# THE TOGETHER TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 209782

## Details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Other names** | BOYS' AND GIRLS' WELFARE SOCIETY, TOGETHER TRUST LIMITED, THE TOGETHER TRUST, TOGETHER TRUST |
| **Status** | Registered |
| **Legal form** | Charitable company |
| **Company number** | 00301722 |
| **Registered** | 1963-04-05 |
| **Register** | View on the Charity Commission register |

## Contact

| | |
|---|---|
| **Address** | The Together Trust<br>The Together Trust Centre<br>Schools Hill<br>Cheadle<br>SK8 1JE |
| **Phone** | 01612834848 |
| **Email** | enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk |
| **Website** | www.togethertrust.org.uk |

## Activities

**Objects:** THE OBJECTS, WHICH WILL BE CARRIED OUT FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT ARE:(A) TO GIVE AID, ASSISTANCE AND CARE TO THOSE WITH DISABILITIES OR IN NEED, INCLUDING TO CHILDREN AND/OR YOUNG PERSONS; AND(B) TO PROMOTE THE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ADVANCEMENT IN LIFE OF THOSE WITH DISABILITIES OR IN NEED. INCLUDING THAT OF CHILDREN AND/OR YOUNG PERSONS.

**Activities:** The Together Trust provides care, education and support for children, young people, adults and families in need in England and Wales.

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## Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, Disability
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities

## Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

## Finances

| Period end | Income | Expenditure | Assets | Employees |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2025-03-31 | £41,160,000 | £39,825,000 | £27,981,000 | 826 |
| 2024-03-31 | £38,505,000 | £39,574,000 | £26,459,000 | 859 |
| 2023-03-31 | £33,753,000 | £34,070,000 | £27,996,000 | 809 |
| 2022-03-31 | £32,568,000 | £31,195,000 | £28,547,000 | 821 |
| 2021-03-31 | £30,695,000 | £29,299,000 | £27,093,000 | 866 |

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## Trustees

| Name | Role | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| **GILES GADDUM** | Chair | 2019-02-14 |
| Anthony Farnworth | | 2019-02-14 |
| Ganiatu Martins | | 2021-10-07 |
| Geoffrey Durbin | | 2021-12-14 |
| Ian Barry Johnson | | 2019-02-14 |
| Jane Grime | | 2021-10-07 |
| Jane Walapu | | 2022-01-25 |
| Louise Pennington | | 2026-02-20 |
| Marcell Edwards | | 2022-02-22 |
| Michael Henshaw | | 2022-12-10 |
| Norah Flood | | 2019-07-26 |
| Peter Singleton | | 2026-02-20 |
| ROGER ANTHONY HORNE | | 2019-02-14 |
| Steven Pitt | | 2023-06-06 |

## Linked charities

- THOMAS HUNT FUND (209782-1)
- JOHN CHARLES HOYER (209782-2)
- WILLIAM MELLAND (209782-3)
- MANCHESTER AND SALFORD BOYS' AND GIRLS' REFUGES AND HOMES AND CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY (209782-4)
- RAGGED AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AT SALFORD (PROCEEDS OF SALE) (209782-5)
- ANN STREET WARDLE (209782-6)
- HAROLD ASHTON GRIMSHAW (209782-7)
- INVALID CHILDREN'S AID ASSOCIATION (MANCHESTER, SALFORD AND DISTRICT) (209782-8)
- JUBILEE TRUST FUND (209782-9)

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**THE TOGETHER TRUST**

England & Wales - Charity number 209782

# Accounts

TOGETHER TRUST charity

# Trustees' report and financial statements

## Year ended 31 March 2025

Registered charity number 209782
Company registration number 00301722

The Together Trust
A Company Limited by Guarantee

# About the Together Trust

## Our aims and objectives

We are one of the North West's leading disability charities. We help children, adults, parents, and carers, delivering individual care, support and education to thousands of people each year.

For over 150 years, we have been championing and caring for people with disabilities, autism, and complex health needs. And providing life-changing support for looked-after children and care-experienced people.

## Our mission

We are the Together Trust. We're here to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support – they are at the heart of everything we do. We stand by them, and we work together for change.

## Our vision

A society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities.

## Our values

## We will always strive to be:

- **Positive**
  We take pride in celebrating the difference we make.

- **Professional**
  We act in a fair and respectable way that recognises our collective expertise.

- **Passionate**
  We encourage creative ideas and inspire one another.

- **Supportive**
  We are considerate and caring towards one another.

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# Joint introduction from the Chair and Chief Executive

It's a genuine privilege to be part of an organisation with over 800 amazing, passionate staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to make a real difference to the lives of others. In leading the Together Trust, we see firsthand the determination and incredible talents of the people we support - those who face additional challenges in life, who inspire and have so much to give. We believe we are a richer society because of our differences and all that makes us unique.

We are incredibly proud of the achievements of the Together Trust over this past year, supporting over 3,100 children, young people, vulnerable adults and families across over 40 social care, special education, community and family support services.

Our commitment to creating a society where people thrive because they are valued in their communities remains. We stand by the people we support, championing their rights, needs and ambitions, and providing person-centred, tailored support to meet their needs, goals and ambitions.

This year has been a time of significant change for the Charity. We said a fond farewell to Mark Lee, Chief Executive, and to Jill Sheldrake, Service Director, who collectively gave an incredible 38 years' service to the Together Trust and during that time led the Charity in going from strength to strength despite challenging times.

We welcomed new Trust leaders, including myself as a new Chief Executive, bringing renewed energy and focus to all that we do. Throughout the year we have continued to deliver against the four strategic aims in our Stronger Together Plan with a focus on delivering high quality, person-centred support, empowering people to make positive progress, to organically and sustainably grow, and to listen to and develop our diverse talented staff promoting equity, inclusivity and wellbeing.

## Achievements

There has been plenty to celebrate throughout the year. We continue to achieve good outcomes for the young people we support with long-term placement stability, good educational attainment and personal celebrations with many young people and services achieving awards. We have also extended our work experiences to enhance life skills and our campaign work, leading on making improvements to the longevity of placements in residential care, which seeks to improve the wellbeing and development of children in care up to the age of 18.

As a trusted partner, we have continued to work collaboratively with other charities and importantly, with the people we support to amplify their voice on policy matters such as the 'What Comes After Education' report, Volunteer Led Research and legislative and policy reform to ensure safe, regulated care.

Throughout the year, we have cast our net wider to meet rising demand and have laid the foundations for further growth developing a new growth strategy focusing initially on growth and in time impact.
We have also worked creatively to maximise fundraising opportunities amidst a changing landscape; extending our funding base, supporters, local businesses and partnerships with the successful opening of an early intervention and prevention service.

We continue to invest in our staff and have once again achieved the Investors in People 'Gold Award'. Our commitment to being a Real Living Wage employer remains, as does our ambition to build an inclusive workplace working closely with our Staff Council and our four staff networks to further this aim.

The wellbeing of our workforce matters. Throughout the year we have continued to enhance our wellbeing offer; striking a balance between reactive, preventative and proactive support with further developments

ahead, which includes compassionate leadership. Our learning offer has gone from strength to strength - nurturing talent, embedding inclusive learning principles and extending opportunities for our workforce to grow and develop.

## Our operating environment and the road ahead

The uncertain and ever-changing environment in which we operate continues to be a challenge for the Trust, and the people we support. The cost-of-living crisis remains, local authority funding continues to be squeezed and there is rising demand for support. Conflict and instability around the world bring further risk and uncertainty for the charity sector. The world is moving at a pace, particularly in technology.

Working collaboratively and in partnership with other providers, more businesses, commissioners and funders is more important than ever. Working together to innovate and grow, to raise awareness of the issues and causes that matter, raising much needed funds to address these, sharing skills and ideas to improve services and outcomes, or pooling funds to achieve economies of scale, will influence our thinking and approach as we begin to lay the foundations for a new 5-year Strategic Plan for 2026 and beyond.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will become increasingly relevant to the way we work with many in the charity sector beginning to use this technology. AI presents opportunities - enabling greater independence for the people we support and improving working practices to give more time to what matters most. But AI also poses risks, so we need to continue to develop our approach in the future use and management of AI. We must understand our position on data and develop plans to become a more data-driven, data mature charity – one that makes more informed decisions, leading to more effective working practices.

The impact of climate change on the environment is an area of increasing concern. We have a role to play in helping to achieve environmental sustainability with those who are socially vulnerable – the very young, older people, those in poor health and low personal mobility are affected more than others. In the year ahead, we will seek to better understand and manage the impact of our activities on the environment and will develop a 10-year Estates & Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

## Thank you

We are moved and humbled by the incredible work of the Together Trust, the breadth of services we provide and the dedication of all who work here, our volunteers – including our trustees, our partner's and generous donors. Thank you – with your support we continue to achieve a great deal and importantly make a real difference to the lives of the people we support.

Overall, the year ahead involves planning for the future – new leadership brings new ideas and an opportunity to build on the strong foundations of all the good work that has gone before. We have challenging yet ambitious and exciting times ahead and look forward to expanding our reach and impact in the years to come.

**Giles Gaddum**
Chair of Trustees

**Melanie Dunn**
Chief Executive

# Report of the Board of Trustees Strategic Report

## What we do

### Everyone deserves to lead a happy life – together, we make that possible

At the Together Trust, we deliver individual care, support and education services across the North West.

We care for and champion the rights, needs and ambitions of care-experienced children and people with disabilities, autism and mental health differences.

Every year we support thousands of children, young people and adults to lead happy, fulfilled lives.

In the year to 31 March 2025, the Together Trust provided over 40 social care, special education, community and family support services to over 3,100 children, young people, vulnerable adults and families, whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Like many other charities, demand for the majority of the Trust's services continues to grow.

The Trust's services were carried out, on the whole, on behalf of local authorities, public sector bodies and service users in the North West of England and surrounding areas, though our online support presence is developing. All Special Educational Services are Ofsted regulated. Residential Care Services, along with Domiciliary Care and Community Support Services, are regulated by either the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

During the reporting period, the Together Trust's services were:

### Specialist Educational Services

Every young person deserves a chance to learn and space to thrive. That's why we break down barriers to education for all young people, helping them learn and grow at their pace, in our specialist learning environments in Greater Manchester:

**Inscape House School** – a non-maintained special school, that meets the needs of children and young people, aged 5 to 19 years, with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) and related social communication difficulties.

**Inscape Vocational College** – opened in September 2024, this college welcomes learners aged 16-19 who would benefit from accessing a smaller post 16 provision specialising in working with learners with ASC and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

**Bridge College** – a specialist further education college that supports students aged up to 25 years with learning difficulties and disabilities, complex needs, communication disorders and autism.

**Ashcroft School** – this independent special school closed in July 2024.

### Social & Therapy Care Services – Residential Care Services

Everyone deserves a place to call home - whether that's a place to call your own or somewhere to get safety, stability and support. We work with children, young people and adults to build a happy future.

We have 12 Ofsted registered homes for children and young people, offering a mixture of: short break and respite services for children with autism, learning and physical disabilities; mainstream homes for looked after children in need of care and support, and; therapeutic homes for looked after children in need of care, support and therapy including for those with complex autism and learning disabilities.

We have 1 CQC registered home for disabled adults with complex health needs.

### Social & Therapy Care Services – Fostering services

We provide a Fostering service, with support and training, so our foster carers can provide safe, caring, nurturing homes for children who need them.

### Social & Therapy Care Services - Domiciliary Care, Helping Families and Community Support Services

We offer a range of flexible services for young people and adults with autism, a learning disability or complex health needs. We put our services at the heart of local communities, making sure everyone has a chance to thrive - whether that is helping someone to live independently, or creating spaces to learn, work and play.

We have provided:

- supported living services for adults with complex needs across Bolton, Manchester, Salford and Stockport
- weekend club for young people with complex needs in Stockport
- evening youth activity clubs for young people with disabilities/autism in Stockport
- adult day services for adults with complex needs at the Humphrey Booth Centre in Ordsall, Salford – a community space for the people of Salford
- adult day services for adults with complex needs at our Newbridge community centre in Stockport
- specialist Positive Behaviour Support services in Stockport and Salford
- SEND mediation and dispute resolution services in Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, St Helens, Stoke on Trent and Telford & Wrekin
- SEND Information and Advice Service in Stockport and Tameside
- early intervention and prevention service in Manchester for children and young people with a diagnosis of autism and learning disabilities and their families

### Social & Therapy Care Services – Clinical services

We have multi-disciplinary teams working in mainstream and SEND schools and colleges providing a wide range of therapy and training programmes including:

- observation, assessment, individual and group interventions
- support to update and deliver on Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP) recommendations
- staff coaching and training
- sleep support
- speech and language therapy and occupational therapy

### Our Beneficiaries – the people we support

The Charity works determinedly towards a brighter future for the people we support and their families and to build communities where everyone feels valued and can thrive. The people we support tell us that they face daily discrimination, hardship and barriers in their lives. They continue to find it difficult to access the support they need.

We recognise the importance of listening to and amplifying the views of the people we support, sharing knowledge and raising awareness of the issues they face, and building collaborations with other organisations across the sector to tackle those issues. Through these activities, the Board gains a comprehensive overview of the landscape in which the Trust operates, where future developments and trends are, and how we can increase our impact and social value.

We take a proactive approach to influencing local, regional and national policy making. We work closely with national organisations such as the Disabled Children's Partnership, the Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers and the Children, and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, to help the people we support to influence future policy and provision in a coordinated and impactful manner.

The Board actively engages with its beneficiaries, both informally and formally, to understand the impact of its charitable activities and the interests of its beneficiaries.

Our aim is to be a trusted partner to the people we support and empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision.

We continue to work in partnership with charitable organisations and have strengthened our

relationships with charities through partnership work including the publication of a powerful book “Free Loaves on Friday” about the diverse experiences of the care system which saw contributions from several young people supported by the Together Trust. We were incredibly grateful to be receiving half the profits from the book along with our partner Article 39.

## Fundraising Activities

Our fundraising activities enable us to provide the people we support with so much more than just the contracted minimum.

Despite huge amounts of work by the Fundraising team, this year has been particularly challenging. Nevertheless, we were delighted to once more have benefited from the support of some fantastic individuals and organisations each supporting our work in a range of really helpful ways.

Notable contributions were received from a diverse group of supporters, both long-standing relationships and friends to the Charity. The Together Trust is extremely grateful for the generous support received from a variety of individuals, community and corporate supporters, and grant-making trusts who have chosen to support our young people and families.

Our special thanks also go to our other key partners for their ongoing support throughout 2024/25, who include: Roughley’s Bikers, L’Oreal, Boohoo, The Booth Charities, Hospital Saturday Fund, CRH Charitable Trust, John Horniman Children’s Trust, The Broome Family Charitable Trust, High Lee House Charitable Trust and WNS Assistance.

## Volunteering

The Charity aims to have an effective and inclusive volunteering programme that delivers tangible and valuable outcomes for our beneficiaries, supporting the delivery of the Trust's Stronger Together Plan.

The focus in 2024/25 was on increasing the number of volunteer driver journeys. These volunteers help our educational services by transporting students to work experience placements and excursions, supporting school runs for residential services, as well as doing fundraising collection and delivery trips. Across the year our volunteer drivers completed 489 journeys – a large increase from last year's 177 journeys.

"Not only do our Volunteer Drivers provide vital transport" says Claire Jenkins, Volunteer Service Manager, "but their kindness, empathy, and humour mean their passengers, who sometimes struggle to adjust to new people, feel reassured and look forward to seeing them."

Other volunteering activity included research for Together Trust's Campaigns team, with the publication of the research paper "Exploring the Link Between Poverty and Children Entering Care in England: Insights from Our Research Volunteer". This paper, published in October 2024, identified gaps in the existing literature, and proposed meaningful changes to improve the care system and address child poverty.

Overall, in addition to governors and trustees freely given time, our fantastic volunteers contributed a total of 3,310 regular hours. Their contribution equates to over £37,000 if valued in terms of the National Living Wage, however the real value of their wide-ranging expertise and dedication is immeasurable. An additional 551 hours was contributed by ad-hoc volunteers at events.

The great work of our volunteers saw them being nominated for the Stockport Rocks Awards 2024.

Our horticulture enthusiast, Tom Hatton-Jones, was a finalist for the Young Volunteer of the Year Award, while our Volunteer Drivers were contenders for the Volunteering Team of the Year Award. Tom has been praised as a dedicated horticulture enthusiast who cares for plants and nurtures our students with his wisdom and patience and his dedication and positive disposition have transformed our horticulture program at Bridge College.

"There's such a feel-good factor that comes with volunteering. Getting involved with the local community can make you feel so complete. Forming relationships with people you wouldn't normally is such a positive thing to do and gives you something to get up for in the morning," shares Tom.

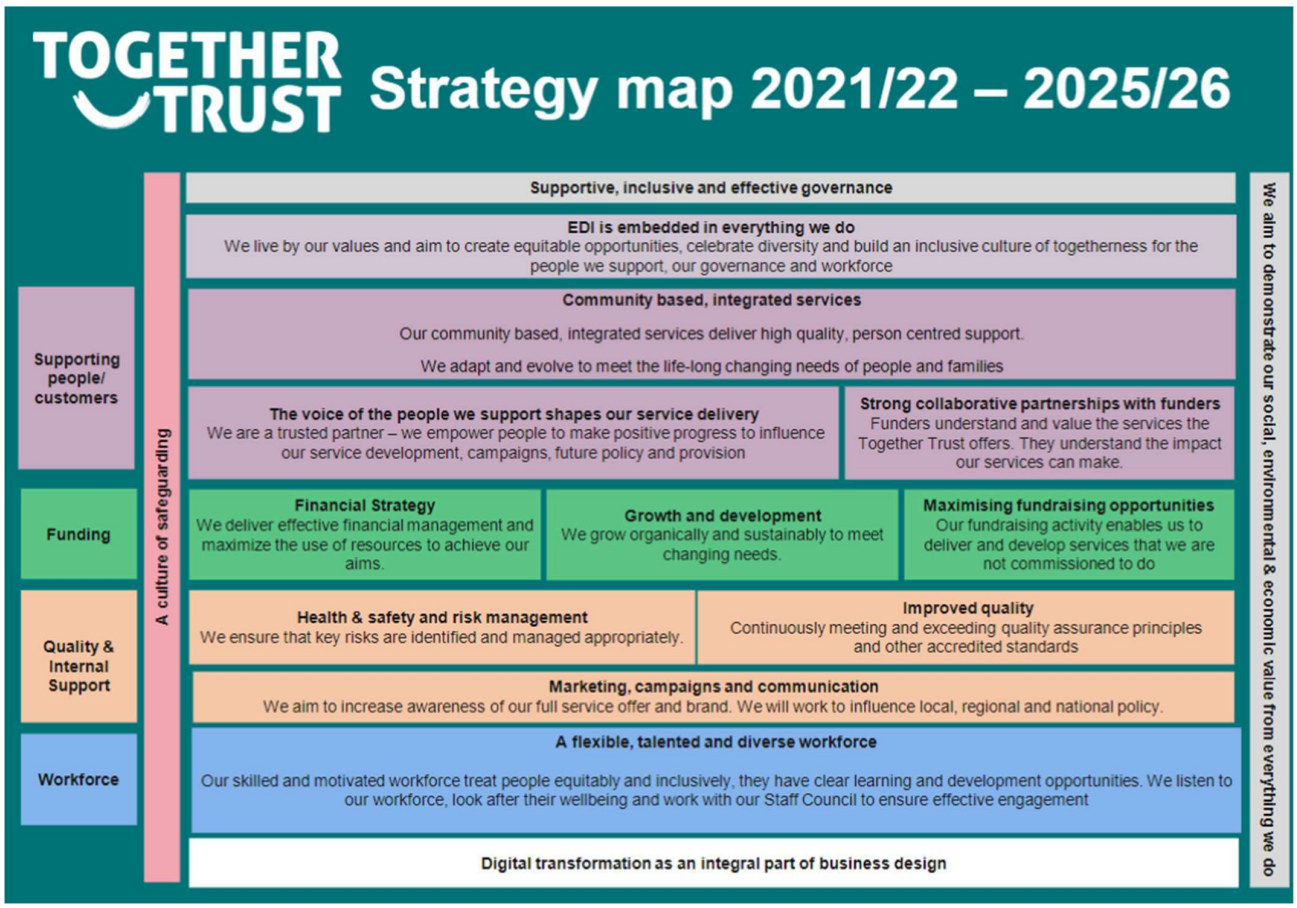
## Our strategic aims

Our strategic charitable aims are set out in our four year Stronger Together Plan. Our Stronger Together strategic aims are:

1. Our needs led, community based, integrated services deliver high quality, person centred support. We adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families
2. We are a trusted partner – we empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision
3. We grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs. We maximise fundraising opportunities and aim to demonstrate our social, environmental and economic value from everything that we do
4. Our flexible, talented and diverse workforce treat people equitably and inclusively. They have clear learning and development opportunities. We listen to our workforce, look after their wellbeing and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement

## Our strategy map

The Board is focused on its strategic long-term charitable aims as set out in its Stronger Together Plan.



# Strategic achievements & performance

The Trust renewed its commitment to its strategic plan, the Stronger Together Plan, in 2022 when it updated the plan to 2025/26. The plan builds on existing expertise as well as committing to innovative ways of improving how the Charity works. During 2024/25, the Trust continued to deliver results against its four key strategic aims which were originally set in 2017/18. The Board monitors progress against strategic aims in the Stronger Together Plan by measuring key performance indicators (KPI) related to specific areas of our operations, as illustrated in our strategy map on the previous page. Each Board subgroup, described in the Structure, Governance and Management section later in this report, receives KPIs relating to their specialist area either monthly or quarterly.

## Stronger Together Aim 1

**Our needs led, community based, integrated services deliver high-quality, person-centred support. We adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families.**

### Our KPI results against Stronger Together Aim 1

At 31 March 2025 all Trust services were graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted/CQC.

Service Occupancy – Placement Numbers – Target 100%

| | 31 March 2025 | 31 March 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Community Services achieving a minimum of 95% of contracted hours : | 96% | 89% |
| Clinical Services achieving a minimum of 95% of contracted hours: | 99% | 95% |
| Average occupancy across all children's homes: | 82% | 85% |

### Our progress in 2024/25

We supported over 3,100 children, adults and families this year, whether it was helping them learn more, sleep better, live well, have fun, gain skills, or relax!

