

# LET'S BEFRIENDS

England & Wales · Charity number 1199161

## Details

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**Other names** LBF

**Status** Registered

**Legal form** CIO

**Registered** 2022-05-31

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

## Contact

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**Address** C/o 39a Storey Avenue  
Lancaster  
Lancashire  
LA1 5PA

**Phone** 07598993669

**Email** [lbflancastermorecambe@gmail.com](mailto:lbflancastermorecambe@gmail.com)

## Activities

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**Objects:** THE OBJECTS OF LET'S BEFRIENDS ARE: 1. TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT IN THE LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE DISTRICT BY PREVENTING PEOPLE FROM BECOMING SOCIALLY EXCLUDED, RELIEVING THE NEEDS OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED AND ASSISTING THEM TO INTEGRATE INTO SOCIETY.FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS CLAUSE 'SOCIALLY EXCLUDED' MEANS BEING EXCLUDED FROM SOCIETY, OR PARTS OF SOCIETY, WHO ARE HOMELESS, RECENTLY REHOUSED OR UNDER THREAT OF EVICTION AND IN CHARITABLE NEED OF ASSISTANCE. 2. THE PREVENTION OR RELIEF OF POVERTY OR FINANCIAL HARDSHIP IN THE LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE DISTRICT BY PROVIDING SERVICES, ADVOCACY AND ADVICE TO INDIVIDUALS IN NEED. 3. THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HEALTH OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE HOMELESS, RECENTLY REHOUSED OR UNDER THREAT OF EVICTION ACROSS THE LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE DISTRICT AND IN CHARITABLE NEED OF ASSISTANCE BY PROMOTING ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE A PROVEN BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON HEALTH, INCLUDING THE PREVENTION OR RELIEF OF SICKNESS, DISEASE OR HUMAN SUFFERING. 4. THE RELIEF OF THOSE IN NEED BECAUSE OF ILL-HEALTH, FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AND OTHER DISADVANTAGES THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SERVICES IN THE LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE DISTRICT, OFFERING SUPPORT TO IMPROVE ILL-HEALTH, FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AND OTHER DISADVANTAGES SUCH AS SUBSTANCE ABUSE, POOR EDUCATIONAL / SKILLS ATTAINMENT, RELATIONSHIP AND FAMILY BREAKDOWN, POOR HOUSING AND CRIME.

**Activities:** We promote social inclusion in the Lancaster and Morecambe District by befriending people who are homeless, about to become homeless or who have recently been accommodated after a period of homelessness. We prevent beneficiaries from becoming socially excluded by helping them obtain and maintain tenancies and by supporting them to engage with services to create and sustain healthy ways of living.

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

## Geography

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- Lancashire

## Finances

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Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-05-31	£75,915	£60,346	-	-
2024-05-31	£63,778	£69,301	-	-
2023-05-31	£33,528	£18,748	-	-

## Trustees

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Name	Role	Appointed
Mark Thornton Thomas	Chair	2022-05-31
Agnieszka Nowakowska		2025-01-03
CAROLINE JACKSON		2022-05-31
Jane Attfield		2025-04-15

**LET'S BEFRIENDS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1199161

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# Accounts

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# The 3rd Annual General Meeting of Let's BeFriends



**Wednesday 11th June 2025, 1pm-2pm**

**Room 1, The Cornerstone, Sulyard Street, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 1PX**

**In attendance:** Stephen Hurst, Dusty Thomas, Caroline Jackson, Jane Attfield, Rebekah Sutcliffe, Claire Richardson, Sam Hannon, Hannah Lodge, Louise Seacy, Andrew Mcmenamin, Ashkan Rezaee, Robert McCaffery

**Apologies:** Agnes Novakovska, Stacey Sweeting, Joanna Sliwicka

## **Agenda**

Chair's Report

Finance Report

AOB

## **Chair's Report**

Good afternoon everyone, and welcome. I'm delighted to open this year's Let's beFriends Annual General Meeting Chair's report and to have the opportunity to reflect on the past year with you all. Thank you for taking the time to be here — whether you're a trustee, consultant, volunteer, partner, or supporter, your presence and ongoing commitment to our work means a great deal.

As Chair, I want to take this opportunity to express my deepest thanks to the incredible people who make our work possible. This past year has once again shown how vital our charity is to those experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness or recently rehoused after a period of homelessness. It's the dedication of everyone involved with Let's BeFriends that enables us to meet their needs with compassion, dignity, and determination.

To our consultants — thank you for the professionalism, insight, and heart you bring to your work. As self-employed specialists, you bring not only expertise but also a deep understanding

of the complex challenges facing those who access the service. Your flexibility and commitment allow us to deliver life-changing support in a way that is responsive, respectful, and rooted in real compassion. Your impact is significant and truly valued.

To our trustees — I'm grateful for your steady guidance and thoughtful leadership. The time, experience, and oversight you provide ensures that we remain accountable and focused, always acting in the best interests of the people we serve. Thank you for your support, challenge, and vision in helping steer the charity through another important year.

And to our volunteers — you are at the heart of the Let's BeFriends community. Whether offering a warm welcome, lending a hand with practical support, or simply being there to listen, your presence brings humanity and hope to those we support. Thank you for giving so generously your time and energy. Your contribution makes a profound difference in people's lives.

Before I go any further, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the sad loss of our long-standing trustee, Grahame Legg, who passed away earlier this year. Grahame was with the charity from day one and played an instrumental role in shaping who we are today. Beyond his strategic input and leadership, Grahame was someone who always made time to support others. Often offering guidance, encouragement, and genuine care to both colleagues and those we serve. His commitment, wisdom, and compassion were at the heart of our work, and his presence will be deeply missed. We are incredibly grateful for everything Grahame gave to Let's BeFriends. His legacy lives on in the work we continue to do.

Over the past year, the organisation has navigated periods of challenge, change, and achieved meaningful growth, all the while continuing to support some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Within this report I will attempt to focus on the mentioned topics of challenge, change and growth to give an overview of the year and a vision of the year ahead.

In relation to changes to the Management Committee, the board has welcomed three new members this year: Agnes Novakovska has joined the board, and we thank her for the valuable contributions. Joanna Sliwicka has also joined as a trustee, bringing fresh insight and energy to the team. Jane Attfield has stepped into the important role of Treasurer after a short spell as Administrator. We are grateful to them all for their ongoing commitment and expertise.

In addition, Hannah Lodge has taken on the role of Unmatched Beneficiary Coordinator, and Sam Hannon has joined us as our new Administrator. Both have already made a positive impact in their respective roles. Each of these individuals brings unique strengths and experience, and we're delighted to have them as part of the team.

We're also pleased to note that some consultants have increased their hours this year; this a reflection of both the growing needs of our work and their ongoing commitment to it. We're grateful to all of the consultants' continued hard work, flexibility, and professionalism, which

have made a real difference during a demanding period that has seen an increase in demand for a service we provide.

