

# HEART Annual Report 2023/24



**HASTINGS** ❤️  
**HASTINGS EMERGENCY  
ACTION RESPONSE TEAM**

Supporting those most in need in our community

# Welcome

**Hastings and St.Leonards experience widespread poverty and deprivation  
This report shows the profound impact we had in helping people in need over  
the last year, all thanks to supporters like you**



Hastings Emergency Action Response Team (HEART) was founded in March 2020 to assist people cope with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and manage to stay healthy and well throughout prolonged periods of national lockdown.

As the pandemic eased, the organisation recognised that many of the most vulnerable in our community continued to experience considerable hardship and that much of the work the organisation had been undertaking throughout the pandemic was still much needed.

Since then, the organisation has grown considerably, both in terms of the range of services we provide, and in the scale of the numbers of people we support each year. Further, to aid this growth, in 2023 we became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission no.1201825 in recognition of the work we and our volunteers undertake in the community.

This year, we have built on the work of previous years, refining and focusing our services on areas where we truly feel we can have the greatest impact.



**Hastings**



**Emergency**



**Action**



**Response**



**Team**

# A year of transformation



**Lorraine Roberts**  
**Chair of Trustees**

With the country still reeling from a pandemic, years of austerity and now, a cost-of-living crisis, belts are tighter than ever. All three hit Hastings hard.

The impact has meant the demand for the kind of support HEART provides has never been higher. At the same time, the challenge to secure funds to provide that support has never been greater.

Thus far, the Charity has weathered the storm. But with costs rising all the time, we are constantly having to come up with new ways to finance the organisation to support the community's growing needs.

In late 2023, the National Lottery Communities Fund awarded HEART a significant development grant to enable us to transform the Charity into the organisation it is today. Based on a detailed action plan, it has helped strengthen the organisation in its working practices, helped developed its capacity, and generated the awareness we needed to sustain our work and grow the support we provide.

Our Community Info Hub in Hastings Town Hall has become a key asset for the town, providing a free, drop-in support and information service for anyone seeking help with debts, housing issues, health challenges, digital challenges, social or legal problems and much more. We've been delighted as more and more partner organisations have joined us there, helping us realise the vision of a multi-service hub for all the community.

We continue to provide our other services too, transporting hundreds of people each year to urgent NHS appointments, carrying out shopping trips for people who can't get out, or need assistance with finding help and support from other organisations.

With your support, we will continue to grow and help even more people in our community to overcome the challenges they face.



# Working together for everyone

We are an apolitical charity that works hard to be accessible to all members of the community that may need our support or want to volunteer. Making sure our core values of inclusivity run through everything we do - how we communicate, our volunteer guidelines, help-request form, call-back phone line and website.

Everyone involved, from our Trustees, our management team, our staff and, most importantly, our volunteers are drawn from the very community we seek to support – we live their challenges and understand the difficulties so many in our community face.

Where support already exists, we will help people access it. Where it doesn't, we collaborate with partners to create new services.

We have been heartened by the continued support we have received from so many individuals, funding bodies and partner organisations who recognise the importance of what we do.

We know many challenges lie ahead, both for our community and for our organisation. We also know that by working together we can find solutions that make us more resilient and sustainable with better outcomes for our beneficiaries.



**Hastings**



# Our Impact



**VISION** A thriving, sustainable community

**MISSION** To provide relief and support to people in need



## OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

**249** assignments undertaken

**164** NHS transport assignments

**220** people attending social inclusion cafe

**8000** partner leaflets distributed

**0** data breaches

**0** complaints received



## THE INFO HUB

**2320** enquiries supported

**834** people digitally included

**498** people supported with health

**357** training days with partners

**3900** visits including special events



## KEY STATISTICS

**2900** volunteer hours recorded

**55%** increase in referrals from agencies

**28** presentations to partners

**8** festivals & events attended

**4338** social media followers



## Action

# The Community Info Hub

The Hub opened in October 2022 initially as a three-month Pilot project after in-depth research into the low take-up of Covid-19 vaccinations in Hastings. This revealed a broad range of other issues affecting the health and wellbeing of people in the town, from being able to access financial advice, coping with stress or mental health issues, to getting back into exercise or seeing friends.

At the same time, many support services had either been forced, or had for other reasons decided to close offices and provide access online to people needing help, advice or information.

The trouble was people didn't know where to go.

Today, the Community Info Hub has firmly established itself as the one of the main first points of contact for anyone seeking help or support in the town.

Based in Hastings Town Hall it offers a central, accessible and welcoming drop-in service for thousands of people every year, whether they are visitors simply seeking information about where to go or what to do, people needing help to get online or make new connections in the town, right through to people experiencing significant challenges with health, benefits, finances or legal issues.