As we reported last year, we took the difficult decision to close our Ashcroft education provision at the end of the academic year in July 2024. Following the decision, our focus in its final term was to minimise the impact on and prioritise the well-being of all Ashcroft students by working closely with pupils, families, carers and Local Authorities to look at individual support plans and best outcomes to help with transitions. By the time the school closed in July 2024, of the 48 students, 42 were confirmed to be continuing in education - the majority of whom were transferred to our Inscape House School and Inscape Vocational College service provisions. In addition, we were able to find continued employment for many staff at alternative positions elsewhere within the Trust.

In other areas of our service provision, we continued to grow through winning new contracts and extended delivery of existing contracts, joining or reconfirming its position on a number of frameworks such as:

- Stockport MBC – FPS Agreement for the Provision of Day Opportunities – April 2025 to March 2029
- NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board/Northamptonshire Children's Trust – Sleep Service – April 2025 to March 2026
- STAR procurement – Provision of Short Breaks for Children & Young People with Disabilities in Stockport/Trafford/Tameside/Rochdale – February 2024 to August 2026
- Liverpool City Council – Extension to Flexible Purchasing System for Schools Outreach Programme – April 2024 to March 2029
- Stockport MBC – Extension to Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) for SEND, Health & Social Care contract – April 2024 for 12 months
- STAR Procurement – Extension to Greater Manchester Learning Disability & Autism Procurement System – September 2024 to March 2025
- Cheshire East Council – Extension to Mediation & Disagreement Resolution Service contract - April 2025 to March 2026
- Cheshire West & Chester Council – Extension to Provision of SEND Mediation Service contract – to March 2026
- Membership of North West Flexible Purchasing System for Residential, Fostering and SEND services maintained
- Stockport MBC – Enhanced Therapies Service 1 year re-award from September 2024

Each year, we celebrate the fantastic achievements of the people we support and 2024/25 was no different. We hosted the annual Achievement Awards to celebrate our amazing young people.

Inscape House School's collaboration with the restaurant chain Gusto strives to give autistic students a chance to prove themselves in the workplace but also motivate employers to foster a more inclusive environment and tackle preconceived notions and unconscious biases about autism while transforming autistic people's lives.

Our students have been gaining valuable work experience to enhance their life skills through the support of Gusto. After 8 weeks of learning the ins-and-outs of working in a premium restaurant, they were able to test their knowledge on a practical day. They helped guests find their table, took orders, brought food, cleared tables, made drinks and more.

One of the students told us: "I really enjoyed the last few weeks here. We have done all sorts – we've been in the kitchen, learned about serving and more. Today has been less stressful that I thought it would be."

Our Bridge College students also gained valuable work experience and life lessons at their supported internship with Sodexo.

Being able to access work experience programmes has a huge impact on our students and is an invaluable resource for our Education service.

In our Residential services, we were able to support our young people on a variety of holidays including trips to Scotland where the children of one of our residential care homes took a trip to a breathtaking outdoor activity centre. The location of the holiday home is an ideal outdoor haven for autistic children. It has grown into a much-anticipated retreat for the young people, who lovingly call it their 'Holiday House', and for two of them, it feels like a second home.

"Our children love to go there. It is a wonderful thing to provide our young people with the experience of anticipation, and we spend so much time in the build-up talking about what we did last time and what we will do when we get there. This year, one of the young people had a 47-day countdown to the leaving date… he even had a countdown to picking up the minibus from Inscape," shared Kevin Clarke, Registered Manager at Haines House.

"Flying down a zip line, 30 ft in the air, watching one of our young people happily kick his shoes off into the lake below us will be an abiding memory for me," recalls Kevin.

Our day service, Newbridge Centre, in Stockport is a vital community hub supporting people with autism, learning disabilities and/or complex health needs. It is an inclusive and creative day centre. At Newbridge, we support people to have a happy social life, helping them grow confidence, skills and self-esteem as part of a nurturing community.

Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support team responded to over 1,400 SENDIASS enquiries this year. Our experienced team were able to offer vital support to parents and carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities together with advice and support directly to young people aged between 16 and 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Young people are able to access this service in their own right or with the support of their parents.

Our Clinical Services have continued their essential Sleep Services program, increasing the number of people supported by over 8%. Poor sleep doesn't have to be a given and we have continued to offer one-to-one sleep clinics and online advice. Our sleep practitioners work with parents and carers to create personalised sleep plans for their child so everyone can get a good night's sleep.

## Stronger Together Aim 2

**We are a trusted partner – we empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision.**

### Our KPI results towards Stronger Together Aim 2

| People supported | 2025 | 2024 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of people supported during the year | 3,100 | 3,350 | -7% |

### Our progress in 2024/25

As we closed our Ashcroft Education provision during the year and saw some consolidation of our Clinical Services provision to schools, the number of people supported in 2024/25 has seen some contraction this year.

However, we have made advances in other areas, including the opening of a new early intervention service where we have strengthened our role as a trusted partner by working collaboratively with the Local Authority and amplified the voices of the people we support. We focused on co-production – inviting children, young people, and families to help shape our services. The result is a year of closer partnerships and empowered individuals driving positive change in both our organisation and the wider system.

Key achievements include:

- **Championing lived experience in policy**: We joined forces with fellow charity National Star to run a nationwide survey, gathering hundreds of young people's and families' views on the transition to adulthood. The findings, published as *What Comes After Education?,* will help influence future policy and practice. In January 2025, students and staff from our schools and college travelled to Parliament to share their experiences at the launch of this national post-education report. By speaking directly to MPs, they ensured their firsthand insights would inform the government's recommendations on improving support for young people with disabilities leaving education.

- **Empowering through volunteer-led research**: Our volunteers play a crucial role in shaping services and campaigns. For example, Amber, a volunteer Research Assistant, spent the year investigating links between family poverty and children entering care – work that "could be used for change," as she describes. With guidance from our campaigns team, Amber and others applied their skills to dive into policy research and generate evidence for advocacy. This not only provided Amber with valuable experience but also gave the Trust robust data to influence sector improvements. Such volunteer-driven research exemplifies how we empower individuals to contribute to service development and wider social change.

- **Exposing a hidden national crisis and influenced national policy debate on children's care placements**: In April 2024, the Together Trust's Policy & Campaigns team published a powerful opinion piece highlighting the emerging crisis of children being placed in illegal, unregistered homes across the UK. Based on a joint investigation with The Guardian and The Observer, the article revealed that thousands of vulnerable children were being housed in unsafe and unregulated settings due to a severe shortage of appropriate placements. The piece called for urgent reform and a coordinated national response from Ofsted, the Department for Education, and the Ministry of Justice. This work significantly raised public and political awareness of the issue. This built on the appearance of our Campaigning Manager, Lucy Croxton, being invited to give evidence before a Westminster Select Committee, where she reinforced the need for legislative and policy reform to protect children's rights and ensure they receive safe, regulated care. These efforts exemplify our role as a trusted partner – advocating with evidence, empowering the voices of young people, and influencing decision-makers at the highest level to create lasting change.

All these efforts have enhanced our reputation as a reliable, values-driven partner, with commissioners, charities, and communities increasingly looking to work with us to co-design solutions. By building trust and actively involving people in decision-making, we have ensured that our services and campaigns in 2024/25 were not only *for* our community but also *with* our community.

## Stronger Together Aim 3

**We grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs. We maximise fundraising opportunities and aim to demonstrate our social, environmental, and economic value from everything that we do.**

### Our KPI results towards Stronger Together Aim 3

| **For the year ended 31 March 2025:** | |
|---|---|
| Income from Charitable activities | Target £40.8m<br>Actual £40.7m (2024 - £38.1m) |
| Fundraising donation income | Target £0.3m<br>Actual £0.2m (2024 - £0.3m) |

### Our progress in 2024/25

Over the past year, we have pursued thoughtful growth – expanding our reach to meet rising needs while safeguarding quality, sustainability, and our commitment to social value. We recognise that growing our impact must go hand-in-hand with financial resilience and environmental responsibility. In 2024/25 we started on the path of developing our plans to modernise and scale our services by starting to develop new Fundraising Growth Strategies – making sure every effort translates into real value for the people we support. Highlights of our activity in 2024/25 includes:

- **Sustainable service expansion -** Guided by our ambitions to grow, we began laying the groundwork for growth in our education, care, and therapeutic services. This year we mapped out major projects - such as new purpose-built school facilities and additional residential homes. Crucially, this growth is being pursued in a measured and sustainable way: we are carefully planning phased development so that each new classroom or home is filled in line with demand and operated on secure funding. Our plans also embed innovation and environmental sustainability from the start. For example, designing new builds with eco-friendly features and inclusive, autism-friendly layouts that enhance both efficiency and the experience of those we support. By growing in a restrained, values-led manner, we are preparing to serve more people in the future without compromising on the high standards of care and education our communities trust us to deliver.

- **New service provision** – We have opened an early intervention and prevention service in Manchester for children and young people with a diagnosis of autism and learning disabilities and their families. Opening halfway through the year, this is a new service where, working in partnership with Manchester City Council, we have supported 23 individuals - providing vital support to them and proving to be a trusted partner to a Local Authority, enabling the provision of best value care.

- **Demonstrating social value and impact**: We are committed to showing funders and the public the tangible social, environmental, and economic value created by their support. Throughout 2024/25, we closely tracked the outcomes of our initiatives and shared the results. For example, our 2024 Christmas appeal, boosted by a creative staff-led fundraiser where our HR team swapped their "Secret Santa" gifts for donations back to the Trust, raised funds to purchase essential gift vouchers for care leavers and families in need. Thanks to efforts like these, over 80 young people and families had a brighter, less stressful winter, and a total of 416 personalised presents were delivered across our services during the festive season. Each statistic represents a life touched: a young person feeling remembered and supported at Christmas, or a family relieved of economic pressure.

- **Maximising fundraising opportunities -** Amid economic challenges nationwide, we worked creatively to broaden our funding base and engage supporters. Our fundraising team offered a wide range of ways for people to get involved, from online initiatives to community events. Notably, our accessible Join Together Festival returned in July 2024 as a family-friendly summer celebration - bringing together hundreds of attendees and local businesses in support of our cause. We also ran popular themed activities, all of which gave supporters fun and meaningful ways to contribute. These efforts were backed by growing partnerships with companies and grant-makers, from local firms to national brands, who chose to invest in our mission. We also started to think about the future and how we begin to focus our efforts on high-impact, inclusive fundraising opportunities, which not only raise vital additional income but also strengthen our community of supporters.

We apply this outcomes-focused approach across all our activities. Whether it's a therapeutic program improving a child's communication skills or an efficiency change that saves funds, we aim to capture and communicate that impact. By evidencing how *"everything we do"* ties back to positive social

outcomes, financial prudence, and even eco-friendly practices, we give our stakeholders confidence that their investment in the Trust yields real value. This year's successes – from fundraising totals to lives changed – will inform how we allocate resources and set targets moving forward, ensuring we continue to grow with purpose and accountability.

## Fundraising Activities

This year has been one of both challenge and reflection for our fundraising function. Against the backdrop of a rapidly changing charitable giving landscape and growing financial pressures on households, fundraising has become more difficult than ever. National data published in the *CAF UK Giving Report 2025* shows that fewer people are donating overall - with a third fewer young people giving than in 2017 - while charities continue to face rising costs. These trends have been felt across the sector, and the Trust is no exception.

Despite these challenges, our fundraising team delivered a calendar of activities that continued to engage our community and bring in vital voluntary income. Events such as the Join Together Festival, Halloween Together, and our annual seasonal appeals remained popular, while online retail and supporter-led campaigns helped extend our reach in an increasingly digital environment.

We are grateful to all those who supported our mission - from long-standing funders and grant-making trusts to first-time donors and volunteers. Their generosity continues to enhance the quality and scope of our charitable work.

However, in recognising the need to do things differently, this year we have taken significant steps to transform how we approach fundraising in the future and have been developing a comprehensive fundraising strategy designed to ensure that our fundraising activities are sustainable, scalable, and capable of generating greater impact for the people we support.

We know that children's charities continue to receive significant public support, but our current fundraising income does not yet reflect our ambition.

Through the implementation of a new strategy, we will be repositioning our fundraising efforts to better align with the needs and expectations of our supporters, the strengths of our organisation, and the opportunities emerging in the wider giving environment.

Our new strategy will ensure that every pound raised goes further - enabling us to campaign, innovate, and invest in support that goes beyond our core statutory provision.

We would like to thank all of our supporters who contributed throughout 2024/25. Their generosity continues to make a meaningful difference, and we look forward to sharing the positive impact of our new strategic direction in the years to come.

## Stronger Together Aim 4

**Our flexible, talented and diverse workforce treat people equitably and inclusively. They have clear learning and development opportunities. We listen to our workforce, look after their wellbeing and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement.**

### Our KPI results against Stronger Together Aim 4

| For the year ended 31 March 2025: | |
|---|---|
| Staff turnover | Target less than 20%<br>Actual 18% (2024 – 22%) |
| One year retention | Target more than 80%<br>Actual 87% (2024 n/a) |
| Staff sickness absence | Target 4% or lower<br>Actual 4% (2024 5%) |

### Our progress in 2024/25

#### Workforce and Workforce Engagement

The Trust takes great pride in its workforce, on whom it depends for the delivery of its charitable objectives.

Throughout the year, the Trust employed over 800 people in the fields of care, education, community, clinical, management and infrastructure support. The Trust started paying the Real Living Wage in 2020 and proudly became an accredited Real Living Wage employer in June 2022. The Trust continues to be committed to being a Real Living Wage employer and to a transparent system for pay and reward to attract and retain staff.

#### Investing in people

In 2021, the Trust was assessed at 'beyond the standard' for Investors in People ("IIP") and it achieved the prestigious 'Gold' award. We are delighted to say that we have again been awarded 'Gold' for a second time in 2024. The Trust regards the IIP standard as an effective way to benchmark performance and demonstrate excellence. The IIP framework is used to support ongoing enhancements aligned to the Together Trust's people strategy.

The Trust is deeply committed to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Our goal is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly, equitably, and with respect. We want the Trust to be a place where we all feel we belong and can thrive, and we want to foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

We have an ongoing focus on ensuring our policies, procedures, processes and workspaces are inclusive and accessible, role modelling inclusive and compassionate behaviours, nurturing a diverse workforce at all levels that's reflective of the communities we support, as well as cultivating an open and inclusive culture where everyone feels safe, and a sense of belonging. We are planning to undertake an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) audit during 2025 as another method of ensuring the views of the workforce inform how we continue to make improvements.

The Trust will continue to ensure that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is at the forefront of all service delivery and workforce support.

The Charity publishes its gender pay report each year and a copy of the latest report can be downloaded from our website.

The Trust has continued to work closely with its Staff Council, along with our four staff networks, which represent the workforce and act as our workforce's voice.

The Trust continues to invest heavily in its learning and development programme, giving our workforce the opportunity to build their skills and capabilities, and providing them with clear pathways to grow and develop within the organisation. By embedding inclusive learning principles and championing equitable access to development, we actively support a flexible and diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. Our learning offer includes a blend of mandatory, role-specific, and aspirational development opportunities, which, as a result, ensures our workforce is not only highly skilled but also equipped with the knowledge and behaviours needed to create inclusive environments across all our services.

In recognition of our sustained investment and impact, we were selected as an Apprenticeship Employer of 2024, highlighting our ongoing commitment to nurturing talent, developing capability, and building a workplace where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Our dedicated volunteers have supported the Trust this year on a regular basis in a variety of roles, from drivers, gardeners and student mentors to Trustees and Governors, plus many more one-off or short term arrangements. Where possible, volunteering outcomes have been tracked for the services supported. More information can be found on their activity in the volunteering section of this report.

The Trust is committed to creating a supportive and healthy work environment that benefits employees and the organisation. Aligned to enhancements we've made to our wellbeing strategy in line with external and internal trends, we have identified key actions aligned to four strategic areas to shift our approach from focussing on providing reactive support to also including preventative and proactive solutions. Developing compassionate leadership across the Trust, as well as the enhancement of support to empower staff to feel more in control of their financial wellbeing will increase in momentum in 2025/26.

# Financial review

With the majority of Trust income being from local authority fees for education and care services provided, it is noted that authorities continue to face significant funding gaps and the financial outlook for the sector remains challenging, which highlights a premium being put on continuing to provide services which represent good value for money to local authorities in the future.

The Trust's services are essential for those who we support and the majority of people who receive our services require a funding decision from the responsible local authority or other such public agency. Most of the Trust's fees are received for services to individuals, although some services are purchased on a block contract basis by local authorities who wish to ensure they have guaranteed access to the Trust's services as their provider of choice.

The Trust reports net income for 2024/25 of £1.4m which is up from a net expenditure of £1.0m in 2023/24. After transfers between funds and other gains and losses, there is an increase in funds of £1.5m compared to a reduction in funds of £1.5m in 2023/24.

This marks a considerable turnaround from last year which was impacted by the closure of one of our Education services, and an actuarial loss relating to our closed, defined benefit pension scheme.

Our charitable activities of Social & Therapy Care Services continued to operate in a particularly difficult environment. Results however have marginally improved to a small surplus of £0.1m on income of £22.5m compared to a deficit of £0.1m on income of £20.7m in 2024. Improvements have been made to staff recruitment and retention which have impacted these results despite continued reliance on agency staff.

Our charitable activities of Education services performed well overall through a challenging year of closing one service, with a surplus of £1.1m on income of £18.3m compared to a deficit of £0.3m on income of £17.4m in 2024.

Fundraising income of donations, grants and gifts in kind, reduced this year and was £0.2m compared to £0.3m in 2024. The challenging environment is being particularly felt in our Fundraising efforts and we are so grateful to all of our donors who support us. There is further information about these earlier in this report.

## Income

2024/25 saw the Trust's income increase by 7.0% from £38.5m in 2024 to £41.2m in 2025 with the main increase being in our Social & Therapy Care services where income increased by over £1.8m. This is due to improving levels of occupancy being achieved in our residential homes, expansion of service provision in areas of our Community & Personalisation services, along with the effects of some fee increases.

Our Education service performed exceptionally well with a significant amount of change during the year. We were able to continue to support a number of students from our Ashcroft Service which was closed during the year, by transitioning them to our Inscape House School provision and limited the number of redundancies by transferring staff into vacancies within Inscape House School and Bridge College.

## Expenditure

The Charity reports expenditure of £39.8m in the year compared to £38.8m in 2024 (before exceptional costs), an increase of 2.6%. This resulted in net surplus of £1.3m compared to net expenditure, before exceptional costs and gains and losses, of £0.3m last year.

Of the total expenditure incurred, payroll costs amounted to £29.1m compared to £27.2m in 2024, an increase of 7.0%. The average number of employees during the year was 826 compared to 859 in 2024, a decrease of 33 in headcount year on year, mainly as a result of service closure within Education.

Agency costs decreased in the year to £1.7m compared to £2.0m in 2024, which is the result of a number of factors including developing our pool of banking staff and focusing on recruitment and retention, although the continued dependency on agency staff is still keenly felt along with many other organisations in the sector.

Social & Therapy Care Services expenditure increased from £20.8m in 2024 to £22.4m in 2025, an increase of 7.7%, with the growth in service provision and associated staffing resources therefore required.

Education services expenditure contracted by a little under 3% from £17.7m (excluding exceptional costs) to £17.1m, being largely impacted by the reduced number of education establishments.

An actuarial gain of £162,000 on the defined benefit (final salary) pension scheme (which has been closed to new members since 2000) has improved the overall surplus further following last years significant actuarial loss of £530,000, mainly due to the changes in financial assumptions used in the valuation. The scheme, however, remains in deficit.

## Investments

At 31 March 2025, the value of the investment portfolio increased by £38,000 from its 2024 value of £999,000 to its 2025 value of £1,037,000 through investment gains on assets held within the portfolio.

Our investment managers have been given delegated responsibility to manage the investment portfolio in line with the investment policy and funds are invested in a well-diversified portfolio of UK and overseas equities, fixed interest investments, alternative investments and cash.

Our investment policy is to invest with the main purpose of ensuring the underlying security of the investment, while achieving long term returns from both generation of income and capital growth. We seek to achieve our investment goals through a mix of low-risk and high-risk investments to achieve a diversified portfolio of investments at a suitable risk level.

The Trustees are committed to investing in a socially responsible manner and expect the investment manager to integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into investment management processes and ownership practices. The Trust has specified ethical restrictions in the management of the portfolio. The ethical investment policy precludes direct or indirect investment in companies in the alcohol, tobacco and arms industry.

There is no prescribed level of income the portfolio is required to generate and our investment managers are mindful of the overall objective of a total return from income and capital growth.

The total return performance of the investments over the year was 5.26% (9.18% in 2024), being impacted, particularly around the year end by the changes in US trade policies. The performance of the portfolio is compared to the associated and relevant blend of indices for the Investment Managers risk category profile which equates to a total return performance of 3.4% (11.22% in 2024).

## Final Salary Pension Scheme

The Together Trust is the employer sponsor of the Together Trust Defined Benefit pension scheme, which is a defined benefit pension plan. It closed to new members in 2000 and stopped the further accrual of benefits at this date.

The Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 valuation position on 31 March 2025 shows a deficit of £514,000, compared with £724,000 in 2024. This deficit is recognised on the balance sheet and the movement has led to a £162,000 actuarial gain in year as recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities. The reduction in the deficit was due to a combination of:

- the membership experience since the last triennial valuation at 30 Sep 2021 has resulted in there being a gain, likely due to members who may have passed away earlier than assumed
- a reduction in the value placed on liabilities, because of a higher discount rate used in the calculations (by 83 bps) due to a rise in AA corporate bond yields. Although asset values also fell due to the matching strategy in place, these did not fall as much as the liabilities on an accounting basis.

The financial year end FRS102 valuation is different from the triennial actuarial valuation which was last formally performed as at 30 September 2021.

The September 2021 valuation showed a deficit of £687,000, and a plan to eliminate the deficit was agreed by the payment of monthly contributions through to 31 March 2027. It is the on-going triennial valuation that is used to calculate the payment of additional pension contributions and the deficit reduction plan will make sure the deficit reduces over a number of years as additional pension contributions are paid. The pension scheme deficit is a long-term liability, where the payments required by the pension deficit reduction plan will need to be met from future cash flows.

The next triennial valuation is currently taking place valuing the scheme as at 30 September 2024.

