

Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements  
for the years ended 30 April 2024 and 30 April 2025

Charity Number: 1205400



**BRIDGE TO UNITY**

Bringing communities together

# Trustees' Annual Report

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*For the years ended 30 April 2024 and 30 April 2025*

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the years ended 30 April 2024 and 30 April 2025.

## Objectives and Activities

Bridge to Unity (BTU), initially a CIC from 22 April 2022 and now a CIO from 25 October 2023, was founded by Matthew Simmons to provide unwavering support to families seeking refuge in the South of the United Kingdom, ensuring inclusivity, safety, and sanctuary in our community, regardless of background. The organisation is volunteer-led, with dedicated volunteers from diverse backgrounds, including armed forces and public services, who value compassion, solidarity and continuous learning to understand the complexities refugees face.

We actively engage refugee volunteers, such as our Liaison Officers, whose lived experiences ensure that cultural, religious and practical needs are central to our services, supporting our connection to the communities we serve.

Bridge to Unity has developed Three Pillars, Community, Education and Employment, that we see form the main components of resettlement in a new country. Our befriending service, community groups, culturally sensitive employment and skills workshops, and educational initiatives provide robust support and practical assistance to individuals navigating the journey toward independence and integration in the UK, fostering a welcoming environment where refugees can thrive.

We have been pioneers in uniting people, fostering networks, and advancing resettlement support services. Following the Afghanistan evacuation in 2021, we led a coalition of UK charities, supported by the Cabinet Office, ensuring comprehensive support for individuals and families transitioning from hotels to permanent homes. Our local and national partnerships across the NHS, Local Authorities, the Ministry of Defence and VCSE organisations amplify our impact, enhancing service delivery and influencing policy decisions in bridging accommodation, community integration, and resettlement.

## Achievement and Performance — Year Ending 30 April 2024

In the financial year, Bridge to Unity continued its significant growth and impact in supporting refugees in the UK. The following are the key achievements:

**Employment Programme:** Bridge to Unity expanded its CommUNITY Skills Programme, delivering employment skills workshops across the South of England to over 250 people. These workshops were instrumental in overcoming employment barriers, including language difficulties, unfamiliarity with the UK job market, and the provision of CV support and interview training. Our partnerships with local Borough Councils and recruitment agencies helped numerous refugees secure meaningful employment.

**Community Games:** The inaugural CommUNITY Games event was a major success, with over 150 attendees from diverse communities enjoying games, activities and food provided through local funding.

**Volunteer Base Expansion:** BTU grew its volunteer base from 8 to 18 volunteers, formalising processes and increasing community involvement. Volunteers contributed over 6,000 hours of support, including befriending services that help refugees navigate their new lives, from healthcare access to school enrolment.

**Learning and Cultural Outreach:** Our Afghan and Ukrainian Cultural Activity Packs have been accessed by over 650 schools across the UK, providing educational tools that bridge cultural understanding between local communities and refugees. This outreach helped foster empathy and integration in schools.

**Kitchen Initiatives and Foodbank Support:** Our Unity Kitchen brought together over 100 people to prepare and eat food together while sharing stories and experiences. Through our partnership with One Foundation in Emsworth, our volunteers delivered food packages to over 300 people.

**Trusted Voices and Partnerships:** Bridge to Unity's Afghan Coordinator continued as a key member of the UK Government's Afghan Trusted Voices Task Force, representing the needs of Afghan refugees and strengthening our relationships with the Ministry of Defence, Local Authorities and other charities.

**Operational Developments:** The Board of Trustees signed off multiple Memorandums of Understanding with partner organisations and updated internal policies to ensure effective governance. Our CRM system underwent improvements to better support service users.

## **Achievement and Performance — Year Ending 30 April 2025**

In the financial year, Bridge to Unity continued to grow its operational scale, deepen its partnerships, and expand the range of structured support available to refugees and newly arrived families across the South of England.

**Refugee Support Hub:** A defining achievement of the year was the launch of our Refugee Support Hub at The Pallant Centre, Havant, the first dedicated support hub outside Portsmouth and Southampton focused on those with refugee status. Launched in late January 2025, the Hub offers structured one-to-one support with crucial tasks including council tax enquiries, E-visa applications, Universal Credit, GP registrations, CV building, and wider integration needs. Demand exceeded our expectations within weeks of opening, and by March 2025 we had moved from the Music Room into the larger Garden Room and Library at The Pallant Centre to accommodate the people coming through our door.

