



## **Blue Spirit**

**Charity registration number: 1201278**

### **Trustees' Annual Report for the period**

**06/04/2024 to 05/04/2025**

## **Legal Information**

**Charity information:** 1201278

**Structure:** Registered Charity

**Address:** 5 Dilston Avenue, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 1JE

### **Trustees during reporting period:**

Jennifer Lees (known as Solen) Chair of Trustees

Nina Emett

Leda Dadkhah

Stuart Page

Lily-Mae Kroese

Jemma Willins - Until July 2024

Christina Hawkes-Blackburn  
(known as Amber) - Until January 2025

Ira Hakim - From September 2024

## Objectives and Activities

### The objects of the CIO are:

To advance in life and relieve the needs of young people experiencing or at risk of experiencing poor mental health and/or from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds through:

- (a) The provision of recreational and leisure time activities in subsidized sailing experiences provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve their conditions of life;
- (b) Providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.

### Main activities

Blue Spirit enabled sailing experiences for around 60 young people, mostly through community groups and voluntary organisations that work with young people in the North East of England.

Between April and August 2024, Blue Spirit reached 62 young people through several activities, provided by three sail training organisations:

- An activity day with Derwent Reservoir Sailing Club (DRSC) where a group of 14 young people tried dinghy sailing and paddleboarding
- Two weekend voyages with Ocean Youth Trust North (OYTN) on board James Cook
- Two five-day voyages with the Cirdan Trust on board Faramir

### Statement

The charity trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the 2006 Act to have due regard to guidance on public benefit published by the Commission.

## Achievements and Performance

Research has shown that just being in blue spaces (like the sea) can have a positive effect on stress reduction and wellbeing and sailing itself also has multiple benefits, such as helping develop essential life skills and increasing self-confidence and resilience.

Feedback given by young people after their experiences consistently shows that young people are getting a lot out of sailing: learning new things such as working in a team and preparing and eating food together, feeling more relaxed and less anxious, creating bonds and having fun.

We gather feedback in different ways, most immediately by a post-sail questionnaire given to the young sailors. We also ask group leaders for their own assessment, and especially to tell us their observations of the young people during and after the experience. Some of our sail training partners also have their own feedback form for group leaders, which they share with us.

Through maintaining relationships and continuing conversations with our partners, we know that a lasting impact has been felt by young sailors. They have found tools they need to

progress and succeed, and make changes in their lives, through the time and space they have had to reflect, a new-found interest, or increased self-confidence.

Several young people have now been sailing via Blue Spirit more than once, and feedback from some of our community partners tells that sailing has had a life-enhancing, life-changing and occasionally even life-saving impact.

**The following testimonials are a small illustration of Blue Spirit's impact:**

*"Before I went on this trip, I was very cautious about people and anxious about what I say and do around people. I worry about being a drag on people and especially on this trip, I thought people would tell me I was too much. I'm used to people not being able to cope with me or leaving me out. Sometimes in school it has been really negative about my autism and people make fun of me.*

*"It was really good on the trip, I did so much more than I expected to be able to do. I didn't get as overwhelmed as I believed and I could communicate better than I thought I would. We had planned to use hand signals if I was struggling to speak or hear. I really appreciated this understanding. Being so busy meant I didn't overthink, I just said what I needed and realised everyone was ok with that. The movement of the boat showed me I can enjoy the physical effects of my sensory problems too. It can be an advantage. I really appreciated everyone being so understanding about me using ear defenders, this was just treated as normal.*

*"During the journey I realised everyone had been through this - literally we're all in the same boat. I still felt like I was lagging behind and was really embarrassed by how tired I was on the last day. It surprised me that no one shouted at me or made fun of me for crying when I was overwhelmed by this. I spoke to one of the crew members and he reassured me that I shouldn't worry if it's who I am. This was such a relief to hear from an adult who didn't know me and I had no reason to not believe. It has changed me so my anxiety isn't as able to convince me people will hate me.*

*"After being on this trip, I've realised I don't have to be everyone's best friend... I mean I don't have to be my absolute best for everyone. I can be myself and I can make mistakes and it's still ok."*

Written by a 15-year-old white British, autistic female with sensory processing needs.

