

***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service
operating as Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)
Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023***

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

For the year ended 31st December 2023

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Registered Charity number : 1196377 (England and Wales)

Working Name: Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)

Original date of registration : 1964 (as charity no. 244974)

Converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 3rd November 2021

Principal Office:

Hospital Radio Reading
East Drive,
Royal Berkshire Hospital,
London Road,
READING
Berkshire
RG1 5AN

Main contact address

c/o Mr G Rocks (Chairman)
6 Maldon Close
READING
Berkshire
RG30 2DH

Elected Trustees:

A Beasley (Treasurer)
J M Burton Stewart (Secretary)
* S Ham (until April 17th)
F M McKechnie
* C L Mills (until April 17th)
C Monahan (Station Manager)
M E O'Czaja
J Patey
G B K Rocks (Chairman)
* P Wilson (from April 17th)

* All the above Trustees were in place throughout the reporting year, with the exception of S Ham and CL Mills, who did not seek reappointment, and P Wilson, whose unopposed nomination as Trustee was approved by the membership – both at the Annual General Meeting on April 17th 2023.

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank Ltd
24 Broad St,
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 2BT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE and MANAGEMENT :

Governing Document :

Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, governed by its constitution.

Governance and Organisational Structure:

The Charity is governed by a Board of Trustees, who are responsible for overseeing strategy, direction and ensuring that the charity's finances are spent in accordance with its charitable objects.

The Constitution allows for the Board of Trustees to consist of no fewer than three and no more than nine Elected Trustees, elected by full members of the organisation for a two-year term of office. The Constitution requires that half of the Elected Trustees should retire each year in order to ensure some degree of continuity and at the Annual General Meeting on April 17th 2023, whilst two of the outgoing Trustees (Stephen Ham and Charlotte Mills) did not seek re-election, only one new Trustee (Philip Wilson) sought election and was appointed unopposed. It follows that, for most of the reporting year, the activities of the charity were overseen by a board of eight Elected Trustees.

The Constitution also allows for up to three Appointed Trustees, appointed by the other Trustees on account of their skills, knowledge and experience, for a term of one year. However, no such Trustees were appointed during the reporting year.

The operational functions of the charity, namely the provision of a local broadcasting service for hospitals, residential homes and similar (essentially to the Royal Berkshire Hospital), are overseen by a Committee, composed of the same Trustees with responsibility for technical maintenance and scheduling & programme content being vested respectively in those holding the positions of Senior Engineer and Station Manager.

The Annual General Meeting, held on April 17th, was attended (either in person or via Microsoft Teams) by 20 members of the organisation. In addition, six Trustees' Meetings were held during the year (in January, February, June, July, September and November) and the Trustees maintained regular contact at other times through a dedicated WhatsApp group.

Membership:

Of the 40 volunteers registered with HRR at the end of 2022, 37 renewed their membership for the following year and were subsequently joined by 4 more on completion of their training and probation (the last one being approved by Trustees in the early days of 2024). As in the previous year, with some teams having either lost ward visitors or retained members whose ability to ward visit was limited by work, health or family commitments, recruitment of additional volunteers remained a priority and one more suitable applicant began the Trust's process of CBS, reference and Occupational Health checks as the year ended.

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Seven volunteers were awarded long-service certificates from the Hospital Broadcasting Association during the course of the reporting year: three for 10 years, two for 15 years, one for 30 years and one for 40 years (presentation of this being deferred from the previous year due to the virtual nature of the AGM in 2022 which had been held via Microsoft Teams).

In addition, the Chairman of Trustees was surprised and honoured to be placed on a shortlist of five for the award of Volunteer of the Year, one of many categories in the Royal Berkshire Hospital Trust's annual CARE Awards, recognising hospital staff embodying the Trust's core values of Compassion, Aspiration, Resourcefulness and Excellence.

OBJECTIVES AND AIMS :

Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose charitable objects are :-

- (1) The relief of sickness, poor health and old age amongst people living in Reading and the surrounding area by providing a local broadcasting service for hospitals, residential homes and similar institutions, and for patients receiving community care.
- (2) The advancement of health and prevention or relief of sickness for the public benefit, through the promotion of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle and the importance of maintaining good personal mental and physical health, by (mainly, but not exclusively) the means of broadcasting health education messages to people living in Reading and the surrounding area.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES :

