubs as well as the Lawn Tennis Association for their Grassroots Clubs.

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

The organisation continued to grow its impact, deepening engagement with sports fans, clubs and administrators in order to drive action on climate and environmental issues. Below we have reviewed our performance against the objectives set out in the 2023-4 Trustees Report.

1) Increase impact

We continued with the implementation of recommendations from our 2024 impact review, all of which have either now been delivered or work is underway. One extensive area of work was the development and implementation of an email marketing strategy to increase repeat pledges and support Pledgeball users on their sustainability journey. Generating the content was incredibly time intensive and the project was more far reaching and of a higher spec than initially anticipated but we're confident that the rigour will deliver greater impact for the organisation. Trustee Katrin Schweigert used learning from ongoing academic research and the approach was ratified by the leading behavioural psychologist, Lorraine Whitmarsh.

2) Grow our fan audience

We had a huge spike in the number of fans engaged through the Pledgeball league and media exposure as a result of our partnership around the UEFA Champions League 2024. We estimate that we reached 6.2m fans with messaging about climate change and the campaign messaging appeared in a range of large media outlets, including the BBC, Sky News, The Sun, Metro and The Independent. We also gained media coverage through focused outreach around the Sustainable Travel Charter. The number of clubs that have signed up to the charter has now increased to 14 and we were able to tell this story through a number of major outlets including Sky Sports. This kind of coverage is vital in normalising climate conversations within sport.

3) Grow our network

We continued to build a strong network within the sports world, across fans, players, clubs and administrators. We're focused on developing long-term relationships that allow us to deepen engagement and help others to drive change within their communities. We know that our influence and network has been growing but resource constraints meant that we didn't rigorously track the full extent of all our relationships. We're aiming to address this in future periods.

4) Ensure financial sustainability

We planned to develop a fundraising strategy in the period but postponed this to pivot to dealing with the realities of capacity restraints and short-term priorities, including responding to commercial partnership needs and the changing funding landscape. We were able to

strengthen dedicated resource and improve management and operational processes, which should allow us to focus on fundraising strategy, as outlined in Future Plans.

5) Grow our brand

We were delighted to be awarded BBC Green Sports Grassroots Organisation of the Year. It was a strong endorsement of our work and offered a great boost to our reputation and standing. Our CEO, Katie, continues to be a strong media performer, taking the message of our work and awareness of what we do to new audiences. This will continue to be a major area of focus for us in the year ahead.

6) Digital transformation

Work started on two significant projects: the complete redevelopment of our website (pledgeball.org.uk) and the development of a completely new online community for Pledgeballers. Although we'd hoped to complete both projects in 2024-5, it became clear that these game-changing projects would require additional time to deliver their full benefits. Huge progress was made to allow for launch in the following reporting period.

Challenges in 2024-5

- **Funding:** While we were able to grow income, the funding landscape presented a number of challenges. Our main funder closed their grant-making in the area relevant to us and the political landscape continues to have an impact on grant funding.
- **Resource:** the team continued to be incredibly busy for extensive periods, leaving staff stretched, particularly in communications.
- **Sustainability backlash:** there was a global downward trend in corporate appetite for addressing environmental sustainability, which has created difficulty in some of our engagement.

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. The staff and Trustees came together in early 2025 to work on a long-term vision for our work and agreed the following three overarching objectives for the next five years:

- Engage 1.2 millions sports fans
- Environmental sustainability is an inherent part of sports organisations
- The charity is sustainable and resilient

The Trustees agreed the following priorities and objectives for 2025-6, which will help us deliver on that ambition for the future:

Objectives for 2025/26

- Intensify work with existing changemakers in grassroots communities, giving them more support to drive attitudinal and behavioural shifts and start conversations.
- Build our online community, to reduce reliance on third parties and deepen relationships with fans online.
- Work with ambassadors to support community development, audience-building and resonance of messaging.
- Deliver schedule of in-person events to support in building both online and grassroots community engagement.
- Ensure effective use of CRM system to turbocharge users' sustainability journeys and numbers of pledgers.
- Continue to directly support and, where appropriate, apply pressure on EFL clubs to up their game on environmental sustainability and climate action.
- Produce thought-leadership research report and/or solution that will help to further accelerate systemic change in sport.
- Develop and deliver a diversified funding strategy to support our work.

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 have started implementation of a risk register for the organisation. Risks are now captured, scored for likelihood and impact, with mitigating actions agreed.

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 began the process of recruiting new trustees to broaden the experience of the Board. Emphasis has been placed on finding people with knowledge and experience of: commercial sports operations; and charity operations. These were the two areas identified as most in need of strengthening.

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.

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 four 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 three 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 £94,048. 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 three months' worth of projected expenditure. The reserve at the period end, being the 30th April 2024, was £94,048. Three months of expenditure amounts to circa £50,000. 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 four 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 01/05/24 to 31/05/2025

Statement of Financial Activities for the period from 1/05/24 to 31/05/2025 (13 Months)

Income	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	
Total	Funds	Funds	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Income from generated funds	-	-	-	-
Income from charitable activities	58,000	155,255	213,255	121,940
Total Income and Endowments	58,000	155,255	213,255	121,940

Expenses

Cost of generating funds		14,900	14,900	7,319
Expenditure on charitable activities		157,673	157,673	69,537
Total expenses		172,573	172,573	76,856
Net Gains on Investments		-	-	-
Net Income		40,682	40,682	45,084
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed asset		-	-	-
Net movement in funds		-	-	-
Net Income for the period		40,682	40,682	45,084
Net funds carried forward		94,048	94,048	53,366

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

Expenses for the period from 01/05/24 to 31/05/2025

Expenses	2025	£	2024	£
Costs of generating funds	14,900		7,319	
Charitable Activities	157,673		69,537	
Resources Expended Charitable Activities	108,304		51,798	
Computer costs	23,569		3,665	
Consultancy fees	400		0	
Sundry expenses	25,400		14,074	

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

Assets	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £
Cash Funds	-	94,048	-
Other monetary assets	-	-	-
Investment assets	-	-	-
Assets retained for charities own use	-	-	-
Total	-	94,048	-
Liabilities	-	-	-

Independent Evaluation of Annual Accounts for the Charity Pledgeball for the period 1/5/2024 to 31/5/2025.

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)

The Charity is a CIO and has income of circa £213k, 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)

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 Tues the 6th Jan 2026 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 2024/25.

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.

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

This year no specific items required further analysis.

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.



Signed by Richard Beale on 08/03/2026

72 St Albans Road