

# Trustees' annual report and accounts

1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025



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## Administrative information

The Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) number 1203380 registered by the Charity Commission for England & Wales on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 with a 'foundation model' constitution, with the intention of taking responsibility for the assets and operations of the charitable unincorporated association (CUA) of the same name, registered as a charity in England & Wales, number 1040128. The CUA's operations and assets were vested in the CIO with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024. At the end of the reporting year the trustees had yet to close the CUA formally, pending finalisation of its financial affairs, including claims for Gift Aid tax relief, and its activities are described in a separate report.

## Accredited Museum No 1433

**Registered office:** Wharf Station Tywyn Gwynedd LL36 9EY

## Objects of the CIO:

- i. to advance and promote education for the public benefit in the history and heritage of narrow-gauge railways (being railways having a gauge between the rails of less than 1432 millimetres) and their impact on society past and present;
- ii. the provision, maintenance and administration of a museum for the display of objects related to narrow gauge railways and the sharing of heritage about the people who worked on, used and enjoyed those railways through exhibitions, interactive displays, and projects;
- iii. the making of grants to promote the purposes of the CIO subject to such conditions as the charity trustees may lay down.

## Personnel

<b>First Charity Trustees</b>	<i>To serve until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2028</i>	
	Ian Evans	Minutes secretary
	Malcolm Phillips	Collections manager
	C Keith Theobald	Chairman
	<i>To serve until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026</i>	
	John D Olsen PhD, MRSB, CIBiol	
	Wendy Pink	Resigned August 2024
	<i>To serve until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025</i>	
	Diane K Drummond PhD FHEA	
	Frank Nolan	
<b>Co-opted trustees</b>	William Apps	From 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
	Shirley Atkinson SFHEA	From 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
	Robert Morgan	From 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
	MRFS BD BSc	From 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2024
<b>Officers</b>	Charles Fleming	Legal adviser
	Victoria Harrison MA BSc	Museum mentor. Resigned August 2024
	Tim Bryan BLib, ALA, FMA	Museum mentor, from September 2024
	Robert Langham	Museum mentor, from August 2024



Andrew Nock  
Stephen Powell

Secretary  
Treasurer

Unless otherwise shown, all personnel served throughout the reporting year. They gave their services voluntarily and received no benefit from their activity.

The Trustees met 8 times during the reporting year, having regard at all times to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. All meetings were held in Tywyn with Trustees attending in person whenever possible; Trustees living at a distance had the option of remote participation by 'Teams' if unable to come to Tywyn.

**Bank:** CAF Bank Ltd  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill  
West Malling Kent  
ME19 4JQ

## The Narrow Gauge Railway Museum (“the Museum”)



*Two of the Museum’s star exhibits – “Dot” and “Rough Pep”*

The Trust’s aim is to record and interpret the history of narrow-gauge railways in the British Isles and beyond. While a number of passenger-carrying railways have been preserved and still operate, primarily now to serve the tourist market, many other passenger-carrying lines, as well as numerous industrial and military ones, ceased to exist in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The pioneering enthusiasts and collectors of those times laid the basis of the collection while it was still possible, so that today the story of these railways can be told, most of which never achieved the widespread following enjoyed by the main lines, but were in their own way important contributors to economic and social history.

The Trust’s main activity is managing the Museum to ensure its current operation and secure its long-term sustainability.

The Museum occupies a purpose-made building, opened in 2005 as part of the major re-development of the Talyllyn Railway’s Wharf station in Tywyn. Its location alongside a working narrow-gauge railway gives the Museum’s story a living context, and adds a significant attraction to the pleasure and interest of a journey on the Railway. Elsewhere on the Wharf site the Museum also has use of the historic Gunpowder Store and new building featuring the original Talyllyn Railway weighbridge.

### The Collection

The main collection consists of items relating to narrow gauge railways of the British Isles, and to the Talyllyn Railway in particular.

