

THE SHALOM NETWORK

England & Wales · Charity number 1195375

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2021-08-03

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

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Activities

Objects: THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT, IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, AMONGST THOSE WITH 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS' BY:* CREATING AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES SUCH AS WORSHIP, PRAYER, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SHARING IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP;* ENCOURAGING, TRAINING, AND ENABLING CHURCHES TO WELCOME AND SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS' AND ENABLE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES. THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT AMONG PEOPLE WITH 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS', THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS LIVING MAINLY, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, WITHIN THE FOREST OF DEAN AREA TO RELIEVE THE NEEDS OF SUCH PEOPLE AND ASSIST THEM TO INTEGRATE INTO SOCIETY, IN PARTICULAR BY:* PROVIDING A LOCAL NETWORK GROUP THAT ENCOURAGES AND ENABLES MEMBERS WITH 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS' TO PARTICIPATE MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY;* INCREASING, OR CO-ORDINATING, OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS WITH 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS' TO ENGAGE WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS AND TO ENABLE THOSE PROVIDERS TO ADAPT SERVICES TO BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF THAT COMMUNITY;* PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES SUCH AS HEALTHY LIVING AND LIFE SKILLS COURSES, COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES, MUSIC AND ART TO BETTER EQUIP THOSE WITH 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS';* RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES AFFECTING THOSE WITH 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS', BOTH GENERALLY AND IN RELATION TO THEIR SOCIAL EXCLUSION;* PROVIDING WORKSHOPS, FORUMS, ADVOCACY AND GENERAL SUPPORT;* PROVIDING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WITH 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS' INVOLVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY." FOR THE PURPOSE OF THESE CLAUSES, 'ADDITIONAL NEEDS' MEANS ANYONE WHO HAS A LEARNING, COMMUNICATION OR DEVELOPMENTAL NEED, PHYSICAL DISABILITY OR MENTAL HEALTH NEED. THESE ARE SOMETIMES ALSO REFERRED TO AS 'COMPLEX' AND/OR 'SPECIALISED' NEEDS.

Activities: The advancement of the Christian faith for the public benefit, in particular, but not exclusively, amongst those with additional needs. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people with additional needs, their families and carers living mainly, but not exclusively, within the Forest of Dean to relieve the needs of such people and assist them to integrate into society.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, Disability, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Religious Activities, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£38,628	£48,057	-	-
2024-12-31	£41,797	£42,472	-	-
2023-12-31	£34,977	£43,906	-	-
2022-12-31	£76,694	£34,939	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Jessica Louise Thompson		2020-11-24
Lorraine Fellows		2020-11-24
Stephen Paul Thompson		2020-11-24

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England & Wales - Charity number 1195375

Accounts



Report of the Trustees

Period: 1st January 2025 – 31st December 2025

Document Owner: The Shalom Network

Approval Date:

Publication Date:

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8 Overview

The trustees present their statutory report covering the period from 1st of January 2025 to December 31st, 2025, for The Shalom Network a Charity Incorporated Organisation, charity number 1195375, registered on August 3rd, 2021.

The financial report has been examined and approved by an appropriate third party who is independent of the charity. It has also been reviewed and approved by The Shalom Network Finance Committee and the whole board of trustees.

This report summarises our purposes, vision, values and mission giving an accurate picture of how and to what degree we have met those objectives in the reporting period.

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9.1 Our Charitable Purposes

The advancement of the Christian faith for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively, amongst those with additional needs.

The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people with additional needs, their families and carers living mainly, but not exclusively, within the Forest of Dean to relieve the needs of such people and assist them to integrate into society.

9.2 Our Vision & Mission

To bring Christian fellowship, social inclusion, advocacy, skills and opportunities to people with additional needs, their families and communities within the Forest of Dean and beyond.

9.3 Our Values

Inclusivity – Welcome displaces judgement and opinion

Enablement – To develop and grow capacity

Empowerment – Build self confidence and self-worth

Self Advocacy – Help others to help themselves

Integration – Through loving, lasting relationships

10 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Projects

10.1 Giving Voice Community

10.1.1 What our Giving Voice Community Programme has achieved in 2025

a. Evaluating Community Needs

From its inception, the project has been shaped by careful assessment of the expressed needs of individuals, families, and support networks. Experiences of isolation, misunderstanding, and the absence of accessible resources have emerged as the most significant barriers. Audio, written, and video resources, alongside safe, empowering spaces and trusted relationships continue to evolve in genuine response to these needs.

b. Adapting Our Approach to Build Community

A flexible, person-led approach has guided community building throughout, recognising that individuals who think and communicate differently require spaces adapted to their needs. The Shalom Network serves as scaffolding, becoming less visible as the community's own strength grows.

c. Professional Collaboration within the Community

Meaningful partnerships are being developed with a range of organisations working alongside the people we serve. Drawing on specialist expertise, including Carol Gray's Social Story principles the project ensures that individuals and families are recognised as experts in their own right, blending professional knowledge with lived experience.

d. Listening and Supporting the Community

In partnership with Voices for All Podcasts, the project has begun collecting and sharing real stories from individuals and families in written, audio, and video formats. Social Stories and Easy Read materials shaped through drama, roleplay, sensory experience, and music are being developed as community-owned resources, handled with care, confidentiality, and respect.

e. Continuous Learning and Training to Serve the Community

Volunteers and contributors have received training in digital tools, resource creation, and accessible materials. Each session is logged and reviewed, with learning drawn from both successes and challenges. The pace of development across the project has been encouraging.

f. Building Confidence and Self-Esteem in Ourselves and in the Community

A significant achievement has been the growing confidence of individuals, support networks, and the project team. For individuals with limited or no speech, being part of something that genuinely values their contribution has had a meaningful impact on wellbeing and self-esteem. For volunteers and support workers, participating in resource and community creation has strengthened skills and sense of purpose.

g. Developing Techniques and Using Technology for Online Community Learning and Engagement

Technology has played a growing and meaningful role. Easy Read resources and Social Stories have been placed onto Grid software for accessible use on iPad. Social media platforms chosen by participants will be

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used to extend reach, and digital skills are being developed so that the community can increasingly own and manage its own online presence.

10.1.2 Constraining Factors within the Giving Voice Community Programme

Volunteer recruitment and training is taking longer than planned, and building authentic community ownership requires sustained time and commitment. Some individuals face significant daily challenges that affect the pace of engagement. The infrastructure for community ownership, platforms, roles, and shared leadership, is still being carefully built, as is natural for a new initiative.

3.1.3 Giving Voice Community Programme summary

The Giving Voice Community Project represents one of the most purposeful developments for this group of people who have limited or no speech within the Shalom Network this year. Beginning with listening, to stories, needs, and quieter voices; it builds outward into resource creation, friendship, and community ownership. Meaningful progress has been made, and much of the most important work still lies ahead, approached with hope, humility, and a deep commitment to ensuring every individual knows their voice matters and that they belong.

3.1.4 Giving Voice Community Programme Next Steps

a. Empowering Individuals as Leaders and Pioneers

The next phase will focus on amplifying diverse voices by gathering and sharing real stories from individuals and families, using written, audio, and video formats. Working in partnership with Voices for All Podcasts, stories will be collected across multiple formats, shared through accessible community-led spaces and social media, and used to develop guiding principles from lived experience for future initiatives.

b. Sharing Resources with the Wider Community

A suite of generic Easy Read documents, Social Stories, and accessible resources will be developed for free sharing across wider online communities, relevant to any individual with limited or no speech, any family navigating similar challenges, or any support worker seeking practical, person-centred tools. Partner organisations and communities of practice will be engaged to ensure resources reach those who need them most, with individuals, families, and supporters central to the process as contributors and quality-checkers. In doing so, the Giving Voice Community aims to contribute to a wider movement toward accessible, inclusive, and community-owned resources for everyone who communicates differently.

10.2 Digital Inclusion & Accessibility

The Shalom Network, with its commitment to challenge social exclusion, has continued this programme in collaboration with and partly funded by other organisations. Together we seek to ensure that those we serve can benefit through appropriate and safe use of digital technology. We recognise that individuals with additional needs are more vulnerable to online risks and that the digital world we now live in needs careful navigating.

10.2.1 What Our Digital Inclusion & Accessibility Programme Achieved in 2025

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Throughout 2025, the programme made strong progress in expanding both reach and impact. Easy Read digital guides continued to be a cornerstone resource, with the first edition widely shared and a second edition—focused on email use—developed and nearing publication. These guides have been well received across partner organisations, with growing demand for accessible digital learning materials.

The Digital Inclusion Partnership in the Forest of Dean strengthened, creating opportunities for collaboration with local organisations and increasing awareness of digital exclusion. Participation in local events helped showcase the work and build new connections.

Podcasting workshops, delivered in collaboration with Camphill Village Trust, enabled participants with additional needs to develop communication skills, confidence, and increasing their digital literacy. Participants produced and shared content, including a podcast for Mental Health Week, demonstrating measurable personal development.

Additionally, tailored communication sessions supported individuals through the development of “How to use Email” Easy Read materials.

Building on this progress, a comprehensive rollout plan has been developed for the *Voices for All* programme. This plan aligns with funding secured through Forest of Dean District Council (FODDC) in Oct 2025 and the Thriving Communities Grant at the end of 2025, covering the period from October 2025 to December 2026. It integrates delivery, governance, partnership working, and sustainability.

The programme is designed to support adults with additional needs to develop communication, confidence, and digital skills through inclusive podcast creation, while strengthening their connection to the wider community. Delivery is strengths-based, accessible, and paced according to participants’ needs.

The initial phase (October – December 2025) focuses on preparation, trust-building, and establishing strong foundations for delivery. This includes planning and scoping meetings, confirming volunteers and partnerships, completing safeguarding and DBS checks, identifying suitable venues, carrying out risk assessments, purchasing podcasting equipment, beginning development of Easy Read materials, and delivering outreach and promotional activities.

10.2.2 Constraints on the Digital Inclusion & Accessibility Programme in 2025

The most significant constraint has been funding instability. The Life Development Fund (LDF), which supported key elements of the programme, came to an end during the year, creating uncertainty around sustainability.

Some initiatives, including podcasting and wider digital training expansion, were delayed or paused due to limited resources and reliance on securing new funding streams.

There were also administrative delays in accessing legacy funding, requiring follow-up with funding bodies, which slowed progress on resource development.

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10.2.3 Digital Inclusion & Accessibility Programme 2025 Summary

Despite financial challenges, 2025 has been a year of meaningful growth. The programme successfully strengthened partnerships, expanded accessible resources, and empowered individuals with additional needs to engage more confidently in the digital world.

The development of the Voices for All rollout plan represents a significant step forward, providing a clear and sustainable framework for expanding digital inclusion through creative, participant-led engagement.

