

Letter Box Study Group

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity Registration Number 1198577

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 April 2024

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity Number: 1198577

Trustees

The affairs of the CIO are managed by its Trustees. The Trustees who served during the year are:

Andrew R Young	(Chairman and Acting Treasurer)
Paul Snelling	(Vice Chairman)
Valerie P Scott	(Secretary)
Wayne E Cox	
Robert R Hunt (<i>resigned 4 September 2023</i>)	
Isla M Kennedy (<i>appointed 14 October 2023</i>)	
Simon Vaughan Winter	
Andrew W Young	

The Trustees met formally on two occasions during the year using *Zoom*, with additional discussions taking place by email.

Contact address

7 Bow Close, Newport, TF10 7GR

Independent Examiner

Cyril R H Parsons, 83 Ingram Avenue, Aylesbury, HP21 9DH

Bankers

TSB Bank PLC, 30-31 Long Causeway, Peterborough, PE1 1XP

Objects

The objects of the LBSG as laid out in its constitution are to advance the education of the public in the heritage and history, development and maintenance of letter boxes in the United Kingdom, and British letter boxes worldwide where they are found, including by:

1. maintaining the only comprehensive data base of the 115,500 roadside letter boxes including location, style, type, monarchical cipher, and rarity
2. providing educational information via the CIO's website and social media channels, newsletter, meetings, publications, email discussions and picture sharing
3. working collaboratively particularly with Royal Mail and The Postal Museum, their heirs and successors, on heritage issues, including through heritage meetings chaired by the CIO, and to help support the policy agreement of Royal Mail and English Heritage on the conservation of roadside letter boxes
4. providing educational materials for the use of schools and informal education organisations on the history of the design of and social communications through roadside letter boxes

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES for the year ended 30 April 2024

The Trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2024.

The Group is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) incorporated on 11 April 2022, having previously been an unincorporated association founded in 1976.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. Under their Guidance the Group fulfils its Public Benefit requirement particularly through points 2, 3, and 4 of its Objects as stated on the previous page, and through its General Enquiries facility available to the public on its website.

Membership

At the start of the year the Group had a membership of 514, and on 30 April 2024 membership stood at 516. Most interest groups are finding it difficult to recruit new members and are losing members each year through aging, so it is very pleasing to see our numbers remain steady. Our Secretary, Val Scott, manages our membership records and deals with new members who join during the year. She is particularly busy during membership renewal period in June and July.

Newsletter

Four editions of the Group's high-quality and well-respected Newsletter were produced in the year, edited by Simon Vaughan Winter. All were in full colour and the content totalled 236 A4 pages. As always, a broad range of topics were covered, varying widely in approach and fully-reflecting the many letter box-related subjects that interest members.

Meetings

Three meetings were held in the year. The first was held at King's Lynn on 13 May 2023. The AGM took place at Bishop's Monkton, near Ripon, on 14 October 2023 and this was followed by our annual virtual meeting via *Zoom* on 20th January 2024. Fifty members joined in from all corners of the UK.

Publications

A wide range of publications are available to members with an order form appearing in each Newsletter. The Group's flagship full-colour *Guide to British Letter Boxes* grew to 28 Sections, with compilation of the 29th due to start once updates have been completed to some of the older sections. Supporting the *Guide* is a comprehensive series of 46 *Smart Viewing Notes*. The *Directory* is the LBSG database of box types and their locations and is available in full, normally supplied on USB memory stick. Printed lists offering a wide range of *Directory* extracts are also available. The *Register of Box Types* reached version 21 during the year. Copies of Newsletters 1-191 are available on USB memory stick, supported by the free *Index to Newsletters*, available in two sections, numbers 1-113 and 114-191. A significant addition to the materials new members receive in their welcome packs was made with the introduction of the "Beginner's Letter Boxes" Guide, a 24 page full colour A5 booklet, compiled by member Steve Johnson.

