

***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service  
operating as Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)  
Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024***

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**

**For the year ended 31st December 2024**

The Trustees of the Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service have pleasure in presenting their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:**

Ann Beasley (Treasurer)  
James M Burton Stewart (Secretary)  
Fiona M McKechnie  
Chloe Monahan (Station Manager)  
Martin E O'Czaja (Deputy Chairman and Senior Engineer)  
\* James Patey (until August 14<sup>th</sup>)  
\* John Precious (from April 15<sup>th</sup>)  
Gerard B K Rocks (Chairman)  
Philip Wilson

\* All the above Trustees were in place throughout the reporting year, except for J Precious, whose unopposed nomination was approved by the membership at the Annual General Meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup>, and J Patey who, having been reappointed for another term at the same meeting, resigned for personal reasons on August 15<sup>th</sup>

**Bankers:**

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

***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service  
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Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024***

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE and MANAGEMENT :**

**Governing Document :**

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

**Governance and Organisational Structure:**

The organisation 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 further requires that half of the Elected Trustees should retire or seek re-election each year.

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.

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 NHS Foundation Trust), 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.

In addition to the Annual General Meeting, held on April 15<sup>th</sup> 2024, eight Trustees' Meetings were held during the year (in January, March, April, June, July, September, October, and December) and the Trustees maintained regular contact through a dedicated WhatsApp group.

**MEMBERSHIP :**

Of the organisation's 41 volunteers, whether active or "resting", during the course of 2023, 35 renewed their membership at the start of the reporting year and eight more were recruited in the following months, most of whom had, by the end of the year, completed the necessary Reference, DBS and Occupational Health checks (required by the Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Trust, whose patients we primarily serve and on whose premises we operate) and the subsequent period of training and probation required by ourselves. During the year five volunteers left the area and one more parted company with our organisation, due to the attitude he displayed during a disagreement with the Trust's Voluntary Services Department over Trust car-parking policy, which led to his volunteer status being revoked by the Trust.

That, in turn, led the Trustees to revise and update their Conditions of Membership, which all Hospital Radio volunteers must agree to and sign on joining, to emphasise the importance of complying with all the hospital Trust's procedures for volunteers and reiterating the need to display its core values – CARE (Compassion, Aspiration, Resourcefulness, Excellence) .

***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service  
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Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024***

Four volunteers were awarded long-service certificates from the Hospital Broadcasting Association during the reporting year: one for 15 years, one for 25 years and two for 30 years

**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**

While automation enabled the station to remain on air all day and every day during the reporting year, the cornerstone of our activities and fundamental to the achievement of our first charitable objective were the **32 – 35 hours per week of live programming**, at least 24 hours of which were “HRR Requests”, broadcast (and repeated) daily, or “Good Afternoon Royal Berks”, airing 4 afternoons per week : both shows being devoted in whole or in part to playing patients’ music choices. Only 4 days (including Christmas Day & New Years Eve) saw no live programming at all, compared to 7 days in 2023. And the year saw our “post-Covid recovery” continue, with **5,750 music requests** played for patients (or requested by their visitors and occasionally members of staff) – an increase of just over 1,000 on 2023 but nowhere near the 8,066 played in 2019, our last Covid-free year. The number of phoned-in requests (or calls to say thank-you) also rose to a record number, **457**, many of them from regular long-term or returning patients who would send in lists of their favourites, illustrating once again successful engagement with patients who can be bored and lonely and for whom we make a real difference to their hospital stay. **58** more music requests were received by email, **47** via social media and **10** thanks to a new proforma added to the organisation’s website towards the end of the year .

Analysis of all those requests, however received, enabled us to produce the usual charts of most requested artistes and titles. There was some slight rearrangement of the most popular performers with Ed Sheeran returning to the Top 5, replacing Elton John, behind the Beatles and Elvis Presley while Queen regained the top spot, pushing Abba down to number 2. ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ and ‘Sweet Caroline’ remained in the Top 5 most popular titles, joined by Bob Marley’s ‘Three Little Birds’ and ‘Hotel California’, I Want to Break Free ‘and ‘Simply the Best’ tying for 5<sup>th</sup> place while ‘Dancing Queen’ was a clear winner in the number 1 spot.

