

the *Meath*
epilepsy charity



1 in 100
people have
epilepsy



2024

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEE & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

Registered Charity Number 200359

the *Meath*
epilepsy charity

www.meath.org.uk



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TheMeathCharity



TheMeathCharity

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STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

As Chair of Trustees, it brings me great pleasure to represent The Meath Epilepsy Charity's delivery of exceptional person-centred care to adults with complex epilepsy and associated disabilities.

In the face of ongoing challenges, particularly regarding staff recruitment and retention in line with national shortages of care staff, the Board has remained proactive. We are proud to have implemented two pay increases for frontline workers over the past year, with the most recent representing a significant 7% uplift. These efforts aim to ensure that The Meath remains an employer of choice within the Surrey community.

Additionally, the Board has been instrumental in driving a values and culture programme, endorsing a new set of values to foster inclusivity and best practice. This initiative not only strengthens the working environment for our dedicated staff but also enhances our ability to attract top talent.

Under the exemplary leadership of our CEO, Lee Bennett, we have made remarkable progress in the CQC recovery programme, culminating in the attainment of a 'Good' rating following an independently assessed mock CQC inspection earlier this year. We thank Lee and the residential care management team for their outstanding efforts in driving continuous improvements.

Furthermore, we have made strategic decisions to increase residential capacity following the decommissioning of two bedrooms in 2022 due to fire regulations. This expansion will aid in the recovery of significant income loss, with work already underway to expand The Cottages service while repurposing the affected Skills Centre area.

The launch of The Hive (former on-site Café) last autumn stands as a testament to The Meath's commitment to fostering community engagement, social opportunities, and skill development. This vibrant multipurpose space reflects our dedication to enhancing the lives of the people we support.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, our dedicated fundraising team has continued to provide life-enriching opportunities. Notably, our Capital Appeal has enabled us to future-proof our facilities and enhance the comfort and safety of the individuals we support, with phase 1 of the works already completed.

We are currently in the process of recruiting new members for the Board of Trustees following the retirement of Malcolm Ring in late 2023 and the successful appointment of Lisa O'Brien as The Meath's Head of Health & Wellbeing and Epilepsy Nurse Consultant. I extend my gratitude to both Malcolm and Lisa for their invaluable contributions as trustees. Their dedication and commitment have greatly enriched The Meath, and I wish them continued success in their future endeavours.

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with optimism and gratitude for the resilience and commitment demonstrated by The Meath community. Together, we have navigated through challenges, demonstrating our dedication to making a positive impact for the residents of The Meath.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I extend our deepest appreciation to Lee Bennett, CEO, our staff team, volunteers, donors, and partners for their unwavering support and commitment. Our annual report serves as a testament to the remarkable achievements made possible through our collective efforts.

Graham Healy, Chair of Trustees

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I would like to recognise the Board of Trustees for their dedication to our continuous improvement programme. Their commitment to conducting internal audits and actively participating in the monthly Health & Social Care Committees over the last 12 months has been much appreciated. The Board have also endorsed a significant pay rise for our frontline workers to support us with talent attraction and retention given the national challenges in the health & social care sector.

I'm proud to announce that the residential care team has achieved a remarkable milestone, with 100% completion of the continuous improvement plan and earning a 'Good' rating in a recent independent mock CQC assessment. This accomplishment reflects their relentless hard work and dedication in this reporting period.

Moreover, I'm delighted by the collaborative efforts across various departments, with staff volunteering in working groups focused on crucial areas such as safeguarding and operational policies. These groups serve as pillars for enhancing and reinforcing organisational policies and fostering best practice, ensuring we closely align to emerging initiatives and trends.

The recent appointment of our new Epilepsy Nurse Consultant brings a sense of reassurance to both the Board and I, as we continue to prioritise creating a safe and inclusive environment for the people we support. With Lisa's expertise, we've been able to identify and mitigate risks associated with epilepsy, offering peace of mind to residents and their families.

The launch of The Hive stands as a testament to our commitment to innovation and social impact. This unique social hub, coupled with learning and volunteering opportunities, distinguishes The Meath from other providers, allowing residents to actively engage and develop life skills within their community.

Furthermore, the Skills Centre team's initiative to develop an exciting new timetable of events for 2024, aligned with resident feedback, demonstrates our dedication to meeting evolving needs while exploring avenues to enhance service offerings and generate income.

Our facilities team have done an outstanding job in maintaining our premises, including internal and external refurbishments and project management support for the increased bedroom capacity programme. The team's diligent work ensures a conducive environment for our residents and staff alike.

The success of the capital appeal launched in 2023 is a testament to the exceptional efforts of our fundraising team. This initiative will significantly impact our ability to serve vulnerable adults for years to come, ensuring our facilities and services remain future-proofed.

Lastly, I am pleased to have launched a recognition programme to acknowledge and reward outstanding staff achievements over the last year. As we embark on another year, I am confident that with the continued support and dedication of our staff, trustees, volunteers, donors, and families, The Meath Epilepsy Charity will achieve even greater success in 2024.

Lee Bennett, CEO

OBJECTIVES & AIMS

ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT SERVICE

At The Meath Epilepsy Charity, our mission is to enrich the lives of individuals with complex epilepsy and associated disabilities. We are dedicated to ensuring they receive the tailored support, expert care, and encouragement necessary to foster confidence, develop new skills, and achieve greater independence in their daily lives. In setting the objectives and planning the activities of the Charity, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

The Charity's illustrious history traces back to 1892, when the Countess of Meath inaugurated Westbrook House as a haven for "epileptic women and girls." Over the years, our mission has expanded to support both male and female adults navigating the challenges of epilepsy. While the quality and diversity of our services have evolved, it is heartening to note that The Meath Epilepsy Charity has steadfastly upheld its legacy as a "happy home," a sanctuary cherished by residents both past and present.

We are extremely grateful to Lady Meath for her foresight and are proud of our long history, the many years of highly effective services forming the bedrock upon which we have built our modern, proactive and highly professional organisation. One relative has described the organisation as *"The Meath is a most exceptional place and should be used as a blueprint for all care homes"*.

Amidst a nationwide shortage of specialist epilepsy care providers, The Meath Epilepsy Charity continues to stand out as a highly sought-after residential home, with a steadily growing waiting list for residential accommodation.

We offer a progressive pathway of specialised care and support for individuals aged 18 and above, living with complex epilepsy and other disabilities. From around-the-clock, high needs registered care to tailored support within a person's own tenancy, our diverse range of living options bridges the gap and provides flexible solutions tailored to individual needs.

Beyond our person-centred care, we champion independence and resilience. To further this initiative, we've invested in social enterprises aimed at celebrating individual abilities. This encompasses a wide range of on-site activities, both educational and social, hosted at our Skills Centre and newly launched 'Hive', located within our former on-site café.

Nestled in the serene surroundings of central Godalming, our community offers an idyllic setting complemented by exceptional facilities. From the picturesque Grade II listed manor house to modern annex houses catering to higher needs, alongside the dynamic Skills Centre, all set amidst landscaped grounds, our location combines tranquillity with accessibility to local amenities and transportation hubs. Embraced by our vibrant local community, The Meath Epilepsy Charity maintains strong ties with the town, proud to be at its heart.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

RESIDENTIAL HOUSES

The Meath comprises nine individual houses organised under the oversight of four Registered Managers, all reporting to the Head of Residential Care. At present, we accommodate 78 residents and have initiated a refurbishment programme to enhance our residential services. This initiative includes the addition of two bedrooms, a necessary step following the decommissioning of two rooms in the past year due to fire regulations. Our houses are individually named and listed below:

1. Cedar View & Cottages.
2. Bradbury House & Jeffrey Court.
3. Bradbury Wing & Little Meath.
4. Hambledon, Thursley & The Bradbury.

Our houses are fitted with state-of-the-art kitchen and bathroom facilities, ensuring convenience and comfort for our residents. While some houses offer en-suite facilities, others feature high-tech bathroom fittings, including specialised baths and showers, kindly funded via our generous donors, designed for comfort and accessibility.

In keeping with our commitment to personalised care, bedrooms are furnished according to the individual preferences of our residents and their families. Additionally, communal areas are decorated in accordance with residents' choices, which are gathered through surveys and questionnaires. This collaborative approach ensures that our residents feel truly at home in their surroundings, developing a sense of ownership and belonging.

Residents are meticulously matched with houses that align with their specific requirements, placing paramount importance on person-centred care. Under the guidance of a Registered Manager, each house operates with the support of a Deputy Manager and a dedicated team of Senior Support Workers and care staff. This structured approach ensures that residents receive tailored support tailored to their unique needs, nurturing a supportive environment within each household.

The residential care team comprises approximately 160 committed support workers who provide 24hr care to our residents. Given the persistent nationwide recruitment shortages, we also developed partnerships with reputable agencies to bolster our staffing levels when needed, due to the ongoing staffing shortages prevalent in the health and social care sector.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated colleagues within the residential care team, many of whom have been with us for a considerable time. Their unwavering commitment and willingness to go above and beyond have played a pivotal role in ensuring the well-being and comfort of our residents.

MEATH SUPPORTED LIVING

We provide supported living opportunities via three properties in Godalming, where we currently accommodate 8 tenants. Our dedicated team assists individuals with daily chores, appointment management, and the cultivation of social and independence skills.

Many of our tenants actively volunteer within the local community, leveraging the facilities and resources available to them.

Benefiting from the expertise of our long-standing staff, we offer tailored support to each tenant under the supervision of a newly appointed Supported Living Manager. Our tenants are encouraged to participate in activity sessions at the Meath's Skills Centre, attend epilepsy clinics and actively engage in the local community. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment among our tenants, enriching their overall living experience.

Our newly appointed Supported Living Manager is currently conducting a comprehensive review of our service, actively researching alternative supported living provisions within the community to glean best practices. The aim is to further develop our service, supporting an expansion of this provision to complement our existing residential care service. This expansion will create additional opportunities for residents at The Meath to develop skills and transition into the local community.

By exploring innovative approaches and collaborating with other community resources, our Supported Living Manager seeks to enhance our offerings, ensuring that we provide comprehensive and effective support tailored to the evolving needs of our residents. This proactive approach underlines our commitment to empowering individuals to lead fulfilling lives while promoting their integration into the wider community.

HEALTH & WELLBEING TEAM

We are delighted to have strengthened the health & wellbeing team by appointing a new Epilepsy Nurse Specialist to oversee the provision of therapies for the people we support, including physiotherapy and occupational therapy, as well as bringing a wealth of epilepsy expertise to The Meath.

Lisa O'Brien, appointed as Head of Health & Wellbeing is committed to running regular epilepsy clinics, as well as providing comprehensive staff and family training sessions. In addition, Lisa conducts SUDEP (Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy) related risk assessments, promoting heightened awareness among staff members. Lisa's dedication to promoting staff education and enhancing overall awareness highlights our commitment to providing exemplary care to individuals affected by epilepsy.