As detailed in note 28 of the financial statements, a review of historic scheme benefit changes is currently being undertaken which may, dependent on the outcome of the review, impact the future valuation of benefit obligations and the 30 September 2024 scheme valuation.

## Reserves

As at 31 March 2025, reserves totalled £28.0m (2024 £26.5m) as detailed by the fund balances in the balance sheet on page 34.

The Trust's reserves policy is based on an assessment of the Trust's cash flow and the risks it faces. The Trust takes a prudent view where, as a minimum, the level of cash reserves must not fall below £2.5m at each month end and it should hold cash reserves of at least six weeks expenditure at the year end.

### Restricted funds

Restricted funds of £0.4 m (2024 £0.4m) represent funds that have been given for a particular purpose. The Trustees have no discretion to reallocate them for use other than for those for which they were given. Further details are set out in note 22 of the financial statements.

### Endowment funds

Endowment funds of £0.2m (2024 £0.2m) represent the value of donated investment assets. Only the income generated by the fund can be expended. Further details are set out in note 22 of the financial statements.

### Unrestricted funds

General reserves of £16.7m (2024 £15.1m) are the part of the Charity's funds that are not restricted or designated to any particular purpose.

The revaluation reserve of £6.6m (2024 £6.7m) is the unrealised gain on our property portfolio.

Designated funds of £4.1m (2024 £4.1m) are funds that have been set aside for a specific purpose by the Trustees (further details of which are set out in note 22 of the financial statements.

The revaluation reserve and the designated funds are not readily available so are not included in the calculation of freely available general reserves.

Of the £27.4m (2024 £25.9m) unrestricted funds, £19.3m (2024 £19.4m) is represented by fixed assets and a further £4.1m (2024 £4.1m) has been designated to set aside funds towards investment plans and both are therefore not available as working capital, leaving £4.0m (2024 £2.4m) as free reserves, which is also summarised in the balance sheet table below.

| | **2025 £'m** | 2024 £'m |
|---|---|---|
| Net current assets | **9.7** | 9.3 |
| Less long-term creditors and provisions | **(1.2)** | (2.2) |
| Net reserves | **8.5** | 7.1 |
| Less: Restricted & designated funds | **(4.5)** | (4.7) |
| **Free reserves** | **4.0** | 2.4 |

Unrestricted available cash as at 31 March 2025 was £8.6m, against the equivalent of six weeks' worth of expenditure of £4.6m (2024 unrestricted cash was £7.0m against £4.5m of expenditure).

## Fixed assets

Changes in tangible fixed assets are summarised in the notes to the financial statements (see note 14).

Fixed asset purchases during the year amounted to £1.1m compared to £1.2m in 2024.

A modest amount of investment was required to our properties to accommodate an increase in student numbers on our Cheadle site.

Further investments have been made in property renovations and improvements at six of our residential properties.
Improvements to a new leased property for our day services provision along with ongoing routine works at each of our education establishments were also incurred.

## Going concern

We have detailed above a review of the financial performance of the Trust during the year and of its financial reserves position as at 31 March 2025. The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which the Trustees consider to be appropriate for the following reasons.

The Trust has prepared budgets and cash projections taking account of the impact on its financial resources of the increase in employer's national insurance contributions, increases to the Real Living Wage, the resources required for capital expenditure, and the risks associated with being able to secure annual fee increases for its services.

The Trustees have prepared cashflow forecasts for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. The forecasts are prepared on a conservative basis and support that there are sufficient free reserves to provide cover for any short term unexpected changes in income and expenditure.

The level of brought forward unrestricted reserves and available cash funds have been considered and we do not believe there are any material uncertainties that cast significant doubt over the Together Trust's ability to continue in operation as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

# Principal risks & uncertainties

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring effective risk management and ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to manage risks. On an ongoing basis risks are reported to every main Board meeting to keep the Trustees abreast and up to date with strategic risks and the actions being taken to mitigate these risks. We continue to review our risks and our risk handling methodology in order to improve the management and reporting of our strategic and wider operational risks. Below is a summary of our principal risks and the processes we have in place to manage them.

| Principal risk | Management & mitigation<br>What the Trust is doing to reduce the likelihood or minimise the impact of these risks occurring |
|---|---|
| **Safeguarding failure**<br>Significant safeguarding failure by the Trust | The Trust has established a robust accountability, control and review framework involving officers and Trustees. We have robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place, including safer recruitment, along with training for all of our staff. We have clear safeguarding reporting mechanisms and conduct reviews and lessons learned from cases. |
| **Health & Safety failure**<br>Significant health and safety failure by the Trust | We have clear health and safety policies aligned with legal and regulatory standards. We ensure that all key staff have role specific health and safety training. |
| **Corporate governance, regulatory breach and ESG shortfall**<br>Failure to ensure the Trust's governance arrangements are effective and robust. Significant non-compliance or regulatory breach | We have a robust governance framework in place which is periodically reviewed to ensure effectiveness and alignment with best practice.<br><br>We have a rigorous board structure to review compliance risks and maintain regulatory oversight. We ensure mandatory training for all staff on key regulatory and compliance requirements, with clear policies and compliance checks to assess adherence. |
| **Estate Deterioration**<br>The risk that our estate is not adequately maintained or developed | The Trust actively reviews its resource requirements for its property portfolio and its facilities to ensure that it meets Health & Safety compliance standards and remains competitive in the future. Regular condition surveys are undertaken internally, and planned maintenance programmes are followed. |
| **Workforce capacity, capability & wellbeing**<br>Misalignment of staff capabilities and the needs of the Trust together with the risk of declining employee well-being | Our workforce is our most valuable asset.<br>We review our pay and rewards package regularly in order to stay competitive and retain our staff along with attracting new talent. We remain committed to being a Real Living Wage employer. We have strong and comprehensive learning and development opportunities available to staff, along with a defined wellbeing strategy to support staff health, engagement and retention. |
| **Financial viability**<br>Failure to effectively explore diversification and growth opportunities or ensure the Trust's financial viability | There is pressure on securing annual fee increases to support increases in the Real Living Wage and other cost increases, particularly the increase in national insurance contribution costs for 2025/26. We ensure regular budget monitoring supports decision making, financial stability and early risk identification. We aim to maintain our reserves position in order to ensure continuity of service. We monitor our financial performance continuously so that we can adapt and plan and take proportionate measures as required. |
| **Cyber security attack**<br>The risk that the Trust is subject to a successful and serious cyber security attack and the impact that this would have | We have IT security controls in place such as firewalls enabled on all networks, anti-virus software installed on all devises and two factor authentication on all staff accounts and all third party software providers. We have clear policies and procedures for our staff to follow such as not allowing accounts or passwords to be shared. We have Cyber Essentials accreditation and we conduct annual penetration testing on our networks. All staff complete mandatory training on data protection and IT security. |
| **Service disruption**<br>Unable to effectively respond to a significant service disruption | We have resources prepared and available to support responding to disruption and perform regular risk assessments for infrastructure, IT and service resilience. |
| **Transformation failure**<br>Unable to achieve transformation of the Trust (digital or other) | We have regular risk assessments for infrastructure, IT and service resilience. |

# Future plans

The Together Trust continues to evolve and grow to meet the changing needs of the people we support. Our ambition is to grow in the future and this growth will enable us to deliver improved outcomes for even more young people and adults with complex needs, whilst ensuring the Trust operates with long-term financial sustainability.

As our new leadership team embeds itself, it sees 2025/26 as an opportunity to lay the foundations for an exciting future.

Our new Executive Trust Leadership Team have been setting their priorities for 2025/26 which include developing a new five-year strategy for beyond 2025/26 including seeking to grow our services recognising the growing and unmet needs across education, care and clinical services.

### Our Strategic Focus Areas

We plan to focus on five strategic service areas:

- specialist education
- children's residential homes and fostering
- community and personalisation care services
- clinical services; and
- fundraising

Each area is grounded in strong existing demand, clear alignment with our charitable mission, and the potential to generate both social impact and financial sustainability.

Our approach is not simply to expand, but to evolve. This focused approach in each strategic service area allows us to grow with purpose, while remaining agile and responsive.

Together, these strategic focus areas form the backbone of a modern and resilient charity - one that is ready to grow in a way that is sustainable, people-centred, and driven by need.

### Laying the groundwork for change

To ensure we are ready to deliver on our ambitions, the Executive Trust Leadership Team (TLT) has identified a set of key priorities for the 2025/26 year ahead. These priorities are designed to lay strong and lasting foundations - strategically, operationally, and culturally.

The areas of focus are wide-ranging but interlinked and reflect our commitment to deliver meaningful, well-governed growth with people at the centre.

**Strategic clarity:** We are developing a new five-year strategy for beyond 2025/26, complete with a clear delivery roadmap, supported by robust KPIs and market insight.

**Capital investment:** We are looking at major infrastructure projects starting with our education services with detailed planning, procurement and governance structures in place to ensure delivery.

**Digital and estates planning:** We are developing two major long-term strategies - a five-year Digital Transformation Strategy and a ten-year Estates and Facilities Strategy - to underpin service delivery and resilience.

**Workforce and leadership:** We are investing in strategic workforce and succession planning in key areas, alongside initiatives to embed compassionate leadership, support staff wellbeing, and further embed equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

**Systems and governance:** We are aiming to enhance internal systems, improve our performance reporting, and strengthen governance and assurance across all services and functions.

Taken together, these priorities represent a whole-Trust effort to prepare for the next phase of our journey. By clarifying direction, investing in infrastructure, developing our people, and strengthening our systems, we aim to ensure the Trust is equipped and energised for the future.

### How we'll deliver

To realise these ambitions, we are further strengthening the already solid foundations of the Trust. With compassionate leadership, enhanced governance, and more robust ways of working, we are positioning the Charity to be able to move forward with confidence and purpose. Our commitment to digital transformation and improving data quality will enable evidence-based decision-making across the organisation. We remain committed to maintaining strong reserves and securing new income through capital fundraising, building capacity in our services and strengthening our trusted partnerships. Above all, our dedicated staff and volunteers are central to delivering impactful outcomes every day for the people we support.

### Our commitment to impact

As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring every person we support has the opportunity to thrive. Our plans are bold because the needs are urgent and growing. With the right partnerships, investment, and collective resolve, we believe the Together Trust is ready to grow, adapt, and evolve to meet the needs and aspirations of more people than ever before.

# Structure, governance and management

## Charity objects

Together Trust is the working name of The Together Trust ("the Trust" or "the Charity"). Originally founded in 1870, it is now a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, which is governed by its Articles of Association. Together Trust serves children, young people, adults, and families whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autism.

The Charity's objects (purposes) are:

- to give aid, assistance, and care to those with disabilities or in need, including to children and/or young persons; and
- to promote the education, training and advancement in life of those with disabilities or in need, including that of children and/or young persons.

The Trust's work reflects the main themes and ideas within Department for Education plans and the direction of current and future adult social care and health provision. Most of the Trust's services are based in the North West of England and surrounding areas, however, the Charity accepts referrals from all parts of the UK.

## Members

Any person who is appointed as a Trustee will automatically, by virtue of that appointment, become a Member. No person other than a Trustee may be admitted as a Member. There are currently 13 registered Members.

The interests of the Trust and its Members are aligned with the common purpose of carrying out the objects of the Charity.

There are Conflicts of Interest and Gift in Kind policies in place for Members, Trustees and Governors to manage any actual and perceived conflicts that might arise.

## Public benefit

The Trustees have taken into account the Charity Commission's general guidance on the provision of public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and planning future activities which are set out in this report. The Trustees always ensure that the activities undertaken are in line with the charitable objectives and aims of the Together Trust.

The summary of the Charity's Strategic Plan and the analysis of the achievements to date as shown in the Strategic Achievements and Performance section of this report, together with more details of the Charity's services set out in the 'What we do', section demonstrate how the Charity has sought to fulfil its principal charitable objective which is to give aid, assistance and care to those with disabilities or in need.

Access to all Together Trust services is based on an objective assessment of need by Trust staff and/or a commissioning local authority and is not based on financial ability to pay. In the case of Independent Advice and Support Services and Independent Supporter Services, any parent/legal guardian whose child attends school in the area that the service operates in may have access to these services.

## Statutory and Regulatory

The Together Trust's subsidiaries, as listed in note 15 to the financial statements, have not traded during the year, have no income and bore no expenditure.

## The Board of Trustees (Non-executive)

Trustees are Directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006. The Articles of Association state that there shall be a Board of Trustees (a Board of Directors) which shall consist of not less than five members.
There is no maximum number. Terms of office are for three years, but Trustees can be reappointed for two further terms up to maximum of nine years. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance and strategy of the Trust.

17 Trustees served during this year.
We said goodbye to three Trustees, all of whom ended their trusteeships during the reporting period and the Board would like to thank Maria Greenwood, Dilal Ranasinghe and Tristan Morris, for their service as Trustees. Simon Lees-Jones was a dedicated long serving member of the Board who sadly passed away in 2024 and who will be sorely missed.

The Board is currently made up of 13 Trustees comprising a mix of professional and lived experience.

Trustees are recruited from a number of sources, including personal recommendations, Council for Voluntary Services organisations across Greater Manchester, Reach volunteering website and social media. The Board has defined the skill profiles required and actively seeks to establish a diversity of backgrounds and experience of its members. The Board looks at skills gaps as well as the terms of office of current Trustees to inform succession planning.

The Charity seeks to secure its future governance responsibilities by an active Trustee Governance Subgroup which is responsible for recruiting Trustees. New Trustees bring knowledge and abilities to the Charity that have been derived from various perspectives including business and commerce or professional, occupational, charitable or lived experience.

Prospective Trustees are invited to submit an application and are subsequently shortlisted and interviewed by members of the Board. They are made aware of their responsibilities and are required to provide two referees who are contacted before appointment. All Trustees are checked via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

During induction, new Trustees meet the Executive Directors and are given access to a secure online platform which contains governance documents, relevant policies and procedures, and previous reports, accounts and meeting minutes. Trustees are given information on their roles and responsibilities and undertake training courses relevant to their roles, including mandatory safeguarding training.

Governance handbooks for Trustees support the Trust's Articles by setting out the policies, procedures and practices the Board and our Governing Bodies adopt in the fulfilment of their responsibility for the activities of the Trust and are provided to each on induction to the Trust.

| Our Trustees who served during the year |
|---|
| Geoff Durbin |
| Marcell Edwards |
| Anthony Farnworth |
| Norah Flood |
| Giles Gaddum |
| Maria Greenwood (resigned 17 June 2024) |
| Jane Grime |
| Michael Henshaw |
| Roger Horne |
| Ian Johnson |
| Simon Lees-Jones (deceased 8 October 2024) |
| Gani Martins |
| Tristan Morris (resigned 16 July 2024) |
| Rebekah Pierre |
| Steven Pitt |
| Dilal Ranasinghe (resigned 8 November 2024) |
| Jane Walapu |

The Board holds responsibility for agreeing the strategic direction of the organisation, setting the budgetary framework, and deciding upon major undertakings. A Scheme of Delegation, approved by the Board, is in place that sets out in detail the matters and powers delegated to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive reports fully to the Trustees at each Board meeting and to the Chair on a regular basis. This allows the Board to monitor progress in a well informed and incremental manner and to agree any strategic or budgetary adjustments which may become necessary in the year.

Delegation in other areas is mapped in a Scheme of Delegation which sets out the powers and functions of the Board and its subgroups and details responsibility and accountability in a Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (RACI) framework.

The Trustees have the benefit of a qualifying third-party indemnity provision as defined by section 234 Companies Act 2006. The Charity purchased and maintained throughout the year directors' and officers' liability insurance in respect of itself and its Trustees.

## The Trust's Leadership Team (Executive)

Under the Scheme of Delegation, responsibility for the operational management of the Charity is delegated to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is assisted in the operational management of the Charity by Operational Directors who together form the Trust Leadership Team and are our Key Management Personnel. Each Director has responsibility for an area of the Charity's activities, resources, performance, and operations.

During the year the Trust welcomed a new Executive Trust Leadership management team as a result of changes in the Key Management Personnel. The current Executive Directors are listed in the Reference and Administrative Information section at the end of this report.

**Remuneration of the Executive Trust Leadership Team**

The pay and remuneration of Key Management Personnel is considered by the HR & OD subgroup who are advised by the Trust's Head of Organisational Development. The evaluation of a role for Leadership pay scale remuneration purposes uses a mixture of National Joint Council and Hay job evaluation methodologies, which is also independently reviewed by an external consultant adviser.

## Groups that report to the Board

The Trust aims to ensure the Charity's values are reflected in all our work and that the ethos and the culture of the organisation underpins the delivery of all activities. The Board maintains several Trustee-led, special purpose subgroups and school and college governing bodies that undertake specific tasks which contribute to the Charity's governance and operation to meet the aims within the 'Stronger Together' plan. They meet regularly and report to the Board to assist the Board with its function, decision-making and continued improvement.

**School and College Governing Bodies** – Each governing body has its own constitution approved by the Board. The Board appoints Trustees to be the Chair and Vice Chair of each governing body. Trustees who served as a Chair to a Trust education governing body during the reporting period were:

Bridge College – Roger Horne
Inscape House School - Giles Gaddum

**The Together Trust Fostering Panel** - the panel is an independent body and is made up of people with a range of skills, knowledge and experience and includes staff members from the Trust's fostering agency. Some panel members have a professional background in child or social care, and others have direct experience with the fostering process. Our panel members also have access to legal and medical advice should they need it as well as each other's skills and expertise. The panel reports to the Board on an annual basis.

The panel considers fostering applications and makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants. This also includes making recommendations about the number, age range and backgrounds of the children placed with Together Trust foster carers.

### Board Subgroups

The Board has ensured that each of its subgroup's terms of authority and reference and strategic theme responsibilities are in line with the Charity's strategic plans and reflect the Charity Governance Code. All subgroups monitor and evaluate relevant KPIs to help drive continuous improvement with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement. The subgroup terms also ensure each area of activity supports the Trust's commitment to social value and improved equity, diversity and inclusion for governance, the workforce, and the people the Charity supports.

Each subgroup receives updates on performance, evaluation, and risk in core areas of operational and infrastructure services at the Charity.

The Board receives reports from each subgroup in line with the organisation's planning and performance management cycle.

### Governance Subgroup

The subgroup meets quarterly to assist the Board to oversee the methods by which the Board, subgroups and governing bodies monitor and share progress to ensure supportive, effective, and inclusive governance. The group is assisted by the EDI Governance Steering Group to ensure the recruitment of Trustees and Governors, their training, responsibilities and the proper arrangements of supervision and appraisal (where relevant) are in place and follow best practice.

The Trust aims to create an environment where divergent views are welcomed and individuals feel confident sharing their ideas. To achieve this, trust and mutual respect is essential - both between Board members and between the Trustees and the Executive Team and wider workforce.

### EDI Governance Steering Subgroup
The subgroup reports to the Governance Subgroup and oversees the strategic approach to building a more equitable and diverse organisational governance culture, ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles are embedded to help deliver the best possible outcomes for the people we support.

### Finance & Audit Subgroup
The subgroup meets six times a year to inform the Honorary Treasurer and the Chair of Trustees of the financial position and performance of the Charity. It scrutinises the annual budget prior to Board approval and considers any special issues with financial implications that are to be reported to the Board.

The subgroup also reviews funding strategy, growth plans and matters in respect of the Charity's pension schemes. It ensures that third party partners and suppliers are procured in line with policy and the Trust conducts its business in a commercially responsible way to achieve maximum positive impact for communities, people and the environment.

The subgroup is responsible for the appointment and removal of the external auditor, the ongoing relationship and liaison with the auditor and for monitoring management's responsiveness to external audit findings and recommendations.

### Digital Subgroup
The subgroup meets quarterly to oversee how technology can reach and support our workforce and the people we support with the aim of delivering practical, efficient and cost-effective solutions. It oversees how the Charity creates a culture in which digital can flourish and the accountabilities for digital development within the Charity ensuring that, where possible, digital is an integral part of business design.

We take a digital-led approach, and our aim is to share learning to enable our workforce and the people we support to:

- Develop the right skills required to use technology effectively and safely
- Make it easier to communicate with the Trust
- Explore how technology can encourage independence and wellbeing
- Ensure effective information management and compliance reporting including GDPR

### Service Visitor Subgroup
A programme of visits aims to ensure that all the Together Trust operations and central support services will be visited by Trustees at least once in each financial year.

This enables Trustees to broaden their knowledge and awareness of issues relating to the activities of the workforce and for the people who use the Charity's services. The aim is to promote positive working relationships between Trustees and our workforce.

### Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD) Subgroup
The subgroup meets regularly to ensure that the Trust can attract, retain and motivate the highest calibre of staff to deliver value for money for the Charity's beneficiaries. The subgroup assists the Board to oversee the approach to an effective People Strategy including fair pay and reward for all staff including key management personnel.

The subgroup ensures our staff have clear learning and development opportunities and supports staff with the day-to-day challenges they face in work and outside. We know that the Trust can be a challenging working environment and resilience is important for all. The subgroup ensures effective staff engagement and that the outcomes from staff surveys are received and acted upon.

The subgroup oversees the Charity's approach to workforce equity, diversity and inclusion, effective engagement with and development of the Staff Council and ensures safer recruitment procedures operate effectively.

The subgroup also ensures that the Charity can attract, retain and motivate high levels of volunteers and oversees external accreditation of HR/training-related standards including Investors in People which we have been awarded the Gold Standard.

### Supporting People Subgroup
The subgroup meets six times a year and has responsibility for overseeing and advising Trustees to ensure the Together Trust is aligned to the needs of the people it supports and commissioners. It also reviews how the Charity continuously improves and addresses the needs of the people and families who use its services. The group monitors and evaluates all relevant quality improvement and most regulatory activity in services. It oversees participation, co-production and customer engagement, aiming to create accessible and regular programmes of effective communication, impact and social value reporting to our external stakeholders. It oversees campaigns, advocacy and participation and external accreditation of customer relationship standards ensuring results are acted upon effectively.

The subgroup also ensures that the Charity's complaints policy is transparent, well-publicised and effective, and that complaints are handled constructively, impartially and dealt with following a pre-agreed timeline.

### Safeguarding Scrutiny Subgroup

The subgroup has lead responsibility for effective governance of safeguarding at the Trust. This is achieved by scrutiny of operational actions and quality assurance of safeguarding standards and processes at the Charity. The day-to-day operational safeguarding responsibility is held with the designated safeguarding officer for the Trust who is also the Service Director.