And it does so at scale. This year, some 2320 enquiries have been managed at the Hub, with one in six taking up to an hour to resolve and one in 20 taking up to two.

Moreover, the numbers are going up every month. 2023/24 saw an 18% increase in enquiries year-on-year.

Yet every visitor receives the same response – no need for an appointment, a friendly ear to listen to people's challenges, and a thoughtful and caring approach to finding a solution specific to each person's request.

By keeping track of every enquiry made at the Hub, Heart can also identify trends in the type of issues people are facing in the town.

**2320** visitors  
this year  
so far



**Action**

## 3 in 5 visits require digital help



Perhaps not surprisingly, the biggest area where people are needing support is with money matters – with one in every four enquiries in 2023/24 seeking information or support with managing debts, energy bills, pensions or benefits.

But other fields are just as significant, with one in every five enquiries being about transport, applying for bus passes, taxi licenses or accessing Heart's own key service providing free transport for people struggling to get to urgent NHS appointments.

Unfortunately, this year has seen a significant increase in the numbers of people experiencing challenges with housing, some 18% in all, whether dealing with issues with their existing social or private landlords or facing eviction notices and needing to get on the housing register to keep a roof over their heads.

But it is in enabling people to be more digitally included where the Hub really takes a lead.

As more and more services go online, and the world moves truly into a digital age, huge numbers are left behind whether because they can't afford the equipment to get online or – more commonly – they lack the skills or confidence to access the internet without a bit of help.

Today, 3 in every five enquiries require digital help – some 834 people in total in 2023/24. Each one sees our Hub advisors help people get online, taking them step-by-step through the processes involved, either by using a visitor's own smartphone or tablet or turning the laptop round to show them how to find information, fill in a form, or learn how to manage online at home.



**Action**



Helping people locate and access the services they may need, or supporting them because they've been told to visit the Hub to get the support they require means working with a huge range of service partners.

Not only does the Hub display leaflets and information from a comprehensive spectrum of organisations, our desk advisors and volunteers are trained in knowing precisely which organisation offers what kind of service, whom it is aimed at, and how people can access it.



It also involves helping people by making referrals to those services, either by contacting them direct, filling in a form, providing them with a leaflet or printing off information for them to read at home.

As awareness of the Hub has grown, so too have the number of organisations referring for people to the Hub to get the help or support they might need. Of these, by far the most significant is the town's own local authority, Hastings Borough Council. Whether it be help with registering with the Council's online service portal, filling in a council tax exemption or reduction form, or applying for social housing, the Hub is increasingly providing a key support service for a local authority itself struggling to meet the demands placed upon it.

Others now recognise the Hub support's offer. Citizens Advice, Adult Social Care, the Hastings Advice & Resource Centre, Orbit and Southern Housing Associations and the NHS Social Prescribing teams – all now regularly refer people to visit the Hub to talk to our advisors and get the help they need, whatever their particular challenge may be.

We know it works. While many visitors might just be passing and thought they'd drop in, today nearly a third of people using the Hub have been before, either because they still need help with the challenge they might be having, or because they have a new issue to resolve.



**Response**

# Developing a multi service hub

Central to the philosophy of the Community Info Hub is the concept that people can access all sorts of different help from one place. In 2023/24, we've been delighted to see this truly become a reality.

From its launch, people needing help with their health challenges has been a key feature of the Hub's work. Even though the Hub was forced to close for a period (see below) 199 people received support from our partners One You East Sussex in 2023/24, accessing everything from weight loss clinics, stop smoking help, controlling their alcohol intake and free NHS health checks



In May, national charity Macmillan Cancer Support opened a new Community Information Service Hub in the facility – the first of its kind in the country.

With a host of information leaflets and trained volunteer help, the service is aimed to help anyone affected by cancer in Hastings to meet someone face to face to talk about their concerns and find the right kind of support they might need – locally or nationally across the huge Macmillan support network.

In April, the Hastings Library of Things moved to the Hub too. With a growing membership base, this popular service has over 100 items of equipment to borrow, use and return to be used again, including power tools, hand tools, kids fancy dress, camping gear, wheelchairs, folding tables and even a chocolate fountain! On Fridays, its parent organisation, Umbrella Sussex, also runs "Make and Mend", where people can bring along a loved, if tired item to get help with repairing it, from teddies to backpacks.



Response



A Band of Brothers is an award-winning charity helping young men grow and develop, matching mentors with young men in the community to consider and move towards the adult man they wish to be. With locations across the country, they now use the Info Hub as a relaxed, informal space for mentors to meet the young men they are seeking to support, brokering those all-important first discussions in their journeys.