Also concerning change, the organisation is currently reviewing its systems, structures, and processes to ensure full compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Just as importantly, we are committed to making sure that everyone working with us, including our consultants and volunteers feel supported and valued. Their welfare is at the heart of what we do, and these reviews are a key part of strengthening our foundation for the future.

As the year has passed we have encountered a number of significant challenges that have tested our resilience and adaptability. This includes:

Recruiting male volunteers. This is an area where greater balance would strengthen our team and help us better reflect the diverse needs of those we support. We recognise the value that male volunteers can bring, and we continue to address this by actively networking, promoting the work we do, and finding new ways to make volunteer roles more visible, welcoming, and appealing to a wider range of people.

Securing sustainable funding continues to be a significant challenge, particularly in light of ongoing economic pressures and wider national and regional uncertainties. These external factors have impacted the availability and competitiveness of funding opportunities. In response, we are placing greater emphasis on identifying and submitting strong funding bids, as well as exploring new income streams to support the continuation and development of our services.

We have also seen a noticeably low number of female referrals this year, which remains a concern. It's important to us that our services are accessible and welcoming to all who need them, and we are actively exploring the reasons behind this trend. Moving forward, we aim to strengthen our outreach efforts and work more closely with partner organisations to ensure women feel safe, informed, and encouraged to access the support we offer.

We continue to face the familiar delays in DBS processing, which can slow down the onboarding of new volunteers. However, we are committed to keeping prospective volunteers engaged and informed during this waiting period via regular contact and training, ensuring they feel connected and prepared to step into their roles as soon as clearance is received.

In parallel with the challenges we have seen substantial meaningful growth that strengthens our ability to support those who rely on us. We currently have 44 volunteers either matched or in training and ready to be matched. Over the year volunteer intake has continued to grow. In their respective roles both Claire and Rebekah's tireless and efficient effort to recruit, successfully support our volunteers through DBS application, Safeguarding training, Induction and overseeing shadowing.

It is evident that our partnership working has both grown and strengthened over the past year. The charity has continued to build a solid reputation rooted in professionalism, passion, and hard work. These qualities have helped us develop meaningful relationships with a wide range of organisations and stakeholders. We have worked with numerous statutory, regulatory and third sector services, which includes but is not limited to: Walter Lyon House, Littledale Hall, Oaktree House, Social Ease, Lancaster and Morecambe College, CVS, Calico, Citizens Advice north Lancashire, Lancaster Bay Health Festival, Lancaster and Morecambe library, Red Rose Recovery, Global Link, RAIS, EggCup, Green Rose, Addullam, The Olive Branch, Lancaster City Council's Homeless Team, Stanley's Community Centre, Lancaster District CVS, The new Well work, Acorn Recovery, Safenet, Bay and Lancaster ICC's and Beyond radio.

Monthly Peer Support groups continue to take place on the 1st Monday of the month in The Cornerstone accompanied by a guest speaker invited to each of these sessions which has proved popular and adds great value to the service. We are very grateful to Claire Niebieski, a holistic practitioner who offers Wellbeing sessions to our volunteers on the second week of the month.

We require all our befrienders to complete Mental Health & Suicide Awareness training and this is delivered in partnership with Positive Futures. We support volunteers to gain qualifications, increasing social capital and enhancing their knowledge by continuing to offer a variety of vocational training sessions on the third week of the month, delivered by Lancashire Adult Learning, The Hep C Trust and later this month by Inspire's Community Educator.

Our Project Coordinator Louise has continued to work tirelessly, playing a key role in linking together our systems, structures, and processes. Her dedication, passion, and commitment to maintaining strong, effective relationships — both internally and externally, have been vital to the smooth running and continued progress of the organisation.

We have received the majority of our funding via UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund), which we have been granted a further year's extension, (despite stiff competition) we have exceeded our targets, though this will not cover our full costs. We were granted a small pot of £5000 from the Mental Health Transformational Fund due to our ongoing work in helping people to access Mental Health services. We were fortunate enough to receive an Awards for All pot, hence the creation of two new roles i.e. Unmatched beneficiary coordinator and Administrator. Also the funds enabled us to increase a consultant's hours.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on building a stronger, more resilient organisation — one that continues to adapt, grow, and respond to the needs of those we serve. We aim to strengthen our partnerships, increase access to our services, and ensure our internal systems continue to support the people who power this work.

With the passion and dedication of our team, trustees, consultants, and volunteers, I'm confident that we're well-placed to meet the challenges and opportunities the coming year will bring. Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. As without it we simply

couldn't facilitate the positive change that so many people — those who need it most — rely on. Whether through time, expertise, or partnership, every contribution helps us continue making a real and lasting difference in people's lives.

Stephen Hurst

Let's BeFriends- Chair

## Finance Report

Cut and Paste Jane's report once finalised

### AOB

#### **Motion raised:**

Louise Seacy proposed that Jane Attfield formally take over from Stephen Hurst as Treasurer as of 11 April 2025: this motion was seconded by Caroline Jackson and voted for unanimously by a quorum of trustees.

#### **Questions asked:**

It was stated after the Chair's report was read that there has recently been an increase in female referrals due Safenet reaching out to see if we could assist those which they are supporting.

Andrew asked why there was a backlog on getting DBS checks for volunteers - it was explained that as this is an outsourced service and due the length of the process (the longest stage being that of the police checks) and the fact that the local area has two large Universities each submitting a high volume of applications there is consequently a lengthy turn-around. However, we continue to work on getting volunteers to sign up for the update service once their DBS comes through to help to overcome the time and cost implications when the time comes to renew DBS checks.

Caroline asked if there was anything which would help in the recruitment of male volunteers - Claire suggested that having male volunteers attending the various male support groups would offer current befrienders the chance to say what they get from volunteering and this may aid recruitment.

Louise mentioned that due to Let's BeFriends having recruited people with a wide range of heritage and skills we now have a bank of volunteers who are able act as interpreters.

Andrew asked about the restructuring of the current policies and procedures and why this was happening. It was explained that this is being done as a matter of due diligence and making sure the organisation is operating in compliance with all laws and regulations.

Hannah asked whether the Management Committee would be open to considering a move towards an employment model for staff - it was explained that due to limited pots of funding we currently have available and the difficulty in securing future grants in the current financial climate it is not possible to change the model at this moment in time.

## Let's BeFriends Treasurer Report 2025

Accounting period 1st June 2024 - 31st May 2025

LBF is a registered Charity with effect 31 May 2022

The finances are reported annually with reference to the following policies and procedures:

1. Let's BeFriends Financial Controls Policy
2. Let's BeFriends Management Committee Minutes and Decisions

The starting balance for this year was £43,916.70 with our end balance coming in at £59,485.03.

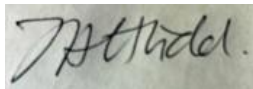
Our main income for this year has come from Awards for All which has enabled us to recruit much needed admin support along with additional hours for volunteer recruitment and training. We also remain grateful to UKSPF for continued support covering our core activities this year.