The Trustees continue to review selectively items offered for sale at auction, and make a reasonable bid for any item which they consider would enhance the collection. Items are also offered to the Museum from time to time, with any accession decision being taken by the Trustees. Accessions now tend to be small items, reflecting the reality of new material availability, and the pressures on the Museum’s space.

During the reporting year, 20 objects were added to the **Main Collection**. Representative examples of the items added are:

TYWRM:TR404	document	Letter from Edward Thomas to Atlas Foundry Shrewsbury about wheels of TR van 5 dated 11/8/1948
TYWRM:TR414	telephone	Omnibus style telephone from Abergynolwyn
TYWRM:TR417	plate	Edmondson makers plate from the small ticket rack in Talyllyn Railway Van 5

TYWRM:ZZ038	photograph	Photographic prints and slides from the John Smallwood collection
TYWRM:DOR002	book	Record of Inspections of Dorothea Slate Quarry May to November 1926
TYWRM:GS003	photographs	Letter and photographs of the railway from the Guinness Archive
TYWRM:TR405	container	Steam Oil can carried on TR locomotive No.7. Embossed GPO on neck.
TYWRM:TR407	gauge	Pressure gauge off TR locomotive No.3
TYWRM:TR408	poster	Poster for TR Coronation Day Special Train 6th May 2023
TYWRM:TR410	document	Hand coloured and annotated plan of Bryneglwys Quarry marking land ownership boundaries

32 items were added to the **Support Collection**, mostly reference books for the Museum library; examples of the additions are:

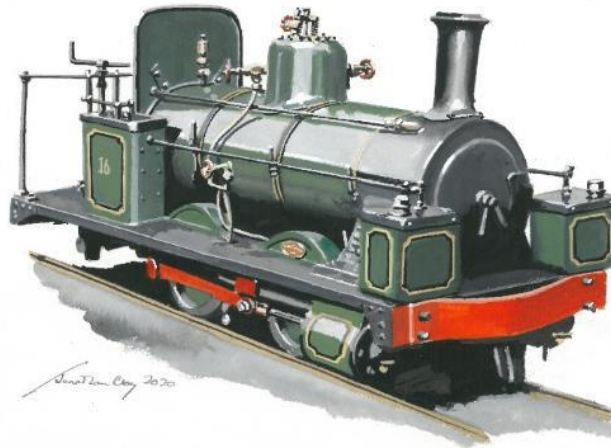
TYWRM:SUP598	book	The Corris Railway by Lewis Cozens
TYWRM:SUP599	book	The Mawddwy Railway with the Hendre-Ddu Tramway by Lewis Cozens
TYWRM:SUP603	book	The Plymlimon and Hafan Tramway by Lewis Cozens
TYWRM:SUP607	document	Lewis Cozens correspondence and press cuttings concerning the books including a poster advertising the Tallylyn Railway book
TYWRM:SUP608	book	North British Locomotive Co. Ltd 1903 - 1953.
TYWRM:SUP610	book	The Life of LTC Rolt where engineering met literature by Victoria Owens
TYWRM:SUP611	button	Uniform button believed to have come from the uniform jacket of Jacob Rowland.
TYWRM:SUP613	book	Scrap book of press cuttings and notices about the Tallylyn Railway and other related subjects from the John Milner Collection and Cyril Lockhart
TYWRM:SUP623	book	Slate Quarrying in Wales by Alun John Richards
TYWRM:SUP627	book	The Rolt Archive - A catalogue of the papers of Tom and Sonia Rolt
TYWRM:SUP628	book	Reservoir Builders of South Wales - Dam Builders in the Age of Steam Book Six by Harold D Bowtell and Geoffrey Hill
TYWRM:SUP615	print	Limited edition print 85/220 by Jonathan Clay for the re-launch of Russell 2.8.2014
TYWRM:SUP617	model	Model of Plas Goch house and outbuilding at Rhydyronen
TYWRM:SUP618	book	The Leek and Manifold Valley Light Railway by Robert Gratton
TYWRM:SUP622	book	Manx Northern Railway by Dr. R. Preston Hendry and R. Powell Hendry