Heart has worked closely with Citizens Advice 1066 since it launched, and we particularly appreciate all the support they have given us over the years. However, the growing number of referrals the Hub was making to the organisation for people seeking advice and help on everything from benefits to legal issues has now led them to placing an advisor at the Hub to meet and talk with clients face-to-face, and cope with the growing demand for this key service in the town.

2024 will also be the third year Heart has collaborated with Citizens Advice in rolling out its winter pressures initiative to help people cope with energy bills and the cost-of-living crisis. Its “keep warm and well” campaign provides a range of support for people struggling to pay bills and the Hub recently hosted a special Energy Day to train key workers and let the public learn more about the support available.



**357** training  
days with  
partners



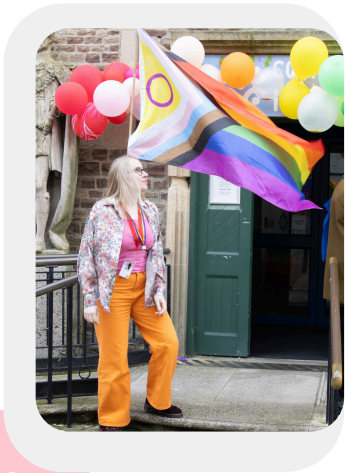
**Response**



# Events and the training room

The Hub's central location, its accessibility and its flexible spaces lend themselves to holding community events also, and 2023/24 saw over 500 people attending the various events staged.

From its official launch in October 23, the facility also hosted the 'Kickstart 2024' event for Orbit Housing bringing together a wide range of social housing and support organisations, the 'Hastings is no place for hate' event which saw over 200 people attending to meet groups supporting Hastings' LGBTQ+ community and the Heart Xmas Fayre where charities and not-for profit groups were invited to come along for some festive fun, tell people about what they do and raise money in the process.



The Hub's facilities also provide an ideal location for community meetings and a growing range of training activities, whether in the main hub room, its private consultation rooms or its fully equipped training room which hosted 357 training days in 2023/24.

In October 23, Heart's partner the Eastbourne-based Tech Resort held two highly popular free coding sessions for young people to learn how to programme and run Lego robots in half term-time.



The training room has also hosted the town's Community Response Hub meetings, training for minority ethnic carers, the local Food Network and a series of week-long training courses for the unemployed to acquire all-important online skills to equip them for work, led by the DWP.



**Action**

# Our Amazing Volunteers

From its early days, Heart's community support has depended hugely on the incredible work of its volunteers.

Whether providing vital extra capacity at the Community Info Hub or working out in the community to help people struggling across the town, it is the work of volunteers which has made Heart what it is today. We, and many in the community, owe them a debt of gratitude.

2023/24 saw over 1400 hours of volunteer work undertaken at the Info Hub alone, 498 separate assignments undertaken in the community – from shopping to collecting medications – as well as twenty events held for Heart's "Get Chatting" meetings where people experiencing loneliness and isolation would be transported to the events by volunteers and then taken back home afterwards.



164 of those assignments involved transporting people free of charge to urgent NHS appointments – people without transport for whom, without help, might miss a key appointment for their health and wellbeing and which, for the NHS, would cost thousands in missed appointments.

The service, known as 'Road Runners', can make a critical difference in people's lives. For example, local treatment for people suffering from glaucoma, cataracts or macular degeneration is carried out in nearby Bexhill. However, getting there can mean four separate journeys on public transport if you live in Hastings, two of them frequently after short-term sight-impairing treatment. Heart volunteers take people door-to-door, making sure they get there on time and back home safely, all free of charge.

Sometimes, we're able to recognise their support, recommending them as Volunteers of the Year for awards from the town's Voluntary & Community Service Organisation, Hastings Voluntary Action. But we owe them all a fantastic thank you: without their time, dedication and willingness to help, Heart simply couldn't exist.

**498** assignments  
out in the  
community



Team

# Responding to emergencies

When a major water main burst in May 2024, 31,000 properties in Hastings saw their water supply cut off for days. Worse, the issue occurred over one of the busiest weekends of the year for the town – the annual Mayday Bank Holiday motorcycle run and the popular Jack in the Green festival, attracting thousands of visitors to the town.

Within hours, Heart had sprung into action, deploying volunteers to help out at Southern Water distribution points handing out hundreds of bottles of water to queuing motorists.

The year saw multiple emergencies, with the town centre flooding for the second time in October 2023, causing shops, roads and railways to close, houses to be evacuated and Heart's own Community Info Hub to shut its doors due to the inundation.

As a result, the charity has set up a dedicated Emergency Responders team with support from the Sussex Community Resilience Fund – volunteers willing to be called on to help the emergency services with evacuations, handing out food and blankets at evacuation centres, information to the community and follow-up support to victims to help them get back on their feet.