10.2.4 Digital Inclusion & Accessibility Programme Futures

Looking ahead, the priority is to successfully deliver the Voices for All programme and enable longer term sustainability.

The programme will progress through three key phases as detailed in the Voices 4 All Project section of this report.

Future plans include:

- Rolling out the second edition of Easy Read guides more widely
- Expanding partnership working through formal agreements and collaborative delivery

With appropriate funding and continued partnership support, the programme has strong potential for lasting regional impact.

10.3 Voice 4 All Project

10.3.1 Voice 4 All Project Achievements in 2025

The Voices for All initiative has continued to demonstrate strong value as a creative and inclusive digital engagement project. Through pilot podcasting workshops, participants with additional needs have developed confidence, communication skills, and practical digital competencies.

Participants contributed to the creation of podcast content, including themed outputs such as a Mental Health Week podcast. This has provided meaningful opportunities for individuals to express their voices and engage with wider audiences.

The project has also strengthened partnerships and raised the profile of the Shalom Network within digital inclusion networks, creating a firmer foundation for future growth.

10.3.2 Constraints on the Voice 4 All Project in 2025

The primary constraint has been funding uncertainty. While initial grant applications were not successful, alternative funding has since been identified, enabling the project to move forward.

Delays in securing funding, confirming resources, and purchasing essential equipment have slowed the transition from pilot activity to a fuller programme of delivery.

10.3.3 Voice 4 All Project 2025 Summary

Voices for All has successfully piloted an innovative and impactful approach to digital inclusion. Participants have shown clear development in confidence and communication, and the project strongly aligns with the organisation's mission to support individuals with additional needs.

The development of a fully funded and structured rollout plan positions the project for further expansion and a deeper impact.

10.3.4 Voice 4 All Project Futures

The Voices for All programme will be delivered through a structured rollout aligned to the October 2025 – December 2026 funding period. This approach integrates delivery, governance, partnership working, and longer term sustainability.

The programme will progress through three key phases:

- **Phase 1 – Preparation, Trust-Building & Setup (October – December 2025)**
- **Phase 2 – Core Delivery (November 2025 – September 2026)**
- **Phase 3 – Evaluation & Sustainability (October – December 2026)**

Future priorities include:

- Expanding participation and outreach
- Maintaining strong governance and safeguarding
- Securing ongoing funding beyond the current grant period

11 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Group Sessions

11.1 Shalom Online

11.1.1 Shalom Online 2025 Achievements

Shalom Online continued to provide consistent, accessible weekly sessions, with attendance stable at 14–15 participants.

Teaching programmes, supported by interactive quizzes, proved highly effective in reinforcing learning and engagement. The programme successfully transitioned from grant funding to core funding.

11.1.2 Constraints on Shalom Online in 2025

Key challenges included:

- Transition from external funding
- Ongoing need for sustainable financial support
- Managing online safety and safeguarding concerns

11.1.3 Shalom Online Futures

Future priorities include maintaining consistent delivery, strengthening safeguarding processes, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

11.2 Shalom Groups

11.2.1 Shalom Groups 2025 Achievements

Shalom Groups continued to provide vital in-person community through regular gatherings, social events, and church engagement.

Key achievements include:

- Successful social events and community activities
- Strengthening partnerships with local churches
- Introduction of a subscription model generating regular income
- Continued provision of inclusive, supportive environments

11.2.2 Constraints on the Shalom Groups in 2025

Challenges included:

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- Volunteer shortages at key points
- Financial pressures, with limited funding secured
- Capacity constraints impacting growth

11.2.3 Shalom Groups Summary

Despite constraints, the Shalom Groups remained a strong and consistent ministry, providing belonging, community, and support for individuals with additional needs.

11.2.4 Shalom Groups Futures

Future priorities include:

- Increasing volunteer capacity
- Strengthening church partnerships
- Securing sustainable funding for the future of the group
- Exploring opportunities for growth while maintaining quality and safety

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11.3 Giving Voice Communication Sessions

11.3.1 Giving Voice Communication 2025 Achievements

The Shalom Network's Giving Voice Project continues to strengthen its role in empowering individuals with additional needs, particularly those with limited or no speech, to communicate with confidence through personalised, accessible support. In 2026 it will develop the foundation for the wider Giving Voice Community Project, expanding our commitment to co-created resources, lived-experience podcast stories, and inclusive communication across our network.

Giving Voice comprises these key elements that drive the objectives that we have largely succeeded in meeting.

- Evaluation of Individual Needs and Personalised Goals
- Professional Collaboration and Resources
- Communication Progress and Independent Initiation
- Learning, Development, and Confidence
- Technology and Resources

11.3.2 Giving Voice Community Achievements in 2025

a. Evaluation of Individual Needs and Personalised Goals

Working in partnership with individuals, families, and carers, personalised goals have been continuously refined to reflect each person's strengths, preferences, and aspirations. Bespoke Easy Read materials and Social Stories have been co-produced with individuals and their support networks. These have measurably reduced anxiety, supported clearer self-expression, and will form the foundation of a wider community toolkit. Creative techniques, including rhythm, music, and hip-hop have made these resources genuinely engaging and memorable.

Self-expression remains central to sessional work. Individuals are encouraged to use vocal sounds alongside gestures, eye-pointing, hand signs, and other body language. This year, a number of individuals have shown notable increases in confidence, with sounds becoming recognisable words, simple, clear, and significant. Music and sensory activities continue to support emotional regulation, creating the conditions of calm and trust in which real communication progress can occur.

b. Professional Collaboration and Resources

Collaborative work with NHS community teams, including CDLT Speech and Language Therapy services, has strengthened practice and informed the development of accessible resources now in active use and ready for wider sharing.

c. Communication Progress and Independent Initiation

Individuals have made meaningful progress in initiating communication through gestures, body language, communication devices, and emerging spoken words. With consistent modelling and encouragement, individuals are increasingly leading interactions rather than waiting to be prompted. Family and support worker involvement has been central, extending communication practice into daily life and building confidence across a wider range of situations.

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d. Learning, Development, and Confidence

Learning plans have been regularly reviewed in response to each individual's evolving needs. iPad resources, 'Now and Next' visual tools, and Social Stories have supported continued engagement. Self-expression has been a particular focus as individuals move into adulthood and their choices continue to grow.

e. Technology and Resources

Confidence in using and adapting Grid software has increased, with bespoke stories and games co-produced using individuals' own photos and text. A wider range of music apps has enhanced creative and sensory engagement, and eye-gaze technology is now accessible via any modern iPad, broadening options for individuals with more complex physical needs.

11.3.3 Constraints on the Giving Voice Community Project in 2025

Many individuals experience a particular form of isolation, where those closest to them are often paid professionals. Some individuals are not consistently motivated to communicate, and this is respected rather than overcome; progress depends on safe, settled, and enjoyable environments. Emotional and challenging behaviours, frequently rooted in the frustrations of limited expression, remain a significant factor in the pace of development. Externally, gaps in understanding within statutory and social care services, staff turnover in supported living environments, and the demands of working across multiple agencies continue to present barriers to the consistency that communication development requires.

11.3.4 Giving Voice Community 2025 Summary

This has been a productive year of meaningful progress, deepening relationships, and growing confidence across individuals, families, and support networks. The project remains committed to truly listening, carefully observing, and following each individual's lead, investing in enhanced accessible resources and strengthening relationships with all those who support the people we serve.

11.3.5 Giving Voice Community Future

Alongside continued Giving Voice sessions, new insights from the Giving Voice Community Project will feed into the wider network. The ambition is clear: to enable individuals with little or no speech to achieve greater understanding, greater inclusion, and a stronger sense of belonging — supported at their own pace and on their own terms.

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11.4 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Shalom Events

11.4.1 What we Have Achieved

We have organised and held

- I. A Passover meal at a local gastro pub, which was very well attended.
- II. By popular demand, another summer BBQ and Activity Day blessed with fine weather very good attendance.
- III. We have organised meals out and social times together which were very well attended and appreciated.
- IV. We have attended local churches as a group and on some occasions led their services. This has raised awareness of the Charity and work it does.
- V. Quarterly skittles evenings have become a popular event during which we are joined by members of other local communities comprising people with additional needs and disabilities.

11.4.2 Constraints on Holding Shalom Events in 2025

Organising events—even those with modest activities and smaller groups—continues to require significant time and effort. To expand the number and reach of these events, additional support from volunteers and staff is essential.

Securing suitable venues remains a consistent challenge. Factors such as transportation access, hire costs, and the availability of appropriate facilities often determine where events can be held. The overall accessibility of a location also plays a critical role and can significantly limit our options, especially when trying to accommodate individuals with varying needs.

11.4.3 Shalom Events Futures

We will continue exploring ways to expand our programme by offering a broader range of both one-off and recurring events. These events will aim to provide diverse opportunities for connection—not only for those already involved with The Shalom Network, but also for members of the wider community.

A key focus will be on creating engaging, high-quality content and delivering it in meaningful and memorable ways. This approach is expected to foster new partnerships with like-minded organisations, opening doors for collaborative initiatives that align with our mission and values.

Provided that the funding and resource is available all of the events held in 2025 will, with some updates, be held in 2026.

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12 The Team

12.1 Paid Professional Resource

The Shalom Network employs paid professional project leads on a freelance basis. They deliver according to accepted quotations agreed by a representative trustee at rates agreed by the board and Finance Committee. Those agreements are made at the inception of a particular project and then regularly reviewed, as is the case with core non project assignments such as the Shalom Group activities Giving Voice Communication schedules and Shalom events.

Three freelance professionals have been engaged during this reporting period, one on an ad hoc basis others 1-3 days per week. Due to their extensive experience, specific skills and proven track records they are regularly engaged by other organisations. Good communication ensures effective time management and the involvement with the wider support community is beneficial in terms of networking and information gathering.

As is the case for all team members actively working with The Shalom Network they have been vetted and subject to DBS checks and are required to hold appropriate safeguarding credentials. They are performance managed in line with The Shalom Network policies and procedures with regular reviews and field accompaniment is carried out by one or more trustees.

Funding a deeper and wider pool of available professionals to resource current and planned activities has been and continues to be a priority. They are a significant challenge for The Shalom Network.

12.2 Voluntary Help

The team of regular volunteers comprises a very low number of incredibly committed people. They typically support the Shalom Group activities and events. Regular volunteers are required to sign a volunteer agreement meet safeguarding requirements and are provided with a volunteer handbook that is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Shalom Network acknowledges a need to prioritise the recruitment and training of more committed volunteers and in 2026 greater efforts will be made to meet the identified requirements. Training activities have been identified and mandatory courses completed in the priority areas such as safeguarding and food hygiene.