Patient interaction and Request programmes

The cornerstone of our activities and fundamental to the achievement of our first charitable objective are the minimum of 27 hours per week of live programming, some devoted, entirely or in part, to playing music requested by or for hospital patients. As the effects of the coronavirus subsided, 2023 was the first full year in which HRR volunteers could enjoy unrestricted access to the wards, to meet the patients and gather requests, since 2019. And we are grateful to the Voluntary Services Manager and the Chief Nurse with responsibility for Patient Experience not only for their support and encouragement but for their trust in us. With any restrictions on access to patients due to infection being temporary and localised rather than hospital-wide, a total of **4,736** music requests were played for patients (and the occasional member of staff) - almost twice the previous year's total but nowhere near the 8,066 played in 2019, our last completely Covid-free year. The number of telephoned requests (or calls to say thank-you) fell to 212 but many of them were from long-term or returning patients, some of whom who contacted us daily and, in some cases, having prepared long lists of favourite music tracks. This illustrates successful engagement with patients who can be bored and lonely and for whom we make a real difference to their hospital stay.

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The availability of volunteers for Requests and other live programmes was inevitably affected by work and family commitments, health issues etc. but others often showed readiness to cover for absent colleagues on evening "HRR Requests" shows and two more also joined the presenting team on "Good Afternoon Royal Berks" which spread to 4 afternoons per week in the middle of the year with the launch of a Monday edition. As a result, the number of days with no live broadcast at all, in either afternoon or evening, remained at a very respectable seven, meaning that **358 days** had some form of live programming.

Analysis of requests received enabled us to produce, as usual, charts of most-requested artistes and titles, which saw some rearrangement of the most popular performers. The Beatles and Elton John replaced Ed Sheeran and Frank Sinatra in the Top 5, Elvis Presley was there, as always, but for the first time since 2019 Queen lost the top spot – to Abba. Bohemian Rhapsody and Sweet Caroline remained in the Top 5 most popular titles, joined by Dancing Queen and I Will Always Love You – but a clear winner in the number 1 spot was Simply the Best (often requested as an expression of gratitude for the RBH nursing and medical staff).

Special programming and relations with local organisations:

The ongoing relaxation in restrictions and attitudes relating to Coronavirus resulted in the return of a few more of the special events that traditionally feature in our programming. Although the League of Friends' fete and the Trust Open Day still remained off the calendar, we again attended Maidenhead Lions' Family Fun Day and "Duck Derby", from which we featured an outside broadcast. At the end of the year, in addition to recording the Trust Carol Service in the hospital chapel and a second Christmas Concert at Reading Minster (in aid of the Royal Berks Charity) we were welcomed back to Pangbourne College by the Pangbourne Choral Society to record their Christmas Concert, another traditional highlight which was restored to the Christmas schedule.

In addition our "Saturday Sport" team, led by Graeme Collyer and Maurice Moore, worked wonders in not only expanding our outside broadcasts and the range of sports and leisure activities covered but also raising the profile of Hospital Radio in the local community. In addition to chronicling the trials and tribulations of Reading FC in coverage of home games at the SCL Stadium, they presented the programme as live outside broadcasts from Burghfield Sailing Club, Reading City FC, Calcot Cricket Club, Caversham Croquet Club and Wokingham Emmbrook FC and regular live reports and score updates from Reading City, Wokingham Emmbrook, Reading Rugby Club, Rams Rugby and Maidenhead United FC. Although not an outside broadcast, with the help of the station engineer they provided background music and PA for Holybrook Parish Council's Coronation Picnic, as well as arranging "try a sport" sessions during the event with Calcot Cricket Club and St Anthony's GAA (Reading's Gaelic football club). In studio-based shows they welcomed guests (in person, recorded or by telephone and some on return visits) including a former cabinet minister, Damian Green MP (a Reading FC supporter), mostly representing local clubs or groups and many of them spreading the word about HRR to their members. And in the summer months their remit extended from sport to include leisure and they featured the

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Friends of Reading Abbey and the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust and less well-known competitive activities such as Fives and Brass Band Contests!

In his Wednesday evening show Matthew Rolland continued to interview celebrities via Zoom, often continuing to focus on their experiences during the pandemic and lockdown (and at the same time often highlighting and supporting the work of the NHS). New interview guests for "Take Five" recordings, discussing their lives and musical tastes, included four Mayors (of Reading – and, for political balance, Wokingham Borough & Earley Town - the leader of Reading Borough Council, the director of Re-Wilding Britain and a former RBH lead governor. To the range of pre-recorded specialist music programmes, we added coverage of local brass bands and "Screen Sounds" compilations of film & TV music.

All of the above illustrates our efforts to fulfil the first objective of our charity, "the relief of sickness, poor health and old age by providing a local broadcasting service ... to patients" - by implication, entertaining them. Progress towards our second objective "the promotion of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle ... by (mainly, but not exclusively) the means of broadcasting health education messages to people living in Reading and the surrounding area" was achieved by public service announcements, either obtained from government websites or created to order for local charities & organisations (such as the University of the Third Age and Reading Macular Society). Representatives of those groups and members of Trust staff wishing to promote special initiatives were featured in editions of "Good Afternoon Royal Berks", as were the Trust Chaplaincy and the Royal Berks Charity.