We are eager to continue to offer on-site therapies, including a dedicated weekly GP clinic and several specialist neurology clinics throughout the year to provide a truly person-centred environment for the people we support.

Throughout 2023, our team underwent significant changes following the departure of our former neuro-physiotherapist. Subsequently, both physiotherapy assistants also opted to explore new

opportunities. Despite our efforts to recruit a replacement neuro-physiotherapist, we encountered challenges due to a shortage of suitably qualified candidates in the field. However, during this transition period, residents in need of physiotherapy were referred to the local community physiotherapist through our on-site GP clinic.

In response to these changes, we conducted a thorough review of our physiotherapy provision to ensure equitable access for all individuals. Following extensive consultations with our GP and community physiotherapist, it was recommended that the implementation of an on-site physiotherapist on a part-time basis would be beneficial. Additionally, we identified a greater need for two physiotherapy assistants to facilitate exercise programs effectively.

The Head of Health & Wellbeing and her team have made a commitment to collaborate closely with families in order to build the necessary clinical evidence to support client funding requests for physiotherapy. By working closely with families, the team aim to gather comprehensive information about each resident's needs and progress, thereby strengthening funding requests through robust clinical evidence.

This collaborative approach not only empowers families to actively participate in the care planning process but also ensures that funding requests accurately reflect the individual requirements of each resident. By leveraging the collective expertise and insights of both healthcare professionals and families, we can advocate more effectively for the vital physiotherapy services needed to support the health and well-being of our residents.

The Occupational Therapy (OT) provision continues to play a crucial role in supporting the residents of The Meath. The provision continues to be supported by one experienced OT and one OT Assistant.

Given the scarcity of client funding for OT provision, our allocation of treatment time is primarily based on functional and clinical need. Residents funded by CHC (Continuing Healthcare) receive regular 1:1 timetabled sessions of OT. For those who self-fund and have assessed need, allocated time is provided.

The provision of complementary therapy has significantly enriched the well-being experience for all our residents. Available to everyone, these treatments are delivered in our exquisite sensory room, enhancing the overall therapeutic experience. Our complementary therapist is proficient in Reflexology, Aromatherapy, Reiki, and Indian Head Massage, providing a diverse range of options tailored to individual needs.

To ensure equity for all residents, we have conducted a review of our complementary therapy offering, this was prompted by the notable improvements observed in mood and self-esteem post treatment. As a result, we now offer six sessions throughout the year to each resident. Any additional sessions beyond this allocation will be arranged and paid for either through the funding authority or by family members, ensuring accessibility to these beneficial treatments while maintaining fairness and sustainability.

We are confident that Lisa's leadership will further raise our efforts in supporting the health and wellbeing of our residents.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Skills Centre

The overarching aim of the Skills Centre seamlessly aligns with the objectives of the Wellbeing team. The sessions created and provided within the Skills Centre are meticulously designed to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those who attend.

Since the beginning of the year, the Head of Health & Wellbeing has taken on the responsibility of overseeing the development of the Skills Centre. This renewed focus accentuates our commitment to enhancing the wellbeing element of activities and their impact on the lives of our residents. By integrating the Skills Centre within the broader framework of our wellbeing initiatives, we aim to create a holistic and enriching experience that promotes the overall health and happiness of our residents.

Some of the regular activities that are available to the people we support are:

- Food technology
- Horticulture
- Embroidery
- Choir/Music therapy
- Woodwork model making
- Geography
- Gym fitness sessions
- Sensory sessions

In addition to our regular activity programme, the team organises social events throughout the year, catering to various interests and preferences. These events include seasonal gatherings, a sports day, and our highly anticipated awards ceremony, which is always a highlight for residents, families, and staff alike.

With the refurbishment and expansion of two bedrooms, the Skills Centre will undergo reconfiguration to optimise the use of remaining space for activities. This presents an excellent opportunity for the team to refresh the rooms and create versatile, multi-purpose spaces to accommodate a renewed timetable later in 2024.

Moreover, we have identified a series of off-site activities following a resident-focused survey to determine the skills and activities most appealing to them. These activities include a walking group, canoeing, sailing, cycling, and the relaunch of our swimming club. By offering a diverse range of activities both on and off-site, we aim to ensure that our residents have ample opportunities for social engagement, skill development, and overall enjoyment.

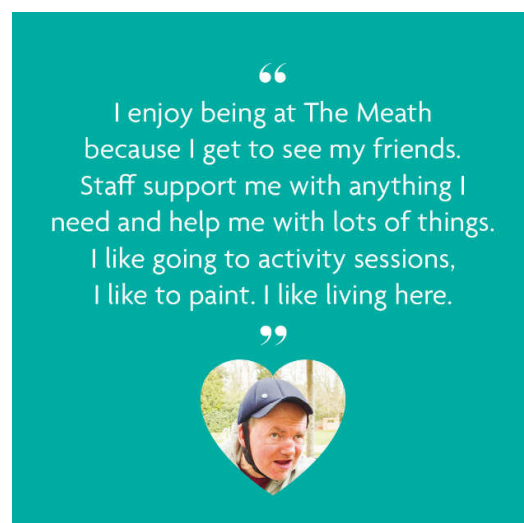
The Hive

In October 2023, our Head of Marketing & Communication successfully launched The Hive, transforming the former on-site Café into a vibrant multipurpose space. The Hive serves as a welcoming haven for the people we support to enjoy. Additionally, it offers residents, staff, and families the opportunity to gather for a healthy lunch, coffee, or a treat in a friendly and inclusive environment.

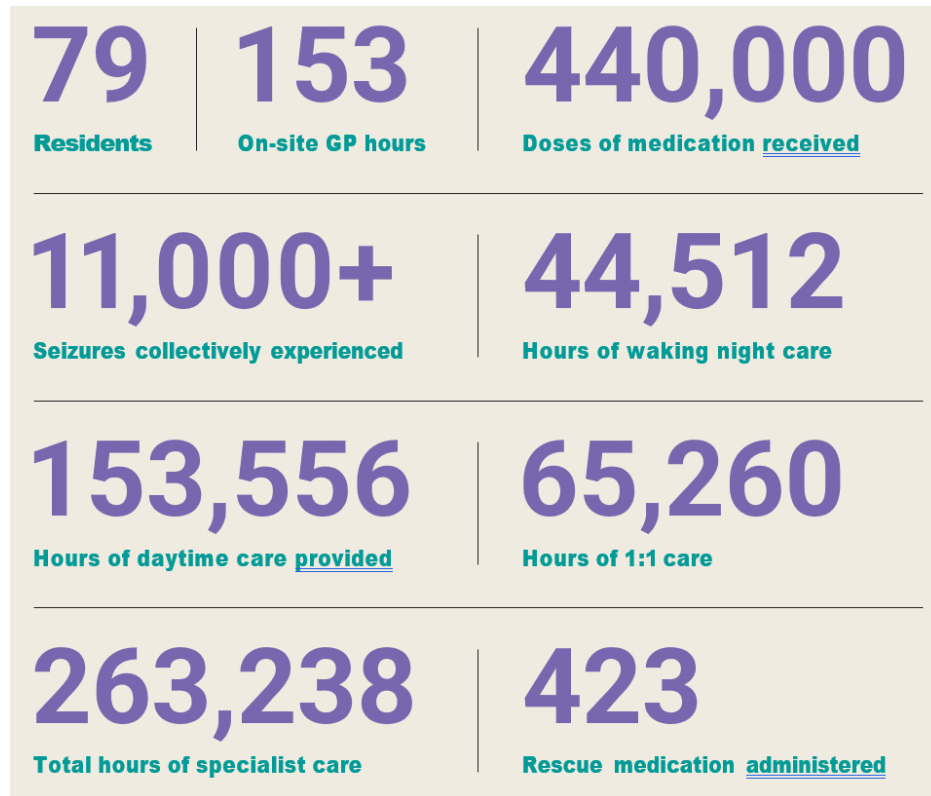
We're thrilled to have appointed several dynamic volunteers to support The Hive and work alongside the committed staff team, providing valuable assistance and creating opportunities for individuals we support to engage in meaningful activities as part of their OT life skills sessions. These resident volunteering opportunities have been met with great enthusiasm and have significantly contributed to the development of confidence and life skills within the community.

The Hive Café operates daily and hosts regular lunch clubs for individuals we support. Additionally, twilight activity sessions are planned for later in 2024, further enriching the offerings of this dynamic space. Our Social Saturday Club provides another avenue for individuals we support to enjoy homemade food, coffee, and conversation with friends, along with engaging in board games for added enjoyment.

The Hive embodies our commitment to fostering community engagement, socialisation, and skill development, providing a warm and welcoming environment for all who visit.



RESIDENTIAL CARE



Continuous Improvement Plan

We are delighted to announce that the residential care team has achieved 100% completion across the continuous improvement plan in Q1 of 2024, following the CQC downgrade in 2022. The team's unwavering dedication and tireless efforts have enabled us to close identified gaps and elevate standards across The Meath.

Our trustee-led audits continue to be conducted, with services being internally graded within the 'Good' or 'Outstanding' categories. This remarkable achievement reflects the commitment and dedication of our CEO in leading the residential care team, as well as the culture of accountability fostered within the monthly trustee-led health & social care committees.

This success serves as a testament to the collective efforts of our team and reaffirms our commitment to delivering exceptional care and support to all our residents.

We remain committed in our pursuit of excellence and look forward to continuing our journey of continuous improvement.

External Agency Inspections

To further validate the effectiveness of our internal audits, we engaged an independent mock inspection provider to conduct an unannounced inspection in early January. We were delighted to receive a 'Good' rating following their thorough 2-day visit.

This positive outcome is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team over the past 18 months. In response to the feedback received during the mock inspection, we have proactively developed a new action plan that addresses several minor improvement areas identified. This new plan will now supersede the 2022 continuous improvement plan, which has been successfully completed.

We are pleased with the progress we have made and remain committed to maintaining high standards of care and continuous improvement across The Meath.

Following the inspection, Sybill Teall, Compliance Consultant & Registered Nurse, commented *“The Meath is amazing place with genuine caring and competent staff. I would be happy for my relative to live there.”*

Compliance judgements

The judgements are made against the:

- Internal Quality Outcomes, Policies & Procedures
- Health and Social care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

New scenario-based training on houses

The mock inspection highlighted a key strength of The Meath: the development of a positive learning culture for staff, where colleagues are empowered to flourish and expand their knowledge. In line with our improvement plan, teams have been implementing role-play-based scenarios during team meetings to complement their e-learning and classroom learning initiatives.

These role-play scenarios cover a range of situations, including safeguarding incidents, first aid emergencies, and challenging behaviour scenarios. By engaging in hands-on, practical learning experiences, our team members gain valuable skills and knowledge that are essential in a fast-paced care environment.

This type of learning is actively encouraged and promoted across The Meath, as it facilitates the sharing of best practice and equips our team members with the necessary skills to deliver high-quality care effectively. We are committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning and development, ensuring that our staff are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of our residents and provide the best possible care.