Our expenditure has remained stable with a few rises in costs for our room hire due to additional befriender induction sessions run this year.

Our budget for the following year remains similar to this year though this will be dependent on forthcoming funding applications and will need to be monitored with forward projections.

Attached **Independent Examiner's Report** to the Trustees of the Let's Be Friends Charity No. 1199161 on the accounts for the year 1st June 2024 to 31st May 2025.

Jane Attfield

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Attfield', on a light-colored background.

Treasurer  
14th November 2025

**Let's Be Friends**  
**1/06/2024 to 31/05/2025**  
**Statement of Financial Activity Income & Expenditure Account**

INCOME	June - 2024 to May - 2025			June - 2023 to May - 2024		
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Awards For All	20000.00	0.00	20000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bank Interest	0.00	842.30	842.30	0.00	734.89	734.89
General Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	854.45	854.45
Mental Health Transformation	21.00	0.00	21.00	4996.00	0.00	4996.00
UKSPF	54840.91	0.00	54840.91	36940.78	0.00	36940.78
Unrestricted Fund	0.00	210.93	210.93	0.00	20251.81	20251.81
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>74,861.91</b>	<b>1,053.23</b>	<b>75,915.14</b>	<b>41,936.78</b>	<b>21,841.15</b>	<b>63,777.93</b>

EXPENDITURE	June - 2024 to May - 2025			June - 2023 to May - 2024		
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Awards For All	6479.48	0.00	6479.48	145.82	0.00	145.82
Bay ICC	0.00	0.00	0.00	803.50	0.00	803.50
Eric Wright	0.00	0.00	0.00	24.62	0.00	24.62
Lottery Covid response	0.00	0.00	0.00	51.30	0.00	51.30
Street Aid	0.00	0.00	0.00	26.00	0.00	26.00
LCC Self Isolation Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	18726.80	0.00	18726.80
Urgent Response Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	473.77	0.00	473.77
Rough Sleepers Initiative	0.00	0.00	0.00	1103.29	0.00	1103.29
UKSPF	49807.84	0.00	49807.84	47439.08	0.00	47439.08
General Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	507.25	507.25
Mental Health Transformation	3842.26	0.00	3842.26	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unrestricted Fund	0.00	217.23	217.23	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>60,129.58</b>	<b>217.23</b>	<b>60,346.81</b>	<b>68,794.18</b>	<b>507.25</b>	<b>69,301.43</b>
<b>Surplus/(Loss)</b>	<b>14,732.33</b>	<b>836.00</b>	<b>15,568.33</b>	<b>-26,857.40</b>	<b>21,333.90</b>	<b>-5,523.50</b>

Expenditure	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Accounting Software subscription	60.00	0.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	60.00
Audit Fees	300.00	0.00	300.00	250.00	0.00	250.00
Computer Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	17.18	0.00	17.18
DBS checks	590.00	0.00	590.00	665.00	0.00	665.00
Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	468.99	0.00	468.99
Insurance	477.47	0.00	477.47	436.36	0.00	436.36
Purchase of equipment	34.99	0.00	34.99	0	0	0.00
Phone and Internet	300.00	0.00	300.00	183.00	6.00	189.00
Printing and Stationery	566.10	0.00	566.10	696.62	0.00	696.62
Promotional Material	0.00	0.00	0.00	893.40	0.00	893.40
Publicity	24.00	0.00	24.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Room Hire	1165.00	0.00	1165.00	742.50	0.00	742.50
Salaries	52714.11	0.00	52714.11	40979.03	91.25	41070.28
Training Expenses	265.95	0.00	265.95	214.50	0.00	214.50
Travel & Accommodation	3400.74	0.00	3400.74	2735.83	0.00	2735.83
Website	231.22	0.00	231.22	159.96	0.00	159.96
Other Cost	0.00	217.23	217.23	0.00	350.00	350.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,129.58</b>	<b>217.23</b>	<b>60,346.81</b>	<b>48,542.37</b>	<b>507.25</b>	<b>49,049.62</b>

**Let's Be Friends**  
**Balance Sheet as at 31/5/2025**

<b>Restricted Fund</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Awards For All	13,520.52	0.00
Population Health Fund	15,668.85	15,668.85
Rough Sleepers Initiative	11,669.58	11,669.58
UKSPF	-5,465.23	-10,498.30
Mental Health Transformation	1,174.74	4,996.00
<b>Unrestricted Fund</b>	<b>21,834.48</b>	<b>20,998.48</b>
General Fund	1,082.09	1,082.09
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b><u>59,485.03</u></b>	<b><u>43,916.70</u></b>
Account	34,116.58	19,390.55
Savings Account	25358.74	24,516.44
Petty Cash	9.71	9.71
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b><u>59,485.03</u></b>	<b><u>43,916.70</u></b>

# **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Let's Be Friends**

**Charity No. 1199161**

I report on the accounts for the year

1st June 2024 – 31st May 2025

## **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

## **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

## **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Shweta Pankhadiwala

C/o Lancaster District CVS, The Cornerstone Sulyard Street Lancaster LA1 1PX  
12th November 2025.

**LET'S BEFRIENDS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1199161

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# Accounts

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## Let's BeFriends Treasurer Report to the Trustees of the Annual General Meeting on 5.6.24

LBF is a registered Charity with effect 31 May 2022

The finances are reported annually with reference to the following policies and procedures:

1. Let's BeFriends Treasurer Report to the Trustees of the Let's Be Friends on the accounts
2. Let's BeFriends Financial Controls Policy
3. Let's BeFriends Management Committee Minutes and Decisions

### Let's BeFriends Balance sheet

#### Let's Be Friends Balance Sheet as at 31/5/2024

Restricted Fund	2023-24	2022-23
	£	£
Awards For All	0.00	145.82
Bay ICC	0.00	803.50
Eric Wright	0.00	24.62
Lottery Covid Response	0.00	51.30
Population Health Fund	15,668.85	15,668.85
Street Aid	0.00	26.00
LCC Self Isolation Fund	0.00	18,726.80
Urgent Response Fund	0.00	473.77
Rough Sleepers Initiative	11,669.58	12,772.87
UKSPF	-10,498.30	0.00
Mental Health Transformation	4,996.00	0.00
<b>Unrestricted Fund</b>	<b>20,998.48</b>	<b>746.67</b>
General Fund	1,082.09	0.00
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>43,916.70</b>	<b>49,440.20</b>
Current Account	19,390.55	25,607.94
Savings Account	24516.44	23,701.55
Petty Cash	9.71	130.71
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>43,916.70</b>	<b>49,440.20</b>

(Source: Attached Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Let's Be Friends Charity No. 1199161 on the accounts for the year 1st June 2023 to 31st May 2024).

Steve Hurst,  
Treasurer  
Dated 04.6.24

# Annual General Meeting Report

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Good afternoon and a very warm welcome to Let's BeFriends' second official Annual General Meeting.