12.3 Board of Trustees

At the beginning of this reporting period there were 5 trustees. In October 1 trustee resigned and in November the Chair advised his intention to step down as a trustee and Treasurer no later than 31st March 2026.

The recruitment of at least 2 more trustees and a treasurer, who may or may not be a trustee is a priority.

13 Advisers

The Shalom Network has no permanent advisers. However, external resource has been required to complete the Independent Financial Examination. Whilst the charity has been fortunate in the past years to have the inspection covered by a qualified volunteer in this reporting year, we have had to engage a paid professional.

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14 Funding

14.1 Grants Provided

The Shalom Network is dependent on grant funding to support many of its activities. We are fortunate in 2025 to have been awarded grants from:

National Lottery Community Fund

Forest of Dean District Council Community Fund

The Day House Trust – Shalom Groups activities.

14.2 Donations

The Shalom Network has been fortunate to have received numerous unrestricted one-off donations. The total was considerably lower than the previous year.

This and other modest donations have contributed towards core funded activities. However, these activities have had to be carefully managed in the absence of more consistent funding streams. Lack of committed regular donations is a perennial concern and a consistent focus of our fund-raising team. Sponsored and crowd funded initiatives, along with direct appeals to sympathetic organisations such as local churches and their members will continue. In person presentations and appeals have in 2025 and will in coming years, continue to be made to local churches and organisations despite the very low level of response in the past. These are valuable in terms of building relationships and receiving donations and volunteer commitment.

14.3 Expenditure

Lower levels of income have curtailed some activities and consequently reduced some key costs such as contractor fees. Limited core funds have also meant that a number of areas of expenditure have been reviewed.

As a consequence we have:

- Moved to monthly payments for insurance
- Removed monthly storage costs
- Have managed to hold Shalom Group sessions in venues that are free of charge
- Removed or reduced some monthly subscriptions

Regular consideration cost management measures will continue in the coming financial year.

15 Governance & Management

15.1 Statutory Meetings

The board of trustees' meetings have been held bimonthly incorporating the Finance Committee meeting. From October the frequency of trustee meetings was increased to monthly.

The annual general meeting is on or around the anniversary of Charity Commission registration. In this reporting year the AGM was delayed due to a number of personal clashes AGM wasn't held until 25th October.

15.2 Reporting Periods

The Shalom Network will submit reports to the Charity Commission covering a 12 month period consistent with the calendar year. There are currently no other statutory requirements.

16 Risk Management

Risk management is clear in the principles and procedures that support our policies, and we ensure they are implemented. Risk assessments are always carried out as required and the results recorded and stored securely in our Microsoft Teams/Sharepoint.

Assessments are appropriately actioned and steps to mitigate to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. Should this not be possible a decision is made not to start or to cease activities. Risk assessments are appropriately actioned to ensure that environments are safe for those attending activities and events, any activity event deemed to be unsafe would not be viable and therefore would not run. Risk assessments are updated as required to ensure careful planning.

Those responsible for carrying out and actioning risk assessments are regularly assessed for and updated on our procedures and requirements.

17 Policies & Procedures

The Shalom Network has and maintains carefully crafted procedures that are appropriate for an organisation of our size and sphere of operations. These policies are published on our website <https://theshalomnetwork.org.uk/our-policies-purposes/>

These policies are reviewed annually or bi-annually depending on the subject covered, or when circumstances dictate. Reviews and amendments are agreed and signed off by the board of trustees and any accountable manager who may not be a trustee.

It should be noted that at the end of this reporting period all policies were due reviews, updates and subsequent approval. The trustees have made a joint commitment that all required actions to bring the policies up to date will be completed by 31st March 2026.

17.1 Designated Managers/Officers

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Each policy area has a designated manager who is responsible for ensuring that policies are implemented and for identifying and actioning opportunities for improvement and managing any breaches or reportable incidents.

17.2 Partner Organisations

In 2025 The Shalom Network entered into a formal agreement with the Forest Volunteer Action Forum (FVAF). The agreement was to participate in the creation and publication of Easy Read documents to support digital inclusion.

The charity does not have any other formal partnership or joint venture agreements. We do however, regularly work with or seek assistance from local churches of all denominations.

We also work with other local charitable organisations, examples include Forest Pulse, and Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre and in the case of the latter we have operated under a informal reciprocal agreement from 2023 to date.

18 Future Opportunities & Challenges

In previous sections which report on our project activities we have highlighted many areas where we can launch new initiatives and improve on our current delivery.

18.1 Our 2026 project focus will include:

- Giving Voice Community – Building on the foundation work completed in 2025 widening and strengthening the community of service users, support networks/teams to be creative and confident in their communications with those who have little or no verbal speech. This ambitious project will need further funding to ensure that collective experience and expertise that we are gathering provides ways to increase the presence of those with little or no speech capability in the community.
Continued strengthening of the ties with providers of residential support to ensure that they can better manage and gain benefit from digital technology and services.
The skill base has grown significantly, but we feel we've only just scratched the surface. to use readily available technology in ways that will enhance the Shalom Online offering and widen the appreciation of the Gospel message in relevant and meaningful ways.
- Voice 4 All – funding is now in place to support the development to take our established digital inclusion work into new areas. This project will through the efforts of the team and the service users themselves, deliver compelling quality broadcasts. These will tell stories and alert the public and wider communities of the great potential that exists amongst those with additional needs. There are numerous benefits that will accrue, improved communication and literary skills, heightened levels of confidence in terms of interactions as social skills increase. The project will continue work with partners such as the Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF) and Camphill Village Trust. It will, however, also extend into our other group and project activities where digital technology and input are required.

The development and delivery of any further activities is wholly dependent on recruiting additional people to work with us, particularly volunteers. As part of a future campaign to increase public awareness there will be an emphasis on the need for more volunteers.

We are maturing as a charity though still lacking in terms of an effective public profile, even locally. Discussions with third parties have taken place with a view to growing and improving the situation. Whilst this is likely to be a development of our online and social media presence in person presentations and local events will continue to be priorities. They have the benefit of being inclusive, something that the whole team and the people that we serve can all be involved in.

The Shalom Network welcomes wider involvement with other organisations, whose purposes align with our own, to collaboratively produce opportunities that lead to positive outcomes. We will continue to form more working relationships in the future whilst building on those that are already established.



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/01/2025

To

31/12/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
200/204 - Session Fees	8,849	-	-	8,849	13,899
201 - Group Subs	966	-	-	966	333
202 - Events	1,427	-	-	1,427	796
206 - Donations One Off Unrestricted	1,603	-	-	1,603	8,440
205 - Donations Regular Unrestricted	117	-	-	117	557
207 - Donations Restricted	-	1,213	-	1,213	12
208 - Grant Income	-	22,234	-	22,234	15,259
261 - Partnership Income	-	1,485	-	1,485	-
216/7/8 Gift Aid Reclaims	649	-	-	649	2,501
260 - Other Income	76	-	-	76	-
AR)	13,689	24,932	-	38,621	41,797
(see table).	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	13,689	24,932	-	38,621	41,797
400 - Contractors - Core unrestricted	21,722	-	-	21,722	16,955
401/403/404 - Contractors - Restricted	-	20,267	-	20,267	18,994
410 - Event Expenses	1,250	-	-	1,250	920
405 - Personal Expenses	-	-	-	-	198
411 - Sessional Expenses	-	-	-	-	18
415 - Training	45	-	-	45	126
427 - Storage	726	-	-	726	936
409 - Group Expenses	166	-	-	166	364
422 - Fundraising Expenses	-	-	-	-	12
416 - Health & Safety expenses	208	-	-	208	399
429 - General expenses	65	-	-	65	195
433 - Insurance	278	-	-	278	967
417 - Software & IT consumables	1,113	-	-	1,113	1646
426 - Repairs & Maintenance	139	-	-	139	-
425 - Printing & Stationery	17	-	-	17	198
418 - Phone/Data Networks	97	-	-	97	158
430 - Professional Fees	425	-	-	425	24
421 - Website - Publicity - Social Media	686	-	-	686	362
Sub total	26,938	20,267	-	47,206	42,472
A4 Asset and investment					
	-	852	-	852	425
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	852	-	852	425
Total payments	26,938	21,119	-	48,058	42,897
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 13,250	3,813	-	- 9,437	- 1,100
A5 Transfers between funds					
	-	-	-	-	-
	13,944	10,508	-	24,452	25,552
Cash funds this year end	694	14,321	-	15,015	24,452

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Co Operative Bank Account	630	14,321	-
	Petty Cash	64	-	-
			-	-
	Total cash funds	694	14,321	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
	Accounts Receivable	240	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which	Cost (optional)	Current value
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which	Cost (optional)	Current value
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which	Amount due	When due
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of	
		Jessica Thompson	05/05/2026	



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
THE SHALOM NETWORK

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st December 2025

**Charity no
(if any)**

1195375

Set out on pages

1 & 2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2025**.

**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 the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent examiner's
statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have come across the following matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

These matters are set out in Section B.

Signed:

T. Paragreen

Date:

03/05/2026

Name:

Tracy Paragreen

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

Business Manager
The Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre

Address:

The Old Vicarage,
Viney Hill, Lydney
GL15 4NA

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

THE SHALOM NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1195375

Accounts

The Shalom Network



Report of the Trustees

Period: 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024

Document Owner: The Shalom Network

Approval Date: 25th October 2025
The Shalom Network AGM

Approved By: Clive Paragreen – Chair Trustee
Jessica Thompson – Vice Chair Trustee
Lorraine Fellowes – Trustee
Stephen Thompson - Trustee

Publication Date: 27th October 2025

The Shalom Network



1 Overview

The trustees present their statutory report covering the period from 1st of January 2024 to December 31st, 2024, for The Shalom Network a Charity Incorporated Organisation, charity number 1195375, registered on August 3rd, 2021.

The financial report has been examined and approved by an appropriate third party who is independent of the charity. It has also been reviewed and approved by The Shalom Network Finance Committee and the whole board of trustees.

This report summarises our purposes, vision and mission giving an accurate picture of how and to what degree we have met those objectives in the reporting period.

The Shalom Network



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2 Our Purposes and Mission

2.1 Our Charitable Purposes

The advancement of the Christian faith for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively, amongst those with additional needs.

The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people with additional needs, their families and carers living mainly, but not exclusively, within the Forest of Dean to relieve the needs of such people and assist them to integrate into society.

2.2 Our Mission

To bring Christian fellowship, social inclusion, advocacy, skills and opportunities to people with additional needs, their families and communities within the Forest of Dean and beyond.

2.3 Our Vision

Christian, empowering, compassionate, inclusion for all.