Secondment programme

The CEO championed the residential management team to develop a secondment programme aimed at addressing short-staffed services while simultaneously offering career development opportunities. The objective was to reduce reliance on agency or temporary workers. This initiative has been met with enthusiasm by colleagues and has even resulted in a management promotion.

Moving forward, we are committed to promoting this initiative across The Meath to support staff development, create career opportunities, and enhance sustainability.

New Registered Manager Team

After a rigorous 6-month recruitment campaign, we are delighted to announce the appointment of a new Registered Manager, alongside the promotion of a fourth colleague from within the organisation to the same role. This brings our residential care team back to four Registered Managers, aligning with our previous management model. These new appointments are poised to have a positive impact on The Meath, bolstering oversight and development of the care team to ensure the delivery of exemplary care to our residents.

Unfortunately, our Head of Residential Care has been absent on medical grounds. We eagerly anticipate her return once she has completed her treatment programme. In the interim, we extend our gratitude to Carole Brockwell and Tania Evans, current Registered Managers, for their unwavering commitment and dedication in temporarily bolstering the residential care team over the past 6 months. Their dedication has been invaluable during this transitional period.

Safeguarding Audit

In our commitment to continuously track the effectiveness of our internal audits, we have engaged an independent safeguarding expert to conduct a thorough review of our processes and policies. While this review is due to be completed by the end of April 2024, training needs have already been identified and are currently underway.

The safeguarding of the individuals we support is of utmost importance and necessitates collective responsibility. We have established a safeguarding working group, which has attracted 8 staff members following an organisation-wide appeal. The first meeting is scheduled for the end of April 2024, with a focus on addressing the actions identified from the safeguarding audit and fostering a safe and secure environment for all stakeholders. This working group will collaboratively review, assess, and strengthen safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices.

Furthermore, several safeguarding training workshops have been conducted across the first quarter of 2024, targeting trustees, senior managers, and the residential care team. These sessions have reinforced how to address emerging safeguarding risks and challenges while providing forums for colleagues to share insights, concerns, and suggestions related to safeguarding.

A significant training area identified was how to best support residents with friendships and relationships. Given that a small cohort of residents are engaged in consensual relationships, it was deemed essential to assess their level of awareness before any organisation-wide rollout.

Key staff across the residential care team will undergo a "train the trainer" session on this topic in May 2024, ensuring they are equipped to effectively support residents in this aspect. The recent mock inspection observed how residents living at the services were guided by staff on how to keep safe and what safety meant for them, as well as how to raise any concerns. This included Makaton guidance and flash cards if required. This culture supported staff to ensure that residents were as involved as possible in the identification and management of risks and their mitigation.

The collaborative working group approach has been extended to create a policies and procedures committee, comprising staff members who have volunteered to review, assess, and champion new operational policies and procedures for the residential services. This initiative is led by our two Registered Managers, who provide guidance and oversight.

We are excited to announce that a newly appointed Compliance Manager will be joining the committee in April 2024. Their expertise and leadership will contribute significantly to the ongoing efforts of the committee, ensuring that our policies and procedures align with regulatory requirements and industry best practices and ultimately improve the quality of care and services provided to our residents.

Maintenance tracking

The trustee-led audits have emphasised the importance of ongoing monitoring of facilities to ensure proactive maintenance planning and resident satisfaction. While the trustee-led audits incorporate a facilities assessment during inspections, Registered Managers have introduced a monthly maintenance inspection across all services in collaboration with the Head of Estates. This initiative aims to enhance safety, comfort, and compliance demonstration.

Moreover, a newly developed maintenance tracker has been implemented for colleagues to adopt a more proactive approach to managing assets and equipment. This tool supports preventative maintenance planning, enabling timely interventions and ensuring the longevity and functionality of our facilities.

By implementing these measures, we are committed to maintaining high standards of safety, comfort, and compliance across our facilities, ultimately enhancing the overall experience and satisfaction of our residents.

Increased Residential Capacity

Following the decommissioning of two bedrooms in 2022 due to fire regulations, The Meath has been exploring the best strategy to recover the significant loss of income. To restore our residential capacity to 81, we have initiated works to expand The Cottages service by adding two new additional bedrooms. Additionally, we will repurpose certain areas of the Skills Centre to create further space.

This plan enables us to strike a balance between the needs of our day services and the crucial requirement for the charity to generate sustainable income. By strategically expanding our residential capacity, we aim to maximise our resources and ensure the long-term financial stability of The Meath.

Staff Recognition

Amidst the team's remarkable achievements, including the successful completion of the improvement plan, the establishment of collaborative working groups, and the attainment of a 'Good' rating in the mock inspection, the CEO has initiated several rewards and incentives to acknowledge their hard work and dedication. Modest bonuses have been allocated to those who have gone above and beyond in their roles.

Over the past three months, the team has enjoyed a variety of treats, including pizza vans, ice cream vans, and complimentary breakfasts, as tokens of appreciation for their outstanding contribution to The Meath. These gestures serve as a testament to our commitment to recognising and valuing the efforts of our team members.

The positive impact of these initiatives is reflected in the feedback received from the mock inspector, who noted that staff expressed satisfaction with the review of their pay and receipt of bonuses at Christmas. One staff member remarked, "this is a wonderful place to work, and I am supported to develop and do my job well." **Staff Member.**

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Appointment of Epilepsy Nurse Specialist

Lisa O'Brien, appointed as the Epilepsy Nurse Specialist at The Meath in late 2023, has played a pivotal role in overseeing and advancing the health and well-being team's initiatives. Central to Lisa's mission is the education and empowerment of staff to recognise and manage the risks of SUDEP (Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy) while identifying individuals most vulnerable to establish robust risk assessment protocols for heightened safety measures.

Having a dedicated specialist nurse on-site has significantly bolstered The Meath's capacity to manage complex seizure cases while fostering seamless communication with healthcare practitioners and neurologists. This integrated approach not only ensures comprehensive care for individuals with epilepsy but also instils confidence in their families that their loved ones' needs are vigilantly attended to.

Moreover, Lisa's presence has resulted in a tangible decrease in emergency calls and hospital admissions, highlighting the effectiveness of proactive intervention strategies implemented by the health and well-being team.

SUDEP (Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy) & Seizure Safety Checklists

The implementation of SUDEP and seizure safety checklists has been a significant step forward, leading to the identification of 19% of residents deemed at higher risk. To address their needs, comprehensive mitigating strategies have been integrated into their daily care provision. This includes pioneering initiatives such as the introduction of anti-suffocation pillows and EMBRACE 2 epilepsy alarms, aimed at providing an added layer of protection and peace of mind for these individuals and their families. Lisa's proactive approach to exploring new solutions reflects our ongoing commitment to advancing epilepsy care and prioritising the health and safety of the people we support.

Medication Management

The team's involvement in medication formulation plans has produced notable results, with three consecutive months of zero medication errors this year. This achievement emphasises the effectiveness of the implemented protocol, which ensures timely and safe execution of prescribed changes, coupled with regular follow-up reviews to maintain optimal medication management.

In addition to these efforts, Lisa leads strategic liaison with the pharmacy, particularly crucial during the recent national shortage of anti-seizure medication. Her proactive approach ensures the safe and uninterrupted supply of medications, safeguarding the well-being of The Meath's residents relying on these essential treatments.

Epilepsy Reviews

After conducting a thorough assessment of the epilepsy needs, Lisa has implemented significant improvements in treatment protocols, specialist referrals, and exploration of alternative therapies like Vagal Nerve Stimulation (VNS).

To enhance seizure monitoring and support neurology clinic reviews, new seizure charts are being developed. These charts will enable the team to classify seizure data more effectively, leading to more targeted and informed management strategies. During a recent on-site neurology clinic, the piloted seizure chart proved invaluable in facilitating comprehensive reviews and management of The Meath's residents' seizure profiles.

In 2023, a total of 11,000+ seizures were recorded, with 423 doses of emergency medication administered. With enhanced staff training and improved seizure recognition protocols, it is anticipated that the recorded seizure numbers will rise this year. However, this increase reflects a more accurate and proactive approach to seizure management rather than a deterioration in residents' conditions.

On-site specialist clinics

The health and well-being team at The Meath provides invaluable support by organising and hosting several on-site clinics, covering a range of medical services including blood tests, optometry, community physiotherapy, podiatry and vaccination clinics. Currently, we are home to a VNS (Vagus nerve Stimulator) clinic which is supported by our resident Epilepsy Nurse Specialist.

Among these clinics, The Meath has the privilege of hosting on-site neurology clinics conducted by Professor John Duncan from The National Hospital. These clinics, held twice yearly, play a crucial role in ensuring that individuals supported by The Meath receive timely updates on treatments and interventions, without the need to travel to Central London for appointments. This convenience greatly enhances accessibility and ensures continuity of care.

Professor John Duncan's involvement extends beyond clinical consultations; he also delivered an exceptional presentation at The Meath's Family Forum held in November last year. During his presentation, he provided insights into the future landscape of epilepsy care in the adult population, emphasising the role of advanced technology in diagnostics, treatment, and the

development of personal skills necessary to support individuals with epilepsy. His focus on reducing discrimination against individuals with epilepsy highlights The Meath's commitment to promoting inclusivity and empowerment within its community.

Epilepsy Training & Awareness

The Epilepsy Specialist Nurse at The Meath plays a vital role in enhancing epilepsy awareness and safety throughout the organisation by providing comprehensive training to all staff. This training covers crucial aspects such as emergency medication administration and the identification of epilepsy-related risks.

Looking ahead, there are initiatives underway to extend this epilepsy awareness training beyond staff members to include families of the individuals supported by The Meath, the residents themselves, and other stakeholders. By expanding the reach of this training, The Meath aims to foster a more informed and supportive environment for those affected by epilepsy.

Furthermore, recognising the value and demand for such training, there are plans to potentially offer this expertise to other care providers as a service. By outsourcing epilepsy awareness training, The Meath could not only raise awareness and develop skills in other communities but also potentially generate additional resources to support its own initiatives. This presents an exciting opportunity for The Meath to make a broader impact in promoting epilepsy awareness and improving care standards beyond its immediate community.

Occupational Therapy

The scope of OT intervention this year encompasses various areas, including:

- Conducting activity of daily living assessments and goal setting
- Fostering motivation and engagement
- Assisting with daily routines and planning occupations
- Supporting residents' physical and psychological needs in their daily lives
- Facilitating community access and skills development
- Promoting sensory awareness, both interpersonal and intrapersonal, through the development of sensory libraries and addressing evidence of need
- Enhancing communication through effective liaison and education of staff, family, and friends
- Through these interventions, our OT team strives to empower residents to lead fulfilling and independent lives, maximising their potential and overall well-being.

Over the past year, the OT team has dedicated efforts to developing engaging life skills sessions, catering to both 1:1 sessions and groups. This initiative has been facilitated by our team's completion of the ASDAN qualification, which has equipped them with the tools and knowledge to effectively deliver these sessions. As a result, we have observed significant progress in residents' skills, enabling them to successfully volunteer in our Hive social enterprise.