Website

The LBSG website continues to offer information to visitors and is an important recruitment tool. The news pages were updated throughout the year, and included items on the "Liverpool Special" and Eurovision, special postboxes to celebrate the Coronation, letter box toppers, the Group's contribution to an hour long discussion about postboxes on BBC Radio 5 Live, singing postboxes at Christmas, an article in *The Times* about the difference between a Pillar Box and a Letter Box, and the addition of "Beginner's Letter Boxes" to our new members' Welcome Pack. Work to develop the website further is ongoing.

Social Media

We recognise fully the importance of social media as a means of reaching and educating the public about letter boxes (thereby fulfilling one of our Public Benefit obligations) and enticing some of them to become members. Isla Kennedy manages our *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *X (formerly Twitter)* accounts and continues to have a great deal of success with regular posts covering a wide range of themes. She is supported by members who make their photographs available, and then join in with the discussions that follow.

Post Box Working Group

The Group's Information Officer, Paul Snelling, chairs this Working Group attended by the LBSG, Royal Mail and The Postal Museum. It is a very useful forum for the exchange of information relating to letter boxes and allows us to highlight important matters and keeps up to date on Royal Mail's management of their post box estate. The Group met twice during the year, with more informal contact by email in-between time.

Email Discussion Group

The LBSG Mailing List is a forum via email which allows members to discuss anything relevant to the LBSG and to share photographs. Its origins can be traced back to May 1999 and it remains as popular as ever. During the year 85 different members made 7,869 postings to the Mailing List.

The Directory

The Directory is the LBSG's fully-computerised database of box types and their locations. The Group's Information Officer, Paul Snelling, manages the updates received daily from members. These are entered remotely into the database by Paul and his RaK (Records and Knowledge) team. 9,534 entries were made in the year and the database contained a total of 766,395 individual records on 30 April 2024, relating to nearly 123,000 British and Irish letter boxes in use and preserved, in the UK, Ireland, and overseas. Paul also deals with any General Enquiries we receive from the public and keeps in regular contact with Royal Mail.

IT

The LBSG's IT Officer, Andrew W Young, is responsible for all the Group's technology infrastructure and operations including data security and risk mitigation, vendor and cost management as well as day-to-day technical support to our volunteer teams.

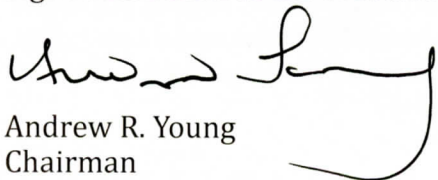
Educational Materials

Another of our Public Benefit obligations is to provide educational materials for the use of schools and informal education organisations on the history of the design of, and social communications through, roadside letter boxes. An education pack is downloadable from our website and consists of worksheets and activities for EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage), and Key Stages 1 and 2. There are also notes for extension activities. The LBSG Education Pack helps children – and adults – look a little more closely at post boxes, their place in our community landscape, and the importance of staying in touch with friends, family and neighbours all over the world.


Finances

The Group continues to be financially stable. The financial report and statement of accounts follow this report.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on 25 July 2024.



Andrew R. Young
Chairman



Valerie P. Scott
Secretary

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

The financial accounts for the year ended 30 April 2024 are for Letter Box Study Group Charitable Incorporated Organisation's second year. We became a charity on 11 April 2022 and our first year's accounts covered the 385 day period from then until 30 April 2023; thus the comparative figures shown represent a slightly longer period. Our subscription year runs from 1 June to 31 May annually, and subscriptions for new members who join between 1 March and 31 May last up to fifteen months.

In the year to 30 April 2024 both subscription income at £14,999 and net sales income at £1,478 showed small increases on the previous year. Donations of £797 include £256.17 paid to us by *easyfundraising*. Gift Aid receivable this year is £1,601, a new and valuable source of income since we became a registered charity. We are able to claim an extra 25p for every £1 we receive in subscriptions and donations from members who live in the UK, pay sufficient tax and have completed a Gift Aid Declaration Form. If you qualify but have not yet done this, please consider doing so. Forms are available from the Group's Secretary, Val Scott.