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3 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Projects

3.1 Giving Voice

The Shalom Network's Giving Voice Project focuses on empowering individuals with additional needs, particularly those with little or no speech capability, to communicate effectively through a tailored support approach. The project, now in its maturity, will in 2025 evolve to become a key element of our core portfolio and the launchpad for the planned Giving Voice Community project.

Giving Voice comprises these key elements that drive the objectives that we have largely succeeded in meeting.

- Evaluating Individual Needs
- Adapting Our Approach
- Professional Collaboration
- Listening and Supporting
- Continuous Learning and Training
- Building confidence and self esteem
- Developing techniques and adopting supportive technology
- Inviting and encouraging wider community engagement

3.1.1 What We Have Achieved

Throughout the year we have consistently monitored our methods taking onboard the observations of others and the feedback from our service users and their support network. Assessment and adaptation are ongoing measures as those we serve mature and develop in an ever changing world. We value the challenges and embrace them as inspirational and unifying influences.

Specifically in our key areas

- I. The evaluation of individual needs has further developed with broader scope that encourages greater involvement of families and others in the support network. Needs and expectations are greatly considered. Working through these with groups and individuals has increased the levels of trust strengthening relationships. We continue

The Shalom Network



to share the benefit of honest, but gentle conversations avoiding anything that might be perceived as judgemental or lacking in understanding. Evaluations have also improved as more focus is placed on the influences of immediate environments and differing circumstances of the individuals that we serve.

- II. Our evaluations frequently lead us to adapt our approach often on an individual bespoke basis. Needs change and we always look to meet them. Crucially we ensure our responses evidence empathy and understanding. We have been able to create environments for every individual in their own settings, where fun activities are positively affecting wellbeing. Elements such as gentle healthy exercise, sensory/breathing activities that calm upset or anxieties always improve the potential for forward steps in communication and interaction. We have introduced easy read content that helps the develop an appreciation of healthy living and stimulate a dialogue that expresses personal feelings and preferences. Jointly, we have created other reading resources that share similar life and sensory experiences, strategies to rethink how challenging thoughts and situations are managed.
- III. The above mentioned creation of easy read materials is an example of our professional collaboration. Increasingly we have and will continue to work and share with other similarly focused organisations who recognise the importance of developing materials in this format. We have brought together elements of the activities enabled by the Thriving Communities funding and the Brighter Lives project to bring refreshing opportunities for social, sensory and healthy lifestyle activities. Resources have been created and made available for our Giving Voice team, enabling us to learn about new approaches and ways to support each other, constantly improving our implementations in response to opportunities and concerns.
- IV. Our listening and supporting priorities have led to an increasing emphasis on creating relaxed settings and encouraging those we serve to take some control of the session and initiate conversations. This may be through using gestures and body language to communicate choices and/or using electronic devices such as an Eyegaze and keyboards to take the conversation in the direction of their preferred topic. We have started to see, with some individuals, the benefit of agreeing achievable objectives that are set out in simple terms and regularly reviewed. Through this process and our constant support we see that a growth in independence, the desire to communicate and the depth of interactions results. We have succeeded in generating a level of trust whereby we have regular honest conversations with families and support groups that help us all with some of the more challenging issues and behaviours that can occur.

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- V. We have all continued in learning and the appreciation of its value never diminishes. Through the regular sessions, observations, reviews and updated goals, we have shaped learning plans that fit the need for individual and overall improvement. Long established inhibiting habits and routines often need to be overcome to make way for fresh knowledge and ideas and for them to be effective. Through building trusting relationships we uncover the willingness to learn, and the growth in independent actions and personal statements, expressed in various ways; aloud using an electronic device, typing and pointing. This leads to our learning more about the individual and how we might better serve them.
- VI. We have achieved much in relation to growing confidence and empowerment. Pointing independently to make choices is an example of a goal that is frequently met through positive development and implementation of our communication strategies. We are increasingly with our adaptive and flexible approach and carefully created settings, we are seeing credible expressions of feelings and their causes. We increasingly see more in the way of thoughtful expression as a result of our encouragement to take control and be confident. We have consistently followed the principle that where people are genuinely respected through both professional support and authentic human connection, their confidence grows to the extent that they will share what they really think and feel.
- VII. To make the most effective use of devices, software and techniques to benefit a person with additional needs is, in line with most that we do, something that is only achieved by understanding individual need and circumstances. We have continued to hone our skills embracing information technology resources and traditional methods to best effect. Some individuals respond positively to consistency others to variety. Through this reporting period we have monitored the effectiveness of our resources and are encouraged that they have predominantly retained their effectiveness. These include: Skyline Eyegaze used with an Apple iPad
- The Grid accessed on the iPad via Eyegaze and/or pointing with a finger.
 - Musical instrument programmes also accessed on the iPad via Eyegaze and/or with finger pointing.
 - Light/sound box sensory app using speaker vibration to give a sensory experience with light and sound.
 - Bitsboard iPad app for word and fun games such as jigsaws using photos to develop independent pointing.

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- VIII. Our focus on the wider community has increased. The presentations that we make are inviting and encourage engagement. We have continued in our efforts to add new members to the team, to apply practical skills that support resource creation and development and to join face to face sessions. Finding those who have the relevant skills and who also feel they can commit on a longer-term basis has proved a challenging mainly because of the in time and travel demands.

3.1.2 Constraining Factors

Some individuals simply require additional time owing to delays in their reactions. They often struggle with movement control due to apraxia difficulties that affect their bodily movements or, challenging habitual behaviours stemming from daily frustrations. This can reduce the effect of communication stimuli; consequently, sessions are tailored accordingly, following guidance provided by families and support networks.

The persistent high staff turnover within supported living and residential environments continues to present a significant barrier to individuals building confidence in their communication abilities. Despite these challenges, these individuals adapt to their circumstances and respond positively to relaxing and enjoyable activities, which simultaneously enable support staff to engage in meaningful and positive social interactions

3.1.3 In Summary

The Shalom Network continues to successfully blend well established principles with a number of innovative measures, particularly in the use of technology. The effectiveness of this approach has been made increasingly relevant and effective given the increased focus on evaluating, in greater detail, the needs and circumstances of individuals and their supporters. This has increased demands for learning and the pace at which develop and implement new or evolved methods. When considering change we now have mature models for assessing the potential impact of those changes and any possible risks.

We have had to be highly adaptive and flexible in response to specific circumstance and needs. In meeting those demands we have gladly accepted the need to further build relationships with those who are responsible for and support our service users.

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3.1.4 Next Steps

We are confident that we will be successful in securing funding for our 'Giving Voice Community' programme. This initiative will bring together into a community those we directly serve, their supporters, professionals, other aligned organisations and their beneficiaries.

Working together the community will gather, collate and share experiences, expertise and actively spend time together to provide settings where those who we are serving can interact, build relationships and grow a real sense of inclusion.

There will be a clear link between this new venture and the continued activities that are at the heart of the Giving Voice sessions. They will be improved through insights shared in the community and in turn the community will be informed by sessional observations and evaluations.

We will grow the team with the intention of including a community project leader, additional volunteers and professionals with proven expertise, experience and credentials, advising on who this collective community approach will most effectively benefit.

We are very excited about this programme given that we have received positive responses when putting the idea to those we are already involved with. The potential exists to enable those with little or no speech capability to develop communication skills through which they will enable a greater degree of understanding by and inclusion in wider society.

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3.2 Digital Inclusion & Accessibility

The Shalom Network, with its commitment to challenge social exclusion, operates a programme which seeks to help ensure that those we serve can benefit through appropriate and safe use of digital technology. We recognise that individuals with additional needs are more vulnerable to online risks and that the digital world in which we now needs to be navigated with care.

3.2.1 What We Have Achieved

We have actively collaborated with the Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF), Barnwood Trust, and Camphill Village Trust to research and pilot a Digital Inclusion project aimed at supporting individuals with additional needs in the Forest of Dean area. Over the course of the year, we have further strengthened these partnerships, enhancing our collaborative working practices. The pilot project concluded mid-year, and a comprehensive report detailing the outcomes and learnings was prepared and submitted to the funders.

- I. Throughout the year, we continued our partnership with Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF), Barnwood Trust, and Camphill Village Trust to deliver the pilot Digital Inclusion sessions, which began in October of the previous year. These weekly sessions have been consistently well received by participants and have provided valuable insights into effective approaches for teaching IT skills to individuals with additional needs.
- II. Towards the end of the project, podcasting was introduced as a creative method for gathering participant feedback. This approach was enthusiastically embraced by the group, who expressed a strong interest in developing their skills further and learning more about podcasting.
- III. In collaboration with our partners and participants, we also developed two Easy Read booklets: How to Stay Safe Online and How to Use a Computer. These resources were professionally designed, printed as spiral-bound booklets, and made available in PDF format. Additionally, audio versions were recorded and produced by a volunteer with lived experience, ensuring the materials are accessible and available for wider use.
- IV. Attendees of Shalom groups and events have continued to provide information regarding the devices they use and their purposes, allowing for the ongoing provision of appropriate digital support as needed.

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- V. We continue to engage in dialogue with them to understand what they value and enjoy about online activities and social media, as well as to explore any concerns they may have.
- VI. This information has informed the development of both face-to-face and online sessions, designed to enrich participants' experiences while proactively addressing vulnerabilities and digital security concerns.

3.2.2 Constraining Factors

This remains an ongoing challenge, as some individuals we aim to support reside in managed care environments where limitations persist. These include inadequate broadband access, restricted to communal areas, and the use of devices owned by care providers, which are often not permitted to be taken off-site.

3.2.3 Next Steps

Over the past year, The Shalom Network has continued to strengthen its partnerships with organisations supporting individuals with additional needs. These ongoing collaborations have contributed to sustained increases in attendance and have further enabled the expansion of our work. Notably, they are also continuing to enhance access to vital resources, including appropriate venues with reliable broadband connectivity and good public transport links.

Looking ahead, the recruitment of skilled and experienced individuals—both volunteers and, where possible, paid staff—remains a key priority. This is essential to support our continued growth and to maintain the development and quality of our activities.

In addition, we are excited to be considering launching a podcasting initiative, which will serve as a new platform for sharing stories, insights, and reflections from within The Shalom Network community. The podcast will support our digital outreach, promote greater awareness of the experiences of individuals with additional needs, and offer accessible, on-demand content that complements our in-person and online gatherings.

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3.3 Dementia Awareness Pilot Project

This project is currently on hold, and it is likely that the activities will be merged with those of other projects and initiatives.

3.3.1 What We Have Achieved

Whilst activities have slowed and halted during the year there have been opportunities for the team and those we serve to learn more about and be aware of signs that someone may be developing dementia. This is creating a more positive attitude and a sense of mutual responsibility

3.3.2 Constraining Factors

3.3.3 Next Steps

We will continue to consider how we might reconfigure the project how it can be reshaped and potentially merged with others, potentially partnering with other likeminded organisations in the area.