The subgroup scrutinises leadership activity in respect of adherence to adopted safeguarding policies and procedures, is informed of safeguarding incidences at the Trust and scrutinises the management of risk. It ensures safeguarding policies at the Together Trust comply with local and national safeguarding standards. The subgroup maintains an overview of key performance indicators. The group works with the Safeguarding, Learning & Development Forum, which reports directly into the subgroup.

### Health and Safety, Risk & Environment Subgroup

This subgroup ensures that appropriate health and safety processes are in place to ensure a safe working environment which meets all legal requirements, including consultation arrangements. It ensures business continuity plans are reviewed regularly and agrees and monitors an organisational approach to environmental impact.

The subgroup also oversees the development of the Trust's property portfolio and ensures that it is fit for purpose, including compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), and monitors the effectiveness of the Charity's approach to risk management.

The Health and Safety Committee of this subgroup is made up of representatives from across the Charity who meet on a regular basis to promote efficient health and safety policies and methods across all areas. The Together Trust is a registered member of the Contractors Health and Safety Scheme under which its health and safety practice is reviewed each year. The Charity also subscribes to The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), for external guidance and advice where required.

## Fundraising

All Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission guidance CC20. The Fundraising Department works closely with the Trust's Information Governance Manager, who oversees data protection compliance for the Charity, to ensure best practice is embedded in all that we do including, but not limited to, our Fundraising database which is administered in the Fundraising Department and the continuance of permission-based communications with individual supporters.

There have been no formal complaints concerning our fundraising practices during the reporting period and the Trust actively promotes a Complaints and Compliments Policy.

The Charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator. The Together Trust does not engage in face-to-face fundraising, telephone fundraising or direct mail campaigns. There were no licensed street collections in the reporting period.

# Environment and Sustainability

## Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)

The Board is focused on its long-term and strategic charitable aims as set out in the Stronger Together Plan described in the Strategic Report section of this report. We are committed to moving the Trust to more sustainable practices and we continue to review our operational environments to identify areas for development and improvement.

One of the aims of the Health and Safety, Risk and Environment Subgroup is to agree and monitor an organisational approach to environmental impact. This subgroup also oversees the development of the Trust's property portfolio to ensure that it is fit for purpose while being as green and sustainable as cost effectively possible.

The information and data to calculate energy usage is taken from meter readings for gas and electricity and from fuel card readings for the Trust fleet of vehicles. Employee business mileage claims have been used to calculate the energy usage of the 'grey' fleet, where employees use their own vehicles for Trust business purposes.

All fuel conversions to kWh and $CO_2$ emissions data have been calculated in line with UK Government environmental reporting guidance, using UK Government Green House Gas (GHG) conversion factors for company reporting.

The environmental impact of the Trust's activities has marginally increased with an increase in carbon emissions of only 0.4% (2024 a decrease of 11.1%).

Our consumption of energy has increased by 3.5% in the year due to increased activity with the opening of a new service, however our emissions from that usage has increased by only 0.4%. The most significant impact has been our continued renewal of energy contracts to zero carbon supplies together with an increase in our fleet of electric vehicles.

We continually review our property portfolio across the Trust. We have continued the process of investing in the transition to more use of electric vehicles and have installed electric vehicle charging points at a further 4 of our residential homes.
We continue to review our fleet of vehicles and form plans on how we can transition to a greener fleet. We have introduced the use of fleet performance telematics to support our fleet becoming more sustainable and improved performance with driver feedback and training.

The table below summaries our energy usage and emissions for the year.

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| Total Energy Consumption (TEC) (kWh) | 3,872,258 | 3,742,822 |
| Carbon Emissions (tonnes of carbon dioxide) | 596.8 | 594.4 |
| | | |
| Annual quantity of carbon emissions resulting from: | | |
| - transport activities, including the grey fleet, and the use of gas | 587.8 | 573.1 |
| - Electricity usage | 9.0 | 21.2 |
| - Total | 596.8 | 594.3 |
| | | |
| Intensity ratio: | | |
| Average tonnes of carbon emissions per employee (tonnes of carbon dioxide per employee) | 0.7 | 0.7 |

# How we meet Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006

This section of the Report describes how the Directors have had regard to the matters set out in section 172(1) (a) to (f), and forms the Directors' statement required under section 414CZA, of the Companies Act 2006.

### a) The likely consequences of any decision in the long term

The Trustees are responsible for the Trust's strategy and overall direction. Our Stronger Together Strategic Plan establishes an approach to achieve our vision of a society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities. The long-term sustainability of our operating model is regularly reviewed to enable change where required to achieve our goals. The Trustees recognise that the long-term success of the Together Trust is dependent on having regard to the interests of its stakeholders who include the people we support, their families, carers, commissioners, our workforce and our regulators and the Trustees consider the likely long term consequences of key decisions taken throughout the year taking into account the impact on key stakeholders.

### b) The interests of the company's employees

Our staff are the force that enable us to deliver our charitable objectives and we take great pride in our workforce. We are proud to have such a wonderful, dedicated team of caring staff who are passionate about what they do.
We strive to maintain effective employee engagement and information on how we do this can be found in the Strategic Achievements and Performance section which sets out our progress towards our Stronger Together Aim 4 which relates to our workforce.

Our pay and reward structure aims to treat all staff in an equal, fair and consistent manner, and at a level to recruit and retain the necessary calibre of staff.

The Trust makes substantial provision for the qualification, training and development of its staff and volunteers. We are committed to working with all colleagues to support their development needs and provide a variety of events, training, and role specific qualifications. We offer a wide variety of learning and development opportunities to support organisational, team and individual development linked to achieving the very best outcomes for the people we support.

Our HR & OD Subgroup oversees effective workforce engagement and that the outcomes from staff and volunteer surveys are received and acted upon. This group also oversees the organisation's approach to workforce equity, diversity and inclusion and monitors and evaluates all relevant KPIs with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement.

The Trust seeks to listen, understand and act upon our staff's views through its Staff Council. The Staff Council is an elected group of colleagues from across all our services who meet on a quarterly basis. The meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive and have Trustee attendance. As a consultative body for employees, its role is to ensure that, as strategy is developed and plans are implemented, Staff Council representatives help to communicate and engage better with our workforce. They review how successfully initiatives have been delivered.

Our workforce can access an employee assistance service which is a free and confidential support programme to help support staff and volunteers in many aspects of their lives, in and out of the workplace. The Trust is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and continues to champion a number of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to enable staff to feel supported both at work and home. Over 50 mental health first aiders in our workforce offer initial support for mental health and wellbeing through non-judgemental listening and guidance. All members of the workforce are also able to self-refer for support from Able Futures, who give guidance from a mental health specialist to help staff learn coping mechanisms, build resilience, access therapy or work with the Charity to make adjustments to help mental health at work.

### c) The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

The Trustees recognise that the success of the Together Trust is dependent on our relationships with our stakeholders who include those who commission our services, our suppliers, our foster carers and our regulators. Developing positive and effective relationships forms a vital role in our ability to deliver our services to the people that we support.

The Trust's procurement policy has been developed to help the Trust achieve best value in the use of limited resources, supporting the Trust in achieving its overall aims and objectives. It also supports addressing the requirements of the Charity Governance Code and the 2010 Bribery Act by emphasising the responsibility of all staff involved to conduct procurement legally and ethically, as well as securing value for money. All procurement activity adheres to the following key principles:

- **transparency** – clear procedures to be followed and evidence of adherence retained for audit
- **equal treatment** – for all potential suppliers to ensure a level playing field, no favouritism and best value is obtained
- **social value -** wherever possible we endeavour to source potential suppliers from the local area where this can be justified in terms of best value and/or social value
- **safeguarding standards -** suppliers will be required to follow the Trust's safeguarding standards where applicable

Our partnerships with local authorities and other funders are extremely important to us and we work closely with our commissioners agreeing fair value for our services and aim to work collaboratively with them.

The Board recognises the importance of open and honest dialogue with regulators who include Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission and continue to work with regulators to provide the best possible outcomes for the people we support.

### d) The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment

We continue to take a strategic approach to the implementation of social value measurement and reporting, both as an organisation and through its contracts, which measure and report our overall social footprint. The Charity is already delivering social value; however, it needs to improve data capture and reporting to its stakeholders to improve impact, evidence social value delivery and support it in developing a stronger and more robust approach to bidding. The Charity continues to build upon the activities previously undertaken to establish a structured process for target setting, measurement and contract management of the social, economic and environmental impacts of each project from bidding, project management through to completion.

Our Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting report in the Environment & Sustainability section of this report details our regard of the impact of our operations on the community and the environment.

### e) The desirability of the company in maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct

The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure its activities are undertaken in accordance with regulatory requirements and best practice. As a registered Charity, the Directors' responsibility also extends to ensuring that the affairs and objectives of the Trust are managed in a way that enhances public trust and support.

The Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission and the Board receives regular updates on legal, regulatory and compliance matters when it meets. Board subgroups receive more frequent updates in line with their specialisms.

Trust procurement policy and practices follow the requirements of the Charity Governance Code, the 2010 Bribery Act, and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by taking a zero tolerance approach towards fraud, bribery and corruption and emphasising the responsibility of all staff involved to conduct procurement legally and ethically, as well as securing value for money.

### f) The need to act fairly as between members of the company.

The Trust is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It does not have shareholders and its members are limited to the Trustees of the Company. The Trust has a conflict of interest policy which Trustees must follow. All Trustees receive the same information about the strategy, operational activities and finances of the Trust and have an equal vote in decision making.

# Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

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

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguardingthe assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection offraud and other irregularities.

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

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

## Auditor

RSM UK Audit LLP was reappointed during the year and has expressed their willingness to continue in office as auditor and a resolution to reappoint RSM UK Audit LLP as auditor will be proposed.

The Report of the Board of Trustees, which includes the Strategic Report and the Directors' Report as required by company law, was approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by

**Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Board of Trustees**

14 November 2025

# Independent auditor's report to the members of The Together Trust

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Together Trust (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 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 charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of 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 Companies Act 2006.

## 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 charitable company 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.

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 charitable company'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 other information comprises the information included in the Report of the Board of Trustees other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Report of the Board of Trustees. 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.

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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

## Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

## Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report or the Strategic Report included within the Trustees' Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

## Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 29, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) 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 charitable company'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 charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditor's 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.

## The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The objectives of our audit are to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding compliance with laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, to perform audit procedures to help identify instances of non-compliance with other laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements, and to respond appropriately to identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations identified during the audit.

In relation to fraud, the objectives of our audit are to identify and assess the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud, to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud through designing and implementing appropriate responses and to respond appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

However, it is the primary responsibility of management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, to ensure that the entity's operations are conducted in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations and for the prevention and detection of fraud.

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud, the audit engagement team:

- obtained an understanding of the nature of the sector, including the legal and regulatory framework that the charitable company operates in and how the charitable company is complying with the legal and regulatory framework;
- inquired of management, and those charged with governance, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, including any known actual, suspected or alleged instances of fraud;
- discussed matters about non-compliance with laws and regulations and how fraud might occur including assessment of how and where the financial statements may be susceptible to fraud.

As a result of these procedures, we consider the most significant laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements are FRS 102, Charities SORP (FRS 102), Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, and the charitable company's governing document. We performed audit procedures to detect non-compliances which may have a material impact on the financial statements which included reviewing the financial statements including the Trustees' Report and remaining alert to new or unusual transactions which may not be in accordance with the governing documents.

The most significant laws and regulations that have an indirect impact on the financial statements are the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework under the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Keeping Children Safe in Education under the Education Act 2002 and other safeguarding regulations, Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulations, and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). We performed audit procedures to inquire of management whether the charitable company is in compliance with these law and regulations and inspected correspondence with regulatory authorities.

The audit engagement team identified the risk of management override of controls as the area where the financial statements were most susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. Audit procedures performed included but were not limited to testing manual journal entries and other adjustments, evaluating the business rationale in relation to significant, unusual transactions and transactions entered into outside the normal course of business and challenging judgments and estimates.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Laura Inglesby

**Laura Inglesby FCA**
**Senior Statutory Auditor**

For and on behalf of RSM UK AUDIT LLP,
Statutory Auditor
Chartered Accountants,
14th Floor
20 Chapel Street
Liverpool
L3 9AG

Dated: 14/11/2025

# Financial Statements

## Statement of financial activities

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2025 (including income and expenditure account)

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2025 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2025 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2025 £'000 | Total Funds 2025 £'000 | Total Funds 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Income from:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | **96** | **129** | **-** | **225** | 294 |
| Charitable activities | 5 | **40,703** | **11** | **-** | **40,714** | 38,087 |
| Investments | 6 | **219** | **-** | **-** | **219** | 116 |
| Other | 7 | **2** | **-** | **-** | **2** | 8 |
| **Total Income** | | **41,020** | **140** | **-** | **41,160** | 38,505 |
| **Expenditure on:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | **307** | **1** | **1** | **309** | 284 |
| Charitable activities | 9 | **39,365** | **151** | **-** | **39,516** | 38,485 |
| Charitable activities - Exceptional costs | 10 | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | 805 |
| **Total Expenditure** | | **39,672** | **152** | **1** | **39,825** | 39,574 |
| Net gains on investments | 15 | **22** | **-** | **3** | **25** | 62 |
| **Net income/(expenditure) for the year** | | **1,370** | **(12)** | **2** | **1,360** | (1,007) |
| Transfers between funds | | **(2)** | **2** | **-** | **-** | - |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** Actuarial gain/(loss) on defined benefit pension scheme | 24 | **162** | **-** | **-** | **162** | (530) |
| **Net movement in funds** | | **1,530** | **(10)** | **2** | **1,522** | (1,537) |
| **Reconciliation of funds** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | **25,905** | **386** | **168** | **26,459** | 27,996 |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | **1,530** | **(10)** | **2** | **1,522** | (1,537) |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 22 | **27,435** | **376** | **170** | **27,981** | 26,459 |

There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed above and the net income/(expenditure) for the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

See note 23 for comparative Statement of Financial Activities analysed by funds.

# Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2025

| | Note | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fixed assets** | | | |
| Tangible assets | 14 | **18,439** | 18,382 |
| Investments | 15 | **1,037** | 999 |
| | | **19,476** | 19,381 |
| **Current assets** | | | |
| Debtors | 16 | **4,554** | 4,673 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | **8,934** | 7,385 |
| | | **13,488** | 12,058 |
| **Creditors:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | 17 | **(3,809)** | (2,766) |
| **Net current assets** | | **9,679** | 9,292 |
| **Total assets less current liabilities** | | **29,155** | 28,673 |
| **Creditors:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due after more than one year | 18 | **(568)** | (643) |
| Provisions for liabilities | 20 | **(92)** | (847) |
| Pension deficit | 24 | **(514)** | (724) |
| **Net assets** | | **27,981** | 26,459 |
| **Funds of the charity** | | | |
| Unrestricted funds: | | | |
| General | | **16,683** | 15,038 |
| Revaluation reserve | | **6,633** | 6,739 |
| Designated | | **4,119** | 4,128 |
| | | **27,435** | 25,905 |
| Restricted funds | | **376** | 386 |
| Endowment funds | | **170** | 168 |
| **Total charity funds** | 22,23 | **27,981** | 26,459 |

These financial statements on pages 33 to 61 of The Together Trust (registered number 301722) were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 14 November 2025. They were signed on its behalf by:

Giles Gaddum
Chair of Trustees

Anthony Farnworth
Honorary Treasurer

# Cash flow statement

For the year ended 31 March 2025

| | Note | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Net cash flow from operating activities** | | | |
| Net movement in funds | | **1,522** | (1,537) |
| Adjustments for: | | | |
| Depreciation | | **1,070** | 905 |
| Gains on investments | | **(25)** | (62) |
| Income from investments | | **(25)** | (21) |
| Profit on the sale of fixed assets | | **(2)** | (8) |
| Interest receivable | | **(194)** | (95) |
| Interest payable | | **42** | 45 |
| (Decrease)/increase in debtors | | **119** | (1,495) |
| Increase in creditors | | **1,041** | 246 |
| (Decrease)/increase in provisions | | **(755)** | 847 |
| Net movement of pension service cost | | **171** | 99 |
| Net cash outflow from defined benefit scheme pension contributions | | **(219)** | (217) |
| Pension scheme actuarial loss | | **(162)** | 530 |
| **Net cash flows from operating activities** | | **2,583** | (763) |
| **Cash flows from investing activities** | | | |
| Interest received | | **184** | 87 |
| Income from investments | | **25** | 21 |
| Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment | | **11** | 8 |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | | **(1,136)** | (1,189) |
| Proceeds from sale of investments | | **535** | 120 |
| Purchase of investments | | **(549)** | (134) |
| **Net cash flows from investing activities** | | **(930)** | (1,087) |
| **Cash flows from financing activities** | | | |
| Interest paid | | **(42)** | (45) |
| Repayments of borrowings | | **(62)** | (60) |
| **Net cash flows from financing activities** | | **(104)** | (105) |
| Net increase/(decrease) in cash in the year | | **1,549** | (1,955) |
| Cash at the beginning of the year | | **7,385** | 9,340 |
| **Cash at the end of the year** | 19 | **8,934** | 7,385 |

See note 19 for the analysis of changes in net debt.

# Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

## 1. Charity and company information

The Together Trust, a public benefit entity, is incorporated in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The members of the company are the Trustees and the current Trustees are named on page 62. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member. The company is a registered charity and has no liability to corporation tax on its charitable activities. The registered office is given on page 62.

## 2. Accounting policies

### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of listed investments and derivatives which are held at fair value.

The financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019)" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective 1 January 2019, and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are presented in Sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest one thousand sterling pounds.

### Group financial statements

The Charity is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial statements by virtue that all subsidiary undertakings may be excluded from consolidation as they are not material and have not operated in the financial year. These financial statements therefore present information about the Charity as an individual undertaking rather than as a group.

### Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have prepared budgets and projections which indicate that, taking account of the impact on cash levels and financial resources of the increase in the Charity's pay and reward offer to staff, the resources it devotes to recruitment, capital and funds expenditure and the risk of being able to secure annual fee increases for its services, the Charity is able to continue as a going concern and maintain sustainable cash reserves for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing these financial statements. The Trustees have considered a period in excess of twelve months from the date of the approval of these financial statements in making their assessment.

### Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes, although in practice they may represent the funding of fixed assets.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes, including the development fund described below. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The purpose of the development fund reserve is to earmark funds to provide for ongoing maintenance, repair and refurbishment of the Together Trust homes and schools, in compliance with standards set by inspecting bodies such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The age and fabric of the establishments necessitate constant repairs, which have been highlighted by comprehensive surveys carried out by an appointed architect and reviewed annually. The programme for refurbishment for any new financial year is specified prior to the previous year end.

## 2. Accounting policies (continued)

### Fund accounting (continued)

The revaluation reserve arose when fixed assets were revalued, prior to the adoption of FRS102, at a value higher than their previous carrying value and the increase in value is accounted for within the revaluation reserve. It forms part of unrestricted funds.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used by the Charity for particular purposes as specified by the donor. The costs of administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The purpose of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are a form of restricted fund where the assets are required to be invested or retained for actual use rather than expended. An endowment fund where there is no power to convert the capital into income is known as a permanent endowment fund which must generally be held indefinitely.

Expendable endowment is an endowment fund where the Trustees have the power to convert the assets (i.e.land, buildings, investments or cash) into expendable income. The Charity holds permanent and expendable endowment funds. The permanent funds are not considered to be material.

### Income

Income is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met (generally by delivery of contracted services), it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from grants includes grants where entitlement to funding is subject to specific performance conditions. Performance conditions may be stipulated explicitly by the funder or may be implicit as per the Charity's funding proposal. Income is deferred when the funder has imposed conditions, which must be met before the Charity has unconditional entitlement or the funder has specified the funds can only be utilised in future accounting periods.

Donated goods and services are included at the lower of their value to Charity and their estimated market value. No amount is included for services donated by volunteers. The full value of leasehold peppercorn rent is not valued due to the prohibitive cost of doing so. Income from fundraising activities is included in donations.

Fees invoiced in advance of services provided are carried forward as deferred income until the service is delivered.

### Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when there is a constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income and those incurred ingenerating fundraising income
- Charitable expenditure includes all expenditure associated with activities directly attributable to the service delivery of the Charity's charitable objectives, in respect of residential, respite, outreach, educational, fostering and social work services
- Support costs are costs of those functions that assist the work of the Charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include central head office costs (for example finance, human resources and governance costs) and have been allocated to charitable activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

### Operating lease agreements

Rentals applicable to operating leases, where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remainwith the lessor, are charged against income on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

## 2. Accounting policies (continued)

### Trustees
The Trustees have elected that the Charity apply a policy of non-remuneration for Trustees, excluding out of pocket expenses.

### Employee benefits
For defined benefit schemes, the amounts charged to the Statement of Financial Activities are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. The interest cost and the expected return on assets are shown as a net amount of other finance gains or losses.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The resulting defined benefit assetor liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. The Trust recognises a plan surplus as a defined benefit plan asset only to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan.

For defined contribution schemes, the amount charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of pension costs is the contributions payable in the year. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments in the balance sheet as appropriate.

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme. The Charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme and therefore has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

### Tangible fixed assets
The transitional arrangements of FRS 102 were adopted on transition to FRS102 to freeze the tangible fixed assets valuation of freehold and leasehold properties as deemed cost, and hence tangible fixed assets are stated at deemed cost (being 2014 market value net of depreciation to the adoption of FRS 102) less depreciation and any provision for impairment. Costs of maintenance are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they are incurred. Assets below a value of £2,500 are not capitalised.

Depreciation is provided on each tangible fixed asset, other than freehold land which is not depreciated, at rates calculated to write-off the cost, less its estimated residual value, on a straight line basis over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Properties - buildings | 2% - 3% pa |
| Properties - improvements | 6% - 20% pa |
| Leasehold property improvements | over the life of lease |
| Motor vehicles | 20% pa |
| Ancillary equipment | 20% pa |

Impairment reviews are conducted when events and changes in circumstances indicate that an impairment may have occurred. If any asset is found to have a carrying value higher than its recoverable amount, it is written down accordingly.

### Investment assets
Investments are included on the balance sheet at fair value as measured by middle market price values at the year end. The Trustees do not consider there to be any material difference in the valuation as measured by bid price. Movements in values during the year are included in the Statement of Financial Activities for any realised and unrealised gains and losses.

## 2. Accounting policies (continued)

### Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised where the Charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amount.

### Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Charity has an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event which it is probable will result in the transfer of economic benefits and that obligation can be estimated reliably. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar expenses

### Financial instruments

The Charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102, in full, to all of its financial instruments.

*Recognition and measurement of financial instruments*

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Charity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

*Classification of financial instruments*

Financial instruments are classified as liabilities and equity instruments according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the Charity after deducting all of its liabilities.

*Financial assets and liabilities at amortised cost*

Trade and all other debtors (including accrued income) which are receivable within one year are initially measured at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being the transaction price less any amounts settled and any impairment losses.

A provision for impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the amounts due will not be collected according to the original terms of the contract. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities for the excess of the carrying value of the trade debtor over the present value of the future cash flows discounted using the original effective interest rate. Subsequent reversals of an impairment loss that objectively relate to an event occurring after the impairment loss was recognised, are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Trade, and all other creditors (including accruals) payable within one year that do not constitute a financing transaction are initially measured at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being transaction price less any amounts settled.

Where the arrangement with a creditor constitutes a financing transaction, the creditor is initially measured at the present value of future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar instrument and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being transaction price less any amounts settled and the cumulative amortisation (using the effective interest method) of any difference between the amount at initial recognition and the maturity amount. The effective interest rate is the rate that discounts estimated future cash payments to the carrying amount of the financial liability.

Borrowings are initially recognised at the transaction price, including transaction costs (unless the arrangement constitutes, in effect, a financing transaction, in which case it is initially recognised at the present value of future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument) and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and other similar expenses.

## 2. Accounting policies (continued)

Trade investments are equity investments over which the Charity has no significant influence, joint control or control and are initially measured at transaction price. Transaction price includes transaction costs, except where trade investments are measured at fair value through profit or loss when transaction costs are expensed to profit or loss as incurred. Trade investments are measured at fair value through profit or loss, or cost less impairment if fair value cannot be measured reliably. The fair value of trade investments quoted on a recognised stock exchange is the quoted bid price.

*Derecognition of financial assets and liabilities*
A financial asset is derecognised only when the contractual rights to cash flows expire or are settled, or substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are transferred to another party, or if some (but not substantially all) risks and rewards of ownership are retained but control of the asset has transferred to another party that is able to sell the asset in its entirety to an unrelated third party.

A financial liability (or part thereof) is derecognised when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires.

*Derivative financial instruments*
The Charity uses derivative financial instruments to reduce exposure to interest rate movements. The Charity does not hold or issue derivative financial instruments for speculative purposes. Derivatives are initially recognised at fair value at the date a derivative contract is entered into and are subsequently remeasured to their fair value at each reporting date. The resulting gain or loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities immediately.

## 3. Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, which are described in note 2, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated 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 ongoing 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 both current and future periods.

In respect of the defined benefit pension scheme, the Charity has an obligation to pay pension benefits to certain former employees. The cost of these benefits and the present value of the obligation depend on a numberof factors including life expectancy, salary increases, asset valuations and the discount rate on corporate bonds. The Trustees estimate these factors in determining the net pension obligation in the balance sheet. The assumptions reflect historical experience and current trends as set out in note 24.

Provisions such as for dilapidation costs involve assumptions and estimation techniques. These are based on the experience and knowledge of management and evidence from the outcomes occurring after the year end.

Other than the above, the Trustees do not consider there are any other critical judgements or sources of estimation uncertainty requiring disclosure.

## 4. Analysis of income from donations

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Donations | **225** | 294 |

## 5. Analysis of income from charitable activities

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Social & Therapy Care Services | **22,460** | 20,692 |
| Educational services | **18,254** | 17,395 |
| | **40,714** | 38,087 |

## 6. Analysis of income from investments

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Investment income | **25** | 21 |
| Bank interest | **194** | 95 |
| | **219** | 116 |

## 7. Analysis of other income

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Net gain on disposal of fixed assets | **2** | 8 |

## 8. Analysis of expenditure on raising funds

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | **228** | 189 |
| Service provision costs | **10** | 16 |
| Service administration costs | **34** | 35 |
| Other service costs | **37** | 44 |
| | **309** | 284 |

## 9. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

| Expenditure | Social & Therapy Care Services 2025 £'000 | Education Services 2025 £'000 | Total 2025 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 16,095 | 11,109 | 27,204 |
| Premises costs | 840 | 1,091 | 1,931 |
| Service provision costs | 817 | 767 | 1,584 |
| Service administration costs | 670 | 643 | 1,313 |
| Other service costs | 719 | 881 | 1,600 |
| Head Office support costs (note 11) | 3,224 | 2,660 | 5,884 |
| | 22,365 | 17,151 | 39,516 |

| Expenditure | Social & Therapy Care Services 2024 £'000 | Education Services 2024 £'000 | Total 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 15,024 | 11,860 | 26,884 |
| Premises costs | 804 | 1,216 | 2,020 |
| Service provision costs | 771 | 766 | 1,537 |
| Service administration costs | 631 | 517 | 1,148 |
| Other service costs | 658 | 765 | 1,423 |
| Head Office support costs (note 11) | 2,939 | 2,534 | 5,473 |
| | 20,827 | 17,658 | 38,485 |

Total expenditure comprises direct costs incurred in the delivery of Trust services and Head Office support costs which are apportioned between services. Direct costs include all direct staff, premises and service provision in the day-to-day delivery of the service. It also includes other costs related to the provision of the service at each location such as insurance, depreciation and interest.

## 10. Prior year exceptional costs

During the prior year, the Charity made a provision totalling £805,000 for the costs associated with the closure of one of its educational services. The costs provided related primarily to operational losses to be incurred while the obligation to deliver services continued through to its conclusion, along with the cost of staff redundancies of £189,000. The Trustees considered these costs to be exceptional due to their non-recurring nature and significant impact on the financial results of the Charity for the prior year.

## 11. Analysis of Head Office support costs

| | Social & Therapy Care Services 2025 £'000 | Education Services 2025 £'000 | Total 2025 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | **1,783** | **1,471** | **3,254** |
| Premises costs | **196** | **161** | **357** |
| Office administration costs | **716** | **592** | **1,308** |
| Governance costs | **212** | **175** | **387** |
| Other costs | **317** | **261** | **578** |
| | **3,224** | **2,660** | **5,884** |

| | Social & Therapy Care Services 2024 £'000 | Education Services 2024 £'000 | Total 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 1,533 | 1,323 | 2,856 |
| Premises costs | 218 | 187 | 405 |
| Office administration costs | 815 | 702 | 1,517 |
| Governance costs | 154 | 133 | 287 |
| Other costs | 219 | 189 | 408 |
| | 2,939 | 2,534 | 5,473 |

### Head Office support costs allocation

There is a Head Office function, which provides all the support services of the Trust's activities. These services include Communications and Marketing, Business Development, Finance, Human Resources & Organisational Development, IT services and Facilities Management and the services of the Executive Directors. Cost recovery apportionment is based on the level of income for each of the services.

## 12. Net income/(expenditure) for the year

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

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Auditor's remuneration | | |
| - audit | **47** | 60 |
| - other audit services | **3** | 3 |
| - non-audit services | **7** | 62 |
| Interest paid on bank loan | **49** | 53 |
| Interest received on interest rate swap contracts | **(10)** | (8) |
| Depreciation of owned assets | **1,070** | 905 |
| Rental under operating leases | **156** | 155 |

These costs include central head office costs where applicable and have been allocated to activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

## 13. Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

The average number of staff employed during the financial year, excluding relief and bank supply staff, amounted to:

| Headcount | 2025 Number | 2024 Number |
|---|---|---|
| Social & Therapy Care services staff | **441** | 454 |
| Education services staff | **297** | 319 |
| Fundraising and Support staff | **88** | 86 |
| | **826** | **859** |

The aggregate staff employment costs were:

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Wages and salaries | **24,403** | 23,038 |
| Social security costs | **2,410** | 2,202 |
| Pension – defined contribution schemes | **2,089** | 1,887 |
| Pension – defined benefit scheme operating costs | **171** | 99 |
| | **29,073** | 27,226 |

During the year the Trust incurred redundancy costs of £26,000 (2024 £201,000).

Although the Trust maintains a pool of bank relief and supply staff to cover unforeseen absences, where this is insufficient to meet operational need, agency staff are engaged in the short term. In addition to the above staff costs, agency costs for the year were £1,673,000 (2024 £2,018,000).

In addition to the above staff costs, foster carer fees amounted to £827,000 (2024 £1,057,000).

### Employee emoluments over £60,000

The number of employees whose emoluments, excluding pension contributions and employer's national insurance contributions, but including benefits in kind, were in excess of £60,000 was:

| | 2025 Number | 2024 Number |
|---|---|---|
| £60,001 to £70,000 | **9** | 3 |
| £70,001 to £80,000 | **3** | 4 |
| £80,001 to £90,000 | **3** | 1 |
| £90,001 to £100,000 | **3** | - |
| £100,001 to £110,000 | **2** | - |
| £120,001 to £130,000 | **-** | 1 |
| £130,001 to £140,000 | **-** | 1 |

Of the above 20 employees (2024 10) 3 employees (2024 1) were accruing pension benefits under a defined benefit pension scheme.

The key management personnel are detailed on page 23. The total remuneration (including pension contributions and employers' national insurance contributions) of the key management personnel of the Trust for the year totalled £752,000 (2024 £548,000).

### Trustees' remuneration

None of the Trustees receive any remuneration for their services to the Trust. During the year, no Trustees received reimbursement of expenses (2024 £nil).

## 14. Tangible fixed assets

| Cost | Land and Buildings £'000 | Property Improvement £'000 | Motor Vehicles £'000 | Ancillary Equipment £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| At 1 April 2024 | 23,007 | 1,281 | 1,343 | 371 | **26,002** |
| Additions | 997 | 6 | 90 | 43 | **1,136** |
| Disposals | - | - | (163) | - | **(163)** |
| **At 31 March 2025** | **24,004** | **1,287** | **1,270** | **414** | **26,975** |
| **Depreciation** | | | | | |
| At 1 April 2024 | 5,165 | 1,268 | 909 | 278 | **7,620** |
| Charge for the year | 874 | 4 | 145 | 47 | **1,070** |
| On disposals | - | - | (154) | - | **(154)** |
| **At 31 March 2025** | **6,039** | **1,272** | **900** | **325** | **8,536** |
| **Net book value** | | | | | |
| **At 31 March 2025** | **17,965** | **15** | **370** | **89** | **18,439** |
| At 31 March 2024 | 17,842 | 13 | 434 | 93 | 18,382 |

The freehold and leasehold properties were professionally valued on 31 March 2014 and this became the deemed cost on transition to the accounting standard FRS 102.

Included within land and buildings above is a long leasehold property with a net book value of £4,443,000 (2024 £4,473,000). The Charity pays a peppercorn rent for the related land.

Certain property is pledged as security on the Charity's bank loan. The net book value of these properties is £4,443,000 (2024 £4,473,000).

The comparable amounts for fixed assets included above at a valuation determined according to the historical cost accounting rules are:

| | Land and Buildings £'000 |
|---|---|
| Cost | 16,700 |
| Accumulated Depreciation | 5,443 |
| **Net book value at 31 March 2025** | **11,257** |
| Net book value at 31 March 2024 | 11,106 |

## 14. Tangible Fixed assets (continued)

### List of charitable properties:

| Property | Description |
|---|---|
| **Cheadle Campus, Schools Hill** | The main administrative centre for the Charity. The site is also home to **Inscape House School** which is a school for young people aged 5 – 19 years with autism. |
| **Bridge College** | Property held on long lease as a specialist further education college for students up to 25 years old with learning difficulties, disabilities and complex needs, communication disorders and autism |
| **Corbar** | A 5 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Crosskeys** | A 2 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Greg** | A residential property which is being prepared for service |
| **Haines House** | A 5 bedded residential service |
| **Inscape House Vocational College, Ashton- Under-Lyne** | An education service for learners aged 16-19 who would benefit from accessing a smaller post 16 provision specialising in working with learners with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. |
| **Lerryn** | A 6 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Meridian** | A 5 bedded short break service for young people with autism |
| **Newbridge** | A specialist day service provision |
| **Norvent** | A specialist therapeutic residential provision for two young people |
| **Pearce Lodge** | A 5 bedded property for disabled young people aged 16 to adulthood |
| **Pendlebury House** | A shared care service for up to 6 young people with autism and behavioural needs |
| **Pocket Nook** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people with autism and other special requirements |
| **Swann** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Ventnor** | A 3 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Woodlands** | A 5 bedded short break service for disabled young people |

## 15. Investments

### Listed investments

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| UK listed investments | **1,037** | 999 |

Movement in market value

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| At start of year | **999** | 924 |
| Additions | **549** | 134 |
| Disposal proceeds | **(535)** | (120) |
| Net investment gains | **25** | 62 |
| Movement in cash held by investment managers | **(1)** | (1) |
| At end of year | **1,037** | 999 |

Market value is analysed between:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Investments | **1,022** | 983 |
| Cash held by investment managers | **15** | 16 |
| | **1,037** | 999 |

### Unlisted investments

The company's investments at the balance sheet date in the share capital of companies include the following:

**Subsidiary:**

1. Together (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 3 March 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of £1 ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

2. BGWS (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 1 September 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of £1 ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

3. Boys and Girls Welfare Society Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of incorporation: 6 May 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Limited by guarantee**

None of these companies has traded during the year (2024 dormant) and they are not consolidated in the financial statements of The Together Trust on the grounds of immateriality.

## 16. Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Trade debtors | 3,219 | 3,899 |
| Prepayments and accrued income | 1,319 | 435 |
| Other debtors | 16 | 339 |
| | 4,554 | 4,673 |

## 17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bank loans | 64 | 61 |
| Trade creditors | 1,306 | 541 |
| Accruals | 500 | 743 |
| Deferred income | 409 | 487 |
| Taxation and social security | 1,104 | 522 |
| Other creditors | 426 | 412 |
| | 3,809 | 2,766 |

### Deferred income movement

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Balance at start of year | 487 | 100 |
| Amount released in the year | (487) | (100) |
| Amount deferred in the year | 409 | 487 |
| Balance at end of year | 409 | 487 |

Deferred income comprises income received or invoiced in advance of service delivery.

## 18. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bank loans | 564 | 629 |
| Financial derivatives (see note 25) | 4 | 14 |
| | 568 | 643 |

The bank loan is repayable as follows:

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Payable within one year | 64 | 61 |
| Payable between 1 and 2 years | 66 | 64 |
| Payable between 2 to 5 years | 209 | 203 |
| Payable after 5 years | 289 | 362 |
| | 628 | 690 |

The bank loan matures on 31 December 2033 and is secured on certain property (see note 14) with a debenture dated 26 November 2021.

Interest is payable at a variable rate of UK base rate plus 2.25% on the principal amount. Interest payable in the year was £49,000 (2024 £53,000).

The Trust is a party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. Under this swap contract, the Charity has agreed to exchange the difference between fixed and floating rate interest amounts. This allows the Charity to mitigate the risk of changing interest rates and cash flows on the variable rate debt held. See note 25 for further details.

## 19. Analysis of changes in net debt

| | Note | At the start of the year £'000 | Cash-flows £'000 | Fair value Move-ments £'000 | At the end of the year £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | | 7,385 | 1,549 | - | 8,934 |
| Bank loans falling due within one year | 17 | (61) | (3) | - | (64) |
| Bank loans falling due after more than one year | 19 | (629) | 65 | - | (564) |
| Interest rate swap | 25 | (14) | - | 10 | (4) |
| | | 6,681 | 1,611 | 10 | 8,302 |

## 20. Provision for liabilities

| | Dilapidations | Service Closure | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| At 1 April 2024 | 42 | 805 | 847 |
| Amount provided in year | 43 | - | 43 |
| Amount utilised in year | - | (798) | (798) |
| **At 31 March 2025** | **85** | **7** | **92** |
| At 31 March 2024 | 42 | 805 | 847 |

The dilapidations provision represents the estimated costs of payments required to make good leased property upon the termination of the lease. These costs are expected to be settled within the next two years.

The Service Closure provision relates to the cost of closing one of the education services. Amounts provided for included the cost of redundancy, the cost of completion of onerous contracts and the impairment of fixed assets. The remaining provision is expected to be settled within 12 months.

## 21. Comparative statement of financial activities

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2024 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2024 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2024 £'000 | **Total Funds 2024 £'000** | Total Funds 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Income from:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 179 | 115 | - | **294** | 231 |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 38,084 | 3 | - | **38,087** | 33,375 |
| Investments | 6 | 116 | - | - | **116** | 146 |
| Other | 7 | 8 | - | - | **8** | 1 |
| **Total income** | | **38,387** | **118** | **-** | **38,505** | 33,753 |
| **Expenditure on:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 281 | 2 | 1 | **284** | 226 |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 38,376 | 109 | - | **38,485** | 33,844 |
| Charitable activities - Exceptional costs | 10 | 805 | - | - | **805** | - |
| **Total expenditure** | | **39,462** | **111** | **1** | **39,574** | 34,070 |
| Net gains/(losses) on investments | 15 | 50 | - | 12 | **62** | (66) |
| **Net (expenditure)/income for the year** | | **(1,025)** | **7** | **11** | **(1,007)** | (383) |
| Transfers between funds | | 98 | (98) | - | **-** | - |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial loss on defined benefit pension scheme | 24 | (530) | - | - | **(530)** | (277) |
| Other gains | | - | - | - | **-** | 109 |
| **Net movement in funds** | | **(1,457)** | **(91)** | **11** | **(1,537)** | (551) |
| **Reconciliation of funds** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 27,362 | 477 | 157 | **27,996** | **28,547** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | (1,457) | (91) | 11 | **(1,537)** | **(551)** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 22 | **25,905** | **386** | **168** | **26,459** | **27,996** |

## 22. Movement on funds

| | 1 April 2024 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2025 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | **15,038** | 41,020 | (39,669) | 184 | 110 | **16,683** |
| Revaluation reserve | **6,739** | - | - | - | (106) | **6,633** |
| Designated | **4,128** | - | (3) | - | (6) | **4,119** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **25,905** | 41,020 | (39,672) | 184 | (2) | **27,435** |
| **Restricted funds** | **386** | 140 | (152) | - | 2 | **376** |
| **Endowment funds** | **168** | - | (1) | 3 | - | **170** |
| | **26,459** | **41,160** | **(39,825)** | **187** | - | **27,981** |

| | 1 April 2023 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unrestricted | | | | | | |
| General | 16,108 | 38,387 | (39,272) | (480) | 295 | 15,038 |
| Revaluation reserve | 6,845 | - | - | - | (106) | 6,739 |
| Designated | 4,409 | - | (190) | - | (91) | 4,128 |
| Unrestricted funds | 27,362 | 38,387 | (39,462) | (480) | 98 | 25,905 |
| Restricted funds | 477 | 118 | (111) | - | (98) | 386 |
| Endowment funds | 157 | - | (1) | 12 | - | 168 |
| | 27,996 | 38,505 | (39,574) | (468) | - | 26,459 |

### Unrestricted Designated Funds

Designated funds have been set aside to support the investments required to achieve our corporate strategy, in particular to support digital transformation, our property portfolio and its associated review. It is anticipated that this strategy will result in significant outlay being made over the course of around the next five years.

These funds comprise:

- a development fund which was established to ring-fence funds for the maintenance of the Charity's homes and schools in compliance with standards set for the services by inspecting bodies. This expenditure is expected to be incurred on an ongoing basis.
- service transformation re-development funds established to ring-fence funds for the delivery of the Trust's service innovation plans, property review and digital investment. The timing of this expenditure being incurred is over a period of a number of years.

## 22 Movements on funds (continued)

### Restricted Funds

| | 1 April 2024 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2025 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education fund | **54** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **54** |
| Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **96** |
| Eyegaze Technology fund | **26** | **-** | **(26)** | **-** | **-** |
| Other | **210** | **140** | **(126)** | **2** | **226** |
| | **386** | **140** | **(152)** | **2** | **376** |

| | 1 April 2023 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education fund | 56 | - | (2) | - | 54 |
| Bridge Transitional fund | 96 | - | - | - | 96 |
| Eyegaze Technology fund | - | 26 | - | - | 26 |
| Other | 325 | 92 | (109) | (98) | 210 |
| | 477 | 118 | (111) | (98) | 386 |

**Education fund –** funds from corporate supporters allocated to specific projects for education service provision

**Bridge Transitional fund -** this is a fund for Bridge College, being grant monies from Central Government to enable Colleges to develop alternative income streams.

**Eyegaze Technology fund –** this was a fund for our Clinical Services service being various grant monies received to enable the purchase of digital assistive technology to support young people with conditions that impact on speech intelligibility and conditions that impact direct access to technology.

**Other –** This represents a number of individual service funds, generally established from donations restricted for use by a particular service.

Transfers from restricted to unrestricted funds represents, where permitted, the transfer of funds which remain unspent following completion of the specific projects to which they related.

## 22 Movements on funds (continued)

### Endowment Funds

| | 1 April 2024 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2025 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 108 | - | - | 2 | - | 110 |
| Other funds | 60 | - | (1) | 1 | - | 60 |
| | **168** | **-** | **(1)** | **3** | **-** | **170** |

| | 1 April 2023 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 101 | - | (1) | 8 | - | 108 |
| Other funds | 56 | - | - | 4 | - | 60 |
| | 157 | - | (1) | 12 | - | 168 |

**Jubilee Trust Fund**
This fund forms part of the Charity's investment portfolio and, as a permanent endowment fund, the restrictions on capital and use of income must be followed and spent in accordance with the Jubilee Trust Fund objects. The Together Trust is the sole trustee of the Jubilee Trust Fund and the two charities are linked with The Together Trust being the reporting Charity for both.