In addition to delivering life skills sessions, our OT Assistant plays a pivotal role in enhancing the skills of our activity coordinators. By providing training and support, she empowers our coordinators to deliver ASDAN courses to the individuals we support.

The positive impact of our life skills sessions, which cover topics such as kitchen hazards, food safety, healthy eating, and cookery courses, has been evident. Due to this success, we anticipate recruiting a further OT Assistant in the upcoming financial year. This expansion will enable us to continue delivering high-quality life skills sessions and further enhance the independence and well-being of our residents.

The team has made remarkable progress in implementing the ASDAN life skills training programme for the individuals we support. This comprehensive programme covers crucial areas such as kitchen safety, healthy eating habits, and customer service skills. As a result, several residents have successfully transitioned into volunteer roles at The Hive (on-site Café).

Continual support from the Occupational Therapy (OT) team has been instrumental in fostering skill development among the residents. Through careful observation, constructive feedback, and encouragement, the OT team has effectively boosted their confidence in tackling new tasks, including customer service, cash handling, and food preparation.

A recent milestone worth celebrating is the active involvement of residents in preparing a buffet lunch for our monthly lunch clubs. These clubs serve as platforms for enhancing social skills and self-assurance. The residents' participation in such events highlights their growing capabilities and confidence levels.

Overall, the dedication and collaborative efforts of the team have led to significant strides in empowering individuals with essential life skills and nurturing their integration into social and vocational settings.

"Sybella helped me work out a traffic light system. It helped me feel calm and in control. First of all I went on the train with a support worker next to me, then I did the journey a couple of times with my support worker sitting at the back of the carriage. I also worked at being able to self-administer my medication, that meant that I could then be brave and take the journey on my own. I feel really proud that I can travel alone now and it's good because I can see my friends outside of The Meath easily now." **Andrew, Meath Resident.**

"I feel proud that I did my sponsored swim challenge. I went swimming with Physio and Kim (OT) helped me to make the poster and plan out how many lengths to do each week. Kim helped me collect sponsorship on a form too." **Philippa, Meath Resident**

Psychological Support Services

The Meath's Health & Wellbeing Coordinator has recently attained a master's in psychology, marking a significant advancement in his qualifications. In collaboration with the Epilepsy Nurse Specialist, he is expanding his role to offer psychological support to residents, employing strategies such as counselling and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

This initiative is still in its early stages, with three residents participating in weekly pilot sessions. To ensure the highest quality of care, the coordinator will receive clinical supervision from an external practitioner, providing additional expertise and guidance.

We foresee this service becoming a valuable addition to our offerings, with the potential for further development and expansion. By establishing evidence of its effectiveness, we aim to secure funding for its continuation and growth in the future.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

The Skills Centre

In early 2024, the Head of Health & Wellbeing assumed leadership of the Skills Centre and conducted a comprehensive review of its activities. This included gathering feedback from residents and families to develop an engaging timetable for April 2024. The collaborative effort resulted in a revamped schedule aimed at enhancing overall cognitive, emotional, and physical wellbeing.

Responding to the feedback received, the team has introduced several exciting new activities, including Nutrition & Keep Fit sessions, a Swimming Club, Movement to Music classes, Mindfulness & Relaxation sessions, Walking groups & Nature trails, and Circuit Games.

A particularly noteworthy addition to our offerings is the introduction of the Donkey Therapy ASDAN qualification. Through a partnership with a donkey sanctuary, we now welcome a donkey on a weekly basis to our grounds, providing invaluable support for residents pursuing this qualification. This initiative exemplifies The Meath's commitment to innovative and holistic approaches to wellbeing.

During the last year, the team have successfully delivered the following key events:

River Wey Exhibition – in collaboration with ArtVenture

This exciting collaborative project began in summer 2023 and has enabled the adults who are supported by both ArtVenture and The Meath to visit riverside settings together, to learn about and explore their own areas of interest.

“This project has provided lots of new subject matters and it’s been good to work with new people and go on visits. The project has also enabled me to step out of my comfort zone and try some creative writing”. **Andrew, Meath Resident**

Meath's got Talent

The Meath hosted its annual show in the grounds in July, welcoming residents to showcase their unique talents. Inclusivity is key, with every talent act warmly encouraged. Last year's event featured an impressive array of 14 acts, ranging from soulful singing performances to an energetic DJ set, and a lively dance troupe, among others. Residents eagerly anticipate this event as an opportunity to proudly display their skills and talents. Beyond the individual showcases, the talent show serves as a unifying occasion, bringing everyone together to celebrate newfound abilities and bask in the joy of a fun-filled day.

Outdoor Games & BBQ

We were thrilled to host Colgate Palmolive for a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) day, where they held an outdoor games event and BBQ for the individuals we support. Led by the dynamic collaboration of the Skills Centre and Fundraising teams, the day was a resounding success. A variety of outdoor games were enjoyed on the lawn, including football, archery, and boccia, providing endless entertainment for our residents. Amidst the excitement, a relaxation zone was set up for moments of meditation and mindfulness, promoting holistic well-being. Adding to the

festivities, our resident DJ set the perfect mood with a lively music set, while volunteers from Colgate Palmolive kindly manned the BBQ. This festive occasion was a highlight for both residents and staff alike, fostering a sense of community and shared enjoyment. Our sincere appreciation extends to Colgate Palmolive for their generous sponsorship, which played a pivotal role in making this memorable event possible.

Sports Day

In September, the collaborative efforts of the Skills Centre and Fundraising team excelled once more as they organised an exciting on-site sports day. This eagerly anticipated event was a direct response to residents' requests following an internal events questionnaire, demonstrating our commitment to providing person centred care. The day was filled with a variety of engaging, accessible, and enjoyable games tailored to the needs of the people we support. A visit from a local pizza van added a delicious twist to the festivities, much to everyone's delight. *Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to Sentinel One for their generous sponsorship, which made this memorable event possible.* With such resounding success, we eagerly anticipate making the sports day an annual tradition, further enhancing the sense of community and friendship at The Meath.

Choir Blast

The Meath Choir had the privilege of participating in ChoirBlast last year, a vibrant local community festival dedicated to supporting The Meath and another noteworthy local charity. ChoirBlast serves as a vibrant celebration of contemporary choirs from across the UK, making it an ideal platform for The Meath Choir to showcase their remarkable talent.

Renowned for their weekly performances, the Meath Choir's commitment to inclusivity shines through their incorporation of Makaton into their repertoire.

The Meath's dedication to accessibility not only enriches their performances but also fosters a deeper connection with the audience.

A family member in attendance at ChoirBlast commented *"The Meath Choir was wonderful, given too an oppressively hot day. My daughter loved being part of it, indeed the whole choir performed magnificently well. Your Choir master's energy is awesome."* **Family Member.**

Over the past year, our calendar has been brimming with various events, ranging from festive Christmas parties to heartwarming Carol services at the local church, and a Valentine's Karaoke night. The Skills Centre team has been the driving force behind these dynamic and memorable occasions, consistently delivering excitement and engagement to those we support. Whether it's actively participating in community events or arranging on-site get-togethers at our dedicated Skills Centre.

All individual's accomplishments are recognised and celebrated annually at our Annual Skills Centre Awards Ceremony. Awards are granted for personal milestones, such as enhanced social skills, increased confidence, the completion of fitness challenges, and successful attainment of ASDAN accredited life skills courses. The ceremony, scheduled for May 2024, is currently in the planning stages. Lee Bennett, CEO, comments *"It's really important that we celebrate*

achievement together, we recognise ability all year round but having the awards day, the people we support are able to celebrate their own individual achievements with their peers and family members. It's a moment for them to take stock and see how much they have achieved. I look forward to seeing what they set their sights on next as we have some wonderful opportunities here at The Meath".

The residents and their families are grateful for these efforts, recognising the exceptional care and attention to detail that sets The Meath apart from other residential care homes.

The Hive

The Hive opened in October 2023 as our on-site café and social space to meet, eat and thrive. The Hive is a not-for-profit Meath social enterprise, and prices are kept as low as possible to encourage everyone to join the buzz and enjoy a visit. The Hive Café is open daily for Healthy fresh snacks, freshly made smoothies and milkshakes, homemade cakes, great coffee and tasty healthy lunches.

Our friendly team of Hive Staff and Volunteers endeavor to make The Hive fully inclusive and fun for all. From regular featured Artists exhibitions to Hive Helpers serving, assisting in the kitchen or helping to keep the Hive tidy and in check, we are proud to champion collaborative working with community volunteers and the wonderful people we support.

The Hive works closely with the dedicated Meath Occupational Therapy Team who deliver pre-entry ASDAN courses in Food Safety and Hazards in the Kitchen before the people we support progress to become Hive Helpers, regular Hive volunteers.

Hive activities include:

- Monday-Friday Café
- Fortnightly Social Saturday Sessions
- Seasonal events

The team have successfully hosted several seasonal events since launching The Hive last year, including 'Build a Snowman', 'Fireworks & Hot Chocolate' and a 'Sensory Light Show' to accommodate the diverse needs across The Meath. All events are designed to be inclusive and provide a welcoming and enjoyable experience for the people we support.

Thanksgiving event

"Bingo was fun, and we tried different food." **Louise, Resident.**

"I was happy to have the Thanksgiving evening because I could share thanksgiving food with my friends." **Nathan, Resident.**

Pumpkin Evening

"I made some lovely decorations and had a great time." **Peter, Resident.**

Elvis Presley night

"I had a brilliant evening and really enjoyed myself." **Sharon, Supported Living Client.**

The Hive is committed to promoting healthy eating and has successfully introduced a healthier menu since the new year. The team have incorporated more fruit and vegetables to provide diverse choices. Plans are underway to introduce traffic light menu icons to further support the health eating efforts for the people we support.

Coming next to The Hive is the opportunity for extended opening hours, having increased resources, including the ability to offer a regular calendar of events with the option of educational sessions as well as social evenings.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to our dedicated staff team and volunteers for generously offering their time to support the successful launch of The Hive. We eagerly anticipate growing the enterprise throughout 2024 to ensure the people we support continue to meet, eat and thrive at The Hive.

HR & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Culture & Values Roll-Out

In Autumn 2023, The Meath initiated an organisation-wide consultation aimed at developing a set of values that truly reflect our dynamic, inclusive, and caring working environment. This comprehensive consultation process involved a series of off-site meetings starting from trustee level and cascading down to group meetings involving all frontline workers.

The primary objective of this consultation was to listen to feedback and insights from all stakeholders to ensure the establishment of a collaborative and proactive workforce, aligned with our continuous improvement plan. Both residents and staff were actively involved in the consultation process, with group meetings, surveys and questionnaires distributed to encourage engagement and gauge satisfaction.

We are proud to announce that because of this consultation, we now have a robust set of values in place to

will also

efforts,
and retain
our

support employee engagement and set clear expectations. These values play a pivotal role in our recruitment and retention ensuring that we attract individuals who align with organisational culture.