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3.4 Brighter Lives

As a standalone project 'Brighter Lives' has now been formally closed with its fundamental principles being absorbed into our core and other Project activities, Funded by the Benefacts Trust, we were able to create and deliver activities that encouraged those that we serve, and the team, to take a positive approach to their mental, physical and spiritual health. The links between all these elements and the resilience needed to flourish and live brighter lives are now more clearly understood with simple, but effective routines and habits being established based on the following:

- Strong Messages
- Strong Breathing
- Strong Stretching
- Strong Supporting
- Strong Belief/Faith

We continue to focus on these principles, during group and community activities

3.4.1 What We Have Achieved

- I. We have met the project objectives, closed the project and absorbed many of the activities developed into our core portfolio.

3.4.2 Constraining Factors

We have had to adapt certain elements due to significant health issues experienced by many of our service users.

3.4.3 Next Steps

This project was wound up in quarter one of 2024, however as previously mentioned the principles are now enshrined for all within our wider activities.

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4 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Group Sessions

4.1 Shalom Online

Shalom Online has continued to flourish over the past year, with increasing engagement from both participants and our dedicated volunteer team. We maintain a consistent schedule, meeting via Zoom three to four times each month, with an average attendance of around 15 people. Ongoing support is provided to ensure that everyone who wishes to join—regardless of their level of digital access—can participate fully in our sessions.

Shalom Online offers a welcoming and inclusive space where individuals, with and without additional needs, can explore the Christian faith, ask questions, and share in meaningful discussion in a relaxed and supportive environment.

4.1.1 What we Achieved

- I. Presenting a diverse range of themes to make each session's content more engaging and memorable.
- II. Creating opportunities for individuals to connect with one another on a weekly basis.
- III. Strengthening relationships among group members through regular, meaningful interaction.

4.1.2 Constraining Factors

We continue to encounter significant challenges related to digital confidence and capability, despite the time and effort invested in counselling and coaching. Many individuals still face limitations that affect their ability to engage fully with online sessions. As a result, there are certain constraints on what we're able to deliver.

Nevertheless, we remain committed to recognising and building upon even the smallest steps forward. It can be disheartening when people are eager to participate but lack the digital access or support needed to join. We are actively working to overcome these barriers, not only by supporting participants directly but also by equipping support staff—who often face their own digital skill gaps—with the knowledge and confidence to assist effectively.

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4.1.3 Next Steps

As previously reported, we are undeterred and will continue on the path of developing our wider digital media skills and those that we work with, whether they are beneficiaries, their families, friends, or supporters.

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4.2 Shalom Groups

We continue to host regular group gatherings that are open to all, taking place at welcoming venues in Bream and Blakeney, near Lydney. These gatherings provide an opportunity for people to connect in a warm and inclusive environment—sharing conversation, food, and participating in worship, prayer, Christian teaching, and creative craft activities. Each group offers a safe space to explore the Christian faith through open questions and shared experiences. We have developed strong links with Blakeney C of E and have held a number of our Get-Togethers at the church to include local residents with complex needs. Our monthly “Get-Togethers” remain a key part of our community rhythm, held on the first Thursday of each month (excluding August) at accessible venues throughout the area. Careful consideration is given to the choice of location, as many attendees rely on public transport, volunteer drivers, or taxis to attend.

In addition, we continue to support Christian church leaders by helping them identify and use appropriate resources for engaging individuals with additional needs within their congregations.

4.2.1 What we Have Achieved

- I. Consolidation of our membership and establishment of a format that combines elements of instruction and social interaction.
- II. Developing a beneficial relationship with organisations that can offer suitable venues for our meetings.
- III. We have generated several themed programmes that have proved engaging for both those that have developed and delivered the content as well as those receiving.

4.2.2 Constraining Factors

As a core-funded activity, our group programmes are likely to continue facing financial constraints, which limit what we can offer in terms of materials, equipment, and paid staffing. While we remain committed to delivering meaningful experiences, it is important to acknowledge that funding for core operations is consistently more difficult to secure than project-based grants, which are more readily available.

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4.2.3 Next Steps

We are looking to enhance our meeting times by incorporating more digital media into our content and presentations. This will include in-house developed materials, aligning with our broader goal of promoting digital inclusion.

In the coming months, we will review venues and locations in collaboration with teams and attendees from both the Cinderford and Broadwell groups. Our aim is to strengthen the connection between these two communities by creating more opportunities for joint gatherings and collaborative activities. We hope this will lead to deeper relationships and a shared sense of purpose across the groups.

Looking ahead, there is potential to establish two new Shalom groups in the Newent and Lydney areas. Planning is currently being considered, with progress dependent on securing appropriate resources and assembling the right team to support these new initiatives.

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4.3 Events

4.3.1 What we Have Achieved

We have organised a funding raising event – Dress to Bless.

- I. We have organised a Passover meal at a local public house, which was very well attended.
- II. By popular demand, we held another summer BBQ and Activity Day.
- III. We have organised meals out and social times together which were very well attended and appreciated.
- IV. We have liaised with local churches and occasionally taken on lead roles in their services
- V. We have visited to churches to raise the awareness of the Charity and work it does.

4.3.2 Constraining Factors

Organising events—even those with modest activities and smaller groups—continues to require significant time and effort. To expand the number and reach of these events, additional support from volunteers and staff is essential.

Securing suitable venues remains a consistent challenge. Factors such as transportation access, hire costs, and the availability of appropriate facilities often determine where events can be held. The overall accessibility of a location also plays a critical role and can significantly limit our options, especially when trying to accommodate individuals with varying needs.

4.3.3 Next Steps

We are actively exploring ways to expand our programme by offering a broader range of both one-off and recurring events. These events will aim to provide diverse opportunities for connection—not only for those already involved with The Shalom Network, but also for members of the wider community.

A key focus will be on creating engaging, high-quality content and delivering it in meaningful and memorable ways. This approach is expected to foster new partnerships with like-minded organisations, opening doors for collaborative initiatives that align with our mission and values.

The Shalom Network



5 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Advocacy

5.1 In Community

Demands for advocacy support have reduced and we no longer engage a paid advocate.

Reasons for this are not entirely clear, however the feeling is that there is likely to be sufficient support from other sources such as family, church groups and others. We would only agree to act as advocates with those who are engaged in other activities that we provide.

5.1.1 What we Have Achieved

- I. We have agreed a position in terms of advocacy demand and our responses.
- II. In group sessions and other activities been fully approachable and helped if needed.
- III. Ensured group sessions include subjects and conversations that are helpful and provide an open invitation for advocacy support requests.

5.1.2 Constraining Factors

Advocacy often demands a response to wide range of issues that are sometimes complex with added challenges for those with additional needs, therefore our approach is measured, often referring individuals to other organisations or agencies.

The work is mostly one to one and involves very time-consuming activities, therefore there is constant pressure on both our financial and people resources.

Measuring the effectiveness of advocacy work is extremely difficult, therefore we are mainly dependent on subjective and often anecdotal reports as to the effectiveness of our actions.

5.1.3 Next Steps

Our position in terms of advocacy work has been carefully considered in this reporting period assessing needs and addressing the questions as to whether we are able to provide support on a formal advocacy basis. Given that requests for help of this sort are now rare we will keep our ears, eyes and minds open and make appropriate decisions as to if and/or when our support is appropriate or whether a referral would be the right thing to do.

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6 The Team

6.1 Paid Professional Resource

The Shalom Network employs paid professional project leads on a freelance basis. They deliver according to accepted quotations agreed by a representative trustee at rates agreed by the board and Finance Committee. Those agreements are made at the inception of a particular project and then regularly reviewed, as is the case with core non project assignments such as the Shalom Group activities and events.

Three freelance professionals have been engaged during this reporting period 1-3 days per week each. Due to their extensive experience, specific skills and proven track records they are regularly engaged by other organisations. Good communication ensures effective time management and the involvement with the wider support community is beneficial in terms of networking and information gathering.

As is the case for all team members actively working with The Shalom Network they have been vetted and subject to DBS checks. They are performance managed in line with The Shalom Network policies and procedures with regular reviews and field accompaniment is carried out by one or more trustees.

Funding a deeper and wider pool of available professionals to resource current and planned activities has been and will continue to be a priority and significant challenge for The Shalom Network.

6.2 Voluntary Help

The team of regular volunteers comprises a very low number of incredibly committed people. They typically support the group activities and events. Regular volunteers are required to sign a volunteer agreement and are provided with a volunteer handbook that is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Shalom Network acknowledges a need to prioritise the recruitment and training of more committed volunteers and the 2025 programme has been allocated sufficient funding to meet the identified requirements. Some scheduling of training activities has already been made and courses booked or completed in the priority areas such as safeguarding.

The Shalom Network



6.3 Board of Trustees

At the beginning of this reporting period there were 4 trustees, during the period 1 additional trustee joined the board. Whilst not necessarily a priority, recruiting one or two further trustees will be considered in 2025. At the AGM the chair of trustees was invited to continue in role for another year and in addition it was agreed that he would act as interim treasurer. All other roles remained unchanged.

6.4 Advisers

The Shalom Network has no permanent advisers. In this reporting period there was no official engagement of any temporary advisers.

The Shalom Network



7. Funding

7.1 Grants Provided

The Shalom Network is dependent on grant funding to support many of its activities. We are fortunate in 2024 to have been awarded grants from:

- The Diocese of Gloucester Life Development Fund – Digital Inclusion & Diversity project
- Gloucestershire County Council Thriving Communities
- PCC of Mid Wyedean – Memorial fund
- The Day House Trust – Shalom Groups activities.
- Barnwood Trust via FVAF for the Digital Inclusion Partnership project

7.2 Donations

The Shalom Network has been fortunate to have received numerous unrestricted one-off donations including from a sponsored swim/cycle challenge completed by one of the trustees. These amounted to a significant figure that exceeded forecasts.

This and other modest donations have contributed towards core funded activities. However, these activities may be at risk in the future should more consistent funding streams fail to be established. This is a concern in that we have little in the way of commitment to regular donations and this is an important focus of our fund-raising team.

There are plans for events in the future including some that take a crowd funding approach, others will be sponsored activities and direct appeals to sympathetic organisations such as local churches and their members. In person presentations and appeals have in 2024 and will in coming years, continue to be made to local churches and organisations. These are valuable in terms of building relationships and receiving donations and volunteer commitment.

The Shalom Network



8 Governance & Management

8.1 Statutory Meetings

The board of trustees' meetings have been held bimonthly incorporating the Finance Committee meeting. The annual general meeting is on or around the anniversary of Charity Commission registration. In this reporting year the AGM was held on the 21st of September.