**Emergency**



# Focusing on health and wellbeing

For an organisation set up to support people in a pandemic, it's no surprise that Heart continues to help wherever it can to improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

In addition to our collaboration with partners like One You East Sussex and Macmillan Cancer Support at the Info Hub, 2023/24 saw the charity deliver three further programmes to help people live healthier, happier lives.

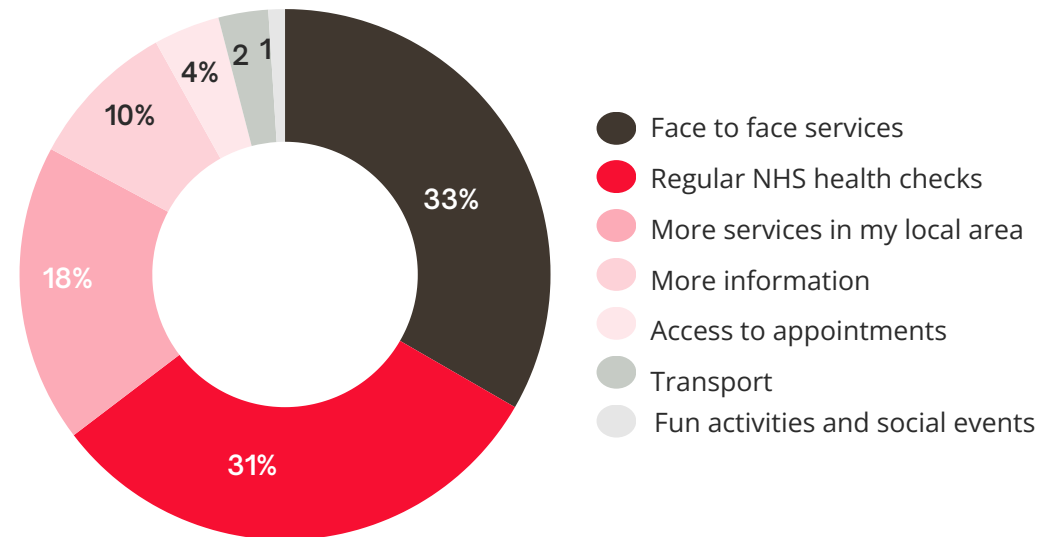
The Core20Plus5 programme is a national NHS initiative that aims to reduce health inequalities focused on the 20% of the population with the highest socioeconomic inequality, the groups that experience poorer access and outcomes most (particularly coastal communities) and in the five key clinical areas most likely to reduce life expectancy, including cancer, respiratory diseases mental health and hypertension.

Heart has helped deliver the programme through our Community Info Hub, and the results can be profound, as detailed in the case study described on the next page.

In June 2023, we reported on a major study the charity had been commissioned to undertake for the new NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board. The study involved 200 participants from diverse parts of the community to help identify key influences in healthy lifestyle decision-making and some of the inequalities and barriers they may face.

The results were profound, revealing that while many do not report any particular barrier to engaging with healthcare provision, a significant majority still do.

## "What would make you more likely to access services and think about your health?"



Response



## Core20Plus5 Case Study – Josh 40 years old

On his first visit to the Community Info Hub, Josh sat down and talked about the financial and housing issues he had been struggling with and the stress of living in temporary accommodation. He was told about CA1066, HARC, and the benefit calculator available online which he could try using on one of the Hub computers. He quickly realised the Hub is a welcome, friendly space where he could chat openly and have a cup of tea.

The next time he came in he had no food or money for the weekend and was in the process of arranging a food bank voucher through Hastings Borough Council. We arranged for one of HEART's volunteer drivers who agreed to pick up and deliver the food parcel that day. He also started opening up about his debts and was put in touch with CAP and CA1066 for financial advice.

The stress had taken a toll on Josh's mental health and it was clear that he was struggling. He was receiving counselling through Health in Mind but wasn't sure he could continue since they were changing location. So we discussed other options like free counselling through Counselling Plus or paid for sessions with Hastings Therapy Centre.

At his next visit, Josh shared the good news he's likely to get a flat through social housing very soon (after being on the waiting list for 5years!). He was still worried he wouldn't get it due to his debts, and wanted to see if anyone could help him to prepare for the call to talk about his finances so he was then given the contact details for BHT Hastings Advice Centre for free legal housing advice. It seemed very much like Josh was turning a new leaf in his life, trying to get help where available.

Josh came a few more times, just to hide from the rain or to sit there for a bit while waiting to meet his friend. It shows how safe and well-treated he felt at the Hub, which can be hugely important for persons living in temporary accommodation, struggling with their mental health and not always feeling secure.



Throughout much of the year, Heart also ran its popular Chatty Café events to help people experiencing loneliness and/or isolation meet up every fortnight in a local café to make new friends and re-build the kind of social networks so many of us take for granted.