1 item was added to the **Awdry Collection**:

TYWRM:AWD552	book	Toby the Tram Engine (signed by Christopher Awdry)
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The Museum has for many years had items on loan from the former Penrhyn Quarry system, principally the De Winton vertical-boiler locomotive "George Henry" and numerous locomotive name and works plates; during the reporting year the Museum held extensive discussions with Breedon Group, successors to the previous owners Welsh Slate, and expects to conclude an agreement on future ownership in 2025.

Some items in the collection – mainly wagons – are displayed outdoors on the Wharf site. Some large items – locomotives and a wagon – which cannot be accommodated at Tywyn for lack of space are on loan to appropriate institutions elsewhere in the UK. One such is Kerr Stuart locomotive 721, originally from Dundee Gasworks, which has been at Beamish Museum in Co Durham for some years. The Museum there is making good its undertaking to restore the locomotive to operating condition, and the boiler has been restored. Further work on the rolling chassis is still needed, with no firm date yet for completion.



*An impression by artist Jonathan Clay of how Loco 721 will look after its current restoration*

For the second year running the Trustees engaged a young lady student to sort, scan and catalogue historic tickets donated to the Museum. In 7 days she processed around 2,000 tickets from the Isle of Man railways.

## **Risk management**

The Trustees maintain, apply and review policies relating to:

- Emergencies
- Safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Environment
- Data protection
- Managing conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty

The Trustees maintain a Designated Insurance Reserve fund as cover against loss or damage to items in the Collection.

The Trustees also earmark a proportion of the Trust's cash balance (held in a high-interest account, £44,424.18 at the end of the reporting year) as a hedge against higher running costs. The Trust occupies its premises on very beneficial terms from its landlord the Tallyllyn Railway, and could face substantially higher costs if changing circumstances caused the Railway to alter its terms.

## **Review of the year**

### *Visitors*

The Museum was open to the public on 259 days, including every day when the Tallyllyn Railway operated a public train service. Visitor numbers marginally exceeded those of the previous year and, significantly, the number recorded in 2019 the last pre-Covid year. Also



significant is that numbers remained constant while passenger numbers on the Talyllyn Railway (the primary source of Museum visitors) were 7% lower than in 2023, and 18% lower than in 2019. Comparative numbers for the last six years are:

Year	Days open	Adult visitors	Child visitors	Total visitors	Visitors per day
2024	259	12778	3220	16698	64
2023	246	12686	3918	16604	67
2022	258	13523	4304	17827	69
2021	194	10501	2975	13476	69
2020	84	1248	204	1452	17
2019	253	12758	3913	16671	66

### *Railway-themed temporary exhibitions*



*“People of this House” temporary exhibition*

The Museum continued its Temporary Exhibition programme, providing an insight into subjects of topical interest and refreshing the Museum experience for repeat visitors. One Exhibition was staged in 2024, “People of this House”, telling the stories of some of the people associated with the Museum’s exhibits, including the designers and builders of locomotives, the people who gave their names to engines, the officers of railways whose name appears on signs and posters, and the quarry owners and those who worked for them. It also celebrated some of the railway preservation pioneers on the Talyllyn Railway.

### *Social media*

For some time the Trustees had aspired to increase the Museum’s social media presence, and the co-option of new trustees made this possible. New ‘Facebook’ features “Mystery



Monday” and “Thursday Delve”, presenting items from the Museum’s extensive photographic collection, attracted 150 direct followers and nearly 42,000 people were reached, an increase of 432% over the previous year.

### *Education*

The Museum entertained several parties from local schools, with the children being given the opportunity to weigh on the Museum’s original Talyllyn Railway wagon weighbridge.