**Other Funds**
These are expendable endowment funds held by the Charity to be used in accordance with the individual fund objects. These funds are as follows:

- Hoyer Trust Fund
- Thomas Hunt Trust Fund
- William Melland Trust Fund
- Ragged & Industrial Trust Fund
- Ann Street Wardle Trust Fund
- Harold Grimshaw Trust Fund

## 23. Analysis of assets and liabilities between funds

| | Unrestricted 2025 £'000 | Restricted 2025 £'000 | Endowment 2025 £'000 | Total 2025 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,439 | - | - | **18,439** |
| Investments | 867 | - | 170 | **1,037** |
| Debtors | 4,554 | - | - | **4,554** |
| Cash | 8,558 | 376 | - | **8,934** |
| Current liabilities | (3,809) | - | - | **(3,809)** |
| Long term liabilities | (568) | - | - | **(568)** |
| Provisions | (92) | - | - | **(92)** |
| Pension deficit | (514) | - | - | **(514)** |
| Total net assets | **27,435** | **376** | **170** | **27,981** |

| | Unrestricted 2024 £'000 | Restricted 2024 £'000 | Endowment 2024 £'000 | Total 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,382 | - | - | 18,382 |
| Investments | 831 | - | 168 | 999 |
| Debtors | 4,673 | - | - | 4,673 |
| Cash | 6,999 | 386 | - | 7,385 |
| Current liabilities | (2,766) | - | - | (2,766) |
| Long term liabilities | (643) | - | - | (643) |
| Provisions | (847) | - | - | (847) |
| Pension deficit | (724) | - | - | (724) |
| Total net assets | 25,905 | 386 | 168 | 26,459 |

## 24. Pensions

### Together Trust Final Salary Scheme

The Charity operates a defined benefit scheme - the Together Trust final salary scheme. The provider and administrator of the scheme is The Pensions Trust. The scheme was closed to new entrants and to future accrual when it became 'paid up' with effect from 31 March 2000.

This scheme is a separate Trustee administered fund holding the pension scheme assets to meet long-term pension liabilities. An actuarial valuation was carried out as at 30 September 2021 by a qualified actuary, independent of the scheme's sponsoring employer. Scheme liabilities have been based on liability information as at 30 September 2021 updated to 31 March 2025 by a qualified actuary, independent of the scheme's sponsoring employer. The major assumptions used by the actuary are shown below.

The most recent completed actuarial valuation showed a deficit of £687,000 as at 30 September 2021 (the 30 September 2024 actuarial valuation is currently being evaluated). The Together Trust has agreed with the scheme's Trustee that it would aim to eliminate the deficit over a period of 5 years and 6 months by the payment of annual contributions of £148,000 (payable monthly) in respect of the deficit. Payments began on 1 April 2023 and continue to be made.

In addition, and in accordance with the actuarial valuation, the Charity agreed with the Scheme Trustee that it would pay £63,000 per annum up to 31 March 2023 and £69,000 per annum thereafter, increasing by 3% per annum each 1 April, to meet expenses of the Scheme and levies to the Pension Protection Fund.

The amount included in the balance sheet arising from the Trust's obligations in respect of the defined benefit scheme is as follows:

| | **2025 £'000** | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets | **5,794** | 6,395 |
| Present value of defined benefit obligations | **(6,308)** | (7,119) |
| **Deficit in plan and net liability recognised in the balance sheet** | **(514)** | (724) |

Reconciliation of opening and closing balances of the scheme assets and liabilities

| | **Fair value of scheme assets £'000** | **Present value of scheme liabilities £'000** | **Scheme assets less scheme liabilities £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scheme assets/(liabilities) at start of year | 6,395 | (7,119) | **(724)** |
| Expenses | (138) | - | **(138)** |
| Interest income/(cost) | 304 | (337) | **(33)** |
| Actuarial (loss)/gain | (581) | 743 | **162** |
| Contributions paid by the employer | 219 | - | **219** |
| Benefits paid and expenses | (405) | 405 | **-** |
| **Scheme assets/(liabilities) recognised at end of year** | 5,794 | (6,308) | **(514)** |

## 24. Pensions (continued)

The actual return of the plan assets over the reporting period was a loss of £277,000 (2024 a loss of £156,000).

The analysis of assets held was as follows:

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Asset Category | | |
| Equity | **5** | 19 |
| Bonds | **2,102** | 4,051 |
| Property | **696** | 725 |
| Cash | **217** | 150 |
| Other | **809** | 307 |
| LDI | **1,965** | 1,112 |
| Liquid alternatives | **-** | 21 |
| Private credit | **-** | 10 |
| Total assets | **5,794** | 6,395 |

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of the defined benefit scheme are as follows:

| | 2025 £'000 | 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Expenses | **(138)** | (87) |
| Interest income on assets | **304** | 324 |
| Interest cost on defined benefit obligation | **(337)** | (336) |
| **Net cost recognised within net expenditure for the year** | **(171)** | (99) |
| Return on scheme assets (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – loss | **(581)** | (480) |
| Experience gains and losses arising on the scheme liabilities – gain/(loss) | **128** | (57) |
| Effects of changes in the demographic and financial assumptions underlying the present value of the scheme liabilities – gain | **615** | 7 |
| **Total actuarial gains/(losses)** | **162** | (530) |
| **Total cost relating to defined benefit scheme recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities** | **(9)** | (629) |

## 24. Pensions (continued)

### Assumptions

The key assumptions used in the actuarial valuation were:

| | **31 March 2025** | 31 March 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| % per annum: | | |
| Discount rate | **5.70** | 4.87 |
| Inflation (RPI) | **3.13** | 3.19 |
| Inflation (CPI) | **2.68** | 2.89 |
| Allowance for revaluation of deferred pensions of RPI or 5% p.a. if less | **3.13** | 3.19 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 5% pa if less | **2.64** | 2.82 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 3% pa if less | **1.92** | 2.26 |

| | **2025** | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage of maximum allowance for commutation of pension for cash at retirement | **75%** | 75% |

The mortality assumptions adopted imply the following life expectancies on retirement:

| Life expectancy at age 65 (number of years) | **2025** | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Retiring today: | | |
| Males | **21.3** | 21.2 |
| Females | **23.6** | 23.8 |
| Retiring in 20 years: | | |
| Males | **22.9** | 22.8 |
| Females | **25.1** | 25.2 |

## 24. Pensions (continued)

The Charity has participated in 2 (2024 2) pension schemes for its staff and these are described below.

### (i) Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS).

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pensions 2014. Membership is automatic for teachers in schools and other educational establishments. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment. The TPS is an unfunded scheme and members contribute on a 'pay as you go' basis – these contributions along with those made by employers are credited to the Exchequer. The Trust has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Trust has set out below the information available on the scheme.

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2023 (the Directions) published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, the design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020 in accordance with the Directions and the Employer Contribution Rate was assessed using agreed assumptions in line with the Directions and was accepted at the original assessed rate as there was no cost control mechanism breach.

The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 26 October 2023. The key elements of the valuation are:

- total scheme liabilities for service (the capital sum needed at 31 March 2020 to meet the stream of future cash flows in respect of benefits earned) of £262 billion;
- value of notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the proceeds from the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222 billion;
- notional past service deficit of £39.8 billion (2016 £22 billion); and
- discount rate is 1.7% in excess of CPI (2016 2.4% in excess of CPI) (this change has had the greatest financial significance).

As a result of the valuation, new employer contribution rates have been set at 28.60% of pensionable pay from 1 April 2024 until 1 April 2028 (compared to 23.68% under the previous valuation including a 0.08% administration levy).

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documents can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website www.teacherspensions.co.uk.

The TPS is a multi-employer pension scheme. The Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme. Accordingly, the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Trust has set out above the information available on the scheme and the implications for the Trust in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The employer pension contribution costs paid to the TPS in the year amounted to £888,000 (2024 £816,000) and have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as an expense with £74,000 (2024 £62,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date. The liability and expense have been allocated in full to unrestricted funds. The allocation of the expense to activities is explained in note 9.

### (ii) Group Personal Pension Plan

The Charity also provides eligible staff the opportunity to contribute to a personal pension through a Group Personal Pension Plan, which is a defined contribution scheme. It is made available to all staff excluding those eligible for the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Provision of the scheme is made through pension provider Standard Life.

In the year ended 31 March 2025 the employer pension contributions payable in respect of staff participating in the Group Personal Pension Plan were £1,201,000 (2024 £1,088,000) with £99,000 (2024 £93,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date.

## 25. Derivative financial instruments

The following table details the notional principal amounts and remaining terms of interest rate swap contracts outstanding as at the reporting date:

### Outstanding contracts - receive floating pay fixed contracts

| | Average contract fixed interest rate | | Notional Principal value | | Fair value | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2025** | 2024 | **2025** | 2024 | **2025** | 2024 |
| | **%** | % | **£'000** | £'000 | **£'000** | £'000 |
| 5 years + | **4.21** | 4.21 | **772** | 836 | **4** | 14 |

The Trust is party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. The interest rate swap contract expires on 31 March 2031.

The fair value of the derivative is calculated by discounting the future cash flows to the maturity date of 31 March 2031. The product gives the Trust increased certainty over future costs and cash flows, and the liability should be considered within the context of the length of the loan period and interest rates existing when the loan agreement was made in December 2010.

The interest rate swap settles on a quarterly basis. The floating rate on the interest rate swap is based on UK base rate. The Trust settles the difference between the fixed and floating interest rate on a net basis.

Gains of £10,000 (2024 £8,000) in respect of the interest rate swap contract have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

## 26. Related party transactions

No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the Charity during the year (2024 £nil). There were no other related party transactions during the current or prior year that require disclosure.

## 27. Financial commitments

### Operating lease commitments

The total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases were:

| | Land & Buildings | | Other | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2025 £'000** | 2024 £'000 | **2025 £'000** | 2024 £'000 |
| - due within one year | **15** | 53 | **61** | 22 |
| - due between one and five years | **50** | 3 | **100** | 26 |
| | **65** | 56 | **161** | 48 |

## 28. Contingent Liabilities

In 2021, the Charity was informed by The Pensions Trust that some benefit changes in regard to the final salary-based pension scheme, which closed to new members in 2000, may not have been in accordance with the scheme rules. The Pensions Trust has sought court direction in relation to this, the outcome of which is expected to be known later in 2025. If the Court directs these changes were made in a way not permitted by the scheme rules, then this would give rise to additional pension liabilities for the Charity in the future, which the Scheme's Actuary has estimated to be in the region of £6.1m. This figure is estimated on a non-accounting basis, using actuarial assumptions derived using the Trustee's Technical Provisions basis as at 30 September 2021, where this relates to service prior to the date of change and has been calculated from the preliminary results of the actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2021 allowing for market conditions at that date.

The actuarial valuation for the Scheme as at 31 March 2025 identified a deficit of £514,000 performed under FRS102 and makes no allowance for any additional liabilities which may arise following the court's decision. As the outcome of the case is awaited (and the outcome may subsequently be subject to appeal), no obligation of a liability has arisen as a result of the past benefit changes and therefore no amounts are provided for. In the event of an adverse ruling, the precise impact on the income statement and balance sheet will be assessed and a payment plan would be agreed with the Trustee of The Pensions Trust with payments made, as normal, over a number of years. The above details are disclosed as a contingent liability in order to provide stakeholders with information about the potential impact of this matter.

In a further connected matter, the Charity is aware that, in 2024, the Court of Appeal upheld the decision in the Virgin Media vs NTL Pension Trustees II Limited case. The decision puts into question the validity of any amendments made in respect of the rules of a contracted-out pension scheme between 6 April 1997 and 5 April 2016. The judgment means that some historic amendments affecting s.9(2B) rights could be void if the necessary actuarial confirmation under s.37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993 was not obtained. The impact of this matter, if any, along with the court case in respect of the benefit changes review, will be considered by the scheme Trustees when the outcome of the benefits review court case is known. Since the year end, on the 5 June 2025, the Government announced its intention to introduce legislation to give affected pension schemes the ability to retrospectively obtain written confirmation that historical benefit changes met the necessary standards. However, details of the legislation have not been announced. Subject to the Scheme Trustee being able to comply with the legislation and the pension scheme obtaining the required written actuarial confirmations, the Trustees do not expect the valuation of the scheme liabilities to change in respect of this matter.

## 29. Ultimate controlling party

The Charity is under the control of its Members and there is no ultimate controlling party. The Members, as Charity Trustees, have control of the Charity and there is no one individual controlling party.

# Reference & administrative information

The Non-executive and Executive leadership, as at the date of this report, are set out below:

## Board of Trustees (Non-executive)

*Chair*
Giles Gaddum

*Vice Chair*
Norah Flood

*Lead Honorary Treasurer*
Anthony Farnworth

*Assistant Honorary Treasurer*
Ian Johnson

Geoff Durbin
Marcell Edwards
Jane Grime
Michael Henshaw
Roger Horne
Gani Martins
Rebekah Pierre
Steven Pitt
Jane Walapu

## Trust LeadershipTeam (Executive)

*Chief Executive*
Melanie Dunn

*Service Director*
Sara Aldridge

*Commercial Director*
Dr Paul Jarvis

*People and Culture Director*
Roland Guy

*Associate Director of Finance*
Clare Morrissy

## Principal Professional Advisers

*Bankers*
Barclays Bank PLC
3 Hardman Street
Spinningfields
Manchester
M3 3HF

*Investment Managers*
Brewin Dolphin Limited
1 The Avenue
Spinningfields Square
Manchester
M3 3AP

*Legal Advisers*
Trowers & Hamlins LLP
55 Princess Street
Manchester
M2 4EW

*Auditor*
RSM UK Audit LLP
14th Floor
20 Chapel Street
Liverpool
L3 9AG

*HR & Health & Safety Advisers*
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)
28 Calthorpe Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 1RP

| | |
|---|---|
| *Charity name:* | The Together Trust |
| *Charity registration number:* | 209782 |
| *Company registration number*: | 00301722 |
| *Registered Office:* | Together Trust Centre<br>Schools Hill<br>Cheadle<br>Cheshire<br>SK8 1JE |
| Telephone: | 0161 283 4848 |
| Email: | enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk |
| Website: | www.togethertrust.org.uk |

TOGETHER
TRUST
charity
Disability,
specialist education
and care

TOGETHER TRUST charity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Cheshire, SK8 1JE

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**enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk**


A digital copy of this publication
can be downloaded at
**togethertrust.org.uk/what-we-do**

**THE TOGETHER TRUST**

England & Wales - Charity number 209782

# Accounts

TOGETHER TRUST charity

# Trustees' report and financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

The Together Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Registered charity number 209782
Company registration number 00301722

HUGO BOSS
BOSS

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# Chair's introduction

On behalf of the Trustees of the Together Trust, I am pleased to present our annual report for the Together Trust, our progress towards the goals in our Stronger Together Strategic Plan (the Strategic Report), the financial statements and auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2024.

We continue to believe that we are a society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities. The Trust remains deeply rooted in its values and aspires to be person-centred in all its plans, practices and behaviours. The complex needs of our beneficiaries mean that the people we support do not often benefit from generic, off-the-shelf solutions, but require specialist support that is tailored to their needs.

The Together Trust's care, special education, community, and clinical services support over 3,300 children, adults, and families each year, transforming lives and pursuing positive outcomes for those we support. Our 830 plus people, at our many sites in the north west, put the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support at the heart of all that they do. We work for the Together Trust because we are passionate about improving the lives of people with disabilities, autism, mental health needs, care leavers and their families.

As well as our frontline operations, I am particularly proud of our campaigning work - giving a voice to the voiceless and presenting powerful arguments in forums of influential decision makers. It is also noteworthy that our outreach now extends all the way to Ghana with the exciting work and support we are providing to New Horizons, a specialist education school with whom we have built a positive relationship.

I am immensely proud of our achievements this year and, on behalf of our Board, would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our workforce for their dedication and loyalty. I would particularly like to thank Brian White, our Resource Director, who retired after 17 years. His management of our resources and finance has been diligent and dedicated, and he steered the Charity through some seasons of very stormy macroeconomics. My thanks also go to our Leadership Team for their heartfelt pursuit to answer the needs of our beneficiaries and their families and deliver the best quality services that we can. More than ever, the essential support of our staff, volunteers and donors enables our services to adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of the Trust.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the Charity has successfully managed its risks to date, to ensure that we are able to continue to support the beneficiaries who need our services in a financially sustainable manner.

*Bridge College students told The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, about their 'Bridge give Back' programme of community support.*

Giles Gaddum
Chair of Trustees

# About Together Trust
# Our aims and objectives

We are one of the North West's leading disability charities. We help children, adults, parents, and carers, delivering individual care, support and education to thousands of people each year.

For over 150 years, we have been championing and caring for people with disabilities, autism, and complex health needs. And providing life-changing support for looked-after children and care-experienced people.

## Our mission

We are the Together Trust. We're here to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support – they are at the heart of everything we do. We stand by them, and we work together for change.

## Our vision

A society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities.

## Our values

## We will always strive to be:

- **Positive**
  We take pride in celebrating the difference we make.

- **Professional**
  We act in a fair and respectable way that recognises our collective expertise.

- **Passionate**
  We encourage creative ideas and inspire one another.

- **Supportive**
  We are considerate and caring towards one another.



Registered Charity Number 209782

# Report of the Board of Trustees
# Strategic Report

## What we do

### Everyone deserves to lead a happy life – together, we make that possible

At the Together Trust, we deliver individual care, support and education services across the North West.

We care for and champion the rights, needs and ambitions of care-experienced children and people with disabilities, autism and mental health differences.

Every year we support thousands of children, young people and adults to lead happy, fulfilled lives.

In the year to 31 March 2024, the Together Trust provided 47 social care, special education, community and family support services to over 3,300 children, young people, vulnerable adults and families, whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Like many other charities, demand for the majority of the Trust's services continues to grow.

The Trust's services were carried out, in the main, on behalf of local authorities, public sector bodies and service users in the North West of England and surrounding areas including Staffordshire and the West Midlands. All Special Educational Services are Ofsted regulated. Residential Care Services, along with Domiciliary Care and Community Support Services, are regulated by either the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

During the reporting period the Together Trust's services were:

### Special Educational Services

**Inscape House School** – a non-maintained special school that meets the needs of children and young people, aged 5 to 19 years, with autism spectrum conditions and related social communication difficulties.

**Bridge College** – a specialist Further Education Day college that supports students up to 25 years with learning difficulties and disabilities, complex needs, communication disorders and autism.

**Ashcroft School** - an independent special school catering for children and young people, aged 8 to 18 years, who have struggled to cope in other settings because of their individual barriers to learning. Ashcroft also offers vocational learning for 14 to 19-year-olds and operates Ashcroft College which support students, aged 14 to 16 years, who may have been excluded or are close to being excluded from mainstream education. This service closed in July 2024.

### Social & Therapy Care Services – Residential Care Services

Everyone deserves a place to call home - whether that's a place to call your own or somewhere to get safety, stability and support. We work with children, young people and adults to build a happy future.

We have 12 Ofsted registered homes for children and young people including:

- 1 short break/overnight respite service for children with autism/learning disabilities
- 1 short break/overnight respite service for children with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities
- 2 mainstream homes for looked-after children in need of care and support
- 4 therapeutic homes for looked-after children in need of care, support and therapy
- 1 therapeutic home for looked-after children in need of care, support and therapy for Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)
- 3 therapeutic children's homes for children with complex autism/learning disabilities

We have 1 CQC registered home for disabled adults with complex health needs

## Social & Therapy Care Services – Fostering services

We provide a Fostering service, with support and training, so our foster carers can provide safe, caring, nurturing homes for children who need them.

## Social & Therapy Care Services - Domiciliary Care and Community Support Services

- 6 supported living services for adults with complex needs
- Weekend club for young people with complex needs in Stockport
- Evening youth activity clubs for young people with disabilities/autism in Stockport
- The Hub at the Humphrey Booth Centre in Ordsall, Salford – a community space for the people of Salford
- Learning support service based at Bolton College
- Adult day services at Newbridge in Stockport
- Specialist Positive Behaviour Support Services in Stockport and Salford
- SEND mediation and dispute resolution services in Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, St Helens, Stoke on Trent and Telford & Wrekin
- SEND Information and Advice Service in Stockport and Tameside
- Ongoing work to mobilise an Early Intervention Service for children and young people in Manchester

## Social & Therapy Care Services - Clinical services

Together Trust multi-disciplinary teams work in mainstream and SEND schools and colleges providing:

- Observation, assessment, individual and group interventions
- Support to update and deliver on Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP) recommendations
- Staff coaching and training
- Sleep support

*Year 12 Inscape House School student, Talia, receiving a trophy for her active involvement with the school library. Talia was one of 8 finalists in the national Pupil Library Assistant of the Year Award 2023.*

*Lee, who fosters with his husband, says 'It's giving a child a chance that they may otherwise not be given."*

## Our Beneficiaries – the people we support

The Charity works tirelessly towards a brighter future for the people we support and their families and to build communities where everyone feels valued and can thrive. The people we support tell us that they face daily discrimination, hardship and barriers in their lives. The long term impact of COVID-19 and the current cost-of-living crisis have only made it harder for them to access the support they need.

We recognise the importance of listening to and amplifying the views of the people we support, sharing knowledge and raising awareness of the issues they face, and building collaborations with other organisations across the sector to tackle those issues. Through these activities, the Board gains a comprehensive overview of the landscape in which the Trust operates, where future developments and trends are, and how we can increase our social value.

We take a proactive approach to helping the people we support to influence local, regional and national policy. We also work closely with national organisations such as the Disabled Children's Partnership, the Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers and the Children, and Young People's Mental Health Coalition to help the people we support to influence future policy and provision in a coordinated and impactful manner.

The Board actively engages with its beneficiaries, both informally and formally, to understand the impact of its charitable activities and the interests of its beneficiaries.

Our aim is to be a trusted partner to the people we support and empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision.
We continue to work in partnership with charitable organisations such as the Disabled Children's Partnership, the Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers and have strengthened our relationship with charities through partnership work, including with Article 39 and National Star. During the year, we were successful, with other charities, in pushing back government proposals to close ticket offices which would have disproportionately affected people with disabilities. We created an innovative solution at pace for people in Greater Manchester and Stockport to respond to the consultation and received more than 500 responses from people in our community.

*The Together Trust was part of a successful campaign against the government's proposed closure of rail ticket offices.*

## Fundraising Activities

Our fundraising activities enable us to provide the people we support with so much more than just the contracted minimum.

We have benefited from the support of some fantastic individuals and organisations, including our own services, each supporting our work in a range of really helpful ways.

Notable contributions were received from a diverse group of supporters, both long-standing relationships and friends to the Charity. The Together Trust is extremely grateful for the generous support received from a variety of individuals, community and corporate supporters, and for the increasing number of grant-making trusts who have chosen to support our young people and families.

The current cost of living crisis has had a significant impact on fundraising activity at the Trust. The team continues to focus on creative ways to overcome this by offering a wide range of opportunities for donors to get involved with supporting the Charity. The organisation's online retail channels continue to expand and support most activities undertaken by the Fundraising Team.