It is a pleasure to introduce and welcome Rebekah Sutcliffe and Claire Richardson - the newest members of the staff team.

This year we have said goodbye to one of our trustees Nina Banks who was not only a member of the Management Committee, but also volunteered as a befriender: we are very grateful to Nina for all her contributions and would like to thank her for her commitment to LBF. We would also like to thank Julie Ridgway for her work as Treasurer for the past 12 months in keeping accounts up to date and processing and transferring staff wages and volunteer expenses.

We have welcomed Stephen Hurst who became a Trustee on the 12th of April 2024. Stephen comes from a recovery background and now teaches at Lancaster and Morecambe college and we are very grateful to him for volunteering to take on the role of Treasurer.

At the LDCVS Volunteer Achievement Awards on 7 June 2023 Hannah was presented with the accolade of "Volunteer of the Year" in a glittering ceremony at the iconic Midland Hotel in Morecambe. Dusty was also nominated in the "Trustee of the Year" category. Let's BeFriends volunteers were all recognized in the "Team of the Year" category.

## **Staff Team**

In 2023 Tracey Benson and Rebekah Sutcliffe joined the staff team as joint Volunteer Coordinators (on 23 August and 20th September respectively), each undertaking 16 hour contracts. We are very grateful for the 6 months of work completed by Tracey. Her resignation due to personal reasons gave the opportunity for Rebekah to take on a 30-hour contract commencing 4th March 2024.

Rebekah provides support to all volunteers in active befriending relationships providing guidance on referrals and signposting and responding to safeguarding issues as they arise. Behind the scenes she navigates the complex housing situations many of our beneficiaries are facing. She also provides practical and emotional support to the volunteers themselves to ensure they are in the right place to have an active befriending relationship with our vulnerable beneficiaries.

Claire Richardson joined us as Network Coordinator on 9th October 2023 and has been working 16 hours per week recruiting new volunteers by forging excellent connections with local treatment services, supported housing projects and Littledale Rehab, delivering regular presentations at these venues in addition to attending health fairs and job fairs at Lancaster and Morecambe job centres.

Claire has also drawn volunteers into the organisation through her natural connection with the local recovery community due to her own lived experience and the journey she has shared with this pool of potentially valuable volunteers.

Claire and Rebekah have successfully supported our volunteers through DBS application, Safeguarding training, Induction training, and accessing other relevant training.

Louise Seacy has been Project Coordinator since the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021. In recent months, due to the expansion of the organisation, the requirements of the role have increased to the point that they can no longer routinely be accomplished within 16 hours per week. The board agreed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 to allow Louise to continue working the toil necessary to complete tasks for 6 months when the situation will be reviewed.

Due to increasing numbers of complex referrals waiting to be matched whilst we train new befrienders, Louise will collaborate with Dusty on a funding bid to secure paid hours to recruit an unmatched beneficiary coordinator, but in the interim, on 28th May 2024 Hannah kindly agreed to donate 6-hours of her time each week to support unmatched beneficiaries.

We also have a pressing need to recruit admin personnel and are grateful to the two volunteers who support befrienders through mandatory safeguarding training. Other forms of volunteering which we greatly value include translators and speakers in languages such as Polish, Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Ukrainian and Russian and a van driver.

Dusty has continued line managing all staff throughout the year. He has co-written all funding bids with Louise. The on-call availability Dusty provides in the evenings, at weekends, on bank holidays and most especially appreciated over the Christmas and new year period have provided a valuable system to deal with out-of-hours support and safeguarding issues. All of this time is donated voluntarily.

To ease the pressure on Let's Befriends Louise has also had conversations with other agencies (Stanley's, Lancaster City Council and Calico) about how to improve the process for newly referred people in housing need and updated our Referral Form to ensure referrers have completed their Duty to Refer obligations, making the council's homelessness team aware of beneficiaries requiring their support.

### **Website, Social Media and Promotional Material**

Thanks to funding from the Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission and the design of Phil Sykes the LBF website [www.lets\\_be\\_friends.org.uk](http://www.lets_be_friends.org.uk) provides a platform for promotion, links to referral and application forms and publication of upcoming job opportunities.

The volunteer and staff WhatsApp groups have provided valuable flow in communication between staff and volunteers. Claire also regularly updates our Facebook page.

Louise designed our leaflet and has liaised with a local printer to ensure that promotional T-Shirts and pens have been designed, produced and distributed.

Stephen Hurst's students at Lancaster & Morecambe college have very kindly offered to design and produce a LBF banner.

Claire will be setting up an in-person meeting with Steve at CVS with regards to adding funder's logos to our Twitter and Facebook accounts.

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

Claire has delivered many recruitment presentations this year including:

- Lancaster & Morecambe job fairs
- Walter Lyon House
- Littledale Therapeutic Community Rehab

- Oaktree House
- Health festivals

Recruitment presentations are planned to be delivered at:

- Social Ease Presentation, Lancaster
- CVS volunteer Fair this Friday
- Lancaster Health Festival in July
- Social Justice Group at Lancaster Methodist Church
- Lancaster and Morecambe College's 200th birthday / Community Open Day

### **Volunteer Training**

Due to the significant increase in the number of volunteers recruited, our Induction Training has been increased to a monthly rather than quarterly event - the next being on Wednesday 12th June. Rebekah and Claire now jointly deliver this training.

Mandatory Mental Health & Suicide Awareness training was last delivered by Lancashire Adult Learning on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The next training will be delivered by Positive Futures on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July and Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Louise has implemented a rolling programme of non-mandatory training delivered via partner organisations (i.e. Lancashire Adult Learning and The Hep C Trust) on the 3rd week of each month and has asked Rebekah to set up and deliver monthly in-person Boundaries training on the 4th week of the month.

### **Staff Training**

Staff have benefited from training provided by external agencies such as LDCVS, Shelter, Lancashire Adult Learning and the National Homelessness Advice Service, for example: Claire has attended Mental Health Awareness and Equality & Diversity training, Louise has attended Supporting Autism and Neuro Inclusion in the Workplace and Writing Funding Bids training whilst Rebekah has completed Introduction to Housing Status and Understanding Homelessness and Housing courses and will attend designated Safeguarding Lead training on the 12th July.

### **Volunteer Support System**

Monthly Peer Support groups continue to be held on the 1st Monday of the month in Cornerstone. Here volunteers can share ideas and information about the community with one another, discuss dilemmas and seek support. Louise introduced the idea of regular guest speakers and over the past 12 months these have included Red Rose Recovery, Food Futures, Healthwatch, The Birchall Trust, Green Rose, Social Ease and Out in the Bay. There will be a speaker from the Adullam Programme next month and there are plans to invite the Samaritans, Positive Futures and Inspire.

This week was National Volunteers Week, so on Monday's Peer Support we provided a buffet and handed out volunteer certificates at the Cornerstone. This was well attended by volunteers, staff and trustees alike. Thanks to Claire and Jess for doing the buffet and Rebekah for organising the quiz.