Other departments within the Trust approached us during the year, as a result of which over a dozen "junior carers" were introduced to hospital radio as part of a tour of the hospital (and loved their time in the studio !) and HRR provided studio facilities for recording of material for podcasts, which could subsequently be broadcast on the station, thus also contributing towards that secondary charitable objective. Those recorded included a short series on the importance of sleep (for a cancer consultant) and the first of several hours of material with teenagers from the Berkshire Young Persons' Diabetes Council, who were also interviewed live on-air. The challenge of achieving our stated educational objective whilst at the same time being entertaining, was again perhaps best met by Maurice Moore's sport and fitness interviews, many focusing on keeping fit and healthy lifestyle choices once discharged from hospital – as previously outlined above - with the bonus of boosting our publicity in wider – and not necessarily sporting - circles.

Future Strategy :

During the reporting year the Trustees continued to address, with limited success, four areas of challenge or potential difficulty for the future :-

- Whilst relations on a local level with *Wifi Spark* (formerly *Hospedia*) providers of the bedside entertainment system in the Royal Berkshire Hospital, remained excellent and they continued to replenish our stock of headphones for patients' bedside consoles on the internal cable system whenever required, we learned of yet another change in ownership and rebranding of the company (now known as *Spark TSL*) and their representative confirmed planned changes of a more radical nature during an

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online meeting with member stations of the Hospital Broadcasting Association (HBA). The company's plan, to replace over the five years bedside consoles with tablets and to make TV as well as radio free to patients, gave cause for concern. Hospital radio stations are united in believing that it is unrealistic to expect hospital trusts (or their fund-raising charitable arms) to finance services currently paid for by patients and their families. The likely removal of one of our current "unique selling points" (that the radio service is free of charge whereas TV packages are generally costly) would result in greater competition from free television channels and other sources of music and would oblige our organisation, in common with hospital broadcasters nationwide, to significantly "up our game" in order to retain our audience. The Trustees appreciate that we must continue to encourage interactivity with patients and to prioritise their musical tastes and requirements in our programming.

- Unfortunately, in the reporting year no further progress was made towards our aim of broadening the range of options by which listeners around the hospital – outpatients as well as inpatients and staff also – might hear and participate in our programmes. It was established that, Wi-Fi signal strength permitting, this can be achieved using loudspeakers or televisions connected to computers or raspberry pi's but the stumbling block of payment (or sponsorship) of the necessary PPL / PRS licence fees has still to be addressed. .
- The long-term charitable objects of the organisation include broadcasting "to hospitals, residential homes and similar institutions, and ... patients receiving community care" and "to people living in Reading and the surrounding area". It has been established that, upon discharge, many listeners move into local community hospitals or care homes but, with reception outside the hospital wards restricted to broadcasts via the internet, future expansion onto a digital platform was still therefore under consideration. We remained in contact with B-Radio which, as Local Radio Ltd, was the only applicant for the Small Scale Digital Audio Broadcasting Licence for Reading when applications closed in June 2023 (and included us in their application among possible recipients of bandwidth on their platform should they be awarded the licence). Ofcom were not expected to announce a decision until mid-2024, leaving our organisation time to carefully evaluate all the financial implications before deciding whether or not to take part.
- Partly, but not exclusively, in connection with the above, the Trustees took two steps to expand sources of funding and increase income in future years. A crowdfunding account was opened and linked to a QR code to facilitate small donations (e.g. from grateful patients) or for sponsored fund-raising activities. In addition, the organisation was registered with the Fund-Raising Regulator in order to ascertain best practice, to promote it among our volunteers in years to come and to appeal to potential donors.

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One challenge, however, which appeared to have been removed during the year was the likelihood of relocation to new studio premises, of which we had been notified in 2022, due to the threatened demolition and redevelopment of the building we have occupied since 2006. Conflicting reports that the Trust now had a new rolling redevelopment plan, beginning at the farthest end of the hospital site from us whilst at the same time not ruling out a new-build hospital on another out-of-town site in the long term (government funding permitting) - and no direct confirmation of either – had led to considerable uncertainty. By the end of the year, however, it was established that our organisation had been reprieved - albeit possibly only in the short term.