***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service  
operating as Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)  
Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024***

**Special programming and relations with other organisations :**

Once again, Christmas highlights included recordings of the Trust Carol Service, a third Christmas Concert at Reading Minster (in aid of the Royal Berks Charity) and another visit to Pangbourne College to record the Pangbourne Choral Society in their annual Christmas Concert for charity. And Maurice Moore single-handedly arranged around 10 special recorded Christmas messages from a variety of dignitaries in local and national government – council leaders, Mayors and MPs - which were highlights of the Christmas schedule.

Maurice and his colleagues on Saturday Sport (Graeme Collyer, Andy Cook and David Downes in the Reading FC commentary box and a number of “stringers “ from local clubs and societies) continued to broaden listeners’ sporting horizons. As well as live Reading FC commentaries from the SCL Stadium, they featured five in total from local non-league clubs Reading City FC, Wokingham Town FC and Maidenhead United, and including a local derby attended by the son of our founder Les Warth’s, who had seen an article about HRR’s planned coverage in the local press. Whilst football remained the principal focus of HRR Sport’s programmes, live outside broadcasts came from rugby clubs (Reading RFC & Reading Abbey RFC), South Berkshire Hockey Club and Emmbrook Bearwood Cricket Club and over 20 other sports and leisure activities were featured in outside broadcasts and studio interviews as the team highlighted the benefits of sport and leisure activities as part of recovery from surgery or illness.

The HRR Sport team also assisted with publicity for the unveiling of Holybrook Parish Council’s memorial bench for the late Andy Alleyne (local resident and first black player for Reading FC) which attracted wide media coverage. They also supported community events – the Holybrook D-Day 80th Anniversary Picnic in 2024, providing public address & background music and a live outside broadcast covering try-a-sport activities (walking rugby, netball, cricket & fencing). And once again their support was much appreciated at the Family Dun Day and Duck Derby organised by the Lions Club of Maidenhead.

Away from sport, Matthew Rolland provided more “Isolation Interviews” with a variety of celebrities in his Wednesday evening show, Maurice Moore (again!) and Gerard Rocks added to our library of extended interviews with local personalities for the “Take Five” slot and, after a long hiatus, work began on recordings of some fresh “Bedtime Stories” from local authors in the Thames Valley Writers’ circle. Two of our Martins (Messrs Todman and Rolfe) branched out from Saturday evenings to host occasional live shows at Friday teatime as well, aiming to feature the activities of some of the other volunteers in the Trust.

We continued to make good use of our archive of recorded specialist shows, both home-produced and syndicated, covering jazz, blues, classical, comedy, musicals, old-time and even the local brass band scene. In addition, John Precious completed enough “Screen Sounds” compilations of film & TV music to earn himself a regular slot in our automation and we also took advantage of Kerry Hutchinson’s origins launching some occasional new hours of traditional Irish music. And live specialist shows included the return to the studio of Treasurer Ann Beasley, this time joining the Monday crew with her selection of great classical & vocal performance, Paul Richards (aka Paul Arthur) continued to enjoy a faithful international following on his Friday Rock show and Julie Hughes provided Christian words and music suitable for Sunday in “Words of Life”.

***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service  
operating as Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)  
Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024***

**Relations with the Trust and other bodies**

The organisation continued to enjoy a positive relationship with the Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, most notably with its Voluntary Services department but also with Pastor Josh of the Chaplaincy and Martin Butler of the Royal Berks Charity, both of whom visited occasionally during “Good Afternoon Royal Berks” to promote their latest events and activities. And, thanks to Tom Brown, HRR also provided music and public address for a second multicultural day for the benefit of the Trust’s staff.

Off-air, four further recording sessions took place with teenagers from the Berkshire Young Persons’ Diabetic Council for their ongoing podcasts. But worthy of special note was our greater involvement with the Trust’s “Junior Carers” scheme, children from three local primary schools who come into the hospital with a teacher, several times a year and in conjunction with the Trust’s Patient Experience team, to learn about various aspects of healthcare & wellbeing as well as finding out what goes on behind the scenes in a busy general hospital. Visits to the HRR studio were already a highlight of their itinerary in 2023 and in the following year developed even further : Keith Miller had the idea of inviting the children to go on-air to introduce their favourite music tracks for the patients which proved a real highlight for the children and their accompanying teachers!