Over 200 people attended the year's 20 café events staged during the year with many attendees being helped to get there by heart volunteer drivers.

Men's health is also a key field where Heart gets stuck in and 2023/24 was no different.

In November, Heart co-founder Alastair Fairley teamed up with Hastings Chamber of Commerce to raise over £700 for the annual Movember men's health charity by getting sponsorship to grow moustaches in the month. Alastair also went out on the road to promote awareness of male cancers, reaching over 2000 people in the town with stalls at Hastings United FC, quiz nights and other events

The charity also collaborates with the Mr.Hastings & St.Leonards Project hosted by Hastings Voluntary Action founded to address the issue locally that men in the town's most socially deprived areas are expected to live over 11 years shorter than men in more affluent areas.

The Project bases its work on the belief that men in Hastings & St.Leonards will be healthier, happier and live longer if they are in strong, supportive and well-connected communities, and supports men to get together and talk about what matters to them.



**220** Chatty  
Café  
attendees



**Action**



# A big heart but a small team



Kim Batty is one of Heart's co-founders and its principal co-ordinator. Kim now also chairs the town's Community Response Hub meetings and is a key member of the Hastings Community Network Executive which brings together organisations from all over Hastings to enable communications between the voluntary and community sector and who make decisions locally.



Laura Matthews is Heart's Volunteer Network Co-ordinator. A successful TV, film and theatre actress, Laura brings her bubbly personality to the fore when matching Heart's amazing volunteer team to support people in the community.



Alastair Fairley co-founded Heart with Kim and is now its fundraising and finance lead. A writer and journalist, Alastair is an experienced fundraiser and former member of the SE regional committee of the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Maria Piechocka is Heart's Community Info Hub Manager. A multi-linguist she is also a qualified practising therapist, and has been a driving force in making the Info Hub the welcoming, yet highly professional initiative it is today.



Liz Johnson a former system's analyst is Heart's information technology specialist. After running a successful ski transfer business in France, Liz now uses her tech experience to keep Heart's databases and financial systems in tip-top order.



Katrina Palumbo is Heart's latest addition to the team. Working at the Community Info Hub as a Desk Advisor, Katrina's welcoming smile and easy manner is matched by a professional, caring approach to helping clients visiting the Hub find precisely the support or information they need.



**Team**

**REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: CE031309 (England and Wales)**  
**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1201825**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 3 FEBRUARY 2023 TO 31 MAY 2024 FOR**  
**HASTINGS EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE TEAM**

Ashdown Hurrey  
Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers  
20 Havelock Road  
Hastings  
East Sussex  
TN34 1BP

## **HASTINGS EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE TEAM**

### **CONTENTS OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 3 FEBRUARY 2023 TO 31 MAY 2024**

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## **HASTINGS EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE TEAM**

### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS FOR THE PERIOD 3 FEBRUARY 2023 TO 31 MAY 2024**

The following people were Trustees of Hastings Emergency Action Response Team CIO on the date of approval of this report or served as a Trustee during the reporting period.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>	<b>Date of first appointment</b>	<b>Date of retirement</b>
Lorraine Roberts	Chair	Election at inaugural meeting	Feb 2023	
David Easterby	Trustee	Election at inaugural meeting	Feb 2023	
Lesley (Leah) Levane	Secretary	Election at inaugural meeting	Feb 2023	
Dawn Dublin	Trustee	Election at inaugural meeting	Feb 2023	Feb 2024
Liz Crew	Trustee	Co-option	June 2024	

#### **Trustees**

The Trustees of the Charity are also its Members. They are individuals drawn from the local community and they normally reside in the districts of Hastings & St.Leonards. There is no maximum limit on the number of Trustees which may be appointed but there is a minimum requirement for three Trustees to be appointed at any one time.

As a new Charity, Trustees were appointed by way of election at the time of adoption of the Constitution to serve for a varying number of years, namely Lesley (Leah) Levane for an initial three years, David Easterby and Lorraine Roberts for two years and Dawn Dublin for one year.

On 22nd January, in consideration of the above, all but three of the Trustees were automatically re-appointed in line with the Constitution. However, Dawn Dublin did not present herself for re-election at this time and, given her appointment in the Constitution for only one year, her position as Trustee for the CIO was terminated.

At its meeting of 20th June 2024, the Trustees formally co-opted a fourth Trustee, Liz Crew, who had agreed to put her name forward for election.

Going forward, all four current Trustees will be re-appointed by way of election at the Charity's first AGM on 17th October 2024. In future Trustees will seek, or not seek re-election at the Charity's AGM and will serve for one year at a time until re-election.