8.2 Reporting Periods

The Shalom Network will submit reports to the Charity Commission covering a 12 month period consistent with the calendar year. There are currently no other statutory requirements.

8.3 Risk Management

Risk management is clear in the principles and procedures that support our policies, and we ensure they are implemented. Risk assessments are always carried out as required and the results recorded and stored securely in our Microsoft Teams/Sharepoint.

Assessments are appropriately actioned and steps to mitigate to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. Should this not be possible a decision is made not to start or to cease activities. Risk assessments are appropriately actioned to ensure that environments are safe for those attending activities and events, any activity event deemed to be unsafe would not be viable and therefore would not run. Risk assessments are updated as required to ensure careful planning.

Those responsible for carrying out and actioning risk assessments are regularly assessed for and updated on our procedures and requirements.

8.4 Policies & Procedures

The Shalom Network has and maintains carefully crafted procedures that are appropriate for an organisation of our size and sphere of operations. Summaries of these policies are published on our website <https://theshalomnetwork.org.uk/our-policies-purposes/>

The Shalom Network



These policies are reviewed annually or bi-annually depending on the subject covered, or when circumstances dictate. Reviews and amendments are agreed and signed off by the board of trustees and any accountable manager who may not be a trustee.

8.5 Designated Managers/Officers

Each policy area has a designated manager who is responsible for ensuring that policies are implemented and for identifying and actioning opportunities for improvement and managing any breeches or reportable incidents.

8.6 Partner Organisations

The Shalom Network does not have any formal partnership or joint venture agreements with any other organisations. We do however, regularly work with or seek assistance from local churches of all denominations.

We also work with other local charitable organisations, examples include Forest Pulse, Forest Volunteer Action Forum (FVAF), and Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre and in the case of the latter we have operated under a formal reciprocal agreement from 2023 to date.

The Shalom Network



9 Future Opportunities & Challenges

In previous sections which report on our project activities we have highlighted many areas where we can launch new initiatives and improve on our current delivery.

Our 2025 project focus will include:

- Giving Voice Community – Creating a community of service users, support networks/teams to be creative and confident in their communications with those who have little or no verbal speech. This will be an ambitious project that will seek to gather collective experience and expertise exploring ways to increase the presence of those with little or no speech capability in the community.
Working with providers of residential support to work out ways in which people in receipt of their support can better manage and gain benefit from digital technology and services.
Growing the skill base to use readily available technology in ways that will enhance the Shalom Online offering and widen the appreciation of the Gospel message in relevant and meaningful ways.
- Voice for All – a development of our established digital inclusion work and achievements. This project will through the efforts of the team and the service users, deliver compelling quality broadcasts. These will tell stories and alert the public and wider communities of the great potential that exists amongst those with additional needs. There are numerous benefits that will accrue, improved communication and literary skills, heightened levels of confidence in terms of interactions as social skills increase. The project will continue work with partners such as; Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF) and Camphill Village Trust. It will, however, also extend into our other group and project activities where digital technology and input are required.

The development and delivery of any further activities is wholly dependent on recruiting additional people to work with us, particularly volunteers. As part of a future campaign to increase public awareness there will be an emphasis on the need for more volunteers.

We are maturing as a charity. We are, however, conscious that we need a more effective public profile, even locally. Discussions with third parties have taken place with a view to

The Shalom Network



growing and improving the situation. Whilst this is likely to be a development of our online and social media presence in person presentations and local events will continue to be priorities. They have the benefit of being inclusive, something that the whole team and the people that we serve can all be involved in.

The Shalom Network welcomes wider involvement with other organisations, whose purposes align with our own, to collaboratively produce opportunities that lead to positive outcomes. We will continue to form more working relationships in the future whilst building on those that are already established.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
The Shalom Network

No (if any)
1195375

CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 01/01/2024	To	Period end date 31/12/2024
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Section A Receipts and payments

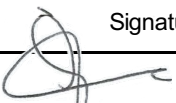
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
200 - Session Fees	13,899	-	-	13,899	10,355
201 - Group Subs	333	-	-	333	240
202 - Events & Gatherings	796	-	-	796	482
206 - Donations (one-off)	8,440	-	-	8,440	3,532
205 - Donations (regular)	557	-	-	557	599
207 - Donations (restricted)	-	12	-	12	-
Gift Aid Reclaims	2,501	-	-	2,501	-
210 - Fundraising activities	-	-	-	-	1,600
260 - Other Income	-	-	-	-	226
208 - Grant Income	-	15,259	-	15,259	17,943
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	26,526	15,271	-	41,797	34,977
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	26,526	15,271	-	41,797	34,977

A3 Payments

400 - Contractors (core)	16,955	-	-	16,955	32,891
401 - Contractors (restricted)	-	18,994	-	18,994	2,858
405 - Personall expenses	198	-	-	198	2,040
410 - Event Expenses	920	-	-	920	
410 - Sessional resources	-	-	-	-	347
411 - Sessional expenses	18	-	-	18	963
415 - Training	126	-	-	126	10
427 - Storage	936	-	-	936	
409 - Group Expenses	364	-	-	364	
422 - Fundraising Expenses	12	-	-	12	
416 - Health & Safety expenses	399	-	-	399	161
429 - General expenses	195	-	-	195	1,250
433 - Insurance	967	-	-	967	881
417 - Software & IT consumables	1,646	-	-	1,646	2,241
425 - Printing & Stationery	198	-	-	198	136
418 - Phone/Data Networks	158	-	-	158	69
430 - Professional Fees	24	-	-	24	
421 - Website - Publicity - Social Media	362	-	-	362	57
Sub total	23,478	18,994	-	42,472	43,904

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
462 - Equipment (IT)	425	-	-	425	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	425	-	-	425	-
Total payments	23,903	18,994	-	42,897	43,904
Net of receipts/(payments)	2,623	- 3,723	-	- 1,100	- 8,927
A5 Transfers between funds	3,680	- 3,680	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	7,641	17,911	-	25,552	-
Cash funds this year end	13,944	10,508	-	24,452	- 8,927

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Co-operative Bank Account	13,892	10,508	-
	Petty Cash	52	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	13,944	10,508	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Accounts receivable	233	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	3,484
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		Clive paragreen	16/10/2025	

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE SHALOM NETWORK

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Shalom Network (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity 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 Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Mr J P Foxwell FCCA FCIE
independent-examiner.net

12 Hillbourne Road, Poole, BH17 7JB

Date: 29 October 2025

THE SHALOM NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1195375

Accounts

Report of the Trustees

Period: 1st January 2023 – 31st December 2023

Document Owner: The Shalom Network

Approval Date: 21/09/2024

Publication Date: 23/09/2024

1 Overview

The trustees presented the first statutory report for The Shalom Network a Charity Incorporated Organisation, charity number 1195375, registered on August 3rd, 2021. This report covers the period from 1st of January 2023 to December 31st, 2023.

The financial report has been examined and approved by an appropriate third party who is independent of the charity. It has also been reviewed and approved by The Shalom Network Finance Committee and the whole board of trustees.

This report summarises our purposes, vision and mission giving an accurate picture of how we meet those objectives.

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2 Our Purposes and Mission

2.1 Our Charitable Purposes

The advancement of the Christian faith for the public benefit, in particular but not exclusively, amongst those with additional needs.

The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people with additional needs, their families and carers living mainly, but not exclusively, within the Forest of Dean to relieve the needs of such people and assist them to integrate into society.

2.2 Our Mission

To bring Christian fellowship, social inclusion, advocacy, skills and opportunities to people with additional needs, their families and communities within the Forest of Dean and beyond.

2.3 Our Vision

Christian, empowering, compassionate, inclusion for all.

3 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Projects

3.1 Giving Voice

The Giving Voice programme was the first grant funded programme that The Shalom Network put in place following its establishment as a registered charity. The aim is very clear, that is to give those that are unable to speak, or have very limited verbal speech, a voice. Having no verbal speech increases the frustration of those with additional needs and their supporters. Giving Voice opens a whole world of opportunity through conversations previously thought unlikely even impossible. It relieves pressure in the everyday lives of those with no spoken communication and other additional needs.

3.1.1 What We Have Achieved

This year has been incredibly rewarding as we walk alongside the individuals we work with, their families, and support workers. The challenges we face inspire us to unite as a team, striving to discover motivational activities that encourage, empower, and support our clients' communication development and needs.

- I. Evaluating Individual Needs
 - Assessing the unique needs of each individual client as they transition from adolescence to young adulthood.
 - Actively listening to their preferences and choices regarding activities and discussions.
- II. Adapting Our Approach
 - Modifying our methods to ensure individuals and families can access communication devices, support systems, and emotional or practical support during communication sessions.
 - The Brighter Lives project has empowered us to expand and adapt our resources.
- III. Professional Collaboration
 - Holding meetings and networking with various professionals involved in their lives to stay informed and communicate the latest information effectively.
- IV. Listening and Supporting
 - Addressing the concerns of families, individuals, and their support workers.
 - Assisting our clients in developing and using better communication skills.

- V. Continuous Learning and Training
 - Enhancing our training to understand their communication needs better.
 - Learning about new conditions and updating our strategies accordingly, with input from individuals and their families.
 - An individual client is now accessing the Royal College of Wales National Open Youth Orchestra, where he is a member of an inclusive orchestra. The staff support The Shalom Network to help the young person communicate and learn how to be part of a group when playing together, which has been the highlight of the year for this individual.
- VI. Developing the Use of Devices, Software, and Techniques
 - Going deeper into the use of Eyegaze and multiple-choice grids using The Grid app for communication.
 - Developing the use of easy read documents when working with the individual clients to improve the way that they communicate important information.
- VII. Community Education
 - Teaching the community about the impact of presuming competence and how to support the development of typing skills in individual clients.
- VIII. Building Confidence
 - Improving the confidence of individuals and their support networks by emphasizing the importance of developing independent communication skills.
 - Developing their self-confidence using independent pointing skills and/or eye pointing skills when making decisions.
 - Implementing gentle strategies to build confidence where needed, using tiny steps that have led to significant progress over the year.
 - Enhancing the expression of emotions and feelings to families and support workers.
 - Exploring various environments to boost confidence in communication, such as outdoor settings where one student feels more comfortable expressing himself.
 - Supporting families in improving communication at home, including helping families address their child's challenging behaviours through honest, non-judgmental conversations.
 - Building trust between individuals, their families, and the staff to foster more confident communication.

3.1.2 Constraining Factors

As previously reported the turnover of staff working with those in a supported living / residential environment poses challenges for our team going into these settings. Those we seek to benefit have not progressed as well in these circumstances as others benefiting from consistency in their support team.