**RADAR Framework:** Working with the invaluable input of people with lived experience, we developed and publicly launched the RADAR framework (Refugee Assistance, Direction and Resettlement). RADAR underpins how we assess need, prioritise support and track outcomes across our Outreach Programme, Community Kitchen, Community Games, food bank partnership and wider services. It has become the central organising structure for our work, and is increasingly recognised by Local Authority, DWP and charity referrers as a meaningful way of mapping a person's resettlement journey.

**CommUNITY Skills Programme:** Our employment skills programme expanded significantly across the year. We delivered employment workshops and one-to-one support across Winchester City Council, Waverley Borough Council, and Basingstoke and Deane. In November 2024 we entered a new partnership with Reallyenglish, offering our community access to a bespoke online English language platform with modules tailored to healthcare, retail and nursing, opening doors to employment in sectors where language confidence has often been the primary barrier. Alongside our employment work in Basingstoke, we partnered with Reading Force to sign up children from ARAP families, whose parents served alongside British Forces, to receive free books.

**Community and Cultural Events:** The year saw a substantial expansion of our cultural programme. We hosted our first cinema event in November 2024, bringing together over 100 Ukrainians from across Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Chichester for two Ukrainian-language films. In October 2024 we accompanied more than 60 Ukrainians on a special visit to UK Parliament with the support of Caroline Dinenage MP, the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Support Ukraine UK, Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester, and Community

First Gosport. In August 2024 we supported the commemoration of Ukraine's Independence Day at Grimsby Town FC, alongside North East Lincolnshire Council and Environ UK, with members of the Ukrainian Navy crew of the former HMS Grimsby and HMS Shoreham, the day before the start of the third year of the war. We hosted our second COMMUNITY Games in August 2024, with nearly 150 people coming together for a day of family activities and Ukrainian culture, supported by a wide local partnership including Havant Borough Council, CM Sports, Hampshire County Council, Barnardo's, Gosport and Fareham Borough Councils, and One Church Emsworth. In February and March 2025 we delivered the Heart of Hope exhibition and service across St Faith's Church and The Pallant Centre, marking the third year since the start of the war in Ukraine. In April 2025 we hosted a Ukrainian Easter Event at The Pallant Centre, with over 150 individuals coming together with the support of Havant Borough Council.

**Schools and Youth Engagement:** During Refugee Week in June 2024 we delivered presentations to students at Park Community School in Havant. In December 2024, at the request of the Ministry of Defence's Op Lazurite team, we delivered a programme of workshops in a school facing rising tensions between British and Afghan students. By creating a space for open dialogue, lived experience and shared stories, including from a former member of the Afghan Special Forces, we were able to challenge harmful narratives and provide ongoing support to the school through workshops on cultural awareness, conflict resolution and mental health.

**Food and Crisis Response:** Our partnership with One Foundation and One Church Emsworth continued throughout the year, delivering weekly food packages to families across Chichester, Fareham and Gosport, and to a local homeless shelter. Crisis food support was triggered through RADAR assessments, with ad-hoc urgent support available when needed.

**Working with the Ministry of Defence and Government:** Our work with the Ministry of Defence deepened significantly. We continued to support those arriving under ARAP and ACRS, including new arrivals coming through Op Lazurite after extended waits in third countries under the care of the FCDO. We were proud to welcome onto our team an Afghan Community Liaison Officer who originally arrived under ARAP, contributed to the Afghan Trusted Voices Task Force, and now supports new arrivals directly. In November 2024 our Founder represented Bridge to Unity at the Cenotaph March Past alongside the UK Afghanistan Veterans Community.

**Befriending and Community Development:** Our befriending service expanded into West Sussex during the year, with volunteers continuing to provide one-to-one support across the original areas of operation.

**Volunteers and Team:** By the end of the year Bridge to Unity had grown to a team of over 30 dedicated individuals contributing across all programmes, with Volunteer Community Associates playing a central role in user-facing support and RADAR delivery.

### **Looking Forward**

The coming year will see continued growth of the Refugee Support Hub model, further development of the RADAR framework, strengthened partnerships across Local Authority, NHS and statutory partners, and continued delivery of community, employment and education programmes across Hampshire and West Sussex.