Trustees are entitled to co-opt additional Trustees at any Trustee meeting provided the number of co-opted Trustees does not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. No other persons or bodies external to the CIO are entitled to appoint persons to the Trustee Board.

A register of Trustees is available at the Charity Commission and is available to the public to view.

### **Senior Officers during the year**

During the reporting period, the Trustees delegated day-to-day management of the charity to the following personnel.

Kim Batty                      Joint co-ordinator & Operations & Policies lead

Alastair Fairley              Joint co-ordinator (until June 2024) & Finance & Fundraising lead

### **COMPANY SECRETARY**

L D Levane

### **REGISTERED OFFICE**

The Magnet Centre Alfred Street  
St Leonards on Sea East Sussex TN38 0HD

### **REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER**

1201825

### **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Ashdown Hurrey  
Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers  
20 Havelock Road  
Hastings  
East Sussex  
TN34 1BP

### **BANKERS**

Metrobank Plc  
Unit 70/71, 59, Arndale Centre  
Terminus Road  
Eastbourne  
BN21 3NW

## **HASTINGS EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE TEAM (REGISTERED NUMBER: CE031309)**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD 3 FEBRUARY 2023 TO 31 MAY 2024**

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their Annual Report and financial statements for the year ended 31st May 2024. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP FRS102) effective January 2015.

#### **INCORPORATION**

The charitable company was incorporated on 3 February 2023.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Objectives and aims**

The Objects of HEART, as set out in its Constitution, are "The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship in the community of Hastings & St. Leonards for the public benefit." It seeks to achieve the Objects through two powers, namely:

- a) The provision of a volunteer service to provide practical assistance services, support and advice, transport, companionship/social interaction;
- b) Signposting to appropriate support organisations when required.

In establishing the charity, Heart's Trustees paid close attention in its Objects to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives for the charitable incorporated organisation and in planning any future activities. Throughout, Trustees are satisfied that HEART fully complies with the guidance as set out by the Commission.

HEART's services are therefore also consistent with the achievement of the Objects through a variety of ways.

First, our core service, which formed the initial work the organisation undertook, involves a range of practical support for people in need. Services include carrying out shopping for people who can't get out or who are recently discharged from hospital; transporting people without access to their own transport, or who would find the use of public transport unaffordable due to financial hardship or inaccessible due to disability or infirmity (particularly to NHS appointments), telephone advice, referrals and other information for people unable to access the charity's Community Info Hub in person, and the provision of access (both physical and through information) to a wide range of companionship and/or social interaction programmes (including our own) for people who may be experiencing loneliness and/or isolation.

The second field of service has now grown from the first and is largely (though not exclusively) delivered via the charity's Community Info Hub at Hastings Town Hall.

A significant aspect of HEART's activities, which has continued throughout the reporting period, is the extent to which HEART engages in collaborative projects with both statutory and non-statutory partner organisations, frequently breaking new ground in terms of innovative and efficient service delivery. For example, this reporting period has seen HEART engage with partners including Hastings Borough Council, Hastings Voluntary Action, the NHS, Citizens Advice 1066, East Sussex County Council, Sussex Resilience Forum, Sussex Police, Sussex Mental Health Action Group, Orbit Housing, and the National Digital Inclusion Network.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Governance**

The Charity is governed by its Constitution as adopted on 29th July 2022 and amended on 21st January 2023. Trustees agreed to observe the Charity Commission guidance with regard to their duty and responsibilities as Trustees of a Charity under UK law.

### **Structure & former incorporation as a Company Limited by Guarantee**

Hastings Emergency Action Resilience Team (HEART) was established in March 2020 and formally incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 23rd July 2020, company number 12762581.

On 3rd February 2023 it changed its name to Hastings Emergency Action Response Team (HEART). This was also the date of its first registration as a Charitable Incorporate Organisation with the Charities Commission under the same name.

At its meeting of 23rd February 2023, it was agreed by Trustees of the new CIO that the Company Limited by Guarantee should continue to operate the organisation up until its year end (31/05/2023) at which time a final Balance Sheet and Year-end Accounts should be drawn up by its accountants.

The Company's final Balance Sheet and Accounts were presented to the CIO Trustees at its meeting of 25th January 2024. The Directors of the Company all attended the Trustee meeting and agreed formally at this point to transfer all assets and liabilities of the Company to Hastings Emergency Action Response Team CIO. It was also agreed by Trustees of the CIO to assume those assets and liabilities as transferred with effect from 01/06/2023. The Company Limited by Guarantee was formally struck off from the register at Companies House in February 2024.