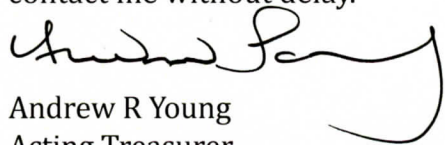
As always, the most significant item of expenditure is our Newsletter. This year members received three standard issues of 56 pages, and a bumper Winter issue of 68 pages. Although Newsletter postage costs increased we were able to limit this once more by buying a stock of NVI stamps ahead of Royal Mail's price increase. Our Editor, Simon Vaughan Winter, treats us to a superb full-colour Newsletter every quarter, and ensures we get excellent production costs and service from our printers.

The increase of £398 in print, post, and stationery is due to increases in the cost of ink cartridges and postage. Website and internet costs increased too, due to the rising costs of our technology and communication systems. This is our biggest and most important area of expenditure after the Newsletter. Our IT Officer Andrew W Young monitors these costs very closely, always ensuring that our systems are secure and fully recoverable.

Although we ended the year with a small deficit of £29 I am pleased to say that the Group continues to enjoy a sound financial position. The reserves figure on the balance sheet has reduced by this amount and stands at £21,088. The value of the stamps we held in stock at 30 April 2024 for future Newsletter mailings was £4,574, an increase of £854 on the figure a year earlier.

Cyril Parsons has undertaken an independent examination of these accounts once again. Cyril took on this role in 2013 and will be retiring at our AGM this year. The help and advice he has given me during this eleven year period has been invaluable. He was also closely involved in our application to become a CIO and has helped ensure that we meet the accounting requirements and tighter timetable that gaining charitable status now dictates. On behalf of all of the Trustees I'd like to thank him for all that he has done for the Group.

As a result of Cyril's retirement we urgently need to find a replacement independent examiner. If you have the necessary expertise and are willing to help in this way please contact me without delay.



Andrew R Young
Acting Treasurer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LETTER BOX STUDY GROUP FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 30 April 2024.

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").

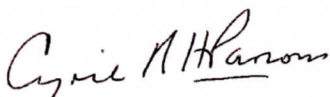
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in my examination, I have followed all the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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 contents 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.



26 July 2024

Cyril R H Parsons
83 Ingram Avenue
AYLESBURY, HP21 9DH

LETTER BOX STUDY GROUP
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

	2024 [366 days]			2023 [385 days]		
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income						
Subscriptions			14,999			14,649
Sales						
Gross sales		2,950			1,783	
Purchases		(1,472)			(680)	
Net sales income			1,478			1,103
Donations, gifts, etc.			797			945
Gift Aid			1,601			1,510
Bank interest			261			136
			19,136			18,343
Expenditure						
Newsletters						
Printing	7,810			7,659		
Postage and distribution	3,861			3,583		
		11,671			11,242	
Meetings						
Members	428			180		
Trustees	—			—		
		428			180	
Group Administration	255			142		
Print, post, stationery	1,158			760		
Travel & subsistence	283			173		
Insurance	505			560		
Website and internet	4,273			3,490		
Depreciation	592			587		
		7,066			5,712	
Total Expenditure			(19,165)			(17,134)
Surplus/(Deficit) of Income over Expenditure			(29)			1,209


LETTER BOX STUDY GROUP
BALANCE SHEET
AT 30 APRIL 2024

	2024		2023	
	<i>[366 days]</i>		<i>[385 days]</i>	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Computer Equipment	1,109		1,109	
Web Development	667		217	
Less: Depreciation	(962)		(587)	
		814		739
Current Assets				
TSB Bank	15,419		14,586	
Cash	3		3	
<i>Debtors</i>				
Prepaid Expenses	1,121		970	
Gift Aid	1,593		1,510	
<i>Stock</i>				
Directory, Guide, &c	284		230	
Newsletter, stamps, &c	4,574		3,720	
		22,994		21,019
Less: Current Liabilities				
Creditors	2,720		641	
		(2,720)		(641)
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		21,088		21,117
Represented by				
Transferred from Unincorporated Association	—		19,908	
Accumulated surplus brought forward	21,117		—	
Surplus/(Deficit) of Income over Expenditure	(29)		1,209	
		21,088		21,117

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on 25 July 2024.



Andrew R. Young
Chairman


Valerie P. Scott
Secretary