2023/24 saw the continuation of the Charity's return to community events including the family-friendly, accessible Join Together Festival. The festival was relaunched the previous year and welcomed by new and existing supporters alike.

We would like to extend particular thanks to the companies and organisations who supported the event in particular: Blue Octopus, the High Sheriff's Police Trust, UDP, the Ward Flexibility Fund and Rodda's.

Our thanks also goes to our other key partners for their ongoing support throughout 2023/24 who include: Kingsmill/AB Foods, John Lewis, L'Oreal, Boohoo, The Booth Charities and WNS Assistance.

*An important event in the fundraising calendar - the family-friendly, accessible Join Together Festival held in July.*

The Together Trust would also like to thank the public for their support of its 2023/24 events, both in person and virtual events, including:

- Declutter and Donate
- Join Together Festival
- Style Together
- Halloween Together
- All raffles and
- 50:50 Lottery

We're also very grateful to our supporters who continue to contribute towards our annual Easter and Christmas appeals.

## Volunteering

The Charity aims to have an effective and inclusive volunteering programme that delivers tangible and valuable outcomes for our beneficiaries, supporting the delivery of the Trust's Stronger Together Plan.

Over 100 volunteers (inclusive of Governors and Trustees) have supported the Trust on a regular basis over the past year: providing valuable input and assistance to our residential services, educational establishments, community services and governance, as well as in support roles including fundraising, communications and organisational development.

Over the reporting period, our 56 regular volunteers (not including Governors or Trustees) gave more than 4,500 hours of their precious time to help the Trust (a jump of 50% on the previous year and more than triple the hours of the year before that). Their contribution equates to over £46,000 if valued in terms of the National Living Wage, however the real value of their wide-ranging expertise and dedication is immeasurable. In addition, 934 hours of event support time was contributed by ad-hoc volunteers, including by corporate groups – while a little lower than the previous year, still a tremendous amount of support.

This year also saw the launch of our new Volunteer Driver scheme, enabling more educational trips to take place and relieving stress on journeys, such as student work experience placements and school runs for residential services. In the second half of the year, our Volunteer Driver Team transported the people we support on 177 journeys and collected 185 boxes of donations.

*Paediatric nurse, Ruth Bailey, volunteers with the Trust's Sleep Service printing out the resources for individualised sleep plans.*

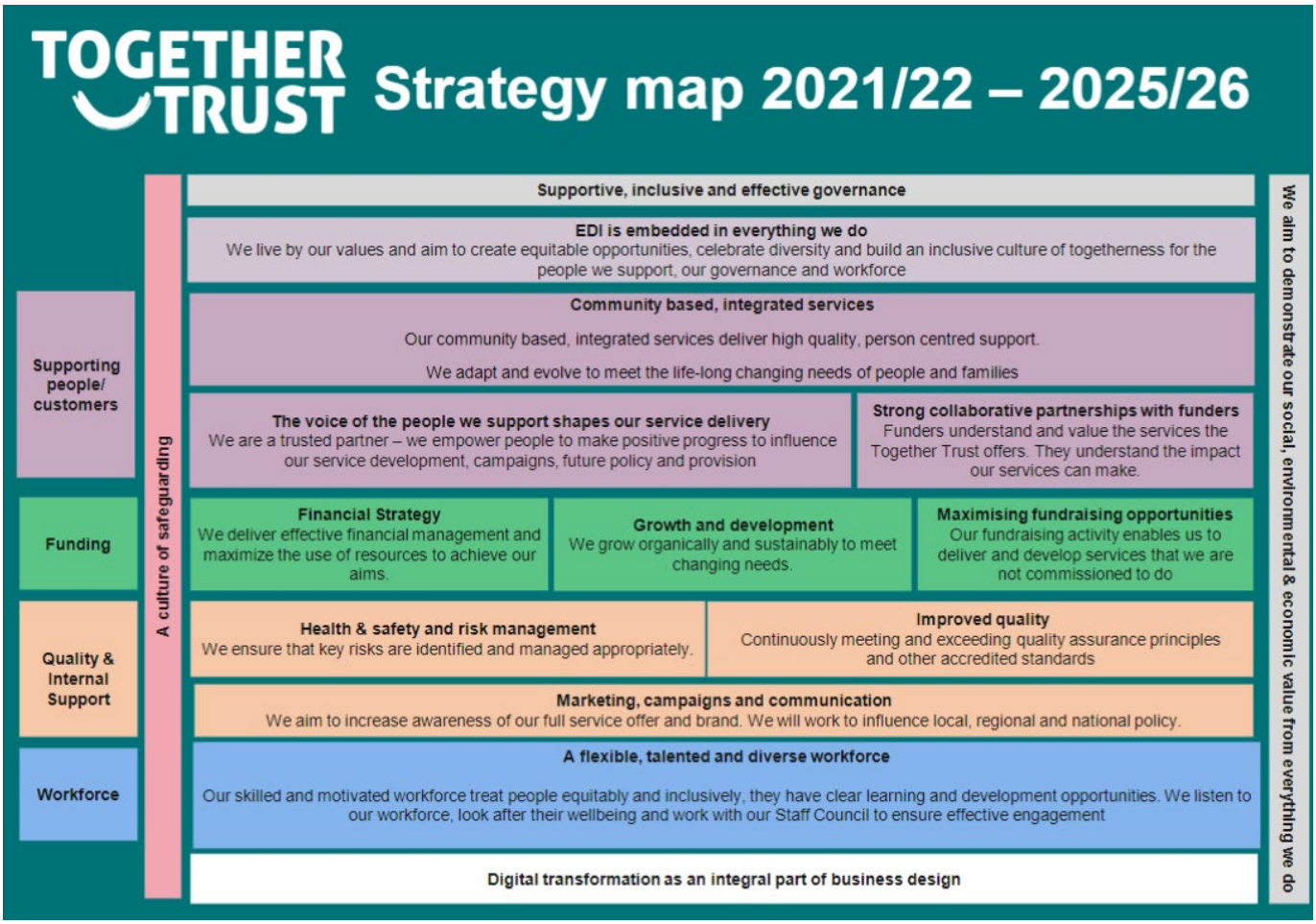
## Our strategic aims

Our strategic charitable aims are set out in our four year Stronger Together Plan. Our Stronger Together strategic aims are:

1. Our needs led, community based, integrated services deliver high quality, person centred support. We adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families
2. We are a trusted partner – we empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision
3. We grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs. We maximise fundraising opportunities and aim to demonstrate our social, environmental and economic value from everything that we do
4. Our flexible, talented and diverse workforce treat people equitably and inclusively. They have clear learning and development opportunities. We listen to our workforce, look after their wellbeing and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement

## Our strategy map

The Board is focused on its strategic long-term charitable aims as set out in its Stronger Together Plan.



# Strategic achievements & performance

The Trust renewed its commitment to its strategic plan, the Stronger Together Plan, in 2022 when it updated the plan to 2025/26. The plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to innovative ways of improving how the Charity works. During 2023/24, the Trust continued to deliver results against its four key strategic goals, those set originally in 2017/18. The Board monitors progress against strategic aims in the Stronger Together Plan by measuring key performance indicators (KPI) relating to specific areas of our operations, as illustrated in our strategy map on the previous page. Each Board subgroup, described in the Structure, Governance and Management section later in this report, receives KPIs relating to their specialist area either monthly or quarterly.

### Stronger Together Aim 1

**Our needs led, community based, integrated services deliver high-quality, person-centred support. We adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families.**

**Our progress in 2023/24**

Referrals for the majority of Trust services remained high throughout the year. Referrals for foster placements continue to increase but sufficiency remains problematic across the sector. As a Trust we need to increase our number of carers year on year. This remains our key objective to secure longer term growth for our fostering services. The Charity continues to invest in supporting and recruiting foster carers.

Many of the young people we support in children's homes benefit from long term placement stability. This remains a good indicator for the outcomes for young people in the Charity's care, as is their attendance in full-time education. The Trust is leading on national and local campaigns aimed at improving the longevity of residential placements for children that reach 16+ and campaigning for young people to remain in care until they reach 18+. Many young people in our foster care also benefit from long term placement stability and we are actively looking at how we can continue to provide a consistent level of support to our cohort of care leavers.

Many young people produced excellent award results, thanks to the dedication and support of our workforce.

Development work on our Newbridge service, a service for people with individual and often complex needs in Stockport, was approved by the Board in April 2019, but works were delayed initially by the COVID pandemic. The development phases now completed include: an extension and relocation of the kitchen area on the ground floor to create increased dining and recreational space for the people who use the service, two new adapted bathrooms and a refurbished first floor creating flexible office space. This investment has created significantly improved facilities for the people that we support.

A review of operations at our Ashcroft education provision identified areas for development and despite taking proactive steps to make positive improvements, an Ofsted inspection in October 2023 resulted in an overall rating of 'Inadequate'. Having considered a strategic review of the long term sustainability of the service, the combination of falling student numbers, the effect of the disappointing Ofsted report and a reduction in referrals and admissions, all led to the very difficult decision to close Ashcroft at the end of the contracted academic year 2023/24. Following the decision, our focus was to minimise the impact and prioritise the well-being of all Ashcroft students, by working closely with pupils, families, carers and Local Authorities to look at individual support plans and best outcomes to help with transitions. By the time the school closed in July 2024, of the 48 students, 42 were confirmed to be continuing in education the majority of which were transferring to our Inscape service provision. Further, we were able to find continued employment for many staff at alternative positions elsewhere within the Trust.

**Our KPI results against Stronger Together Aim 1**

At 31 March 2024 all Trust services were graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted/CQC with only one exception.

Service Occupancy – Placement Numbers – Target 100%

| | 31 March 2024 | 31 March 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| Community Services achieving a minimum of 95% of contracted hours : | 89% | 87% |
| Clinical Services achieving a minimum of 95% of contracted hours: | 95% | 99% |
| Average occupancy across all children's homes: | 85% | 86% |

*Young people from the Trust's residential and educational services entertained parents, carers and staff at the annual Christmas Carol Concert at Saint Mary's Church, Cheadle.*

## Stronger Together Aim 2

**We are a trusted partner – we empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision.**

### Our progress in 2023/24

We again celebrated the fantastic achievements of the young people we support at our annual Achievement Awards ceremony. This event highlights the positive impact our services make on the lives of the people we support and our young people always amaze us.

Throughout the year, our services and young people won multiple awards - here are just a few from our Education services:

Inscape House School won the national Nurture Award in February 2024.

*Inscape House School received a national nurture award for embedding a culture that responds to pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs alongside their academic studies.*

A prestigious award was introduced by CILIP School Libraries Group (SLG) and the School Library Association, recognising the valued assistance of pupils who help within their school libraries. One of our Inscape House School students was recognised at a noteworthy ceremony in London, being shortlisted for Pupil Library Assistant of the Year Award in June 2023.

Inscape House School and its animal-assisted intervention therapy programme won a second award from the UK's leading school improvement company TT Education. Presented at the University of Warwick, the prestigious 'Positive Approaches to Inclusion' was awarded because of Inscape's exceptional work in creating positive and sustainable outcomes for young people through an animal-assisted intervention.

In May 2023 one of our teachers from Ashcroft College won Teacher of the Term award from one of our suppliers.

Three talented students from one of our specialist schools, Inscape House School, scooped top literary awards in this year's Portico Art of the Book Award competition. Out of 200 entries, one of our students was chosen as the overall winner in the competition, which challenges the participants to create a handmade book containing a story through words, pictures or a combination of both. The young talent was also awarded "Best Artwork" for his piece titled 'I'm a Legless Lizard'. Another student's piece was acknowledged as the "Most Engaging Story", and a further award for "Best Writing" was awarded to another student.

In summer 2023, Bridge College celebrated its 30th anniversary since opening its doors to students from all walks of life. Throughout its journey, Bridge has pioneered a transformative approach to education, breaking barriers, and empowering individuals to achieve their full potential. As the college celebrates three decades, it is a moment of reflection and celebration for the countless lives it has positively influenced.

One of the stand-out features of the college's success is its tailored approach to education. Each student is treated as an individual with unique strengths and needs, and personalised learning plans are created to suit them. This student-centric approach has enabled learners to flourish, unlocking their potential and revealing their talents. If the college can meet a student's needs, Bridge College does everything it can to help that individual succeed in life – whatever success means for the individual.

Students from Bridge College took part in 'Bridge Gives Back', a new programme where students work with the local community and our Campaigns team.

**Our campaigning work**
Our mission is to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support – they are at the heart of everything that we do. Our policy work enables the people we support to better influence future policy and provision.

We campaign based on the feedback from the people we support, and their families, about what matters to them and, from their perspective, what good looks like.

Our campaigns and policy priorities are:
- Improved outcomes for care leavers
- Improved mental health support for young people
- Greater employment and opportunity for people with disabilities
- Better support for young people who are transitioning services

During the year, our campaigning work attracted coverage from BBC North West, The Guardian, The Observer, CYPNow and Community Care. Following engagement with the Education Committee, in January 2024 we were invited to present oral evidence in the House of Commons, covering topics such as residential care, excessive profit and semi-independent accommodation.

The people we support and our knowledgeable workforce had many opportunities to engage with our campaigning work this year. Children in our residential care attended the launch of 'Free Loaves on Friday' in London, their contribution to the A-Z of allyship section of the book now in print. Five hundred children with disabilities and their parents and carers shared their experience of transition to adulthood to help inform our policy work in this area. Staff informed our response to the government's advocacy consultation, and young people at Bridge had the opportunity to tell Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham what needs to change.

As part of our campaign's development, the campaign team visit our services to obtain the opinions and thoughts of the people we support, encouraging them to take part in local campaigns and initiatives. Our campaign to improve the accessibility of transport in Greater Manchester was initiated through students at Bridge College being unable access their closest train station. Part of their action was to successfully petition the local mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, to visit their college so they could tell him about the issue.

| **People supported** | **2024** | **2023** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of people supported during the year | 3,350 | 3,225 | +3.9% |
| People signing up to support our campaigns<br>Number of people: | 397 | 411 | -3.4% |

## Stronger Together Aim 3

**We grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs. We maximise fundraising opportunities and aim to demonstrate our social, environmental, and economic value from everything that we do.**

### Our progress in 2023/24

During the year, the Together Trust continued to grow through winning new contracts and extended delivery of existing contracts, joining or reconfirming its position on the following frameworks:

- Bradford District & Craven Health and Care Partnership – Universal Sleep Model for 2-11 year-olds new contract awarded in July 2023 for 2 years
- STAR Procurement – Flexible Purchasing System for the provision of short breaks for Children and Young People with Disabilities in Stockport, Trafford, Tameside and Rochdale; from February 2024 until August 2026
- Stockport MBC – SEND Information, Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS) 1 year contract extension awarded until March 2025
- Membership of North West Flexible Purchasing System for Residential, Fostering and SEND Services maintained
- Tameside MBC – SEND Information, Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS) contract extension awarded from July 2023 until March 2025
- Stockport MBC – Youth Club (short breaks for children with disabilities) 1 year contract from April 2023 awarded
- Cheshire East Council – SEND Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Service 2 years contract extension awarded from March 2023 until March 2025
- Cheshire West & Chester Council – SEND Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Service contract extension awarded from March 2023 until March 2025
- Stockport MBC – Enhanced Therapies Service 1 year re-award from September 2023
- Stockport MBC – EOTAS Service (Education Other Than At School)
- Liverpool City Council - Schools Outreach Service – various individual school contracts for Speech & Language, Occupational Therapy and Advisory Teachers services across Liverpool

Fundraising saw the success of many initiatives throughout the year including the Easter 2024 appeal and the annual ‘egg drop’ from Roughley’s Bikers, whose continued support we are so grateful for.

Investment continues to be made in our digital transformation to upgrade equipment and improve digital platforms for the people we support and our workforce. Migration to cloud storage continues across Trust settings and major projects developing the digital infrastructure continue. During the year the Trust’s finance systems were successfully updated to a cloud based solution and work continues on improving our CRM systems and centralising referrals.

*Three staff members from Meridian did a tandem skydive from 15,000 feet to raise over £1,800 for an upgrade to the short-break home's garden.*

**Our KPI results towards Stronger Together Aim 3**

**As at 31 March 2024:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Income from Charitable activities | Target £38.5m<br>Actual £38.4m (2023 - £33.4m) |
| Fundraising donation income | Target £0.3m<br>Actual £0.3m (2023 - £0.2m) |

## Stronger Together Aim 4

**Our flexible, talented and diverse workforce treat people equitably and inclusively. They have clear learning and development opportunities. We listen to our workforce, look after their wellbeing and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement.**

### Our progress in 2023/24

### Workforce and Workforce Engagement

The Charity takes great pride in its workforce on whom it depends for the delivery of its charitable objectives.

Throughout the year the Together Trust employed over 800 people in the fields of care, education, community, clinical, management and infrastructure support. The Trust started paying the Real Living Wage in 2020, and proudly became an accredited Real Living Wage employer in June 2022. The Trust continues to be committed to being a Real Living Wage employer and to a transparent system for pay and reward in order to attract and retain staff, as our ability to recruit and retain staff continues to be a key risk.

### Investing in people

In 2021, the Trust was assessed at 'beyond the standard' for Investors in People ("IIP") and it achieved the prestigious 'Gold' award. We are delighted to say that we have again been awarded 'Gold' for a second time in 2024. The Trust regards the IIP standard as an effective way to improve its practices, measure performance and demonstrate excellence. The IIP framework is used as a key part of developing the Together Trust's people strategy.

The Charity is committed to eliminating discrimination and treating all individuals fairly in all aspects of its work. The Trust promotes the employment of disabled people through its Equality and Diversity & Disclosure of Disability policies that support equality of opportunity in the recruitment, employment and retention of staff and volunteers, including access to training and promotion. The Charity ensures that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is at the forefront of all service delivery and workforce support. Our aim is for long-lasting change that sees EDI become part of the Trust's DNA.

The Trust is committed to improving EDI engagement plans for its workforce and the people it supports.

The Charity publishes its gender pay report each year and a copy of the latest report can be downloaded from our website.

The Trust has continued to work closely with its Staff Council, which represents the workforce, and acts as our workforce's voice. This year we have also seen four staff networks establish themselves to support colleagues and bring forward issues to the leadership team, relevant to the people they represent. They work alongside the Staff Council and representatives from both attend the bi-monthly Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Steering Group meetings.

The Trust continues to invest heavily in its learning and development programme, giving staff the opportunity to develop their skills and providing them with opportunities to progress within the Charity. It has further developed its leadership and management training for staff.

We have invested in resources and reviewed our current recruitment team structure to understand the changes we want to make to our recruitment process. We have a plan, over the next twelve months, to transition the recruitment process, alongside the implementation to a new Applicant Tracking System, to make the experience for candidates, hiring managers and the HR team much more effective.

Over 100 volunteers have supported the Trust this year on a regular basis in a variety of roles from drivers, gardeners and student mentors to Trustees and Governors, plus many more one-off/short term arrangements. Where possible, volunteering outcomes have been tracked for the services supported.

The Trust has continued to raise awareness with the workforce of the ways they can support their health and wellbeing. A new absence management and disability policy has been launched with guides and training to support managers. A three-year Wellbeing Strategy has been agreed for the Trust workforce with implementation commencing in 2024/25.

*At Manchester Pride Parade 2023, Together Trust staff and the people we support raised awareness about autism, disability and queer youth.*

**Our KPI results against Stronger Together Aim 4**

**As at 31 March 2024:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Staff turnover | Target less than 20%<br>Actual 22% (2023 – 23%) |
| Length of service | Target 50% with 5 or more years of service<br>Actual 42% with 5 or more years of service (2023 42%) |
| Staff sickness absence | Target 4% or lower<br>Actual 5% (2023 5%) |

# Financial review

With the majority of Trust income being from local authority fees for education and care services provided, it is noted that authorities continue to face significant funding gaps and the financial outlook for the sector is challenging, which indicates a premium being put on continuing to provide services which represent good value for money to local authorities in the future.

The Trust's services are essential for those who we support and the majority of people who receive our services require a funding decision from the responsible local authority or other such public agency. Most of the Trust's fees are received for services to individuals, although some services are purchased on a block contract basis by local authorities who wish to ensure they have guaranteed access to the Trust as their provider of choice. The Trust is also in a variety of partnership arrangements with a number of local authorities, although more recent new business has been awarded via formal tender processes.

With this as a backdrop, it has been a very challenging financial year for the Trust. The cost of living crisis has had a significant effect on our workforce (in common with other organisations within our sector) which affected our recruitment and retention of staff. We addressed this by reviewing our pay reward and revising our payscale to an offer which is challenging financially for the Trust, but which is beneficial for recruitment and retention. Further financial challenges arose in relation to our Ashcroft service and its closure at the end of the 23/24 academic year, as detailed on page 10.

The impact of these challenges is that the Trust reports net expenditure of £1.01m compared to net expenditure of £0.38m in 2023. These results are reported after providing £805,000 for the cost of closure of our Ashcroft service, which we consider to be exceptional due to its non-recurring nature and the significant impact that the costs have on the financial results of the charity for the year.

A further significant impact on the reported results this year is the actuarial loss on the defined benefit pension scheme which this year amounted to £0.5m compared to a loss of £0.3m in 2023. After other gains and losses there is a net reduction in funds of £1.5m compared to a net reduction in funds of £0.6m in 2023.

Our charitable activities of Social & Therapy Care Services continued to operate in a particularly difficult environment and were in deficit by £0.1m on income of £20.7m compared to a deficit of £1.3m on income of £16.6m in 2023. Turnover of staff in the sector as a whole has been high despite strong demand for services. This continues to impact us and staff recruitment and retention continues to be a key focus even though we made improvements in our pay and conditions offer in the prior year and further changes in 2023/24. These changes have had an impact, however our reliance on agency staff remains at high levels.

Our charitable activities of Education services continued to perform well overall through a challenging year and (before taking into consideration the provision for the costs of closing one of the services) made a deficit of £0.3m on income of £17.4m compared to a surplus of £0.8m on income of £16.7m in 2023.

## Income

| | **2023-24 £'m** | 2022-23 £'m |
|---|---|---|
| Donations | **0.29** | 0.23 |
| Social and Therapy Care services * | **20.69** | 16.66 |
| Education services | **17.40** | 16.71 |
| Investments & Other Income | **0.12** | 0.15 |
| | **38.50** | 33.75 |

*In prior years, Other services (which was our Fostering service), was presented separately, however this year this service has been incorporated into Social & Therapy Care Services as this better represents how the service is managed and reported internally within the Trust. Prior year figures have been represented accordingly

Fundraising income of donations, grants and gifts in kind, was £0.3m compared to £0.2m in 2023, achieving a small increase in what proves to continue to be a difficult environment. We are so grateful to all of our donors who support us, and there is further information about these earlier in this report.