Lancaster Inspire have offered a room to be used for Introduction meetings as have several places in Morecambe and Heysham. We would also like to thank Green Rose for letting us hold Peer Support and Christmas Party there.

Wellbeing sessions are held on the 2nd week of each month. Initially we had a holistic therapist donating Swedish massage to reward our volunteers for their contributions; these sessions were extremely popular but sadly came to an end when the practitioner no longer had capacity to deliver them. We have been grateful to the council's Jill Brayshaw who offered chair-based mindfulness / yoga to our volunteers from November 2023 through to May, and are now welcoming offers from new providers who can deliver these monthly sessions.

There has been a shift from volunteers completing their own contact sheets to being supported with these (and with expenses claims) by Rebekah, so the final "IT drop in" (which used to be held on the last Wednesday of the month) ran in April, and support to complete the online Safeguarding training will instead be arranged on an as and when basis for any volunteers who need assistance.

## **Outcomes**

We currently have 12 active befriending relationships, 9 beneficiaries due to be matched and a further 2 referrals on pause (i.e. as the person on the waiting list may move out of the area).

We have 18 fully trained volunteers, a further 18 in training and 3 who are on pause due to personal reasons. Not all of our volunteers wish to / are able to become befrienders - some would like to donate their time in other ways (i.e. offering only admin support) and

others are unable to be matched for other reasons (i.e. not being able to provide reinvent documents for DBS due to refugee status).

We have worked with Lancaster and Morecambe Council to access emergency accommodation for beneficiaries in urgent need. For some this has brought an end to their time street sleeping. Some fleeing domestic violence have been supported to access refuge. Referral Pathways meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month with Calico (the Council's Accommodation Finding/Floating Support service) help to make this possible.

We have supported beneficiaries into supported housing projects, social housing and independent living. Our volunteers have helped them to settle in these homes. Our volunteers and staff act as advocates communicating with landlords and letting agencies. We still haven't had any failed tenancies.

We have helped to alleviate poverty by accessing funding through Household Support Fund and Street Aid and food parcel referrals. Our beneficiaries are referred to Citizens Advice for financial advice and debt management when appropriate and volunteers have supported beneficiaries with budget planning.

Volunteers have helped beneficiaries with life skills - for example signposting through to 'Cooking on a Budget' with the Abdulam Team

As some of our beneficiaries experience substance misuse issues it has been crucial to work closely with Inspire, Red Rose and The Well to navigate recovery. We thank these services for their outstanding communication and teamwork with us. In some instances a volunteer has been able to support a beneficiary through their journey through detox, rehab, aftercare and reintegration into the community.

## **Challenges**

We are currently seeing an increase in Section 21's (no-fault evictions) - some having reached court enforcement for eviction dates and several on their way to this.

The shortage of social housing, private rents and most recently beds in supported housing mean that moving on progress can be extremely frustrating. The work of staff and volunteers is therefore often in managing expectations and being an ear for beneficiaries to offload to.

Working with mental health services has proved challenging. Despite our attempts we have failed to build effective working relationships with the START Team, Talking Therapies and Care Coordinators due to waiting times and failure in communication and no continuity of care. Most disappointingly we have been unable to access the mental

health Peer Support workers with Red Rose due Care Coordinators gatekeeping. This has meant some of our beneficiaries are being denied NHS and community mental health support. We thank Positive Futures for being a hub open to all - the crisis evening cafe has been a haven for some of our beneficiaries and volunteers.

One of the biggest challenges is that even when a befriender has completed their mandatory training (i.e. half day Induction / Safeguarding / Shadowing / Mental Health and Suicide Alertness training) in some cases we are unable to match them with a beneficiary due to lengthy DBS waiting times - in some cases this has caused a delay of up to 3 months! We are looking into options to obtain cheaper DBS checks, hopefully with a faster turn around.

## **Funding**

Thanks to UKSPF for 2 years funding and The Mental Health Transformation Fund

**Let's Be Friends**  
**1/06/2023 to 31/05/2024**  
**Statement of Financial Activity Income & Expenditure Account**

INCOME	June - 2023 to May - 2024			June - 2022 to May - 2023		
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Awards For All	0.00	0.00	0.00	49.29	0.00	49.29
Bay ICC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eric Wright	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lottery Covid Response	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Population Health Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	15004.00	0.00	15004.00
Street Aid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
LCC Self Isolation Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	320.00	320.00
Urgent Response Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rough Sleepers Initiative	0.00	0.00	0.00	18000.00	0.00	18000.00
Bank Interest	0.00	734.89	734.89	0.00	154.88	154.88
General Fund	0.00	854.45	854.45	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mental Health Transforma	4996.00	0.00	4996.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
UKSPF	36940.78	0.00	36940.78	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unrestricted Fund	0.00	20251.81	20251.81	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>41,936.78</b>	<b>21,841.15</b>	<b>63,777.93</b>	<b>33,053.29</b>	<b>474.88</b>	<b>33,528.17</b>

## EXPENDITURE

June - 2023 to May - 2024

June - 2022 to May - 2023

	Restricted Expenditure £	Unrestricted Expenditure £	Total Expenditure £	Restricted Expenditure £	Unrestricted Expenditure £	Total Expenditure £
Awards For All	145.82	0.00	145.82	3182.30	0.00	3182.30
Bay ICC	803.50	0.00	803.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Eric Wright	24.62	0.00	24.62	794.08	0.00	794.08
Lottery Covid Response	51.30	0.00	51.30	210.00	0.00	210.00
Population Health Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	9335.15	0.00	9335.15
Street Aid	26.00	0.00	26.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
LCC Self Isolation Fund	18726.80	0.00	18726.80	0.00	0.00	0.00
Urgent Response Fund	473.77	0.00	473.77	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rough Sleepers Initiative	1103.29	0.00	1103.29	5227.13	0.00	5227.13
UKSPF	47439.08	0.00	47439.08	0.00	0.00	0.00
General Fund	0.00	507.25	507.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>68,794.18</b>	<b>507.25</b>	<b>69,301.43</b>	<b>18,748.66</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>18,748.66</b>
<b>Surplus/(Loss)</b>	<b>-26,857.40</b>	<b>21,333.90</b>	<b>-5,523.50</b>	<b>14,304.63</b>	<b>474.88</b>	<b>14,779.51</b>