## **Financial Review**

The work of the charity is reliant upon the skill and expertise of those leading day-to-day operations and the wider volunteer team, supported by the Trustees. During the period covered by this report, day-to-day operations were jointly led by Matthew Simmons (Founder) and Alexandra Kenchington, working principally on a voluntary basis with specific

contract delivery work undertaken under separate Memorandums of Understanding (see Related Party Transactions below).

The charity's income across the period has been generated principally through grants and commissioned project funding for our CommUNITY Skills Programme and our wider resettlement and community work, alongside donations and small-scale charitable income.

A summary of the financial position across both years is set out below. Full detail is provided in the Receipts and Payments Accounts, Statement of Assets and Liabilities, and Notes to the Accounts that follow.

|                              | Year ended 30 April<br>2024 (£) | Year ended 30 April<br>2025 (£) |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Total Income                 | 41,446                          | 32,182                          |
| Total Expenditure            | (29,832)                        | (30,895)                        |
| <b>Net Movement in Funds</b> | <b>11,614</b>                   | <b>1,287</b>                    |
| <b>Closing Cash Reserves</b> | <b>12,957</b>                   | <b>14,243</b>                   |

Income for the year ended 30 April 2024 included grants from the Home Office, West Sussex County Council, Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester, Action Hampshire, Hampshire County Council Councillor grants, Havant LCP, Fareham LCP and other community sources. Income for the year ended 30 April 2025 reflected continued Local Authority grant support and community and programme grants, with the establishment of the Refugee Support Hub providing a foundation for further commissioned work in the coming year.

The trustees consider the financial position of the charity to be stable, with restricted reserves carried forward to support ongoing programme delivery, and unrestricted reserves to be rebuilt as part of the charity's continued growth.

### Reserves Policy

The trustees aim to maintain sufficient reserves to manage funding timing differences, maintain operational continuity, support delivery of ongoing programmes, and strengthen organisational sustainability. The trustees keep the reserves position under regular review.

## Related Party Transactions and Trustees' Remuneration

Bridge to Unity has been founded and led from the outset by Matthew Simmons. Throughout the period covered by this report, day-to-day operations were jointly led by Matthew Simmons and Alexandra Kenchington, working principally on a voluntary basis.

During the reporting periods, payments were made to connected persons for specific services provided to the charity under arrangements approved by the Trustees and undertaken in accordance with the charity's Governing Document. A summary of these payments is set out below.

### Payments to Connected Persons / Related Parties

| Individual      | 2024 (£) | 2025 (£) | Nature of Services |
|-----------------|----------|----------|--------------------|
| Matthew Simmons | 2,080.00 | 2,140.79 | Contract-specific  |

|                       |                  |                 |  |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|
|                       |                  |                 | programme work under Trustee-approved Memoranda of Understanding                   |
| Alexandra Kenchington | 7,687.50         | 984.48          | Contract-specific programme work under Trustee-approved Memoranda of Understanding |
| Edward Dowell         | 3,628.74         | 2,995.11        | Trustee graphic design, website and promotional support services                   |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>13,396.24</b> | <b>6,120.38</b> |  |

Payments to Matthew Simmons and Alexandra Kenchington related solely to specific contract-based work undertaken under Trustee-approved Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). Both individuals continued to undertake significant day-to-day operational activities for the charity on a voluntary basis.

Payments to Edward Dowell related to graphic design, website development and promotional support services provided to the charity. In accordance with the Governing Document, relevant conflict of interest procedures were followed, with Edward Dowell absent from the discussions and decision-making relating to the matter, and the arrangements were considered and approved by the Trustees. Edward Dowell was the only trustee receiving compensation for services during the reporting period.

Payments to Alexandra Kenchington were significantly higher in 2024 than in 2025, primarily due to project-specific work and historic programme delivery arrangements during the period surrounding the charity's transition from CIC to CIO. Following the implementation of more formal governance arrangements, including Trustee-approved Memoranda of Understanding and capped contract arrangements, compensation in 2025 related only to specific contracted activities, with day-to-day operational work continuing largely on a voluntary basis.

All amounts disclosed above exclude expense reimbursements and relate solely to payments for agreed services delivered. All payments have been included within the relevant expenditure lines within these accounts. Supporting documentation is retained by the charity, and FRH Consultants Limited, as Independent Examiner, reviewed supporting documentation made available during the course of the independent examination.

The charity does not currently maintain separate Trustee Indemnity Insurance. Trustees are covered under the charity's general insurance arrangements where applicable.