### *Special occasions*

The Museum contributed to three special events on the Talyllyn Railway: the “Anything Goes” gala and the highly popular “Awdry Extravaganza” both in July, the latter featuring the railway characters created by the Rev Wilbert Awdry, and a “Heritage Weekend” in September, a recent innovation but rapidly becoming a fixture in the Railway’s calendar.



*The recreation of Wilbert Awdry’s study, centrepiece of the Museum’s Awdry Collection*

Away from Tywyn, the Museum participated in a symposium at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum “LTC Rolt: Life, Work, Legacy”<sup>1</sup> marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rolt’s death, with a Trustee delivering a paper on Rolt’s involvement with the Talyllyn Railway and its Preservation Society, and the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust.

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<sup>1</sup> LTC (“Tom”) Rolt was a distinguished author on railway, canal and other industrial history and as co-founder of the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society a pioneer of railway preservation.

## Governance

As noted earlier the trustees of the CUA (old charity) vested its assets in the new CIO at the start of the reporting year. During the reporting year the Talyllyn Railway Company granted the CIO a new lease on the Tywyn Wharf accommodation occupied by the Museum, on similar terms to those previously enjoyed and with a 100-year term ending on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2123. During the year the Trustees opened new bank accounts in the CIO's name enabling the transfer of financial operations to the new charity.

Using the powers in the CIO constitution the Trustees co-opted 4 new trustees, each to serve for 3 years, who brought to the Board very welcome new expertise in finance, education and social media.



*Two contrasting exhibits – Padarn Railway wagons (4ft gauge 'host wagon' conveying 1ft 10¾in slate wagons and guard's van), and model of the Awdry locomotive "Skarloey" derived from Talyllyn Railway No 1 "Talyllyn"*

## People

Without people, and notwithstanding its excellent building and extensive collection, the Museum would be nothing. The Trust employs no staff, and volunteers receive no financial benefit. In addition to the eleven Trustees, the Museum was served by around 30 regular volunteers during the year, putting around 2000 hours (1355 attendant hours + 655 working party hours), and the Trustees acknowledge this commitment with the deepest gratitude. The Trustees and officers themselves were 'hands-on' in the fullest sense of the term, putting in an estimated 3000 hours.

The position of Museum Mentor is an important one, providing professional advice on museum management and collection conservation in the absence of a paid professional. The Trustees place on record their gratitude to Victoria Harrison who after serving in this post for 2 years resigned in summer 2024 because of other personal and professional commitments. They were then faced with the unusual situation of having two willing and appropriate volunteers for the position, and with the approval of the Welsh Government (the accreditation body for museums in Wales) appointed both. Tim Bryan is a seasoned museum professional with extensive experience in the transport history sector, while Rob Langham is a former museum worker with expertise in charity grants and fundraising.

In addition to its local volunteers the Museum values its supporters far and wide and runs a formal Friends of the Museum scheme to encourage such interest; Friends (46 in 2024) pay an annual subscription yielding more than £1000 in income and are kept fully up to date with events at the Museum through 4 newsletters every year.



The Trustees were saddened by the deaths during the reporting year of two long-standing and significant supporters. John Smallwood (aged 82) played an important role in developing plans for the current Museum Building – the project completed in 2005; this included undertaking the negotiations with the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders to secure the necessary grants. The second, Ian Howitt, also played an important part in establishing the present Museum accommodation, having been responsible for removing the large exhibits from the old Museum to temporary storage in Morfa Camp and then returning and installing them in the new building in 2005. More recently, his company Heritage Painting had undertaken the external restoration of the locomotive “William Finlay”.

The Museum would not survive without its working parties, generally with 4 or 5 regular volunteers, that continued to meet on Thursdays throughout the year. Their work falls into two categories – care and maintenance of the Museum’s fittings and displays, and conservation of the Trust’s historic wagon fleet, on public display at Tywyn Wharf station and occasionally used for special train workings on the Talyllyn Railway. Much of this work has to be done outside and therefore depends on the vagaries of the Welsh weather.