*"Without what you have done then there would potentially be two less wonderful young people here. I have seen enough suffering and just helping others keeps me going. You are making a difference and these are real examples of real young people you may well have saved through your work so thank you.*

*"One is a young woman who just had enough of life and uses your sailing as escapism and thinking time for her future. She does not enjoy life at home and is not permitted social media but within minutes of getting home [from the sailing trip in August] managed to make contact with me to say what a lovely time she had had. A young person dragged down by sadness is seeing the good in the world.*

*"She has an awful life trapped in a culture she tries to rebel against and she jumps at every chance to be at sea. She sees the good in everyone (except her family) and just wants to tell me everything about her sailing experiences. She seeks love and to be loved, so is open to exploitation, and again has times when she wishes she was not here. Nobody sees this behind her smiles and laughter but she writes everything down and gives it to me. However, the sailing gives her a boost to reflect and see good people. I wish she could just stay at sea but it gives her valuable thinking time.*

*“The other is a young man who did not initially bother to identify his options for exams as he thought he would not be here to take them. If he thinks he has upset anyone he does not want to be here as he blames himself. However, he never feels that way at sea, and we have developed him into using CBT of being back at sea and talking himself through one step at a time. We can actually laugh about this, although we could not say it to anyone else – there’s always a risk and I have to respect his privacy and, where necessary refer him to safeguarding – but the freedom of the sea works.*

*“He would ideally like to be a chef in the navy, whereas a couple of years ago his options were death, drugs or life in prison.”*

Written by a professional counsellor and youth worker for one of our community partners.

### **Other achievements over this period**

- ▶ We entered our film, [In his Slipstream](#), into the [Smiley Charity Film Awards](#), reached the finals in our category (long-form under £50,000) and won [Silver in the People’s Choice category](#).
- ▶ We were nominated and chosen as a [Big Issue Changemaker](#) in the Culture & Sport category for 2025.

## **Additional information**

### **Achievements against objectives set**

In 2024-5, we aimed to:

- continue to spread our reach, to form and strengthen partnerships and to allow as many young people meeting our criteria as possible to go sailing;
- raise enough funds to be able to operate during the current financial year;
- explore alternative ways of fundraising;
- grow & develop our organisation;
- raise awareness about mental health and suicide.

We met our goals by:

- securing a 3-year grant to allow us to create a part-time role;
- advertising for a part-time freelance role, selecting and interviewing candidates and recruiting a new member of the team;
- supporting the new team member to work on fundraising, organisational development and networking;
- organising sailing voyages for community groups and voluntary organisations that work with young people – both existing partners and new contacts;
- submitting multiple funding applications and securing enough funding to allow us to fulfil projected activities in the 2025 season
- holding two fundraising events: an art auction and a benefit gig;
- entering our film *In his Slipstream* in the Smiley Charity Film Awards and promoting it widely via all our channels;
- maintaining an active social media presence and talking about mental health there.

## Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period: £14,486 in account

Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held: As a relatively young charity run by volunteers, we do not yet have a reserves policy but we only implement activities that we know we can afford and we have very few overheads. We are currently developing our reserves policy.

Amount of reserves held: £0

## Structure, Governance and Management

**Type of governing document:** Constitution

**How is the charity constituted?** CIO - charitable incorporated organisation

### Trustee selection and constitutional provisions

Eligibility for trusteeship

- (a) Every charity trustee must be a natural person.
- (b) No individual may be appointed as a charity trustee of the CIO:
  - if he or she is under the age of 16 years; or
  - if he or she would automatically cease to hold office under the provisions of clause [12 (1) (e)].
- (c) No one is entitled to act as a charity trustee whether on appointment or on any re-appointment until he or she has expressly acknowledged, in whatever way the charity trustees decide, his or her acceptance of the office of charity trustee.
- (d) At least one of the trustees of the CIO must be 18 years of age or over. If there is no trustee aged at least 18 years, the remaining trustees may only act to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee.