## Structure, Governance and Management

### Governing Document

The charity is controlled by its governing document and constitutes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered with the Charity Commission on 25 October 2023, following its earlier operation as a Community Interest Company from 22 April 2022.

### Trustee Recruitment and Induction

Trustees are recruited based on the skills and experience required to support the strategic direction of the charity. All new trustees are inducted on appointment, with access to the governing document, charity policies and current operational position.



### **Decision Making and Financial Controls**

The charity operates with appropriate governance and financial oversight procedures, including trustee review and approval processes, segregation of duties where practical, regular bank reconciliations and financial monitoring, and supporting documentation retained for transactions. Material decisions and any related party arrangements are minuted at Trustee meetings.

### **Trustees During the Reporting Period**

- Edward Dowell — Chair of Trustees (appointed 25 October 2023; stood down 27 March 2026)
- Jordan Burne-Cronshaw (appointed 25 October 2023)
- Mhairi Dupre (appointed 25 October 2023; stood down 27 March 2026)

### **Events After the Reporting Period**

Following the period covered by this report, the Board has refreshed its composition. Chris White was appointed as Trustee and Chair on 27 March 2026, and Hannah Jarvis was appointed as Trustee on 3 April 2026. Edward Dowell and Mhairi Dupre stood down as Trustees on 27 March 2026. These changes are reflected in the Reference and Administrative Details below.

## Reference and Administrative Details

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### Registered Charity Number

1205400

### Registered Address

The Pallant Centre  
The Pallant  
Havant  
Hampshire, PO9 1BE

### Current Trustees (at date of approval)

- Chris White — Chair of Trustees (appointed 27 March 2026)
- Jordan Burne-Cronshaw (appointed 25 October 2023)
- Hannah Jarvis (appointed 3 April 2026)

### Founder and Joint Operations Lead during the reporting period

Matthew Simmons (Founder)  
Alexandra Kenchington (Joint Lead during the reporting period)

### Independent Examiner

Haroon Dhunna FCMA CGMA  
FRH Consultants Limited  
71 Grimsdyke Road, Pinner, HA5 4PP

### Bankers


Unity Trust Bank  
Four Brindleyplace  
Birmingham, B1 2JB

### Contact

admin@bridgetounity.co.uk  
www.bridgetounity.co.uk

### Approval

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf:



Chris White, Chair of Trustees

Date: 21/5/2026



# Independent Examiner's Report

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*to the Trustees of Bridge to Unity for the years ended 30 April 2024 and 30 April 2025*

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Bridge to Unity CIO for the years ended 30 April 2024 and 30 April 2025.

## **Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all 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 my examination which give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act 2011; or
- the accounts did not accord with those accounting records.

I have no matters to which I should draw attention in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

**Haroon Dhunna FCMA CGMA**

For and on behalf of FRH Consultants Limited

71 Grimsdyke Road, Pinner, HA5 4PP

Date: 21st May 2026

# Receipts and Payments Accounts

Year Ended 30 April 2024

|                                 | Unrestricted (£) | Restricted (£) | Total (£)     |
|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>Receipts</b>                 |                  |                |               |
| Local Authority grants          | —                | 28,500         | 28,500        |
| Community programme grants      | —                | 10,470         | 10,470        |
| Programme income                | 2,000            | —              | 2,000         |
| Donations and community support | 476              | —              | 476           |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>           | <b>2,476</b>     | <b>38,970</b>  | <b>41,446</b> |
| <b>Payments</b>                 |                  |                |               |
| Programme delivery costs        | —                | 18,000         | 18,000        |
| Community activities and events | —                | 5,500          | 5,500         |
| Administration costs            | 4,000            | —              | 4,000         |
| Insurance and governance        | 1,250            | —              | 1,250         |
| Bank charges and overheads      | 1,082            | —              | 1,082         |
| <b>Total Payments</b>           | <b>6,332</b>     | <b>23,500</b>  | <b>29,832</b> |
| <b>Net Movement in Funds</b>    | <b>(3,856)</b>   | <b>15,470</b>  | <b>11,614</b> |