*An outside working party in action*

To bring the working parties into compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) a set of guidelines for volunteers was agreed with the Talyllyn Railway and the Trustees, with a view to issuing annual power tool competency certification to working party volunteers. Certificates were issued in June to all active volunteers.

Work inside the Museum during the year included

- mounting interactive displays and grey display plinths on castors for easier and safer moving;
- cleaning all locomotive brass nameplates and re-coating them with conservation wax;
- dusting locomotive wooden casting patterns;
- mounting an additional 6 train headboards on 1<sup>st</sup> floor beams;
- sorting and cataloguing photographs bequeathed by John Smallwood.

For outside work a 'Working in Wharf Yard' safety briefing was agreed with the Talyllyn Railway, with copies issued to all working party volunteers.



*Indoor and outdoor working parties- smiling faces show the benefit of volunteering*

Highlights of wagon work during year included:

- continuing recreation of the Aberllefenni incline counterbalance wagon using new timbers supplied by a volunteer in the Netherlands, with the frame assembled with temporary tie bars once all the timber had been treated with preservative. Stripping the old Aberllefenni incline wagon of usable metal parts and subsequent disassembly.
- stripping back wagon no. 164 to the frames and removing all old paint. Replacing wooden side and end bars, and rotten mortice and tenon joints.
- stripping the Corris Mail Wagon body and door of paint, de-rusting, priming and then painting with two coats of red oxide

### **The future**

At the time of writing this report the Trustees were preparing to submit to the Welsh Government their application for the Museum's re-accreditation.

With constant visitor numbers and income, substantial cash reserves, and a new long lease on its accommodation, the Museum is in a good state to face the future. That future however is uncertain, most strikingly and locally illustrated by the decline in Talyllyn Railway passenger numbers reflecting economic pressures and sharper competition among visitor attractions, with tourists and holiday makers increasingly seeking best value from their spending. The Museum will be increasingly unwise to rely on the Railway as its source of visitors and must re-double its efforts to be regarded as an attraction in its own right.

In the face of rapidly rising project costs the Talyllyn Railway Company's ambitious plans for developing facilities at Tywyn Wharf station, which would have directly affected the Museum, have been deferred *sine die* in order to concentrate on the more urgent need to develop the Tywyn Pendre site where the Railway's engineering activities are concentrated. From the Museum's immediate perspective this gives welcome stability, but as a sign of underlying trends it is disturbing.

Maintaining an adequate workforce is and will remain a challenge; the recent significant reduction in trustee age profile is very welcome, but attendant availability remains problematic in spite of repeated efforts to attract new volunteers.

## Financial Report

Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Registered Charity 1203380				
Accounts for the year 2024-25				
Fund Type	unrestricted	designated		<i>all</i>
Fund Name	General	Insurance Reserve		
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Donations in Museum	£140.00			£140.00
Other Donations	£1,868.81			£1,868.81
Friends Subscriptions	£0.00			£0.00
Legacies	£78.51			£78.51
Grants	£0.00			£0.00
Gift Aid Tax Reclaim	£0.00			£0.00
Sponsorship	£0.00			£0.00
Fees	£0.00			£0.00
Miscellaneous	£61.23			£61.23
Bank Interest	£486.11	£1,547.78		£2,033.89
Transfers from old trust	£94,401.72	£42,876.40		
Total Receipts	£97,036.38	£44,424.18		£141,460.56
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Collection				
Acquisition	£39.75			£39.75
Repair & Maintenance	£1,418.46			£1,418.46
Presentation	£398.35	£0.00		£398.35
Subscriptions	£71.00			£71.00
Grants	£0.00			£0.00
Miscellaneous inc bank chgs	£45.00			£45.00
Total Payments	£1,972.56	£0.00		£1,972.56
Net Receipts	£95,063.82	£44,424.18		£139,488.00
Balances b/f 01/02/24	£0.00	£0.00		£0.00
Balances c/f 01/02/25	£95,063.82	£44,424.18		£139,488.00

Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Registered Charity 1203380					
<b>Fund Balances as at 31st January 2025</b>					
General				Insurance Reserve	£44,424.18
<b>Represented by</b>					
			£0.00		
CAF Cash A/C 31/01/24					
<i>less unrepresented cheques etc.</i>					
	£0.00	£0.00			
<i>plus unstatemented credits</i>					
	£0.00	£0.00			
CAF Cash A/C net			£12,781.88		
CAF Gold A/C 31/01/24		£82,281.94			
<i>plus unstatemented credits</i>					
	£0.00	£82,281.94			
CAF Gold A/C net			£82,281.94		
			£95,063.82	1-year Bond	£0.00

## Financial commentary

The above accounts do not present the full picture of the Museum's financial performance in the reporting year, since transactions in the early part of the year used the CUA's (old charity's) bank accounts until new accounts for the CIO (new charity) came into operation. Some transactions are therefore reported in the separate report for the CUA in the early part of the year. The following statement, consolidating transactions for both charities, shows the annualised position, and is a more meaningful guide to the Museum's financial position:

(The amount attributed in the above statements to Friends' Subscription' is understated, with most of these receipts being reported under "Other Donations".)

"Normal" income was broadly in line with the previous year (discounting the exceptional legacy income in 2023-24), higher interest balancing a delay in receiving Gift Aid tax refunds.

Expenditure was similar to that of the previous year.

"Normal" net receipts were in line with the previous year, reflecting an overall stable financial position, again excluding exceptional items..




# Narrow Gauge Railway Museum 2024-25 - annualised accounts for old and new charities

Fund Type	unrestricted	designated		all		2023-24 for comparison
Fund Name	General	Insurance Reserve				
<b>RECEIPTS</b>						
Donations in Museum	£5,659.03			£5,659.03		£3,464.00
Other Donations	£2,736.53			£2,736.53		£4,109.23
Friends Subscriptions	£905.37			£905.37		£180.00
Legacies	£78.51			£78.51		£11,500.00
Grants	£0.00			£0.00		£0.00
Gift Aid Tax Reclaim	£741.35			£741.35		£1,254.56
Sponsorship	£0.00			£0.00		£0.00
Fees	£0.00			£0.00		£1,200.00
Miscellaneous	£61.23			£61.23		£0.00
Bank Interest	£2,006.72	£1,547.78		£3,554.50		£1,744.14
Total Receipts	£12,188.74	£1,547.78		£13,736.52		£23,451.93
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
Collection						
Acquisition	£89.00			£89.00		£0.00
Repair & Maintenance	£4,431.18			£4,431.18		£3,496.45
Presentation	£617.10	£0.00		£617.10		£2,034.46
Subscriptions	£427.56			£427.56		£436.25
Grants	£0.00			£0.00		£0.00
Miscellaneous inc bank chgs	£280.00			£280.00		£476.00
Total Payments	£5,844.84	£0.00		£5,844.84		£6,443.16
Net Receipts	£6,343.90	£1,547.78		£7,891.68		£17,008.77

## Approval

This annual report for the year 2024-25 was approved by the Trustees at their meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Signed	Signatory	Date
	CK Theobald Chairman of Trustees	18 June 2025
M N Phillips	Trustee M. N. PHILLIPS	18/06/2025

# Appendix

## Independent examiner's report



**CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's  
report on the accounts**

### Section A

### Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

**The Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust**

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31<sup>st</sup> January 2025

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1203380

**Set out on pages**

Not applicable

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/01/2025.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

**Independent .  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:**

*Nigel Roscoe*

**Date:**

5<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Name:**

Nigel Ronald Roscoe

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

**Address:**

35 Kenilworth Road

Cheadle Heath

Stockport, SK3 0QL

## Independent examiner's report (continued)

Section B	Disclosure
<p>Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.</p>	<p>Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).</p> <p>Not Applicable</p>