The next step up from the Junior Carers is the Youth Forum – this time local teenagers – and HRR was asked by the Trust if we would be able to do anything for them too. As a result, two girls recorded some extra editions of “The Zoo”, the weekend show for our children’s wards (and the young at heart), another young lady recorded two additional home-produced hours of classical music and, at the end of the year, one young man from the Youth Forum applied to join us as a full member of the organisation and volunteer weekly on a patient requests team.

Although we are both in the field of communication, our organisation’s links with the Trust Comms department can be sporadic but, towards the end of the year, The Trust chose to focus on HRR in a video for their website to mark International Volunteers Day and one of the Comms team filmed Keith Miller in action and an interview with the Chairman, as well as HRR alumnus Allen Sinclair of BBC South, who came back to visit and talk about what volunteering in hospital radio did for him.

But the feather in our cap, also at the end of the year, was an invitation to apply for the 2025 Kings Award for Voluntary Service, resulting from a visit by one of the Deputy Lords Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire, who came to record an edition of “Take Five” with Maurice Moore and was impressed by what he saw and heard about the organisation. Having supplied by the November deadline the required letters of support, one from a patient and one from the Trust (both in their different ways beneficiaries of the service we provide), we now anxiously await the next stages in the process, leading to the eventual announcement of the Award winners on the King’s Birthday in November 2025. But the support received from Sukhi Sidhu (Voluntary Services Manager) and Sharon Herring (our “line manager” on the Trust Executive) who collaborated with the signatory, Chief Executive Steve McManus, was second to none.

***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service  
operating as Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)  
Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024***

**FUTURE STRATEGY :**

In previous years we identified three areas as priorities for the future. Sadly, in most cases during the reporting year, there is little further progress to report :-

1. Broadening the range of options through which all members of the hospital community can hear and participate in our programmes. Our aim is still to negotiate permission for HRR's signal to be relayed to speakers in cafés, outpatient waiting areas etc. Wifi signal strength permitting, this can easily be achieved using computers or raspberry pi's but the stumbling block is the payment (or sponsorship) of the necessary PPL / PRS licence fees.
2. Our studio headquarters on the hospital site having been under threat of relocation for around 18 months, the possible redevelopment of our current location and the likelihood of a move to a new studio currently appear to have been put on hold.
3. The possibility of a move onto a digital platform is still open to our organisation, as we are still in partnership with B-Radio which, as Local Radio Ltd, was granted the Small Scale Digital Audio Broadcasting Licence in the summer of 2024. We are still keeping our options open and recognise the importance of seriously considering the financial implications- and risks – of opting for DAB. Opinion seems to be divided - both in the country as a whole and amongst our members - as to whether the future of radio in general, and not just Hospital Radio Reading, lies with DAB or on the internet.

Finally, as previously reported, the company that provides and maintains bedside consoles and supplies headphones for distribution to the patients, now known as Spark TSL, is slowly phasing out its old "Hospedia" branding and – more worryingly – adopting a new business plan involving the replacement over the next 3 to 4 years of hard-wired bedside entertainment consoles with tablets (still attached to the arms that extend and pivot from the wall above patients' beds) and, eventually, provision of all services on those tablets free of charge to patients. With other member stations of the Hospital Broadcasting Association, we are not convinced of the viability of expecting Trusts (or their fund-raising charitable arms) to take financial responsibility for services that are currently provided free of charge, subsidised by other sources of income, or paid for by patients. We can only hope that the RBH Trust – or the Royal Berks Charity – will be willing to do so if Spark TSL do indeed proceed down that route.

Whatever finance model is eventually adopted, removal of one of our "unique selling points" (that radio is free) and the inevitable greater competition from a wider range of TV, radio and internet based entertainment on the new tablets would oblige all Hospital Radio Reading volunteers to constantly pay greater attention to the quality of our programming and our outreach on the wards in order to keep our audience. That in itself is no bad thing, but it is already apparent that even elderly patients are more likely nowadays to turn down our invitation to listen to hospital radio and make a request if they have Spotify or one of the other streaming platforms on a mobile phone, which many say is "all they need". The Trustees recognise that volunteers will need to make a far greater effort to engage with patients on the wards, spending time chatting to them and winning them over – and playing what we know our patients want, not what we think they might like to hear.