The shortfall in digital skills and experience amongst some carers is also a factor given that many of our strategies and techniques have technology as a key enabler. This limits the amount of time and opportunities, outside of the time spent with than the Shalom team, that some have to communicate with those around them. We can at times have to deal with scepticism and in some cases rejection of our methods and the way that we use digital technology to deliver proven results.

3.1.3 In Summary

The Shalom Network has successfully blended well established principles with a number of innovative measures, particularly in the use of technology. Time with the individuals and groups we serve has evidenced that they are capable of developing higher levels of interaction and communication than first recognised, and that not only are they able in many respects proactive, but they also show an appetite and confidence to learn how to use technology.

We have had to be highly adaptive and flexible; individual clients develop their own varied ways of using devices and techniques. As we engage with more people who have limited or no speech capability, we see a variety of, and in some cases innovative, approaches to the learning strategies and resources provided to provide communication capability. One of the key measures of success is to see independent choices made or in some cases spontaneously.

3.1.4 Next Steps

Going forward, means of developing the skills and experience within the support networks will be crucial, to increase the potential benefit and further give voice to those who need one. The opportunities to communicate have to be available outside of the time that we are with them. This is a wide ranging and potentially complex challenge that may in itself demand the creation of a new funded project. To engage all those needed within the support network and

to help that engagement to be sustained we will need to create new materials, develop methods and introduce additional skilled resource to achieve this, something that we may be able to start in 2024, but will undoubtedly run for some time.

Another area to address and potentially drive the need for another project is to capture the potential that exists through working with those having communication difficulties from an early age. Our thoughts and fact finding in this area are still very much in the early stages, but will be given more consideration over the coming year.

3.2 Digital Inclusion & Accessibility

The Shalom Network, with its commitment to challenge social exclusion, operates a programme which seeks to help ensure that those we serve can benefit through appropriate and safe use of digital technology. We recognise that individuals with additional needs are more vulnerable to online risks and that the digital world we now live in needs careful navigating.

3.2.1 What We Have Achieved

- i. We have actively worked in partnership with Forest Volunteer Action Forum (FVAF)/Barnwood Trust and Camphill Village Trust to research and pilot a Digital Inclusion project in the Forest of Dean area with people who have additional needs.
- ii. We have worked in partnership with the above and begun the pilot digital inclusion sessions in October. These weekly sessions have proved to be well received from the learners and provided a wealth of learning as to how to effectively teach people with additional needs to develop their IT skills.
- iii. People who attend Shalom groups and events have shared information about what devices they use and what they use them for.
- iv. We have continued to have conversations with them about what they enjoy and what they think is good about online activities, social media and what their concerns are.
- v. This information has been used to formulate the content of face to face and online sessions that helps enhance their experiences and crucially addresses vulnerabilities and security concerns.
- vi. We have also identified opportunities to use much of the technology and techniques used in the Giving Voice programme to enable better experiences for the users.

3.2.2 Constraining Factors

Some of The Shalom team members themselves have disabilities and health issues requiring ongoing treatment. We have experienced delays in delivering some aspects of this programme due to the project lead having to take sick leave.

There are also limitations with some of those we are trying to serve living in managed care environments. They may not have adequate broadband access, or access may only be in a communal area. Devices that they use are often owned by the care provider who will not allow the equipment off site.

3.2.3 Next Steps

Many of the planned actions for 2022 needed to be carried over into early 2023. However specific coaching and awareness sessions were scheduled.

The Shalom Network is taking steps to partner with other organisations that serve those with additional needs. This will increase attendance leading to increasing the scale of the work. It may also lead to greater availability of equipment and suitable locations with, for example, those with adequate broadband and that are accessible via public transport.

Recruitment of appropriately skilled and experienced people for volunteer or potentially even paid roles to ensure continued growth and improvement in these activities is a priority.

3.3 Dementia Awareness Pilot Project

The origins of this project pre-date the creation of The Shalom Network as it is incorporated today. However, it has been taken into the portfolio of projects due to the high incidence of early onset dementia in people with Down Syndrome and we aim to help people to understand the condition and the symptoms with the aim of them being able to make better lifestyle choices, helping them to reduce the risks of developing dementia early on.

Networking with other likeminded organisations is currently happening to see if there is the opportunity to work together in partnership to reshape this project into something that can involve a wider group of people and have a wider county reach (Gloucestershire).

3.3.1 What We Have Achieved

- I. The scope and objectives of the project have been reviewed, amended and agreed with the Forest of Dean District Council who are the principal sponsors.
- II. These details are being shared with other local organisations some of whom may be willing to partner in the delivery of these objectives.

3.3.2 Constraining Factors

We are now we are looking to reconfigure how this project can be reshaped and how we can partner with other likeminded organisations in the area.

3.3.3 Next Steps

We aim to further build relationships with other organisations that have a similar focus working collaboratively to develop a fresh funding application that will better meet the aims of the project.

3.4 Brighter Lives

The Brighter Lives Project, funded by the Benefact Trust, has been launched to help and encourage those that we serve, work and volunteer with us to take a positive approach to their mental, physical and spiritual health. It aims to demonstrate the link between all of these elements and that the resilience needed to flourish in our world and live brighter lives can be developed through some simple routines and good habits.

The activities are based on the following principles and are often placed in the context of 'stress and you':

- Strong Messages
- Strong Breathing
- Strong Stretching
- Strong Supporting
- Strong Belief/Faith

By focusing on these principles, we are introducing the concept that community is also a vital contributor to good health and brighter lives.

3.4.1 What We Have Achieved

- I. An introduction of the 'Strong' concept through our group sessions.
- II. Creation of offline material to further help with an understanding of the concept and the simple techniques and exercises that help the strengthening process.
- III. Provision of resources such as resistance bands and providing guidance on where to find other resources.

3.4.2 Constraining Factors

Many of those that we serve have significant health issues, therefore as with many of our activities we need to adapt to the diverse needs and abilities. It can be difficult to manage expectations positively and ensure that frustration does not arise. As we develop our wider activities to include these principles on a permanent basis, we do so with the clear objective of creating the resilience to support brighter lives not the means to train elite athletes.

3.4.3 Next Steps

This project effectively ended with the year, however as previously mentioned the principles are now enshrined for all within our wider activities.

4 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Group Sessions

4.1 Shalom Online

Shalom Online continues to develop and grow with wider participation by those we serve and with the volunteer team in delivering the sessions. We continue to meet online weekly 3 to 4 weeks of the month. This meeting takes place on Zoom with an average of 15 people in attendance. Continuous support is given to ensure as many people as possible have access to these online gatherings. Shalom Online is a meeting where people with and without additional needs can explore the Christian faith and ask questions in a safe and relaxed space.

4.1.1 What we Achieved

- I. Hands off approach allowing a new pool of volunteers to create content and co - lead these online meetings.
- II. Delivering a variety of themes that make the teaching of content more compelling and memorable.
- III. Enabling people to connect weekly with each other.

4.1.2 Constraining Factors

We are still finding that despite time spent counselling and coaching there are many people who lack confidence and have limitations in their digital capabilities. This means that we are limited in some respects in terms of what we can deliver. However, we are committed to making sure that even the smallest steps are valued and built upon although there is no avoiding the frustration that we feel when there are those that would like to join but simply do not have online access or support to connect online. We continue to chip away at this obstacle as well as helping support staff, as often they are themselves not digitally skilled.

4.1.3 Next Steps

We are undeterred and will continue on the path of developing our wider digital media skills and those that we work with, whether they are beneficiaries, their families, friends, or supporters.

4.2 Shalom Groups

There are regular group gatherings open to everyone. which include a fortnightly group in the Cinderford area and a monthly group who meet in different venues, Broadwell near Coleford and in Bream near Lydney.

These are times when people can come together, chat, eat, and join in a time of worship, prayer, and Christian teaching and a craft activity. The groups are safe spaces to explore the Christian faith with questions and shared experience.

The regular monthly Get-Togethers are open to everyone, we meet on the 1st Thursday of a month (except August) at suitable venues in the area. Particular attention is given to the location of any venue as most attendees are dependent on public transport or the availability of volunteers and taxis to provide transportation.

We also continue to support Christian Church leaders to find suitable resources to use with people within their congregations who have additional needs.

4.2.1 What we Have Achieved

- I. Consolidation of our membership and establishment of a format that combines elements of instruction and social interaction.
- II. Developing a beneficial relationship with organisations that can offer suitable venues for our meetings.
- III. We have generated a number of themed programmes that have proved engaging for both those that have developed and delivered the content as well as those receiving.

4.2.2 Constraining Factors

We anticipate that as a core funded activity the group activities will always face financial challenges limiting what can be provided in terms of materials, equipment and paid resource. There is a greater availability of grant funding for projects rather than core activities.

4.2.3 Next Steps

We plan to develop these meeting times and use more digital media in their content and presentations. Some of this will be content which has been created in house as part of our digital inclusion agenda.

Venues and locations will be reviewed with the teams and attendees from both Cinderford and Broadwell. We will look to create greater synergies between the two groups and come together as one more often. We hope that the two groups will be able to work collaboratively in the future to develop relationships across the groups.

There is potential for two new Shalom groups to be planted within the Newent and Lydney areas, however the planning for this is currently being evaluated and will depend on the correct resourcing and team to be in place.

4.3 Events

4.3.1 What we Have Achieved

- I. We have organised a Passover meal at a local public house, which was very well attended.
- II. By popular demand, we held a summer BBQ and group social.
- III. We have organised meals out and social times together which were very well attended and appreciated.
- IV. We have organised a half day event on a Saturday. This was very well received.

4.3.2 Constraining Factors

Organising events for even a low number of people with modest activities is very labour intensive. We need more people to be able to put on more of these events.

Finding suitable locations is often an issue with the availability of transportation and cost of hire as well as the provision of suitable facilities often dictating where the events can be held. The availability and accessibility of venues can also be a constraint as to where we can hold an event.

4.3.3 Next Steps

We are looking to develop more opportunities to have a wider variety of both one off and regular events. They should give opportunity to meet in different ways, not only to those directly involved with The Shalom Network, but also to include the wider public.

The production of engaging content and the delivery of it in memorable ways are likely to drive further initiatives to partner with other likeminded organisations.

5 Delivering for the Public Benefit – Advocacy

5.1 In Community

Demands for our advocacy support have reduced in this reporting period to the point that we are no longer engaging a paid advocate.

Reasons for this are not entirely clear, however the feeling is that there is likely to be sufficient support from other sources such as family, church groups and other support organisations. We would only ever agree to act as advocates with those who are engaged in other activities that The Shalom Network provide.

5.1.1 What we Have Achieved

- I. Continued to support a reducing number of people with volunteer resource.
- II. Ensured that through our group sessions and other communications we are fully approachable and able to help if needed.
- III. In our group sessions cover subjects and have conversations that are clearly helpful.