### Number of charity trustees

- (e) There must be at least three charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee.
- (f) The maximum number of charity trustees is 12. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum.

### First charity trustees

The first charity trustees are as follows, and are appointed for the following terms –

Jennifer Lees – for 4 years  
Nina Emmett – for 3 years  
Leda Dadkhah – for 3 years  
Stuart Page – for 3 years  
Lily Kroese – for 2 years  
Stephen Castle – for 2 years  
Jemma Willins – for 2 years

## Appointment of charity trustees

### Option 1

- (2) Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.
- (3) In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

## Information for new charity trustees

The charity trustees will make available to each new charity trustee, on or before his or her first appointment:

- (a) a copy of the current version of this constitution; and
- (b) a copy of the CIO's latest Trustees' Annual Report and statement of accounts.

## Retirement and removal of charity trustees

A charity trustee ceases to hold office if he or she:

- (c) retires by notifying the CIO in writing (but only if enough charity trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation takes effect to form a quorum for meetings);
- (d) is absent without the permission of the charity trustees from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the trustees resolve that his or her office be vacated;
- (e) dies;
- (f) in the written opinion, given to the company, of a registered medical practitioner treating that person, has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as a director and may remain so for more than three months;
- (g) is disqualified from acting as a charity trustee by virtue of sections 178-180 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).
- (h) Any person retiring as a charity trustee is eligible for reappointment.

A charity trustee who has served for three consecutive terms may not be reappointed for a fourth consecutive term but may be reappointed after an interval of at least one year

## Declarations

**The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.**

**Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

**Signature(s)**



**Full name(s)** Jennifer Anne Lees

Lily Mae Kroese

**Position (eg Secretary, Chair of Trustees, Chair, etc)**

Trustee

**Date** 29-08-2025



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

BLUE SPIRIT

1201278

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

06/04/2024


To

05/04/2025

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Funds held Externally	Total funds	Last year
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Individual donations	4,733.26	-	-	4,733.26	13,962.17
Grants	12,000.00	1,170.00	-	13,170.00	21,554.00
Participant contributions	1,715.50	-	-	1,715.50	2,150.00
Fundraising / awareness-raising events	2,253.30	-	-	2,253.30	1,875.25
OYTN Budget	-	-	-	-	8,743.95
Other	-	-	-	-	0.01
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>20,702.06</b>	<b>1,170.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,872.06</b>	<b>48,285.38</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>20,702.06</b>	<b>1,170.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,872.06</b>	<b>48,285.38</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Sailing provision for young people	5,610.00	8,200.00	-	13,810.00	18,645.00
Creative project (film & photo essay)	-	-	-	-	6,982.89
Printing (flyers & poster)	-	-	-	-	63.75
Event Costs: Photo printing	93.79	-	-	93.79	856.12
Event Costs: General	469.00	-	-	469.00	-
Event Costs: Venue hire	40.00	-	-	40.00	1,008.00
VONNE membership	85.00	-	-	85.00	85.00
Expenses: Postage Costs	13.35	-	-	13.35	-
Expenses: Printing Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Expenses: Travel/Accommodation	142.47	-	-	142.47	-
Website Hosting/Domain	410.05	-	-	410.05	330.24
Networking/Capacity Building	13.42	-	-	13.42	-
OYTN Budget	-	-	-	-	9,240.00
Advertising/Publicity	3,383.25	-	-	3,383.25	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>10,260.33</b>	<b>8,200.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,460.33</b>	<b>37,211.00</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>10,260.33</b>	<b>8,200.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,460.33</b>	<b>37,211.00</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>10,441.73</b>	<b>- 7,030.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,411.73</b>	<b>11,074.38</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>3,883.57</b>	<b>7,190.81</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,074.38</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>14,325.30</b>	<b>160.81</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,486.11</b>	<b>11,074.38</b>

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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	External funds
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>		14,325.30	160.81	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>14,325.30</b>	<b>160.81</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	External funds
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Print Name	Date of approval	
		Jennifer Lees (known as Solen)	23/06/2025	