

ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE COLCHESTER SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2024

Telephone: 01206 510870
(Established 1876)
Registered under the National Assistance Act 1948

Registered Charity Number 207361

PATRON:
THE MAYOR OF COLCHESTER

CHAIRMAN:
Ray Hardisty (Trustee)
11 Farriers End
Stanway
Colchester
CO3 0YE

HON. TREASURER:
Marilyn Peck (Trustee)
Kestrels
Harwich Road
Beaumont cum Moze
CO16 0AU

HON. SECRETARY:
Alan Kearsley (Trustee)
10 Coventry Close
Colchester
CO1 2RN

COMMITTEE

Sheila Dempsey (Trustee)
Debbie Fitch

Gwen Herbert
Steph Simpson

THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

- (a) To help the blind and partially sighted and defective sighted persons resident in the Borough of Colchester in the County of Essex;
- (b) To do all such other charitable things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above Object.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024

The Committee has pleasure in presenting the 148th Annual Report of the Colchester Society for the Blind.

It was great to hear how many of you enjoyed the annual holiday, supported financially by the Society and the UC Group.

Talking of money, the year to March 31 continued to be difficult for all charities such as ours which rely on interest from investment income to help the blind and partially sighted across the city. Although interest rates rose slightly, we are very grateful to our treasurer for sourcing the best deals when funds mature and must be re-invested.

Our financial trustees maintain help wherever possible, and the past year has seen that go to assist travel for both studies and leisure activities.

However, the year has seen us make strides in two different areas. One is to launch efforts towards establishing our first web site, and the other is to begin investigations into setting up the charity's very first support worker for members. Fingers crossed on successful outcomes for both.

Alan Kearsley continued as the society's voice to the general public through hosting our telephone line as well as ensuring the UC Group was a great social venue for all those with sight issues in the borough/city.

strong position to continue to be able to support both the UC Club, and the various social activities, for several years to come.

The Trustees will continue to ensure that our funds are used to the benefit of the people we support, and any opportunities to increase our funds will continue to be actively pursued.

Although the new Website will undoubtedly be helpful, any other ideas which could help to raise the profile of the Society in the city and area covered by the Society, and thus to gain more local and wider recognition which might attract more income, should be relayed to any member of the Committee. Raising the profile of the Charity could also identify more people who may benefit from what the Society has to offer, & will ultimately enable the Society to continue to flourish for many years to come.

Marilyn T Peck A.C.I.B

18th July 2024

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Thanks to the most generous Legacy from Andrew Millar's estate, our funds have increased by a total of almost £34,000 despite our outgoings being more than our regular interest income. £2,000 from this Legacy have been added to the earmarked Transport Fund, which is available by request to support transport to and from the various activities agreed or arranged by the Society and the UC Club. The use of the balance of the Legacy is currently under discussion in Committee to ensure it is used for activities which would reflect Andrew's ethos in life, as well as being in line with the Objects of the Society.

With rising interest rates over the period we have managed to invest in three 2-year Term Deposits of between 4.15% & 5.2%, with the recent maturity in July also within these figures. Interest income for the year was £2,607, and we received a further £310 in donations.

Expenses include Insurance £578, Summer and Christmas meals £4,002, UC Club Grant £1,000, Holiday grants £3,300, Gill Kearsley Grant £500, and other costs £120. The ring-fenced Transport Fund has increased to £2,355.

No fundraising activities took place during the year.

We continue to be able to offer support when it is needed, and appropriate, within the Aims and Objectives of the Society, and are still in a relatively

Meanwhile links continue with sister organisations and suitable bodies working for those with disabilities. We have an Out and About section on our agendas detailing issues being taken up through Guide Dogs for the Blind to the RNIB, Colchester Talking Newspaper and Colchester Citizens as well as Age Well East, Fair Access to Colchester, and Colchester Seniors Group.

At the same time pressure continues on the authorities over easing the issues facing the visually impaired, including difficulties of sharing pavements with e-scooters that are still 'on trial' in Colchester.

On the personal front, my sincere thanks goes to all members and officers of the society for their work and effort, both as individuals and as a team, for the blind and partially sighted of Colchester. Here I must make special mention of Colchester Rotary Club which continues to support our lunches through transport volunteers.

I firmly believe that without the help and support of volunteer led organisations like the Colchester Society for the Blind many of those with sight problems would be confined to the four walls in which they live.

On behalf of all the trustees, I pledge that we will continue to work as hard as possible to see that loneliness and social isolation for the visually impaired, does not happen in the city of Colchester.

April 1, 2025 will see the start of this charity's 150th year. It is a milestone we must mark in constructive ways to ensure all those who live in the city know about the work it has done, and is still doing. Please let any of the trustees know of your celebration ideas.

Ray Hardisty Chairman June 2024

Colchester Society for the Blind

Opening balances at 1st April 2023:

Current A/c	2,084.58
Bank savs a/c excl designated funds	3,544.29
Bank Savings a/c Transport Fund	355.00
National Savings Income Bond	5,000.00
United Trust Bank 3-yr term 2.1%	25,420.73
Cambs & Counties Bank 2-yr term 2%	36,955.75
Cambs & Cnties Bank 2-yr term 4.15%	<u>27,000.00</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>100,360.35</u>

Income:

Dividends & Interest on funds	2,606.56
Legacies - see below	40,325.54
Other Grant	0.00
Sundry other donations & Income	310.00
Other named Donations – see below	0.00
Gift Aid tax reclaimed	0.00
	<u>£43,242.10</u>

(2022/23 Income : £2,429.18)

Named donations & Bequests:

Legacy - Estate of the Late Andrew Millar	£40,325.54
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Receipts and Payments Account 2023/24

Expenditure:

Hall Hire	0.00
Society main phone	0.00
Stationery and other phone costs	40.00
Christmas lunch	2,092.00
Summer lunch	1,910.40
Social club & other catering	0.00
U C Club Grant & support	1,000.00
Gill Kearsley grant to U C Club	500.00
Transport Fund (designated)	0.00
Committee costs	0.00
Insurance & Subscriptions	578.18
Holiday—society contribution	3,300.00
Goods, Services & assistance #	<u>80.00</u>
(# - see Treasurer's Report below)	<u>9,500.58</u>
(2022/23 Expenditure :	£10,753.62)

Closing balances - 31st March 2024:

Current A/c	4,441.40
Bank savs a/c excl designated funds	1,758.10
Bank Savings a/c Transport Fund	2,355.00
National Savings Income Bond	5,000.00
United Trust Bank 3-yr term 2.1% (07/24)	25,420.73
Cambs & Cnts Bank 2-yr 4.15% (12/24)	28,126.64
United Tst 2-yr term 5.06% (10/25)	35,000.00
Cambs & Cnties Bank 2-yr 5.2% (11/25)	<u>32,000.00</u>
	<u>134,101.87</u>

TOTAL FUNDS

Prepared by: M Peck , Hon. Treasurer.

Audited by Mr R W Fewes ACCA Hon Auditor.

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Prepared by: M Peck , Hon. Treasurer.

Audited by Mr R W Fews ACCA Hon Auditor.

Independent examiner's report to the Colchester Society for the Blind

I report on the accounts of the Colchester Society for the Blind for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on the attached page.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner

The Committee consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under section 145 for the 2011 act;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiners Statement.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required for a full audit, and consequently I do not express an opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - a. To keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - b. To prepare accounts, which according with these accounting records have not been met; or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Mr Ricky Fewes
93 Landermere Road
Thorpe le soken
CO16 0ND
27th November 2024