Expenditure	Restricted Expenditure £	Unrestricted Expenditure £	Total Expenditure £	Restricted Expenditure £	Unrestricted Expenditure £	Total Expenditure £
Accounting Software su	0.00	60.00	60.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Audit Fees	250.00	0.00	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Computer Expenses	17.18	0.00	17.18	70.00	0.00	70.00
DBS checks	665.00	0.00	665.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Equipment	468.99	0.00	468.99	0.00	0.00	0.00
Insurance	436.36	0.00	436.36	0.00	0.00	0.00
Legal & Professional Fe	0.00	0.00	0.00	1177.43	0.00	1177.43
Phone and Internet	183.00	6.00	189.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Postage and Stationery	696.62	0.00	696.62	78.67	0.00	78.67
Promotional Material	893.40	0.00	893.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Refreshment Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.29	0.00	3.29
Repairs & Maintenance	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Room Hire	742.50	0.00	742.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Salaries	40979.03	91.25	41070.28	15405.15	0.00	15405.15
Training Expenses	214.50	0.00	214.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Travel & Accommodati	2735.83	0.00	2735.83	1976.37	0.00	1976.37
Volunteer Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Website	159.96	0.00	159.96	37.75	0.00	37.75
Other Cost	0.00	350.00	350.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,542.37</b>	<b>507.25</b>	<b>49,049.62</b>	<b>18,748.66</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>18,748.66</b>

**Let's Be Friends**  
**Balance Sheet as at 31/5/2024**

<b>Restricted Fund</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Awards For All	0.00	145.82
Bay ICC	0.00	803.50
Eric Wright	0.00	24.62
Lottery Covid Response	0.00	51.30
Population Health Fund	15,668.85	15,668.85
Street Aid	0.00	26.00
LCC Self Isolation Fund	0.00	18,726.80
Urgent Response Fund	0.00	473.77
Rough Sleepers Initiative	11,669.58	12,772.87
UKSPF	-10,498.30	0.00
Mental Health Transformation	4,996.00	0.00
<b>Unrestricted Fund</b>	<b>20,998.48</b>	<b>746.67</b>
General Fund	1,082.09	0.00
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b><u>43,916.70</u></b>	<b><u>49,440.20</u></b>
Current Account	19,390.55	25,607.94
Savings Account	24516.44	23,701.55
Petty Cash	9.71	130.71
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b><u>43,916.70</u></b>	<b><u>49,440.20</u></b>

# **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Let's Be Friends**

**Charity No. 1199161**

I report on the accounts for the year

1st June 2023 – 31st May 2024

## **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

## **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

## **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Shweta Pankhadiwala

C/o Lancaster District CVS, The Cornerstone Sulyard Street Lancaster LA1 1PX  
6th February 2025.

**LET'S BEFRIENDS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1199161

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# Accounts

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# The first Annual General Meeting of Let's BeFriends

Wednesday 7th June 2023, 3pm-4pm



Room 2, The Cornerstone, Sulyard Street, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 1PX

**In attendance:** Dusty Thomas, Hannah Lodge, Caroline Jackson, Julie Ridgway, Grahame Legg, Louise Seacy, Isabelle Hart, Boz Wilson

**Apologies:** Nina Banks, Andrew Bryant, Catherine Corless, Paula Boland, Tom Disley

## Agenda

Chair's Report

Finance Report

AOB

## Chair's Report (Hannah Lodge)

Annual General Meeting Report

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Good afternoon everyone and a very warm welcome to Let's BeFriends first official annual general meeting.

Let's Befriends was set up during Lockdown by the Lancaster Homeless Lived Experience Group who wanted to build on the efforts of the "Everyone In" initiative (which offered practical

assistance to accommodate rough sleepers) by offering social support to address the stigma, isolation and lack of connectivity that can lead to / perpetuate homelessness in the first place.

We are a local charity which recruits, trains and supports people with lived experience of homelessness to befriend people who are currently homeless, about to become homeless or recently accommodated after a period of homelessness.

Our transformative project is underpinned by the ethos of working with our communities to co-produce solutions to local issues and bring about change.

We support beneficiaries to obtain / maintain tenancies and to engage in local services which help create / sustain healthy ways of living, whilst also providing volunteers with work experience, supervision, certificated training and reference's which can improve their access to the job market.

We have weekly meetings with the Council's Homeless Team and Calico's Accommodation Finding / Floating Support service and forged strong partnerships with other agencies such as Citizens Advice, Integrated Care Communities and Changing Futures. Our service builds trusting relationships and enables beneficiaries to improve outcomes in health (i.e. via engagement with GPs / hospitals / agencies treating substance misuse / poor mental health), wealth (i.e. via debt reduction / maximising benefits / energy efficiency) and opportunities to access employment, education or training.

The majority of referrals for our service come from partner organisations but beneficiaries can also self-refer.

We aim to break the cycle of homelessness by working in partnership with statutory / voluntary agencies and the marker of our success is two-fold: desired outcomes for befrienders (with historic lived experience) and their beneficiaries (with current lived experience) which is measured by:

- Improving connectivity by establishing befriending relationships which reduce isolation, build confidence and improve wellbeing and signposting / making referrals to community groups
- Supporting people to move into suitable accommodation / maintain tenancies
- Improving health by supporting beneficiaries to engage with Primary Care services; for example by registering with GPs, providing support to attend medical appointments, accompanying to wound-dressing /vaccination clinics, help to access detox/rehab, introducing beneficiaries to agencies addressing substance misuse (e.g., Red Rose Recovery / Inspire / the Well) and those which promote mental health (e.g., MindsMatter and Positive Futures) and making referrals to Adult Social Care
- Improving wealth by continuing to work in partnership with agencies such as the DWP / Citizens Advice to help reduce debt, improve budgeting, alleviate food and fuel poverty and to maximise benefits
- Enabling more people to access to training and education
- Addressing safeguarding issues

We support beneficiaries to obtain new homes and assist with tenancy set-up (i.e. by transferring benefits claims, setting up utilities and ensuring that properties are adequately furnished and have white goods). We ensure that beneficiaries facing eviction are provided with legal support and assist with applications to Ideal Choice Homes. Where necessary, we advocate for updated banding to improve access to council housing, support with homeless applications and request formal reviews of homeless decisions to ensure that people with priority need are given a duty of accommodation.

We were awarded charitable status in May 2022 and since then have been supported by Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission to launch our new website ([www.letsbefriends.org.uk](http://www.letsbefriends.org.uk)) which provides a platform to promote our work, and provide links to our referral and application forms, alongside publicising any upcoming job opportunities.

### Volunteer Recruitment

This year we have delivered recruitment presentations at:

- Oak Tree House
- The Well Morecambe
- Walter Lyon House
- Lancaster User Forum (LUF Lounge)
- Lancaster Job Centre job fair

- Lancaster Library job fair (LDCVS)
- Morecambe Library job fair

The next recruitment presentations are to be delivered:

- Lancaster Job Centre job fair Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 10:30am
- Lancaster District Health Festival at Dalton Square Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July 10am
- Littledale Hall Therapeutic Community targeted at: Participation & Citizenship stage of treatment as this group are close to leaving treatment and preparing for their lives in the community; Aftercare as this group have left treatment so are living in the community whilst still actively engaged with Littledale Hall. Dates to be arranged for this Summer in conjunction with the new Network Coordinator

In addition, volunteers have been recruited through word-of-mouth, mainly due to the connections formed via the Recovery Community. This will be ongoing and we expect this to become even more successful as we strengthen our links with recovery organisations such as Red Rose and The Well. We are also interviewing tomorrow for the post of Network Coordinator, whose role will revolve around active recruitment and also delivering presentations to our wider network of partners to inform them more about what we actually do as an organisation. We hope this role will see an active increase in the number of our volunteer befrienders. With them in post we hope to speed up the recruitment of volunteers and the process of preparing them for a befriending relationship to get closer to achieving our goal of having 40 active volunteers.