FINANCIAL REVIEW :

The organisation has a long-established policy of holding a reserve of cash, equating to at least one year's running costs, in an interest-bearing National Savings account as a contingency fund, as well as operating a current account for its everyday activities. In fact, two current accounts were operational during the reporting year : although a new account had been opened in the second half of 2022, necessitated by the charity's conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, the Trustees agreed that the old account should remain open alongside it into 2023 as a precautionary measure to allow for automatic and regular payments, both in terms of income (such as members' annual subscriptions) and regular outgoings, to or from anyone who had overlooked to change standing order or direct debit arrangements. Hence, the comparatively limited amount of activity on the old account is included as an appendix to the financial statements which follow on pages 8 and 9.

From those statements it can be seen that, in activity across during the reporting year in the main ("new") account) : Income (£5418.77) exceeded

Expenditure (£3881.72) by £1,537.05

Likewise, the smaller number of transactions in the "old" account also showed an operational surplus with : Income (£670.50) exceeding

Expenditure (£315.67) by £354.83

The organisation therefore ended the year with a surplus of £1,891.88.

Expenditure was kept to a minimum thanks to the ongoing support of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust which continued to provide free accommodation and power at our location on the main hospital site. The largest area of expenditure was once again the accumulation of various annual charges, licences and subscriptions required for us to broadcast. To these regular outgoings (insurance, PPL & PRS fees to performers & copyright holders, payments for Sky News, broadband & internet streaming and membership of the Hospital Broadcasting Association) were added our registration for the first time with the Fundraising Regulator. Other items of expenditure included the ongoing maintenance of the air-conditioning unit in the engineering room (housing the distribution rack) and spare parts, including the replacement of power supplies and fans, for our ageing studio computers.

The principal source of income was the sale (by Omega Auctions on behalf of the organisation) of the contents of our record library. The Trustees had authorised this at the end of the previous year in acknowledgement of the marked decline in the use of vinyl and

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CDs, in favour of digital sources of music, and in preparation for the expected enforced move to smaller premises with limited storage space. Most of the remainder came from members' subscriptions (totalling £1,050), donations from local charities and a parish council in return for a public address service provided at their functions and a member's repeated initiative in organising Christmas carols - and a collection – in the Hospital Reception. Members and friends of the organisation continued to support us as their nominated charity in the Easy Fundraising scheme when shopping online and Trustees set up a Crowdfunding account and registered the organisation with HMRC for Gift Aid in the hope of increasing income from donations in subsequent years. The Trustees were increasingly conscious of the need to galvanise the membership into more (and more profitable) fund-raising activities in future to respond to the increased financial demands that would inevitably be placed upon the organisation if, at some point, it should be necessary to relocate and refurbish & re-equip new studio premises or were it to be decided to embrace broadcasting via a DAB platform.

It should be noted that expenditure listed below as "Members Meetings / Events" refers to that which benefits only our volunteers and not the patients (e.g. catering at members' meetings). The organisation's policy is that monies received from the public must never be used for such expenditure, which must be capped at the amount already paid by volunteers in their membership subscriptions. Exceptionally in this reporting year the Trustees also authorised the donation of £100 to another charity in memory of a former Chairman of our organisation, whose funeral took place at the start of the year.

READING HOSPITAL RADIO BROADCASTING SERVICE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DEC 2023

NEW current account

	£
BALANCE B/FWD	1150.00
INCOME	
FUNDRAISING	255.99
DONATIONS	100.00
MEMBERS' SUBSCRIPTIONS	870.00
REFUND (IRN)	174.32
OMEGA AUCTIONS (sale of library records)	4018.46
	<u>5418.77</u>
EXPENDITURE	
STUDIO MAINTENANCE	1128.06
TELECOM/BROADBAND/STREAMING	378.01
PPL/INSURANCE/RADIO AUTHORITY/HBA/FUNDRAISING REGULATOR	2210.02
MEMBERS' MEETINGS/EVENTS	165.63
	<u>3881.72</u>

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SURPLUS FOR YEAR	1537.05
BALANCE C/FWD	2687.05
RESERVES C/FWD (*)	<u>11939.54</u>
REPRESENTED BY	
INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	8079.91
CURRENT ACCOUNTS (new)	2687.05
(*old)	<u>1172.58</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	11939.54

(*) For appendix (old current account) see following page.

APPENDIX :

OLD current account

£

BALANCE B/FWD 817.75

INCOME

FUNDRAISING 450.52

DONATIONS 10.00

MEMBERS' SUBSCRIPTIONS 180.00

REFUND (PlusNet) 29.98

670.50

EXPENDITURE

STUDIO MAINTENANCE 68.40

TELECOM/BROADBAND/STREAMING 247.27

315.67

SURPLUS 354.83

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BALANCE C/FWD

1172.58

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by

Signature:



Date

23/09/2024

Ann Beasley (Treasurer)



23/09/2024

Gerard Rocks (Chair of Trustees)