***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service  
operating as Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)  
Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024***

**FINANCIAL REVIEW :**

The organisation has continued its long-established policy of holding a reserve of cash, equating to at least one year's running costs, in an interest-bearing account as a contingency fund, as well as operating a current account for its everyday activities. In January 2024, a new bank account as required by the charity's conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which we had originally opened in 2022, became our only current account following the closure of our previous account, and the remaining funds in the old account (£1218) were transferred to our new account, as shown in the accounts summary \*.

From the statements it can be seen that the organisation's total income was £11,273 compared to expenditure of £10,520, resulting in a year end surplus of £753.00. Both income and expenditure were higher than in the previous year, due to the Trustees' decision to invest in an upgrade of both studios, where some key computer equipment was twenty years old and no longer reliable, resulting in occasional breakdown and failure of our automation when the studio was unattended, thus depriving listeners of the full range of programming provided by the organisation. Furthermore, our existing equipment was not compatible with the latest play-out software that we wished to introduce to further increase the size of our music database and improve the technical quality of our programmes, both live and recorded. It was therefore decided to seek funding elsewhere for this special project and the organisation was successful in its applications for grants from The Earley Charity, Holybrook Council and The Berkshire Masonic Centre, grants received from these organisations totalling £7487.00.

Other main sources of income were members' own subscriptions (totalling £1,035) and sundry fund-raising efforts from individual members, totalling £337. Donations totalled £790, including £250 from the Windsor & Maidenhead Lions in return for a public address service provided at their Family Fun Day & Duck Derby. A growing number of members and supporters continued to nominate HRR as their sponsored charity in the Easy Fundraising scheme, thus enabling us to receive a small percentage of their spending on retail websites. Efforts continued to encourage members to carry out their own fundraising initiatives to ensure the sustainability of the organisation.

Regular 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 the accumulation of various annual charges and subscriptions required for us to broadcast :- insurance, PPL & PRS fees (to performers & copyright holders), payments for Sky News, broadband & internet streaming, membership of the Hospital Broadcasting Association etc. In order to cover those regular outgoings, at the organisation's Annual General Meeting in April, volunteers discussed, and approved by a clear majority vote, a proposal to increase the annual membership subscription from £30 to £50 for those in employment and from £15 to £30 for students, retired and unemployed members. These rates, together with a means of paying by monthly direct debit, were due to take effect during the following year.

Expenditure listed below as "Members Meetings" refers to that which benefits only our volunteers and not the patients (principally catering at the Annual General Meeting). The

**Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service**  
**operating as Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)**  
**Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024**

organisation's policy is that monies received from the public must never be used for such expenditure, which must never exceed the amount already paid by volunteers in their membership subscriptions.

**READING HOSPITAL RADIO BROADCASTING SERVICE**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DEC 2024**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
FUNDRAISING	307	337
DONATIONS	510	790
SUBSCRIPTIONS	1050	1035
SUNDRY SALES	4018	0
REFUND – IRN/PLUS NET	204	127
PAYPAL		2
CROWDFUNDING		160
EASY FUNDING		58
GRANTS		7487
TRANSFER – OLD ACCOUNT *		1218
SUPPLEMENTARY PYTS		60
	<hr/> 5885	<hr/> 11273
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
STUDIO MAINTENANCE	1196	6208
BROADBAND/STREAMING	625	621
PPL/INS/RADIO AUTHORITY/HBA	2210	3616
MEMBERS MEETINGS	166	74
	<hr/> 4197	<hr/> 10520
 SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	 1688	 753
 <b>RESERVES C/F</b> represented by		
INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	8079	8141
CURRENT ACCOUNT - OLD	1173	0
CURRENT ACCOUNT - NEW	2687	3440
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<hr/> 11939	<hr/> 11581

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

Signature: 

Date  
 September 29th 2025  
 Ann Beasley (Treasurer)



September 29th 2025  
 Gerard Rocks (Chair of Trustees)



***Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service  
operating as Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)  
Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024***