Moving forward, the next stage of our culture programme involves incorporating these values into our performance management and reward processes. By embedding our values into these critical aspects The Meath, we aim to further strengthen our culture and drive positive outcomes for both our team members and the individuals we support.

Staff Recruitment & Retention

Recruiting and retaining staff within the care sector remains the primary priority for our HR team. The primary source of candidates continues to be online job boards, as referrals remain scarce due to the talent shortage in the sector.

In response to this challenge, the Trustees have endorsed a 7% pay increase for frontline workers, including differentials effective April 1, aimed at enhancing talent attraction and retention efforts. This new rate positions us in the upper quartile percentage and remains highly competitive within the Surrey care community.

We anticipate that this increase, combined with our improved culture and enhanced classroom training initiatives, will positively impact both recruitment and retention efforts. Additionally, professional training qualifications are available for staff, with two members of the residential management team recently celebrated for achieving their prestigious Level 5 QCF in Health & Social Care Awards. These achievements not only recognise their dedication and expertise but also serve as a testament to our commitment to supporting staff development and career progression within The Meath.

Mental Health Champions

Recognising the significant impact of mental health conditions among our colleagues, the CEO has championed a mental health first aid training program. This initiative garnered high interest and attracted 10 colleagues to complete a Mental Health First Aider training program.

We are proud to have developed 10 colleagues across The Meath to become appointed mental health champions. Their primary role is to promote mental well-being, reduce stigma, and foster a supportive environment.

To further support our colleagues, a quarterly mental health forum has been established, led by the HR team. This forum serves as a platform to review new initiatives and trends in mental health, as well as provide an opportunity for the champions to confidentially share information and feedback.

FUNDRAISING & MARKETING

Despite the very rapidly changing fundraising landscape, the fundraising team, for the sixth successive year, has exceeded its target. The team are delighted to have secured £1,137.660 this year. They are very grateful to everyone who has supported this year as we navigate the cost-of-living crisis. Never has each and every donation been so highly valued and needed. Thank you.

Our fundraising team includes two in-house professional fundraisers. We do not undertake door to door or street fundraising and do not use external fundraisers. We are regulated by the Institute of Fundraisers and have received no complaints about our fundraising practices during the year. We only communicate with existing donors or members of the public who have expressed an interest in our charity.

The majority of The Meath's donors wish to remain anonymous, but we are pleased to confirm restricted grants from National Lottery Community Fund, Garfield Weston and the Community Foundation for Surrey. We are very fortunate to receive ongoing support from a variety of individuals, organisations and Trusts. We thank them all for supporting us to continue our valuable work of enabling and empowering extremely vulnerable individuals to live safe, happy and fulfilled lives.

In July 2023, we launched our £1.1m Capital Appeal. This appeal will enable us to restore, renovate and renew our main historic building and upgrade our internal and external systems to provide the safest home for the people we support. Due to the risks associated with complex epilepsy, the use of modern technologies will reduce the risk to the life and provide peace of mind to staff and relatives who look after our vulnerable residents. Our Grade II listed manor house and extensive grounds were left to use by our founder, Mary, Countess of Meath. Mary's gift of a 'safe and happy home' is one that we are extremely grateful for. Her gift grew into a 132-year legacy which has enabled us to provide generations of vulnerable adults with the best care possible in a wonderful home.

The Charity is committed to providing a variety of opportunities, combined with specialist care and support, which comes at a significant cost. The individuals we support receive funding from their own Local Authority or NHS Trust for a basic care package. The income raised by the fundraising team covers the cost of non-statutory services and all the extra activities, services or equipment that mean so much to those in our care. As was highlighted in last year's report, the focus for 2023/24 has been on core funding, strengthening the Charity's financial position and building reserves and this will remain our focus for 2024/25 and to continue to fundraise for the Capital Appeal.

Events Highlights

We were delighted that our Patron and Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP kindly hosted a thank you event for our supporters at 11 Downing Street. In December, we hosted a spectacular Carol Concert at St Clement Danes for which the highlight was our Meath Choir's performance. The team also ran several smaller events ranging from an abseil down Guildford Cathedral, and outdoor cinema and numerous events in the local community. The team are very grateful for everyone supporting these events. In addition, eight CSR days were successfully

hosted, thank you to everyone who has volunteered, supported and engaged with The Meath over the last year.

Marketing activities which have supported our fundraising and awareness of the work of the charity include:

- The Meath's new website (launching May 2024)
- Annual Digital Christmas Appeal
- Supporting The Capital Appeal
- Supporting Fundraising & Supporter events
- Continuing to support our on-going need to attract new staff in the context of the recruitment crisis.

The Meath Marketing department supports all key areas of The Meath which encourage audiences to live at, work at or support The Meath. Marketing activity takes place across a broad range of digital and print media. As well as external Marketing and Communications we also create internal communications or literature for different audiences from within The Meath Community.

The Marketing department uses subcontracted staff for a variety of specialist activities including social media scheduling, videography, and design. We are active on Linked In, Instagram, Facebook and X.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

During the year our total funds raised through contracts for residential services, social enterprises, and fundraising, together with investment income, totalled £8.8m. All of this income was used to fund the services and activities mentioned with a small amount being carried forward to help fund phase 2 of our capital appeal.

As shown in the restricted funds column in the Statement of Financial Activities, restricted income totalled £580k which was raised for life enrichment programmes, our capital appeal and other residential projects. At the year end we still have £337k available to be used as these programmes and projects progress.

Residential services and supported living are our primary charitable purpose and our largest source of income, totalling £7.4m. These are also where we face our biggest challenges in terms of rising costs driven by a combination of inflation and a shortage of care staff. During the year we continued to be more dependent on agency staff than we would like; to counter this we prioritised front-line staff pay rates which is having a positive impact on recruitment.

Donations and legacies total £1.1m this year, of which £320k is for our capital appeal. This income provides support for our life enrichment programmes, through our skills centre and wellbeing teams, as well as the refurbishment of our Grade 2 listed main building. Phase 1 of this refurbishment is already complete, phase 2 is due to start in May 2024 with estimated costs of £400k (including vat).

The balance of our income is from our social enterprises, extending our skills centre and Hive café to both residents and external users, as well as fund-raising events and investment income. These additional funds enable us to continue to provide the life enriching activities which set us apart as a centre of excellence for adults with epilepsy.

Financially this has been a very good year, the Statement of Financial Activities shows a net surplus of income over expenditure for the year of £285k and the Statement of Cash Flows shows net cash generated of £725k. This has contributed to an increase in general fund by £348k to a total of £2.2m.

The Charity's business plan for the year to 31 March 2025 shows that whilst the completion of phase 2 and other capital projects will lock up c£500k of cash the Charity will continue to have adequate reserves and will be able to meet its liabilities as they fall due. Accordingly, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees recognise the need for the Charity to have sufficient reserves to be able to meet its charitable obligations and provide for a stable and sustainable future. The current policy is to build the unrestricted general fund to a level that covers 3 months' expenditure plus any one-off major capital projects. Unrestricted general fund at 31 March 2024 amounted to £2,002,377, after deducting £200k to be used for capital projects, representing 3.3 months' average fixed costs. The balance of major capital projects will be come from restricted funds.

Investment policy and objectives

Our objectives are to achieve capital and investment growth to maintain the value of our investments whilst at the same time generating income to support our charitable activities. The Trustee Directors invest as ethically as possible, whilst also seeking to ensure the investment returns remain competitive. Investments had a value of £964k at 31 March 2024. The Trustee directors can make such arrangements as they think fit for the investment of the charity's funds and have regard to the likely timing of major future development expenditure and the level of market prices when making decisions on investments. Social, environmental and ethical aspects of making investments are regularly reviewed by the Trustee directors together with the Charity's investment advisers.

Principal Risks & Uncertainties

All significant activities undertaken are subject to a risk review as part of the initial assessment and implementation. Major risks, for this purpose, are those that have a significant impact on:

- Operational performance, including risks to our staff and volunteers.
- Financial sustainability, including stability and security of income.
- Achieving our aims and objectives.
- Meeting the expectations of our beneficiaries and supporters.

The Board of Trustees review and evaluate these risks on an on-going basis and satisfy themselves that adequate systems and procedures are in place to manage the risks identified. The main risks identified by the Board are:

- Local authorities not increasing fees in line with inflation.
- Lack of ability to recruit, train and retain staff.
- External cyber-attacks.

The processes to mitigate these risks are summarised below:

- Challenging local authorities and NHS Trusts for annual uplifts and negotiating low offers, with the last resort of eviction threats if increases not provided. Ensure a robust expression of interest register that mitigates against potential eviction notices.
- Converting rooms adjoining The Cottages to increase our capacity and thereby our income.
- Ensure The Meath offers a competitive pay rate in the Surrey care field. Implement new onboarding/induction tools, provide regular exit interviews for improvements and suggestions and identify new recruitment advertising platforms, supported by a new Head of HR who brings a wealth of recruitment experience.
- To work closely with our new IT support provider to maintain cyber training and awareness across the organisation and approval has been given for the introduction of MFA (multi-factor authentication).

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Review of last year's goals

The Board is delighted with the noteworthy progress achieved over the past year in advancing the key goals outlined in the 2022/2023 strategic plan. Below is a succinct summary highlighting the evidence of outcomes attained:

1. Delivery of best possible care experience & outcomes.

Notwithstanding the excellent recent mock inspection result and positive testimonial from the visiting inspector, the residential care team have hosted numerous external agency partners over the last 12 months receiving positive feedback on the service provision and commitment of the staff. A testimonial was received earlier this year from a local authority following an annual review of one of our residents. The Social Worker commented *"Following the review meeting earlier this week, I was so pleased to see the progress LW has made since moving to The Meath. I knew LW at her previous placement and I can see that there is a huge improvement in her communication and confidence levels. Although she is an anxious lady by nature, LW is such a gentle kind person who strives to reach her potential, which has been apparent over the years I have known her. I know that LW's family are really pleased with the progress she has been making and it was a pleasure to see just how well LW is thriving at The Meath (despite her various conditions)."* **Social Worker.**

A family member whose son moved into The Meath in the last year recently commented *"I have seen a huge change in my son over the past month. After 9 months I think things are finally coming together – he is displaying less anxiety, interacting more with staff and residents, calling me less and generally engaging more. You all have done a great job at really understanding his seizures - and noticing the signs of a seizure coming on. It is this early intervention that is key to helping manage his seizures effectively."* **Family Member.**

To alleviate the pressure on frontline workers and enable them to dedicate quality time to the individuals we support, the CEO has recently appointed a dedicated driver. This driver will facilitate hospital appointments and organise group day trips, aiming to enhance the overall care experience. This appointment aligns with our goal of delivering the best possible care and provides additional opportunities for residents to enjoy external trips and visits.

Key stakeholder engagement for staff, families, commissioning partnerships & supporters.