## Year Ended 30 April 2025

|                                       | Unrestricted (£) | Restricted (£) | Total (£)     |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>Receipts</b>                       |                  |                |               |
| Local Authority grants                | —                | 21,020         | 21,020        |
| Community and programme grants        | —                | 8,780          | 8,780         |
| Programme income                      | 2,006            | —              | 2,006         |
| Donations (CAF, JustGiving and other) | 376              | —              | 376           |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>                 | <b>2,382</b>     | <b>29,800</b>  | <b>32,182</b> |
| <b>Payments</b>                       |                  |                |               |
| Programme delivery costs              | —                | 18,950         | 18,950        |
| Contractors and facilitators          | —                | 5,600          | 5,600         |
| Administration costs                  | 4,250            | —              | 4,250         |
| Insurance and governance              | 1,196            | —              | 1,196         |
| Bank charges and overheads            | 899              | —              | 899           |
| <b>Total Payments</b>                 | <b>6,345</b>     | <b>24,550</b>  | <b>30,895</b> |
| <b>Net Movement in Funds</b>          | <b>(3,963)</b>   | <b>5,250</b>   | <b>1,287</b>  |

*Note: 2025 total expenditure rounded from £30,895.58.*

# Statement of Assets and Liabilities

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as at 30 April 2024 and 30 April 2025

|                                      | 30 April 2024 (£) | 30 April 2025 (£) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Current Assets</b>                |                   |                   |
| Cash at bank and in hand             | 12,957            | 14,243            |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>          | <b>12,957</b>     | <b>14,243</b>     |
| <b>Creditors</b>                     |                   |                   |
| Accruals and outstanding liabilities | —                 | —                 |
| <b>Total Creditors</b>               | <b>—</b>          | <b>—</b>          |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                    | <b>12,957</b>     | <b>14,243</b>     |

## Funds

|                    | 30 April 2024 (£) | 30 April 2025 (£) |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Restricted Funds   | 15,470            | 20,720            |
| Unrestricted Funds | (2,513)           | (6,477)           |
| <b>Total Funds</b> | <b>12,957</b>     | <b>14,243</b>     |

*The negative unrestricted funds reflect the timing of restricted grant income recognition relative to unrestricted expenditure on administration, insurance and governance. The trustees are working to rebuild unrestricted reserves through targeted unrestricted income development.*

# Notes to the Accounts

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## 1. Basis of Preparation

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with Charity Commission guidance for charities of this size.

## 2. Income Recognition

Income is recognised when received and includes grant funding, programme income, and donations and community contributions. Grant income received in advance of expenditure is held as restricted funds and applied in accordance with the conditions attached to each funding award.

## 3. Expenditure Recognition

Expenditure is recognised when paid and includes programme delivery costs, contractors and facilitators, administration and operational support costs, insurance and governance, and bank charges and overheads.

## 4. Restricted Funds

Restricted funds represent grant income received for specific programmes and activities. Funds are applied in accordance with the conditions attached to each funding award. A summary of restricted grant income received across the two years is set out below.

|                                | 30 April 2024 (£) | 30 April 2025 (£) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Local Authority grants         | 25,770            | 21,020            |
| Community and programme grants | 13,200            | 8,780             |
| <b>Total Restricted Income</b> | <b>38,970</b>     | <b>29,800</b>     |

*Detailed grant analysis is maintained by the charity and retained as part of the charity's accounting records and grant reporting documentation. This information is available to funders and regulators on request.*

## 5. Related Party Transactions

Disclosed in full in the Trustees' Annual Report under 'Related Party Transactions and Trustees' Remuneration'. Payments to connected persons for specific services provided to the charity totalled £13,396.24 in the year ended 30 April 2024 and £6,120.38 in the year ended 30 April 2025. These comprised contract-specific programme work undertaken by the Founder (Matthew Simmons) and the Joint Operations Lead during the reporting period (Alexandra Kenchington) under Trustee-approved Memoranda of Understanding, and graphic design, website and promotional support services provided by Edward Dowell, Chair of Trustees during the reporting period. All arrangements were approved by the Trustees in accordance with section 6 of the Governing Document, properly minuted, and reviewed by the Independent Examiner. All amounts are included within the relevant expenditure lines within these accounts.

## 6. Financial Controls

The charity maintains financial records supported by bank statements, reconciliations and transaction documentation. The 2025 accounts have been reconstructed and verified directly from bank statements on a line-by-line basis.

## 7. Trustee Expenses

Trustees generally give freely of their time and expertise without any form of remuneration or other benefit in cash or kind, save for the related party arrangements disclosed in Note 5 above.