### **Period of Accounting & Financial year-end**

The final accounts of the Company Limited by Guarantee were reported to 31st May 2023. However, while the Trustees of the Charity formally assumed responsibility for the assets and liabilities of the Company with effect from 01/06/2023, the official period accounting for the Charity's initial year of operation must start on the date of its registration as a Charitable Incorporate Organisation (eg.03/02/2023)



As a result, the Trustees present these Accounts and Financial Statements for a period of longer than one year, starting from the date of its official registration Of 3rd February 2023 - in other words, a sixteen-month period.

On 5th August 2024, the Charity received confirmation from the Charities Commission that its period of accounting and financial year-end was permitted to be changed for future years and, for the year 2024/25, the financial year for which accounts should be presented will be from 1st June 2024 to 31st May 2025.

#### **Transfer of assets and liabilities to the charity**

Those assets belonging to the former Company Limited by Guarantee (and transferred to the charity on 01/06/23) are included in the accounts presented here in the field of 'Donations' in the Detailed Statement of Financial Activities.

#### **Organisational Structure**

The business of the charity is managed by the Trustees who may exercise all the powers of the charity. The Trustee Board meets in formal session at least quarterly to determine overall policy and supervise the furtherance of the charity's objects. Where appropriate, the Trustees also deliberate and make decisions by electronic communications outside formal meetings.

Day to day organisational decisions are delegated to the Joint Co-ordinators.

#### **Data Protection**

The Trustees take the protection of personal data seriously. They are alert to the risks of data loss, misuse, cyber-attacks and other external threats and also to the changing regulatory environment. They have adopted a robust Confidentiality and Privacy policy to safeguard the personal data of clients, volunteers and paid staff and to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations.

#### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

The Trustee Board regards diversity as an important strength for the charity. The Charity has an Equal Opportunities Policy and, in its recruitment practice, is committed to reflecting the communities it serves, to fairness, and to enabling people to overcome barriers to participation. It actively seeks a wide range of skills and life experiences in both the composition of its Board, its staff and its volunteers.

#### **Staff and Volunteers**

The charity has a core of 6 employed staff (1 full-time & 5 part-time) but it also relies upon the services of a large number of volunteers for the delivery of its services. To date it maintains a roster of 336 approved volunteers of which 157 are available for assignments and have appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service clearance.

The work of volunteers is fundamental to Heart and they bring a broad diversity of skills to the charity in all its work. The monetary value of their support cannot be included in the Financial Statements and indeed this monetary value inadequately expresses what they bring to the charity. However, based on a 2024 living wage of £11.44 per hour this has an estimate total financial value of some £33,176.

## **Risk Management & Complaints**

The Trustees regularly review their procedures in the light of charity governance contained in 'Accounting & Reporting by Charities: the statement of Recommended Practice'.

The funding environment in which HEART operates is subject to constant and frequently rapid shifts and changes. As a result, the risks which the charity faces, the activities by which it seeks to deliver its charitable Objects, and its internal organisation are constantly evolving. Heart's survival depends in part from successful risk taking and the ability to seize and develop new revenue opportunities as they arise. The purpose of internal control is not to eliminate risks but to identify, manage and control them appropriately.

Trustees review the risks presenting to the organisation each quarter at their regular Trustee meetings. These can involve potential changes to the financial climate and to the framework of social policy which affect Heart, as well as other technological or legal developments which can impact the charity's services.

The following measures are adopted to help minimise risks inherent in any voluntary organisation which relies on a diverse range of funding to meet all its commitments.

1. The management team and staff recognise that they operate under the authority of the Trustee Board, which has the ultimate responsibility for the organisation.
2. Effective appraisal of the Chief Executive and Management Team.
3. Internal management and supervisory controls which minimise risk of failing to deliver on existing grant agreements and contracts.
4. Staff awareness of sources of funding and the consequences arising from any failure to deliver services in line with grant agreements and contracts.
5. The effective use of probationary periods, Job Person Role Specifications, staff supervision and HR policies to promptly identify and deal with issues of concern.
6. Informal and formal staff reviews; training to ensure quality.
7. Working toward the securing of external quality control accreditations.
8. Regular review and analysis of performance statistics to ensure targets are met.
9. Developing adequate financial reserves and cultivating good relationships with funders to identify potential future funding problems and potential funding opportunities.
10. Quarterly financial monitoring.
11. Good communication between volunteers, staff, the Management Team and the Trustee Board.
12. Maintaining independence, political neutrality and avoidance of conflicts of interest

The charity also maintains a Complaints Register and can report no complaints being received during the reporting period.

## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable incorporated organisation and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SDRP.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departure disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business,

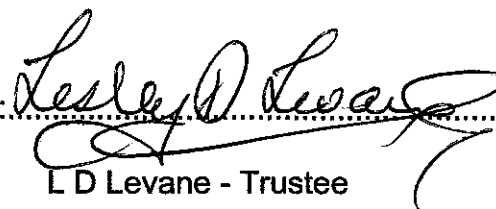
The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant information of which the charity's independent examiners are unaware; and - the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the independent examiners are aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of the financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 05/11/2021 and signed on its behalf by:

  
L D Levane - Trustee

# **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF HASTINGS EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE TEAM**

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Hastings Emergency Action Response Team ('the Company')**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the period 3 February 2023 to 31 May 2024.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

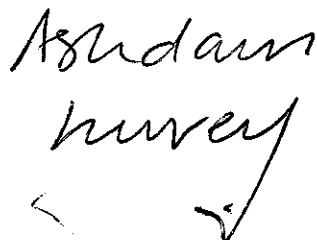
Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by Section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of Section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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.



Stuart Rosling FCCA  
Ashdown Hurrey  
Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers  
20 Havelock Road  
Hastings  
East Sussex  
TN34 1BP

Date: 5.11.24



# **HASTINGS EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE TEAM**

## **STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD 3 FEBRUARY 2023 TO 31 MAY 2024**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>				
Grants, donations & legacies		26,577	75,417	101,994
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Charitable activities		38,350	-	38,350
Other trading activities	2	544	-	544
Investment income	3	17	-	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>65,488</b>	<b>75,417</b>	<b>140,905</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>				
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Charitable activities		56,078	60,133	116,211
Other		2,901	167	3,068
<b>Total</b>		<b>58,979</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>119,279</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>		<b>6,509</b>	<b>15,117</b>	<b>21,626</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>6,509</b>	<b>15,117</b>	<b>21,626</b>

# HASTINGS EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE TEAM

## BALANCE SHEET

31 MAY 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Tangible assets	6	1,019	-	1,019
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Debtors	7	57,536	-	57,536
Cash at bank and in hand		-	15,117	15,117
		<u>57,536</u>	<u>15,117</u>	<u>72,653</u>
<b>CREDITORS</b>				
Amounts falling due within one year	8	(52,046)	-	(52,046)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>5,490</u>	<u>15,117</u>	<u>20,607</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>6,509</u>	<u>15,117</u>	<u>21,626</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>6,509</u>	<u>15,117</u>	<u>21,626</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>	9			
Unrestricted funds				6,509
Restricted funds				15,117
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>				<u>21,626</u>

**HASTINGS EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE TEAM**

**BALANCE SHEET 31 MAY 2024**

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of period ended 31 May 2024.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the period ended 31 May 2024 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

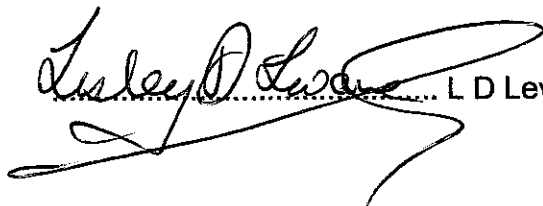
The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for


1. (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
2. (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on .....5.11.2024.....

and were signed on its behalf by:

 ..... L D Levane - Trustee

 ..... L Roberts - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES****Basis of preparing the financial statements**

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

**Income**

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

**Expenditure**

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

**Tangible fixed assets**

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings	- 20% on cost
Computer equipment	- 33% on cost

**Taxation**

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.



**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES cot'd****Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

**Hire purchase and leasing commitments**

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

**2. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES**

Fundraising events	£ 544
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**3. INVESTMENT INCOME**

Deposit account interest	£ 17
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**4. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)**

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

Independent examiner's remuneration	£ 1,800
Depreciation - owned assets	415
Other operating leases	2,640

**5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the period ended 31 May 2024.

**Trustees' expenses**

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the period ended 31 May 2024.

**6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

	Fixtures and Fittings £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
<b>COST</b>			
Additions	1,008	426	1,434
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
Charge for year	202	213	415
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>			
At 31 May 2024	806	213	1,019

**7. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR**

Trade debtors	£ 57,536
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**8. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR**

Deferred income	£ 50,246
Accrued expenses	1,800
	52,046

The deferred income relates to an invoice raised by Macmillan for furniture that will be purchased in the next accounting period.

## 9. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Net Movement in funds £	At 31.5.24 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>		
General Fund	6,509	6,509
<b>Restricted funds</b>		
National Lottery Community Fund	15,117	15,117
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>21,626</u>	<u>21,626</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	65,488	(58,979)	6,509
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
Police & Crime Commissioner	705	(705)	-
National Lottery Community Fund	69,888	(54,771)	15,117
Foreshore Trust	4,824	(4,824)	-
	<u>75,417</u>	<u>(60,300)</u>	<u>15,117</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>140,905</u>	<u>(119,279)</u>	<u>21,626</u>

**10. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES**

There were no related party transactions for the period ended 31 May 2024