Over the past year, there has been a concerted effort to elevate and cultivate communication and engagement with key stakeholders. Staff participation in internal surveys indicates a notable improvement, with communication rated at 8/10, a significant advancement from previous years. A recent staff testimonial highlights this positive trend: *"I am inspired and work to the best of my ability. I continue to be very committed to my role and The Meath to improve residential services"* **Meath - Employee.**

The roll-out of The Meath's values was met with enthusiastic reception from staff, providing them with the opportunity to actively engage in the organisation-wide consultation process and contribute to shaping the future working environment.

Families have received enhanced communication from the services caring for their loved ones. The residential care team have demonstrated commendable progress by consistently producing weekly updates and monthly event summaries for the residential homes. In addition, the CEO has conducted several online meetings with groups of families over the past 6 months to provide updates on staff changes, new initiatives, and developments within the services.

Following family forum events, questionnaires are distributed to gather feedback and gauge interest in future discussion topics. Families have welcomed the inclusion of keynote speakers at these forums, with Professor John Duncan from the National Hospital delivering an impressive talk on the future landscape of epilepsy at the November event.

Feedback from the November family forum highlights the positive impact of these events:

“Family forums are always very interesting and much appreciated. We are so lucky that The Meath tries very hard to keep us up to date with everything that is happening.” - Family Member.

“Thank you for an excellent meeting. Very interesting to hear from Professor Duncan about the future of epilepsy care. A very positive meeting about the way forward for The Meath. Well done to all involved.” - Family Member.

These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement within the organisation.

2. Supported Living provision.

The CEO has been actively collaborating with the recently appointed Supported Living Manager to evaluate the current model and explore best practices from other providers, aiming to raise the service to an outstanding level. Efforts have been concentrated on offering tenants a more inclusive Meath service, including participation in on-site specialist clinics and the introduction of volunteering opportunities in The Hive.

Additionally, families of the tenants have been engaged through online family meetings, with plans for future on-site meetings later in the year, marking a significant improvement in engagement compared to previous efforts. These initiatives reflect a commitment to enhancing the quality-of-service delivery and fostering stronger connections with tenants and their families.

3. Impactful Social Enterprises.

Embracing a beneficiary-driven approach, the team has found the feedback from residents and their families on preferred activities to be highly insightful. They are pleased to have developed an exciting timetable of activities that align closely with the preferences of the people we support.

The introduction of ASDAN life skills courses has been particularly beneficial, empowering residents to engage in activities such as cookery, kitchen safety, and healthy eating. This initiative has not only enhanced their life skills but has also facilitated successful volunteer appointments within the resident group, with strong support from the occupational therapy team.

The launch of The Hive has further enriched the resident community, providing a versatile space for socialising and skill-building through a variety of activities, including life skills opportunities.

It's inspiring to see how these efforts are fostering independence and enriching the lives of The Meath residents.

Future goals

Building on the excellent progress demonstrated above, our focus for this year is to further enhance our achievements and support The Meath in its goal of becoming an 'outstanding' CQC rated provider. We are dedicated to strengthening our commitment to person-centred care and beneficiary-driven services while also ensuring the financial sustainability of the charity.

Key areas for the team to focus their efforts this year have been identified as:

1. **Continuation of Trustee-led Internal Audits:** We will align internal audits with the forthcoming new CQC framework to maintain high standards and ensure readiness for inspection, supporting The Meath's journey to becoming an 'outstanding' care provider.
2. **Fair Pricing from Local Authorities for Care Packages:** While our finance team has made progress, addressing gaps in statutory funding, especially for essential therapies like occupational and physiotherapy, remains a priority to reduce reliance on fundraising.
3. **Enhancing Social Enterprises:** We will continue to develop meaningful activities with impactful outcomes within our social enterprises, focusing on attracting external income to further expand our offerings.
4. **Employer of Choice Initiative:** While our frontline worker pay is competitive, our focus will be on encouraging a stable workforce by minimising dependency on agency workers through robust retention efforts. These efforts will be anchored in The Meath values, ensuring that our team feels valued, supported, and motivated to deliver exceptional care to the people we support.
5. **Building a Robust Expression of Interest Register:** Priority will be given to building a comprehensive register for future vacancies, with a specific focus on the two new bedrooms being created in The Cottages.
6. **Capital Appeal for Building 'future-proofing':** The second phase of the capital appeal will commence later this year to future-proof our buildings. Subsequent phases have been identified and will be prioritised in fundraising efforts over the next 12 months.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Charity

The charity (Registered Charity Number 200359) is unincorporated and registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales. It is governed by its Trust Deed last amended on 25 May 2015.

- Epilepsy is covered by the Equality Act in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland.
- Most importantly, many people with complex epilepsy can take part in the same activities as everyone else given the appropriate help and with simple safety measures applied.

Recruitment and appointment of new Trustee Directors

The Trustee Directors are Directors of The Meath Trustee Company Limited. The Meath Trustee Company Limited is the sole trustee of the unincorporated charity. They are recruited to maintain a balance of skills, qualifications, and experience to ensure that the Charity and its property are managed efficiently and knowledgeably. When a vacancy occurs, a profile of the new Trustee Directors is agreed, with suitable candidates identified possessing the expertise required. References are obtained for any new Trustee Director, including a criminal records bureau check.

All new Trustee Directors are given a copy of the Charity Commissioners' booklet on the responsibilities of a Trustee. A file of essential information is provided as part of their induction programme. A Governance Manual and Code of Conduct for Trustees is available. Each new Trustee Director is appointed for an initial term of four years. Once elected they do not have to be re-elected annually, but they do have to stand down at the end of their four-year term. Trustees are entitled to stand for re-election for a maximum of three terms. Continuing support and training is provided for Trustee Directors including external facilitators at regular away-days.

Organisational Structure

The Chief Executive is responsible for the strategic and day-to-day management of the Charity and reports to the Board of Trustees, who are Directors of the Charity. The strategic direction of the organisation is determined by the CEO with the Trustee Directors, who have overall responsibility for the Charity. The Trustee Directors also ensure that the Charity adheres to the policies and procedures laid down by the Charity Commission and the Care Quality Commission. To fulfil this role, the Trustee Directors have established the following sub-committees: Finance and Risk, Fundraising & Marketing, Health and Social Care and Nominations and Remunerations Committee. These committees report regularly to the Board where decisions are formally agreed. Board Meetings are held every other month.

Arrangements for setting pay of key management

Remuneration of the Chief Executive is decided by the Trustee Directors after consideration of the level paid to comparable organisations and an assessment of performance. The level of remuneration and increases paid to Senior Executives reporting directly to the Chief Executive are proposed by the Chief Executive and agreed by Trustee Directors.

Risk and Corporate Governance Matters

Trustee Directors are responsible for the management of risk faced by the Charity and treat risk management as a priority. Risk awareness is emphasised throughout all levels of the organisation. Risks are identified, assessed and controls are applied throughout the year by senior management and staff employed by the Charity. Each risk has been grouped and evaluated according to priority and assigned to the relevant sub-committees for detailed review at least every 6 months. The Charity is subject to regular inspections by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and is required to conform to the National Care Standards.

Health and Safety

As an employer, the Charity holds Health and Safety matters paramount, working to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other associated legislation. The Chief Executive is responsible for monitoring The Meath's policy and its implementation, maintenance, and ongoing review.

The Charity has a procedure for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive and the National Care Standards Commission, with all records being kept for inspection.

Related parties

Dr Colin Stokes MBE is a Patron of The Meath and Chairman of Arthouse Unlimited. Anna Coss is an Ambassador of The Meath and a Trustee of Arthouse Unlimited. Arthouse Unlimited is a social enterprise, provide stimulating Art activity sessions for Meath residents.

- Mark Dumas, Trustee, is a client of JM Finn, The Meath's current appointed Financial Advisor.
- Katie Randerson, Trustee, is related to a Meath family member who is an occasional donor to The Meath.
- Lee Bennett, CEO, is a Trustee at Disability Challengers, a local children's disability charity.

Apart from the above, no other Trustee Directors of The Meath have connections with any other interested parties.

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATION

The Meath Epilepsy Charity - Registered Charity number: 200359

The Charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes an unincorporated charity. This was founded under the name "The Meath Home for Epileptic Women and Girls" in a Conveyance and Declaration of Trust dated 28th October 1896. The latest change to the governing document was during May 2015.

The Meath Trustee Company Limited - Registered Company number: 5822835

The Meath Trustee Company Limited was incorporated on the 19th of May 2006 and is the Trustee of The Meath Epilepsy Charity.

Principal address:

Westbrook Road Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2QH.

Contact details:

01483 415095

info@meath.org.uk

www.meath.org.uk

Patrons

- HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, Michael More-Molyneux
- The Baroness Parminter of Godalming
- The Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP
- John Jeffrey MBE
- Richard Lockwood
- Lesley Lockwood
- Dr Colin Stokes MBE

Trustee Directors

- Graham Healy – Chair of Trustees
- Mark Dumas
- Karen Thurston
- Helen Pernelet
- Nick Fenton
- Chris Alder
- Katie Randerson
- Sally Wilson
- Lisa O'Brien – resigned in September 2023
- Malcolm Ring – retired in November 2023

Senior Management Team

- Chief Executive - Lee Bennett
- Head of Residential Services – Tracy Toth
- Head of Finance – Andrew Bagley
- Head of Compliance – Michelle Plumb (retired in April 2024)
- Head of Fundraising - Lucy Miguda
- Head of Marketing & Communications – Helen Jackson
- Head of HR – Vanessa Mulholland (appointed in March 2024)

Auditor & Advisors

Auditors: MHA, 2 London Wall Place, London, EC2Y 5AU

Main Bankers: Lloyds Bank Plc, 49 High Street Godalming Surrey, GU7 1AT

Investment Advisor: JM Finn & Co, 4 Coleman Street London, EC2R 5TA

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Trust Deed requires the Trustee Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the situation of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustee Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustee Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Trust Deed.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES



Graham Healy – Chair of Trustees

The Meath Trustee Company Limited

Date : 17/07/2024

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Meath Epilepsy Charity (the 'Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cashflows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charity's affairs as at 31 March 2024, and of its incoming resources and application or resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate. Our evaluation of the Trustees' assessment of the entity's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting included critical reviews of budgets and forecasts provided.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the Charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Report) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 35, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the Charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Enquiry of Charity staff in finance and tax functions to identify any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management override of controls;
- Testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness;
- Evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business;
- Reviewing significant accounting estimates for bias;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance during the year and post year end;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/Our-Work/Audit/Audit-and-assurance/Standards-and-guidance/Standards-and-guidance-for-auditors/Auditors-responsibilities-for-audit/Description-of-auditors-responsibilities-for-audit.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and its Trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



MHA, Statutory Auditor
London, United Kingdom

Date: 23/08/2024

MHA is the trading name of MacIntyre Hudson LLP, a limited liability partnership in England and Wales (registered number OC312313)