### Active Befriending Relationships

We currently have 8 volunteers active in 17 befriending relationships.

The length of befriending relationships is varied to the extent that they range from

- One of our first beneficiaries who has been supported for 2 and a half years through her roller-coaster addiction/recovery journey
- 3 days of intensive support recently which concluded with a positive outcome in that this lady was housed safely in a refuge out of the area.

One of our volunteers provided valuable ongoing support to a beneficiary through their end-of-life journey.

So far none of our beneficiaries have lost a tenancy. This suggests that we are achieving one of our founding objectives which was to stop the revolving door of homelessness.

Not every beneficiary is homeless or about to become homeless (many referrals are for people who have already been accommodated after a period of homelessness), but since our project launched in 2020 we have supported 18 people into their own tenancy, 4 people into supported accommodation and 5 people into interim accommodation.

We have supported 6 beneficiaries into detox or rehab. The support to these individuals has not ended with their admission as befrienders have visited the detox or rehab and were involved in Aftercare support when the beneficiary left residential treatment.

A beneficiary was supported on leaving hospital after 4 months of psychiatric treatment to settle back at home and reintegrate in the community.

### Volunteers in Training

We currently have 4 volunteers who have completed all aspects of compulsory training (Induction and Online Safeguarding) and 1 who has completed the Induction and will be supported with the online training. All require clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before they can commence volunteering.

The length of time DBS checks have been taking to come through has been a major obstacle to starting befriending – with some taking up to 3 months (due to understaffing of police admin staff). We have been very fortunate that so far, the affected volunteers have patiently stuck with us. During this waiting period we provide shadowing opportunities, Peer Support, ongoing training, regular phone and face-to-face contact and the chance to support with other volunteer tasks such as IT support and moving furniture.

We have 2 further volunteers waiting for Induction Training and to complete online Safeguarding Training.

### Volunteers on Pause

We currently have 4 volunteers on pause. This is due to either physical or mental health reasons, personal life circumstances, employment or family commitments.

Whilst volunteers are on pause, we keep contact with the volunteer appropriate to the individual. For most this is a very occasional check in phone call. For some it includes providing support to get them through the personal circumstances or physical or mental health struggles they are facing.

This ongoing support fits with our ethos to look after and value our volunteers as much as our beneficiaries.

It has also proved rewarding that in some instances volunteers on pause have made it to a place where they can start volunteering again.

### Progression into Employment or Education

Our project further supports the health inequalities agenda as we enable volunteers to gain experience, confidence and renewed self-esteem that supports them in their own recovery journeys (26% of our volunteers have moved on into paid employment whilst 7% moved on into education).

### Holistic Working

We would not have achieved successful outcomes working in isolation.

Weekly Referral Pathway online meetings with Lancaster & Morecambe Council Homelessness Lead, representatives from Calico's Floating Support and Accommodation Finding Service help us to secure emergency, supported, social or private housing for our beneficiaries. This communication also provides an opportunity to deal with issues such as anti-social behaviour, rent or bill arrears, maintenance to increase the quality of our beneficiaries' lives and help them sustain their tenancies.

Working closely with Inspire, Red Rose and The Well (most recently the Changing Futures project) gives us a better chance of navigating Recovery.

Several of our beneficiaries have been supported to attend Positive Futures with the successful outcome that they regularly attend independently and have built a social circle.

We help to alleviate poverty and have been able to provide beneficiaries with invaluable financial support by assisting them to apply for pots of money via the council's Household Support Fund and Street Aid.

Working with mental health services has proved most challenging - due to issues with waiting times, communication and continuity of care we have struggled to build effective working relationships with the Specialist Triage Assessment and Referral Team (START), Minds Matter and Initial Response and Care coordinators. We have therefore found it more useful to refer and signpost to local community initiatives like Positive Futures and Red Rose.

### Staff Team

Since we set up, 3 members of part time paid staff have left us to move on into full time employment.

Louise Seacy has been Project Coordinator since 6th October 2021.

Isabelle Hart has been in post as our Volunteer Coordinator since 31st March 2023.

My role has evolved into supporting the rest of the staff team as required and we have funding available to make this a paid role once I have left supported accommodation.

### Volunteer Support System

#### **Monthly Peer Support group (1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month)**

In addition to this being a chance for volunteers to share ideas, information about the community, discuss dilemmas and seek support we have now introduced a guest speaker each month. So far Grahame Legg has presented on his work with LDHAS, Alex Campbell on his work with Changing Futures, Emma Pratt has informed volunteers about Red Rose Recovery and Sue Edwards has presented a talk from HealthWatch.

#### **Monthly training (3<sup>rd</sup> week of each month)**

We are in the process of setting up monthly, non-mandatory training sessions which volunteers will be invited to. Training will be delivered through various providers such as Lancashire Adult Learning and Positive Futures.

#### **IT Support (last Wednesday of every month)**

Red Rose have kindly allowed us space to hold an IT support drop-in where volunteers can come along for support with online Safeguarding training, completing their Contact Hours and Expenses Claim forms and anything else they may need help with.

Lastly, I would like to thank all our volunteer Trustees for their unwavering support, the current staff for the care and diligence they give to all and also to the most important people of all, our present and past volunteer befriender's for their unwavering loyalty to the organisation, the deep care they show to our Beneficiaries and the relationship's they work hard to build. You are the bedrock of Let's BeFriends and we couldn't produce the outcomes we do without your willingness to help turn people's lives around. Thank you.

# Finance Report (Julie Ridgway)

Let's BeFriends Treasurer Report to the Trustees of the Annual General Meeting 3pm on 7.6.23

LBF is a registered Charity with effect from 31st May 2022.

The finances are reported annually in the following ways:

1. The Let's BeFriends Treasurer Report to the Trustees of the Let's BeFriends on the accounts for Year 1 (1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023)
2. The Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Let's Be Friends on the accounts for Year 1 (1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023). This report is to follow.

## **Let's BeFriends Balance sheet as at 31 May 2022**

Savings Account	34,612.29
Petty Cash	48.40
<b>Balance of Total Funds</b>	<b>34,660.69</b>

(Source: Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Let's Be Friends on the accounts ended 31 May 2022)

## **Let's BeFriends Funding Receipts for Year 1**

Rough Sleepers Initiative Year 1	12,000.00
Population Health Investment Fund	15,004.00
Rough Sleepers Initiative Year 2	6,000.00
<b>Balance of Total Funding Receipts</b>	<b>33,004.00</b>

(Source: Savings Account Bank Statement)

## **Let's BeFriends Balance Sheet as at 31 May 2023**

Savings Account	23,701.55
Current Account	25,607.94
Petty Cash	52.94
<b>Balance of Total Funds</b>	<b>49,362.43</b>

(Source: Saving and Current Account Bank Statement and Petty Cash book)

Julie Ridgway  
5.6.23

## **AOB**

**Motion raised:**

Julie Ridgway has been acting as deputy treasurer since October 2022.