5.1.2 Constraining Factors

Advocacy often demands a response to wide range of issues that are sometimes complex with added challenges for those with additional needs, therefore our approach is measured, often referring individuals to other organisations or agencies.

The work is mostly one to one and involves very time-consuming activities, therefore there is constant pressure on both our financial and people resources.

Measuring the effectiveness of advocacy work is extremely difficult, therefore we are mainly dependent on subjective and often anecdotal reports as to the effectiveness of our actions.

5.1.3 Next Steps

Our position in terms of advocacy work will be reviewed in 2024 with careful consideration of need and whether we are best positioned to provide benefits on a formal advocacy basis.

6 The Team

6.1 Paid Professional Resource

The Shalom Network employs paid professional project leads on a freelance basis. They deliver according to accepted quotations for work agreed by the board or a group of trustees such as the Finance Committee. Those agreements are made at the inception of a particular project and then regularly reviewed, as is the case with core non project assignments such as the Shalom Group activities and events.

Three freelance professionals have been engaged 1-3 days per week each, however this has reduced to two in the latter half of the year. Due to their extensive experience, specific skills and proven track records they are regularly engaged by other organisations. Good communication ensures effective time management and the involvement with the wider support community is beneficial in terms of networking and information gathering.

As is the case for all team members actively working with The Shalom Network they have been vetted and subject to DBS checks. They are performance managed in line with The Shalom Network policies and procedures with regular reviews and field accompaniment is carried out by one or more trustees.

Funding a deeper and wider pool of available professionals has been and will continue to be a priority and significant challenge for The Shalom Network.

6.2 Voluntary Help

The team of regular volunteers comprises a very low number of incredibly committed people. They typically support the group activities and events. Regular volunteers are required to sign a volunteer agreement and are provided with a volunteer handbook that is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Shalom Network acknowledges a need to prioritise the recruitment and training of more committed volunteers.

6.3 Board of Trustees

At the beginning of this reporting period there were 6 trustees, during the period 1 resigned and no new trustees have been adopted. Seeking a suitable candidate has not been considered a priority, however it will move towards the top of the agenda in 2024. At the AGM the chair of trustees advised that he would step down as chair as of the 2024 AGM, but would be willing to continue in a volunteer, trustee capacity or both as agreed with the other trustees. The treasurer also advised that she will be resigning her role at the same time.

6.4 Advisers

Except for a volunteer Treasurer with experience in charity finance, The Shalom Network has no other permanent advisers. We do however have the occasional volunteer services of the Chief Executive Officer of a public limited company. This person has acted as the independent reviewer of our accounts, however he has advised that he will not be able to help beyond the review of the 2023 finances.

7. Funding

7.1 Grants Provided

The Shalom Network is dependent on grant funding to support many of its activities. We are fortunate in 2023 to have been awarded grants from:

- The Diocese of Gloucester Life Development Fund – Digital Inclusion & Diversity project
- Sylvanus Lysons - Groups and other core activities.
- Barnwood Trust – Matched funding for Digital Inclusion & Diversity project
- Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF)/Barnwood trust – Funding for a partnership working Digital Inclusion Project
- The Day House Trust – Shalom Groups activities.

7.2 Donations

The Shalom Network has been fortunate to have received numerous unrestricted one-off donations including from a sponsored a walk completed by a member of our local Forest of Dean Christian community. These amounted to a significant figure that exceeded all expectations.

This and other modest donations have contributed towards core funded activities. However, these activities may be at risk in the future should more consistent funding streams fail to be established. This is a concern in that we have little in the way of commitment to regular donations and this is an important focus of our fund-raising team.

There are plans for events in the future including some that take a crowd funding approach, others will be sponsored activities and direct appeals to sympathetic organisations such as local churches and their members. In person presentations and appeals were made to 3 local churches during the year.

8 Governance & Management

8.1 Statutory Meetings

A board of trustees meeting is held bimonthly as is the Finance Committee meeting. The annual general meeting is on or around the anniversary of Charity Commission registration.

8.2 Reporting Periods

The Shalom Network will submit reports to the Charity Commission covering a 12 month period consistent with the calendar year. There are currently no other statutory requirements.

8.3 Risk Management

Risk management is clear in the principles and procedures that support our policies, and we ensure they are implemented. Risk assessments are always carried out as required and the results recorded and stored securely in our Microsoft Teams/Sharepoint.

Assessments are appropriately actioned and steps to mitigate to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. Should this not be possible a decision is made not to start or to cease activities. Risk assessments are appropriately actioned to ensure that environments are safe for those attending activities and events, any activity event deemed to be unsafe would not be viable and therefore would not run. Risk assessments are updated as required to ensure careful planning.

Those responsible for carrying out and actioning risk assessments are regularly assessed for and updated on our procedures and requirements.

8.4 Policies & Procedures

The Shalom Network has and maintains carefully crafted procedures that are appropriate for an organisation of our size and sphere of operations. Summaries of these policies are published on our website <https://theshalomnetwork.org.uk/our-policies-purposes/>

These policies are reviewed annually as a minimum or when circumstances dictate. Reviews and amendments are agreed and signed off by the board of trustees and any accountable manager who may not be a trustee.

8.5 Designated Managers/Officers

Each policy area has a designated manager who is responsible for ensuring that policies are implemented and for identifying and actioning opportunities for improvement and managing any breeches or reportable incidents.

8.6 Partner Organisations

The Shalom Network does not have any formal partnership or joint venture agreements with any other organisations. We do however, regularly work with or seek assistance from local churches of all denominations.

We also work with other local charitable organisations, examples include Forest Pulse, Forest Volunteer Action Forum (FVAF), and Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre and in the case of the latter we have operated under a formal reciprocal agreement in 2023.

9 Future Opportunities & Challenges

In previous sections which report on our project activities we have highlighted many areas where we can launch new initiatives and improve on our current delivery. Most importantly we will focus on:

Projects for 2024 include:

- Giving Voice II – Coaching and equipping members of support networks/teams to be creative and confident in their communications with those who have little or no verbal speech,
Working with providers of residential support to work out ways in which people in receipt of their support can better manage and gain benefit from digital technology and services.
Growing the skill base to use readily available technology in ways that will enhance the Shalom Online offering and widen the appreciation of the Gospel message in relevant and meaningful ways.
- Pre School Groups – facilities for families with young children to bring their children to benefit from sensory stimulation, group activities and fellowship will be considered for a future initiative.
- Digital Inclusion – the project will continue work with Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF). It will, however, also extend into our other group and project activities where digital technology and input are required. As part of the digital inclusion activities creating online video based training and content, in some instances inviting the people that we serve to contribute. All of our major events and activities will be captured in video format and published to appropriate audiences.

The development and delivery of any further activities is wholly dependent on recruiting additional people to work with us, particularly volunteers. As part of a future campaign to increase public awareness there will be an emphasis on the need for more volunteers.

We are still a relatively young charity and conscious of still not being well known, even locally. Discussions with third parties have taken place with a view to growing and improving our public profile. Whilst this is likely to be a development of our online and social media presence in person presentations and local events will continue to be priorities. They have

The Shalom Network



the benefit of being inclusive, something that the whole team and the people that we serve can all be involved in.

The Shalom Network welcomes wider involvement with other organisations, whose purposes align with our own, to collaboratively produce opportunities that lead to positive outcomes. We will continue to form more working relationships in the future whilst building on those that are already established.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Shalom Network

1195375

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

1st Jan 2023

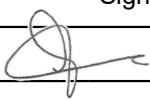
To

31st Dec 2023

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last period (17 months) to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
200 - Session Fees	10,355		-	10,355	5,673
201 - Group Subs	240		-	240	-
202 - Events & Gatherings	482		-	482	663
203 - Arts & Craft sales	-		-	-	63
206 - Donations (one-off)	3,532		-	3,532	19,216
205 - Donations (regular)	599		-	599	1,065
207 - Donations (restricted)	-		-	-	13
210 - Fundraising activities	1,600			1,600	700
208 - Grant Income	5,000	12,943		17,943	44,683
260 - Other Income	226		-	226	4,619
Sub total	22,034	12,943	-	34,977	76,694
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	22,034	12,943	-	34,977	76,694
A3 Payments					
400 - Contractors (core/advocacy/FVAF)	31,147		-	31,147	14,923
401 - Contractors (restricted)		4,602	-	4,602	11,056
405 - Travel expenses	1,968	72	-	2,040	1,998
410 - Sessional resources	65	282	-	347	501
411 - Sessional expenses	801	162	-	963	701
415 - Training	10		-	10	210
416 - Health & Safety expenses	161			161	489
429 - General expenses	1,061	189		1,250	625
433 - Insurance	881			881	1,576
417 - Software & IT consumables	2,233	8		2,241	1,577
425 - Printing & Stationery	76	60		136	78
418 - Phone/internet	69		-	69	107
421 - Website & publicity	57	-	-	57	516
Sub total	38,542	5,375	-	43,906	34,357
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
462 - Equipment			-	-	7,397
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	7,397
Total payments	38,542	5,375	-	43,917	41,755
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 16,508	7,568	-	- 8,940	34,939
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	- 16,508	7,568	-	- 8,940	34,939

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Petty Cash	31	-	-
	Co-operative Bank Account	9,343	16,167	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	9,374	16,167	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	Agreement Error	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Accounts receivable	980	-	-
			-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	IT equipment valuation	Unrestricted	-	4,159
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
			Clive Paragreen	17/03/2024



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
THE SHALOM NETWORK

On accounts for the year
ended

31 December 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1195375

Set out on pages

3 and 4

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2023

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, 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 the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

24/5/2024

Name:

MATTHEW WAKERLEY

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

MW

Address:	WOODLAND HOUSE, BOWSON SQUARE
	BREAM, GLOUCESTERSHIRE
	GL15 6LB

Section B	Disclosure
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Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

1st Jan 2023

To

31st Dec 2023

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last period (17 months) to the nearest £
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Sub total	22,034	12,943	-	34,977	76,694
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	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	22,034	12,943	-	34,977	76,694
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Sub total	38,542	5,375	-	43,906	34,357
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
462 - Equipment			-	-	7,397
Sub total	-	-	-	-	7,397
Total payments	38,542	5,375	-	43,906	41,755
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 18,241	9,312	-	- 8,929	34,939
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	25,882	8,599	-	34,481	-
Cash funds this year end	16,508	7,568	-	8,940	34,939



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Shalom Network

1195375

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

1st Jan 2023

To

31st Dec 2023

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
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	Co-operative Bank Account	9,343	16,167	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	9,374	16167	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Accounts receivable	980	-	-
			-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	IT equipment valuation	Unrestricted	-	4,159
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf
of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Clive Paragreen

Date of
approval

17/03/2024