MHA are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2024	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income									
Donations, legacies & grants	2	490,513	576,547	-	1,067,060	251,380	243,142	-	494,522
Charitable activities	4	7,400,606	-	-	7,400,606	7,049,925	-	-	7,049,925
Other trading activities	5	241,854	3,579	-	245,433	284,722	135,531	-	420,253
Investment income	6	53,920	-	-	53,920	33,705	-	-	33,705
		8,186,893	580,126	-	8,767,019	7,619,732	378,673	-	7,998,405
Expenditure									
Charitable activities	7	7,551,934	142,485	111,804	7,806,223	7,090,777	149,662	111,804	7,352,243
Raising funds - Social enterprise	8	263,530	144,433	-	407,963	425,016	247,339	-	672,355
Raising funds - Other	9	281,554	-	-	281,554	216,337	-	-	216,337
		8,097,018	286,918	111,804	8,495,740	7,732,130	397,001	111,804	8,240,935
Net income / (expenditure)		89,875	293,208	(111,804)	271,279	(112,398)	(18,328)	(111,804)	(242,530)
Net gain/(loss) on investments		13,747			13,747	(133,952)			(133,952)
Transfer between funds	20	130,864	(130,864)	-	-	8,054	(8,054)	-	-
Net movement in funds		234,486	162,344	(111,804)	285,026	(238,296)	(26,382)	(111,804)	(376,482)
Total funds brought forward		10,337,024	174,677	4,384,173	14,895,874	10,575,320	201,059	4,495,977	15,272,356
Total funds carried forward		10,571,510	337,021	4,272,369	15,180,900	10,337,024	174,677	4,384,173	14,895,874

CONTINUING OPERATIONS

Income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

The notes form part of these financial statements

BALANCE SHEET**AS AT 31 MARCH 2024**

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	13	12,641,502	12,866,971
Listed investments	14	964,467	916,572
Subsidiary undertakings	15	-	-
		<u>13,605,969</u>	<u>13,783,543</u>
Current assets			
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	16	388,679	421,178
Bank balances & cash in hand	17	<u>2,017,495</u>	<u>1,493,462</u>
		2,406,174	1,914,640
Current liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	18	<u>831,243</u>	<u>802,309</u>
Net current assets		<u>1,574,931</u>	<u>1,112,331</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>15,180,900</u>	<u>14,895,874</u>
Charity funds	20		
Unrestricted:			
General fund		2,202,377	1,854,226
Capital fund		<u>8,369,133</u>	<u>8,482,798</u>
		<u>10,571,510</u>	<u>10,337,024</u>
Restricted:			
Restricted fund		337,021	174,677
Endowment fund		<u>4,272,369</u>	<u>4,384,173</u>
		<u>4,609,390</u>	<u>4,558,850</u>
Total funds		<u>15,180,900</u>	<u>14,895,874</u>

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustee Directors on 17/07/2024 and were signed on its behalf by:


Graham Healy (Chair of the Board of Trustees)

The Meath Trustee Company Limited

The notes form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net expenditure for the reporting period	285,026	(376,482)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	446,350	455,654
Loss/(gain) on investments	(13,747)	133,952
Interest receivable	(53,920)	(33,705)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	32,499	(77,852)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	28,934	113,603
Net cash generated by operating activities	725,142	215,170
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(222,982)	(93,675)
Sale of tangible fixed assets	2,101	1,300
Purchase of investments	(539,266)	(368,439)
Sale of investments	505,118	344,017
Interest received	53,920	33,705
	(201,109)	(83,092)
Change in cash & cash equivalents	524,033	132,078
Cash & cash equivalents brought forward	1,493,462	1,361,384
Cash & cash equivalents carried forward	2,017,495	1,493,462

Net debt

The charity had no net debt at 31 March 2024 or at 31 March 2023.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Basis of preparing the financial statements

The accounts & financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the 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) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the previous Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities which was effective from 1 April 2005 but which has since been withdrawn.

The Meath Epilepsy Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Having considered the financial position of the Meath Epilepsy Charity and plans and forecasts for future periods, the Trustee is satisfied that there is no material uncertainty around the ability of the Charity to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future. The financial statements have therefore been prepared on the basis that the charity is a going concern.

b) 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. The main sources of income are from local authorities for providing high levels of care and residential accommodation, this is supplemented by income from social enterprises providing products & services to external clients and the general public. Income from local authorities is recognised in the year that care and accommodation is provided. Income from social enterprises is recognised in the year that a sale occurs. Donations are recognised on receipt.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

c) 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.

Direct costs are those which are wholly attributable to a particular activity.

Support costs have been apportioned by reference to direct staff costs as an indication of activity and usage

d) Raising funds

Raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by the charity to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities, events and non-charitable trading.

e) Governance costs

This comprises the costs of compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

f) Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities but was registered for VAT for the social enterprises for part of the year, having deregistered from 1 November 2023.

g) Tangible fixed assets

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

- Freehold property – between 2% and 10% on cost
- Fixtures and fittings - 20% on cost
- Motor vehicles - 20% on cost
- No depreciation is charged on freehold land.
- The charity's policy is to capitalise assets that cost £1,000 or more.

h) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustee. The general fund comprises unrestricted funds which are neither designated by Trustee Directors nor restricted by donors.

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. There is one remaining designated fund within the Trust which form part of the unrestricted funds.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Fund accounting (continued)

The Endowment Fund represents the original gift to the charity of its freehold land and building in 1896, as augmented by subsequent revaluations. The endowment fund supports part of the value of investment in Fixed Assets and as such is not available to be used for the general purposes of the Charity.

The designated "Capital fund" has been established to support the value of investment in Fixed Assets, excluding the Endowment Fund, and thus cannot be used for the general purposes of the Charity.

i) Investments

Investments are valued at market value as at the balance sheet date. Realised and unrealised gains and losses arising on the revaluation of investments are credited or charged to the Statement of Financial Activities.

j) Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charity supports a defined contribution group personal pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charity's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

These contributions are invested in an insurance company and are therefore separate from the charity's assets.

k) Financial instruments

The Meath Epilepsy Charity Trust has financial assets of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at the present value of future cash flows (amortised costs). No discounting has been applied to these financial instruments on the basis that the periods over which amounts will be settled are such that any discounting would be immaterial.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1) Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, which are described within the notes above, the Trustee Directors are required to make judgements, estimates, assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects the current and future periods.

In the view of the Trustee Directors, no assumptions concerning the future or estimation uncertainty affecting assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date are likely to result in a material adjustment to their carrying amounts in the next financial year.

2 DONATIONS, LEGACIES & GRANTS	2024	2023
	£	£
Regular giving & gift aid	190,307	80,906
Charities & trusts	863,559	385,570
Legacies	13,194	14,959
Grants (see note 3)	-	13,087
	<u>1,067,060</u>	<u>494,522</u>
3 GRANTS	2024	2023
	£	£
CJRS furlough support	-	-
Local authority Covid support grants	-	-
Other support & training grants	-	13,087
	<u>-</u>	<u>13,087</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>13,087</u>
4 CHARITABLE ACTIVITY INCOME	2024	2023
	£	£
Residential services	6,987,188	6,622,318
Supported living	413,418	427,607
	<u>7,400,606</u>	<u>7,049,925</u>
5 OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES	2024	2023
	£	£
Social enterprises	168,196	132,310
Fund raising events	69,325	278,755
Feed-in tariff	7,912	9,188
	<u>245,433</u>	<u>420,253</u>

There were no unfulfilled conditions attaching to these grants as at 31st March 2024.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

6 INVESTMENT INCOME		2024	2023			
		£	£			
Dividends & interest received		53,920	33,705			
7 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	Residential Services	Supported Living	2024	Residential Services	Supported Living	2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Direct costs:						
Staff costs	5,000,643	207,193	5,207,836	4,795,063	202,097	4,997,160
Catering	162,425	-	162,425	159,060	-	159,060
Medical supplies	34,134	-	34,134	41,489	-	41,489
Property rent	-	37,466	37,466	-	35,195	35,195
Utilities	-	3,589	3,589	-	30	30
	5,197,202	248,248	5,445,450	4,995,612	237,322	5,232,934
Support costs:						
Staff costs	894,211	37,050	931,261	914,390	38,539	952,929
Estate maintenance	220,648	9,142	229,790	200,786	8,463	209,249
Utilities	278,839	11,553	290,392	138,102	5,821	143,923
Vehicle expenses	25,586	1,060	26,646	17,565	740	18,305
Recruitment & training	91,005	3,771	94,776	66,524	2,804	69,328
IT support & supplies	133,689	5,539	139,228	112,596	4,746	117,342
Administrative costs	123,701	5,125	128,826	120,942	5,097	126,039
Governance	99,780	4,134	103,914	61,420	2,589	64,009
Depreciation	399,392	16,548	415,940	401,273	16,912	418,185
	2,266,851	93,922	2,360,773	2,033,598	85,711	2,119,309
Total charitable activity expenditure	7,464,053	342,170	7,806,223	7,029,210	323,033	7,352,243
Unrestricted funds			7,551,934			7,090,777
Restricted funds			142,485			149,662
Endowment funds			111,804			111,804
Movement on funds			7,806,223			7,352,243
Movement in endowment funds is in respect of depreciation on the endowment property.						
8 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS - SOCIAL ENTERPRISE		2024	2023			
		£	£			
Direct costs:						
Staff costs		244,255	338,061			
Resident activities		15,011	111,176			
Cost of sales		15,548	24,196			
Property rent		19,000	46,000			
Utilities		3,426	9,550			
		297,240	528,983			
Support costs:						
Staff costs		43,677	64,466			
Estate maintenance		10,777	14,156			
Utilities		13,620	9,736			
Vehicle expenses		1,250	1,238			
Recruitment & training		4,445	4,690			
IT support & supplies		6,530	7,938			
Administrative costs		6,042	8,527			
Governance		4,874	4,330			
Depreciation		19,508	28,291			
		110,723	143,372			
Total social enterprise expenditure		407,963	672,355			
Unrestricted funds		263,530	425,016			
Restricted funds		144,433	247,339			
Endowment funds		-	-			
Movement on funds		407,963	672,355			

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

9 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS - OTHER

	2024 £	2023 £
Direct costs:		
Staff costs	136,497	109,670
Resident activities	5,756	4,751
PR marketing & website	50,487	28,211
Fundraising events	26,937	27,194
	<u>219,677</u>	<u>169,826</u>
Support costs:		
Staff costs	24,409	20,913
Estate maintenance	6,023	4,592
Utilities	7,611	3,159
Vehicle expenses	698	402
Recruitment & training	2,484	1,521
IT support & supplies	3,649	2,575
Administrative costs	3,377	2,766
Governance	2,724	1,405
Depreciation	10,902	9,178
	<u>61,877</u>	<u>46,511</u>
Total raising funds expenditure	<u>281,554</u>	<u>216,337</u>
Unrestricted funds	281,554	216,337
Restricted funds	-	-
Endowment funds	-	-
Movement on funds	<u>281,554</u>	<u>216,337</u>

10 EXPENDITURE GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2024 £	2023 £
External accounting & tax support	148	2,040
Auditors' remuneration - statutory audit 22/23	7,520	23,164
Auditors' remuneration - statutory audit 23/24	28,000	-
Auditors' remuneration - VAT advice	1,092	-
Legal & professional	68,009	39,169
Portfolio management	6,743	5,371
	<u>111,512</u>	<u>69,744</u>

11 KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION & BENEFITS

Key management personnel include Trustee Directors and the senior management team.