Caroline Jackson proposed that Julie Ridgway take over from Dusty Thomas as Treasurer. This motion was seconded by Grahame Legg and will take immediate effect.

Let's BeFriends Treasurer Report to the Trustees of the Annual General Meeting 3pm on 7.6.23

LBF is a registered Charity with effect from 1 June 2022.

The finances are reported annually in the following ways:

1. The Let's BeFriends Treasurer Report to the Trustees of the Let's BeFriends on the accounts for Year 1 (1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023)
2. The Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Let's Be Friends on the accounts for Year 1 (1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023). This report is to follow.

#### **Let's BeFriends Balance sheet as at 31 May 2022**

Savings Account	34,612.29
Petty Cash	48.40
<b>Balance of Total Funds</b>	<b>34,660.69</b>

(Source: Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Let's Be Friends on the accounts ended 31 May 2022)

#### **Let's BeFriends Funding Receipts for Year 1**

Rough Sleepers Initiative Year 1	12,000.00
Population Health Investment Fund	15,004.00
Rough Sleepers Initiative Year 2	6,000.00
<b>Balance of Total Funding Receipts</b>	<b>33,004.00</b>

(Source: Savings Account Bank Statement)

#### **Let's BeFriends Balance Sheet as at 31 May 2023**

Savings Account	23,701.55
Current Account	25,607.94
Petty Cash	52.94
<b>Balance of Total Funds</b>	<b>49,362.43</b>

(Source: Saving and Current Account Bank Statement and Petty Cash book)

Julie Ridgway  
5.6.23

# **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Let's Be Friends**

**Charity No. 1199161**

I report on the accounts for the year

1st June 2022 – 31st May 2023

## **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

## **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

## **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Shweta Pankhadiwala

C/o Lancaster District CVS, The Cornerstone Sulyard Street Lancaster LA1 1PX  
21st December 2023.

**Let's Be Friends**  
**1/06/2022 to 31/05/2023**  
**Statement of Financial Activity Income & Expenditure Account**

INCOME	June - 2022 to May - 2023			Sep - 2020 to May - 2022		
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total Income £	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total Income £
	Income £	Income £		Income £	Income £	
Awards For All	49.29	0.00	49.29	10000.00	0.00	10000.00
Bay ICC	0.00	0.00	0.00	2981.00	0.00	2981.00
Eric Wright	0.00	0.00	0.00	1000.00	0.00	1000.00
Lottery Covid Response	0.00	0.00	0.00	10000.00	0.00	10000.00
Population Health Fund	15004.00	0.00	15004.00	10000.00	0.00	10000.00
Street Aid	0.00	0.00	0.00	2697.00	0.00	2697.00
LCC Self Isolation Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	20000.00	0.00	20000.00
Donation	0.00	320.00	320.00	0.00	271.79	271.79
Urgent Response Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	2000.00	0.00	2000.00
Rough Sleepers Initiative	18000.00	0.00	18000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bank Interest	0.00	154.88	154.88	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>33,053.29</b>	<b>474.88</b>	<b>33,528.17</b>	<b>58,678.00</b>	<b>271.79</b>	<b>58,949.79</b>

EXPENDITURE	June - 2022 to May - 2023			Sep - 2020 to May - 2022		
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	Expenditure £	Expenditure £	Expenditure £	Expenditure £	Expenditure £	Expenditure £
Awards For All	3182.30	0.00	3182.30	6721.17	0.00	6721.17
Bay ICC	0.00	0.00	0.00	2177.50	0.00	2177.50
Eric Wright	794.08	0.00	794.08	181.30	0.00	181.30
Lottery Covid Response	210.00	0.00	210.00	9738.70	0.00	9738.70
Population Health Fund	9335.15	0.00	9335.15	0.00	0.00	0.00
Street Aid	0.00	0.00	0.00	2671.00	0.00	2671.00
LCC Self Isolation Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	1273.20	0.00	1273.20
Urgent Response Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	1526.23	0.00	1526.23
Rough Sleepers Initiative	5227.13	0.00	5227.13	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>18,748.66</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>18,748.66</b>	<b>24,289.10</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>24,289.10</b>
<b>Surplus/(Loss)</b>	<b>14,304.63</b>	<b>474.88</b>	<b>14,779.51</b>	<b>34,388.90</b>	<b>271.79</b>	<b>34,660.69</b>

Expenditure	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	Expenditure £	Expenditure £	Expenditure £	Expenditure £	Expenditure £	Expenditure £
Advertising	0.00	0.00	0.00	188.96	0.00	188.96
Computer Expenses	70.00	0.00	70.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DBS checks	0.00	0.00	0.00	417.00	0.00	417.00
Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	802.89	0.00	802.89
Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00	816.80	0.00	816.80
Legal & Professional Fees	1177.43	0.00	1177.43	0.00	0.00	0.00
Phone and Internet	0.00	0.00	0.00	114.37	0.00	114.37
Postage and Stationery	78.67	0.00	78.67	140.82	0.00	140.82
Refreshment Purchases	3.29	0.00	3.29	21.55	0.00	21.55
Room Hire	0.00	0.00	0.00	56.00	0.00	56.00
Salaries	15405.15	0.00	15405.15	17292.00	0.00	17292.00
Street Aid Fund Transfer	0.00	0.00	0.00	2000.00	0.00	2000.00
Sundry Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	637.00	0.00	637.00
Training Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	280.00	0.00	280.00
Travel & Accommodation	1976.37	0.00	1976.37	86.86	0.00	86.86
Volunteer Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	1434.85	0.00	1434.85
Website	37.75	0.00	37.75	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,748.66</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>18,748.66</b>	<b>22,854.25</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>24,289.10</b>

**Let's Be Friends**  
**Balance Sheet as at 31/5/2023**

<b>Restricted Fund</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Awards For All	145.82	3,278.83
Bay ICC	803.50	803.50
Eric Wright	24.62	818.70
Lottery Covid Response	51.30	261.30
Population Health Fund	15,668.85	10,000.00
Street Aid	26.00	26.00
LCC Self Isolation Fund	18,726.80	18,726.80
Urgent Response Fund	473.77	473.77
Rough Sleepers Initiative	12,772.87	0.00
<b>Unrestricted Fund</b>	<b>746.67</b>	<b>271.79</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>49,440.20</b>	<b>34,660.69</b>

Current Account	25,607.94	0.00
Savings Account	23701.55	34,612.29
Petty Cash	130.71	48.40
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>49,440.20</b>	<b>34,660.69</b>