No trustees received any remuneration, benefits, or reimbursement of any expenses for the year (2023 £nil).

The senior management team emoluments, including employer national insurance contributions and employer pension contributions, totalled £395,559 (2023: £403,365). In prior years the Chief Executive, the Head of Operations & HR, and Head of Finance were treated as key personnel, however we now consider the whole senior management team to be key personnel and have amended the 2023 total accordingly.

12 STAFF COSTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages & salaries	4,805,791	4,458,045
Social security	368,649	356,800
Pension contributions	288,180	288,437
	<u>5,462,620</u>	<u>5,103,282</u>
Employees earning over £60,000:	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Between £60,000 and £69,999	2	2
Between £90,000 and £99,999	1	-
	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Average number of staff during the year	<u>192</u>	<u>196</u>

During the year no employees (2023: none) were made redundant and 1 employee (2023: 1) received a severance payment. The total costs, including payments in lieu of notice, were £11,184 (2023: £14,807) of which £nil (2023: £nil) were redundancy payments and £11,184 (2023: £14,807) settlement payments.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

13 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold Property £	Equipment Fixtures & Fittings £	Motor Vehicles £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2023	15,909,963	1,079,944	142,273	17,132,180
Additions	139,500	62,727	20,755	222,982
Disposals	(8,948)	(55,959)	(4,000)	(68,907)
At 31 March 2024	16,040,515	1,086,712	159,028	17,286,255
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2023	3,303,006	866,154	96,049	4,265,209
Charge for the year	333,936	73,200	19,751	426,887
Eliminated on disposals	(2,325)	(44,080)	(938)	(47,343)
At 31 March 2024	3,634,617	895,274	114,862	4,644,753
Net book value				
At 31 March 2024	12,405,898	191,438	44,166	12,641,502
At 1 April 2023	12,606,957	213,790	46,224	12,866,971

14 LISTED INVESTMENTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Market value		
Brought forward	916,572	1,026,101
Additions	539,266	368,439
Disposals	(514,633)	(362,607)
Unrealised gains/(losses)	23,262	(115,361)
Carried forward	964,467	916,572
Historical cost	961,703	945,414

The listed investments held for both years is a mixture of equities and bonds.

15 SUBSIDIARY UNDERTAKINGS

	2024 £	2023 £
Historical cost at 1 April 2023	-	1
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
Revaluations	-	(1)
Historical cost at 31 March 2024	-	-

There were no investment assets outside the UK.

The Charity's investment in Group undertakings was in The Arthouse at the Meath Limited, a dormant company.

The Arthouse at the Meath Limited:

Nature of business: Social enterprise for educating and helping residents of The Meath to make, commercialise and sell art and art images.

Class of shares: Ordinary - 100% holding

Activity: the company was dissolved on 27 June 2023 (2023: Dormant).

16 DEBTORS

Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Residents fees	264,833	296,164
Other debtors	39,216	55,745
Prepayments & accrued income	84,630	69,269
	388,679	421,178

Other debtors include £39,225 (2023: £55,225) due from Arthouse Unlimited that is due after more than one year.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

17 FUNDS HELD AND DISBURSED AS AGENT

During the year the Charity administered funds as agent on behalf of residents. Balances brought forward were £144,278 (2023 £358,268). During the year the Charity received funds totalling £16,244 (2023 £158,881) and paid out funds totalling £142,181 (2023 £372,871). Balances carried forward were £18,341 (2023 £144,278). These brought forward and carried forward balances, and in year transactions, have not been included in these accounts as the Charity has no entitlement to these funds.

18 CREDITORS

Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	202,718	285,055
Social security & other taxes	99,680	85,425
Deferred income - Residents' fees	106,193	87,036
Deferred income - Event income	5,420	2,194
Other creditors	40,479	33,030
Accrued expenses	376,753	309,569
	<u>831,243</u>	<u>802,309</u>

Deferred income comprises residents' fees and event income received in advance of the period to which it relates.

19 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	8,369,133	-	4,272,369	12,641,502
Investments	964,467	-	-	964,467
Current assets	2,069,153	337,021	-	2,406,174
Current liabilities	(831,243)	-	-	(831,243)
	<u>10,571,510</u>	<u>337,021</u>	<u>4,272,369</u>	<u>15,180,900</u>
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	8,482,798	-	4,384,173	12,866,971
Investments	916,572	-	-	916,572
Current assets	1,739,963	174,677	-	1,914,640
Current liabilities	(802,309)	-	-	(802,309)
	<u>10,337,024</u>	<u>174,677</u>	<u>4,384,173</u>	<u>14,895,874</u>

20 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Funds at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains / (losses) £	Funds at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds						
General fund	1,854,226	8,186,893	(7,852,489)	-	13,747	2,202,377
Capital fund	8,482,798	-	(244,529)	130,864	-	8,369,133
	<u>10,337,024</u>	<u>8,186,893</u>	<u>(8,097,018)</u>	<u>130,864</u>	<u>13,747</u>	<u>10,571,510</u>
Restricted funds						
Life enrichment programme	145,054	223,527	(214,822)	-	-	153,759
Unit families	4,623	7,491	(4,048)	-	-	8,066
Vehicle fund	-	20,295	(20,295)	-	-	-
Heritage fund re Countess of Meath	-	8,350	-	-	-	8,350
Capital appeal	25,000	320,463	(47,753)	(130,864)	-	166,846
	<u>174,677</u>	<u>580,126</u>	<u>(286,918)</u>	<u>(130,864)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>337,021</u>
Endowment fund	4,384,173	-	(111,804)	-	-	4,272,369
	<u>4,558,850</u>	<u>580,126</u>	<u>(398,722)</u>	<u>(130,864)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,609,390</u>
Total funds	<u>14,895,874</u>	<u>8,767,019</u>	<u>(8,495,740)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>13,747</u>	<u>15,180,900</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

20 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS (contd.)	Funds at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure (restated) £	Transfers (restated) £	Gains / (losses) £	Funds at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds						
General fund	1,841,046	7,619,732	(7,480,654)	8,054	(133,952)	1,854,226
Capital fund	8,734,274	-	(251,476)	-	-	8,482,798
	<u>10,575,320</u>	<u>7,619,732</u>	<u>(7,732,130)</u>	<u>8,054</u>	<u>(133,952)</u>	<u>10,337,024</u>
Restricted funds						
Life enrichment programme	202,777	282,788	(340,511)	-	-	145,054
Unit families	(1,718)	46,885	(40,544)	-	-	4,623
Fuse board replacement	-	24,000	(15,946)	(8,054)	-	-
Capital appeal	-	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
	<u>201,059</u>	<u>378,673</u>	<u>(397,001)</u>	<u>(8,054)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>174,677</u>
Endowment fund	4,495,977	-	(111,804)	-	-	4,384,173
	<u>4,697,036</u>	<u>378,673</u>	<u>(508,805)</u>	<u>(8,054)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,558,850</u>
Total funds	<u>15,272,356</u>	<u>7,998,405</u>	<u>(8,240,935)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(133,952)</u>	<u>14,895,874</u>

Transfers

On completion of phase 1 of our capital appeal £130,864 was transferred from restricted fund to capital fund.
Other transfers relate to surplus funds received which were approved to be released to general fund.

Endowment fund

Following a review of the original conveyance document dated 28 October 1896 and subsequent legal opinion dated 23 October 1957, the Trustees have concluded no Trust Deed exists in respect of the endowment fund. In the absence of any Trust Deed there are no restrictions placed on conveyed property. The Charity Commission have been approached to confirm they have no objection for the endowment fund balance being transferred to the Capital fund. In response by email dated 10 May 2024 The Charity Commission have confirmed charity number 200359-1 Countess of Meath's Fund for the Endowment of the Lauderdale Bed was removed on 11 January 1996. Aside from this they make no mention of the Meath Epilepsy Charity's endowment fund and would leave it for the Trustees to make their own determination.

Life enrichment programme

Donations received from trusts, foundations and private donors in support of our life enrichment programme. Through our skills centre, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, our aim is for each person we support to live their life to the full. This programme is supported by National Lottery, Garfield Weston and The Community Foundation for Surrey, in addition to many other supporters.

Unit families

Private funds received from family members for furnishings and equipment on their loved one's unit.

Fuse board replacement

Funds received for the replacement and upgrade of the main house fuse board with increased capacity.

Capital Appeal

Donations received from trusts, foundations and private donors towards the costs of restoration and renovation of our Grade II listed building, which is home to 43 of our residents. These works include new roofing and windows, replacement of the on-call system, air-conditioning, and fire safety adaptations.

Vehicle fund

Donations received from trusts and Surrey County Council to replace one of our multi-purpose vehicles.

Heritage fund

Donation received from National Lottery Heritage Fund for the archiving of historical documents relating to the inception and history of Meath Epilepsy Charity.

21 OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS	Land & Buildings 2024 £	Other 2024 £	Land & Buildings 2023 £	Other 2023 £
Future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases:				
Within one year	36,538	11,100	55,262	14,139
Between one and five years	16,138	25,991	16,138	37,573
In more than five years	-	-	-	-
	<u>52,676</u>	<u>37,091</u>	<u>71,400</u>	<u>51,712</u>
Total lease payments made during the year	<u>55,188</u>	<u>7,606</u>	<u>81,195</u>	<u>7,606</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

22 PENSION COMMITMENTS

During the year £284,260 (2023: £284,517) was paid into the group personal pension scheme. Outstanding liability at the balance sheet date was £40,127 (2023: £34,465).

23 RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Arthouse Unlimited (charity number 1177900)

On 31st May 2018 the business activities of the subsidiary undertaking The Arthouse at The Meath Limited were demerged to Arthouse Unlimited, an independent charity.

At the year end £39,225 was due to The Meath Epilepsy Charity (2023: £55,225).

Income related

During the year trustees and senior management made general unrestricted donations totalling £3,761 (2023: £5,454), and restricted donations to the capital appeal totalling £11,105 (2023: £nil).

Expenditure related

A close family member of the former CEO was employed by the charity, receiving remuneration totalling £nil (2023: £2,777).

A close family member of the former Head of HR & Operations is the owner of a business that has an interest in contracts and supplies totalling £38,598 (2023: £51,037). At the balance sheet date £1,088 was unpaid (2023: £5,104).

A close family friend of the Head of Fundraising is the owner of a business that has an interest in contracts and supplies totalling £129,293 (2023: £nil).

24 ULTIMATE CONTROL

The charity is controlled by the Trustee Directors of The Meath Trustee Company.