2023-24 saw the Trust's income increase by 14.0% from £33.8m in 2023 to £38.5m in 2024 with the main increase being in our Social & Therapy Care services where income increased by over £4m due to higher levels of occupancy being achieved in our residential homes, expansion of service provision in areas of our Community & Personalisation services and in our Therapy Support services, along with the effects of some fee increases.

We saw increases in student numbers at Bridge College and Inscape House School but this was offset by a significant decline in the number of students at our Ashcroft service.

## Expenditure

| | **2023-24 £'m** | 2022-23 £'m |
|---|---|---|
| Raising funds | **0.28** | 0.23 |
| Cost of providing | | |
| Social and Therapy Care services | **20.83** | 17.95 |
| Education services | **17.65** | 15.89 |
| Exceptional costs | **0.81** | - |
| | **39.57** | 34.07 |

The Charity reports expenditure of £39.6m in the year compared to £34.1m in 2023, an increase of over 16% compared to an increase in income of 15%. This resulted in net expenditure, before exceptional costs and gains and losses, of £264,000 compared to net expenditure of £317,000 last year. The Trust has continued to feel the effects of high (but reducing) levels of inflation and wage rises needing to keep pace with inflation, but fee increases struggling to keep pace with these two key factors, resulted in a year of expenditure exceeding income though an improvement compared to the prior year.

It has undoubtedly been a tough financial year for the Trust. The Trust took the very difficult decision during the year to close its Ashcroft Educational service. The Ashcroft school and college services closed following the conclusion of the 2023-24 academic year and provision has been made in these 2023-24 financial year results for the significant costs associated with that decision.

Of the total expenditure incurred, payroll costs amounted to £27.2m compared to £23.4m in 2023, an increase of 16.2%. The average number of employees during the year was 859 compared to 809 in 2023, an increase of 50 in headcount year on year. As highlighted above, our payscale was restructured from 1 April 2023 in order to address the effect the cost of living crisis was having on our workforce. Our revised payscale tracked the increase in the Real Living Wage (as an accredited Real Living Wage employer), along with the subsequent knock-on impact to all of our pay grades. We made improvements to pay and reward for our workforce in 2022-23 in order to better attract and retain our essential workforce. Our pay changes in 2023-24 focused on what was affordable for the Trust at a time when the continued cost of living crisis was having a significant impact on the majority of our workforce.

Agency costs decreased marginally in the year to £2.0m compared to £2.1m in 2023 though highlighting the continued dependency on agency staff.

Other costs have been impacted by the high level of inflation of 10.1% at the start of the year but which gradually fell during the course of the year, ending on an inflation rate of 3.2% at March 2024.

Social & Therapy Care Services expenditure increased from £17.9m in 2023 to £20.8m in 2024, an increase of 16% with the growth in service provision and associated staffing resources therefore required.

Education services expenditure increased by over 11% from £15.9m to £17.7m (excluding exceptional costs), being largely an increase in staffing and agency costs.

## Investments

At 31 March 2024, the value of the investment portfolio increased by £75,000 from its 2023 value of £924,000 to its 2024 value of £999,000 through investment gains and changes in cash levels held within the portfolio.

Our investment managers have been given delegated responsibility to manage the investment portfolio in line with the investment policy and funds are invested in a well-diversified portfolio of UK and overseas equities, fixed interest investments, alternative investments and cash.

Our investment policy is to invest with the main purpose of ensuring the underlying security of the investment, while achieving long term returns from both generation of income and capital growth. We seek to achieve our investment goals through a mix of low-risk and high-risk investments to achieve a diversified portfolio of investments at a suitable risk level.

The Trustees are committed to investing in a socially responsible manner and expect the investment manager to integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into investment management processes and ownership practices. The Trust has specified ethical restrictions in the management of the portfolio. The ethical investment policy precludes direct or indirect investment in companies in the alcohol, tobacco and arms industry.

There isn't a prescribed level of income the portfolio is required to generate and our investment managers are mindful of the overall objective of a total return from income and capital growth.

The total return performance of the investments over the year was 9.18%. The performance of the portfolio is compared to the associated and relevant blend of indices for the Investment Managers risk category profile which equates to a total return performance of 11.22% for the 12 months ended 31 March 2024.

## Final Salary Pension Scheme

The Together Trust is the employer sponsor of the Together Trust Defined Benefit pension scheme, which is a defined benefit pension plan. It closed to new members in 2000 and stopped the further accrual of benefits at this date.

The Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 valuation position on 31 March 2024 shows a deficit of £724,000, compared with £312,000 in 2023. This deficit is recognised on the balance sheet. The increase in the deficit, caused by a reduction in asset values (gilt yields fell sharply over the fourth quarter of 2023 and then rebounded slightly during the first quarter of 2024 while equity markets fell in the first half of the year but have seen gains in the second half) and an increase in the valuation of benefit obligations (AA corporate bond yields fell by approximately 2bps and high inflation experience leading to an increase in liability values), has led to a £530,000 actuarial loss in year as recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The FRS102 valuation is different from the triennial actuarial valuation which was last formally performed as at 30 September 2021. The September 2021 valuation showed a deficit of £687,000; and a plan to eliminate the deficit was agreed by the payment of monthly contributions through to 31 March 2027. It is the on-going triennial valuation that is used to calculate the payment of additional pension contributions and the deficit reduction plan will make sure the deficit reduces over a number of years as additional pension contributions are paid. The pension scheme deficit is a long term liability, where the payments required by the pension deficit reduction plan will need to be met from future cash flows.

The next triennial valuation is scheduled to take place as at 30 September 2024.

As detailed in note 29 of the financial statements, a review of historic scheme benefit changes is currently being undertaken which may, dependent on the outcome of the review, impact the future valuation of benefit obligations.

## Reserves

As at 31 March 2024, reserves totalled £26.5m (2023 £28.0m) as detailed in the table below.

| | **2024 £'m** | 2023 £'m |
|---|---|---|
| General reserve | **15.1** | 16.1 |
| Revaluation reserve | **6.7** | 6.8 |
| Designated funds | **4.1** | 4.4 |
| **Total unrestricted funds** | **25.9** | **27.3** |
| Restricted funds | **0.4** | 0.5 |
| Endowment funds | **0.2** | 0.2 |
| **Total funds** | **26.5** | **28.0** |

The Trust's reserves policy is based on an assessment of the Trust's cash flow and the risks it faces. The Trust takes a prudent view where, as a minimum, the level of cash reserves must not fall below £2.5m at each month end and it should hold cash reserves of at least six weeks expenditure at the year end.

### Restricted funds

Restricted funds of £0.4m (2023 £0.5m) represent funds that have been given for a particular purpose. The Trustees have no discretion to reallocate them for use other than for those for which they were given. Further details are set out in note 23 of the financial statements.

### Endowment funds

Endowment funds of £0.2m (2023 £0.2m) represent the value of donated investment assets. Only the income generated by the fund can be expended. Further details are set out in note 23 of the financial statements.

### Unrestricted funds

General reserves of £15.1m (2023 £16.1m) are the part of the charity's funds that are not restricted or designated to any particular purpose.
The revaluation reserve of £6.7m (2023 £6.8m) is the unrealised gain on our property portfolio.
Designated funds of £4.1m (2023 £4.4m) are funds that have been for a specific purpose by the Trustees (further details of which are set out in note 23 of the financial statements.
The revaluation reserve and the designated funds are not readily available so are not included in the calculation of freely available general reserves.

Of the £25.9m (2023 £27.3m) unrestricted funds, £19.4m (2023 £19.0m) is represented by fixed assets and a further £4.1m (2023 £4.4m) has been designated to set aside funds towards investment plans and both are therefore not available as working capital, leaving £2.4m (2023 £3.9m) as free reserves, which is also summarised in the balance sheet table below

| | **2024 £'m** | 2023 £'m |
|---|---|---|
| Net current assets | **9.3** | 10.0 |
| Less long term creditors and provisions | **(2.2)** | (1.0) |
| Net reserves | **7.1** | 9.0 |
| Less restricted, designated and endowment funds | **(4.7)** | (5.1) |
| Free reserves | **2.4** | 3.9 |

Unrestricted available cash as at 31 March 2024 was £7.0m, against the equivalent of six weeks' worth of expenditure of £4.5m (2023 unrestricted cash was £8.9m against £3.9m of expenditure).

## Fixed assets

Changes in tangible fixed assets are summarised in the notes to the financial statements (see note 15).

Fixed asset purchases during the year amounted to £1.2m compared to £0.7m in 2023.

Investment in our property portfolio was made during the year when the opportunity arose to purchase a property adjacent to one of our other residential homes.

Further investments have been made in significant property renovations and improvements at four of our residential properties. While ongoing capital works at our Newbridge community hub and routine works at each of our education establishments were also incurred.

Our aging fleet of vehicles required significant spend during the year. The COVID pandemic has had an ongoing impact on the market for vehicles both in terms of price and availability of vehicles, and almost £0.3m has been spend on 9 vehicles to update our fleet.

## Going Concern

We have detailed above a review of the financial performance of the Trust during the year and of its financial reserves position as at 31 March 2024. The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which the Trustees consider to be appropriate for the following reasons.

The key challenge for the Trust going forward, which is common to the Care sector, is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff in a shrinking labour market. To help address this, last year the Trust reviewed and increased its pay and reward offer to staff and the resources it devotes to recruitment. This year, the Trust has further enhanced its pay reward at competitive levels. The Trust has prepared budgets and cash projections taking account of the impact on its financial resources of the increase in the Trust's pay and reward offer to staff, the expectation of future changes to the Real Living Wage, the resources the Trust devotes to recruitment, funds and capital expenditure, and the risk of being able to secure annual fee increases for its services.

The Trustees have prepared cashflow forecasts for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. The forecasts are prepared on a conservative basis and support that there is sufficient free reserves to provide cover for any short unexpected changes in income and expenditure.

The level of brought forward unrestricted reserves and available cash funds have been considered and we do not believe there are any material uncertainties that cast significant doubt over the Together Trust's ability to continue in operation as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

# Principal risks & uncertainties

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring effective risk management and ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to manage risks. On an ongoing basis risks are reported to every main Board meeting to keep the Trustees abreast and up to date with the main, current risks and issues and the actions being taken to mitigate these risks. We continue to review our risks and our risk handling methodology in order to improve the management and reporting of our strategic and operational risks.

Our principal risks identified within the corporate risk register are:

| Principal risk | Management & mitigation<br>What the Trust is doing to reduce the likelihood or minimise the impact of these risks occurring |
|---|---|
| **Significant safeguarding failure** | The Trust has established a robust accountability, control and review framework involving officers and Trustees. We have safeguarding policies and procedures in place along with training for all of our staff. We have clear safeguarding reporting mechanisms and conduct reviews and lessons learned from cases. |
| **Workforce capacity and capability** | Our workforce is our most valuable asset.<br>We review our pay and rewards package regularly in order to stay competitive, and to attract new talent.<br>We remain committed to being a Real Living Wage employer.<br>We have strong and comprehensive learning and development opportunities available to staff, as well as staff wellbeing support and a staff reward platform providing additional benefits. |
| **Financial stability** | The continued financial success of the Trust is particularly dependent on securing annual fee increases for its services and we have been largely successful in securing these in recent years. Fee increases are becoming increasingly necessary with recent high inflation rates, the cost of living crisis and the need to keep our pay competitive, but we are aware that Local Authorities who fund our services are under increasing financial pressures themselves, but demand for our services remains high and they recognise the reasons for these increases.<br>We aim to maintain our reserves position in order to ensure continuity of service.<br>We monitor our financial performance continuously so that we can adapt and plan and take proportionate measures as required. |
| **Risk of the Trust estate, facilities not being maintained** | The Trust actively reviews its resource requirements for its property portfolio and its facilities to ensure that it meets Health & Safety compliance standards and remains competitive in the future. Regular condition surveys are undertaken internally and planned maintenance programmes are followed. |
| **Risk of cyber security attack** | We have IT security controls in place such as firewalls enabled on all networks, anti-virus software installed on all devises and two factor authentication on all staff accounts and all third party software providers. We have clear policies and procedures for our staff to follow such as not allowing accounts or passwords to be shared. We have Cyber Essentials accreditation and we conduct annual penetration testing on our networks. All staff complete mandatory training on data protection and IT security. |
| **Risk of a significant increase in the defined benefit pension scheme deficit** | We review and monitor the actuarial view of Scheme liabilities. We agree with Scheme Trustees an affordable long term recovery plan for the recovery of deficits.<br>Further information about a risk in relation to the defined benefit pension scheme can be found in note 29. |

# Future plans

**The Stronger Together Strategic Plan**

The Together Trust provides a wide range of care, community, clinical and education services, which have provided it with a degree of resilience during the last few years of challenge in the age of austerity and cost of living crisis. The Charity has sought to develop and build upon these areas of expertise.

The Trust has a strategic plan, the Stronger Together Strategic Plan, to which it is committed. The plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to innovative ways of improving how the Charity works.

The financial projections supporting the Stronger Together strategy, illustrate growth in current service provision across all service areas.

**Beyond 2023/24**
The Stronger Together Plan looks ahead through to 2025/26 and seeks to strengthen existing and form new partnerships and alliances. The plan uses stakeholder feedback, including the feedback we receive from the people we support and their families, to give the Trust greater insights to inform future planning and service development.

The Together Trust strives to deliver even greater impact for the people and families we support. Our Trustees and Governors have a key role in shaping and influencing the continuation and delivery of this plan.

We are also on a journey to improve equity, diversity and inclusion across our governance and leadership structure, our workforce, and our services. Our plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to new ways of improving how the Charity works. We believe we will deliver long-lasting social impact when our Board and leadership teams better reflect the community of people and families the Trust serves.

Improving diversity across our organisation is crucial for us in terms of our values as an organisation. It means we are more effective, make better decisions and is key to effective delivery of our mission.

Our Stronger Together strategic aims are:

1. Our needs led, community based, integrated services deliver high quality, person centred support. We adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families
2. We are a trusted partner – we empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision
3. We grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs. We maximise fundraising opportunities and aim to demonstrate our social, environmental and economic value from everything that we do
4. Our flexible, talented and diverse workforce treat people equitably and inclusively. They have clear learning and development opportunities. We listen to our workforce, look after their wellbeing and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement

Work is continuing to comprehensively review the service environment in which we operate to support the wider goals and challenges of commissioners and families that we work alongside.

In line with a needs-led pathway, our aim is to develop a model to provide services with the individual central to the package of support. This model aims to grow capacity, support local authorities and expand our reach by developing community-based provision that works flexibly with our resources.

We aim to develop innovative solutions and form partnerships and alliances sharing ideas, opportunities and challenges.

We continue to look at growth opportunities and aim to be opening a new Residential service during 2024/25.

The Board has endorsed this approach, which also includes continuing our property review of the Cheadle site, the work for which was paused during 2023/24 while further consideration was given to our aims for the site and the funding available to succeed in our aims. The impact of the decision to close the Ashcroft service on the site is such that our original plans needed a significant overhaul and reassessment. New sources of funding are anticipated to be needed to develop the site which are in addition to the funds that have already been set aside in designated reserves.

Since the year end, we have expanded our executive leadership team with the appointment of two new leadership roles – People & Culture Director and Commercial Director. Our new Executive Directors bring with them a wealth of diverse knowledge and experience, and our new Directors will work with the existing Executive team and Trustees in achieving our goals.

Our progress towards our Stronger Together strategic goals will continue to be measured by key performance indicators relating to specific areas of the Trust's operations and support services.

As we move into the Autumn of 2024, our new Executive Leadership team will begin to develop our thinking on updating our strategy beyond 2025/26 and seek to grow our services to extend our reach in supporting people.

*Ashcroft School celebrated the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023.*

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# Structure, governance and management

Together Trust is the working name of The Together Trust ("the Trust"). Originally founded in 1870 it is now a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, which is governed by Articles of Association, last amended on 2 December 2022. Together Trust serves children, young people, adults, and families whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autism.

The Charity's objects are:

- to give aid, assistance, and care to those with disabilities or in need, including to children and/or young persons; and
- to promote the education, training and advancement in life of those with disabilities or in need, including that of children and/or young persons.

The Trust's work reflects the main themes and ideas within Department for Education plans and the direction of current and future adult social care and health provision. Most of the Trust's services are based in the North West of England and surrounding areas however, the Charity accepts referrals from all parts of the UK.

## Public Benefit

The Trustees have taken into account the Charity Commission's general guidance on the provision of public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives, and planning future activities which are set out in this report. The Trustees always ensure that the activities undertaken are in line with the charitable objectives and aims of the Together Trust.

The summary of the Charity's Strategic Plan and the analysis of the achievements to date as shown in the Strategic Achievements and Performance section of this report, together with more details of the Charity's services set out in the What we do, section demonstrate how the Charity has sought to fulfil its principal charitable objective which is to give aid, assistance and care to those with disabilities or in need.

Access to all the Together Trust services is based on an objective assessment of need by Together Trust staff and/or a commissioning local authority and is not based on financial ability to pay. In the case of Independent Advice and Support Services and Independent Supporter Services, any parent/legal guardian whose child attends school in the area the service operates may have access to these services.

## Members

During 2022-23 the Trust's Articles of Association were updated to reflect best practice and evolve membership. At the Annual General Meeting in December 2022, Members approved that any person who is appointed as a Trustee will automatically, by virtue of that appointment, become a Member. No person other than a Trustee may be admitted as a Member. There are currently 15 registered Members.

The interests of the Trust and its Members are aligned with the common purpose of carrying out the objects of the Charity. As a result, there is no requirement for an AGM and AGM business is resolved within a General Meeting.

There are Conflicts of Interest and Gift in Kind policies in place for Members, Trustees and Governors to manage any actual and perceived conflicts that might arise.

## The Board of Trustees (Non-executive)

Trustees are Directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006. The Articles of Association state that there shall be a Board of Trustees (a Board of Directors) which shall consist of not less than five members.
There is no maximum number. Terms of office are for three years, but Trustees can be reappointed for two further terms up to maximum of nine years. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance and strategy of the Trust. The Board is currently made up of 14 Trustees comprising a mix of professional and lived experience.

19 Trustees served during the financial year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 as follows:

Geoff Durbin
Anthony Farnworth
Norah Flood
Maria Greenwood (resigned 17 June 2024)
Michael Henshaw
Ian Johnson
Nick Lowry (resigned 1 December 2023)
Tristan Morris (resigned 16 July 2024)
Steven Pitt (appointed 6 June 2023)
Jane Walapu
Marcell Edwards
David Freeston (resigned 1 December 2023)
Giles Gaddum
Jane Grime
Roger Horne
Simon Lees-Jones (deceased 8 October 2024)
Gani Martins
Rebekah Pierre (appointed 17 April 2023)
Dilal Ranasinghe (appointed 28 April 2023)

We were pleased to welcome three new Trustees who joined the Board of Trustees during the year - Rebekah Pierre, Dilal Ranasinghe and Steven Pitt. Together, they bring a range of new skills and lived experience, strengthening the Board's oversight to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support.

We also said goodbye to two Trustees during the year. The Board would like to thank David Freeston and Nick Lowry for their service as Trustees both of whom ended their trusteeships during the reporting period. The Board also extends their thanks to Maria Greenwood and Tristan Morris who resigned their trusteeships after the year end. Sadly, after the year end, Simon Lees-Jones passed away. Simon was a dedicated long serving member of the Board who will be sorely missed.

Trustees are recruited from a number of sources, including personal recommendations, Council for Voluntary Services organisations across Greater Manchester, Reach volunteering website and social media. The Board has defined the skill profiles required and actively seeks to establish a diversity of backgrounds and experience of its members. The Board looks at skills gaps as well as the terms of office of current Trustees to inform succession planning.

The Charity seeks to secure its future governance responsibilities by an active Trustee Governance Subgroup which is responsible for recruiting Trustees. New Trustees bring knowledge and abilities to the charity that have been derived from various perspectives including business and commerce or professional, occupational, charitable or lived experience.

Prospective Trustees are invited to submit an application and are subsequently shortlisted and interviewed by members of the Board. They are made aware of their responsibilities and are required to provide two referees who are contacted before appointment. All Trustees are checked via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

During induction, new Trustees meet the Executive Directors of the Trust Leadership Team and are given access to a secure online platform which contains governance documents, relevant policies and procedures, and previous reports, accounts and meeting minutes. Trustees are given information on their roles and responsibilities and undertake training courses relevant to their roles, including mandatory safeguarding training.

Governance handbooks for Members, Trustees and Governors support the Trust's Articles by setting out the policies, procedures and practices the Board and our Governing Bodies adopt in the fulfilment of their responsibility for the activities of the Trust and are provided to each on induction to the Trust.

The Board holds responsibility for agreeing the strategic direction of the organisation, setting the budgetary framework, and deciding upon major undertakings. A Scheme of Delegation, approved by the Board, is in place that sets out in detail the matters and powers delegated to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive reports fully to the Trustees at each Board meeting and to the Chair on a regular basis. This allows the Board to monitor progress in a well informed and incremental manner and to agree any strategic or budgetary adjustments which may become necessary in the year.

Delegation in other areas is mapped in a Scheme of Delegation which sets out the powers and functions of the Board and its subgroups and details responsibility and accountability in a Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (RACI) framework.

The Trustees have the benefit of a qualifying third-party indemnity provision as defined by section 234 Companies Act 2006. The Charity purchased and maintained throughout the year directors' and officers' liability insurance in respect of itself and its Trustees.

## The Trust's Leadership Team (Executive)

Under the Scheme of Delegation, responsibility for the operational management of the charity is delegated to the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive is assisted in the operational management of the charity by Operational Directors who together form the Trust Leadership Team and are our Key Management Personnel. Each Director has responsibility for an area of the charity's activities, resources, performance, and operations,

During the year the Resource Director Brian White retired and, following a governance review of the structure of the Executive team, interim roles were put in place and recruitment to new Executive roles was started. Since the financial year end, the Trust appointed a Commercial Director and a People & Culture Director. The current Executive Directors are listed in the Reference and Administrative Information section at the end of this report.

**Remuneration of the Executive Trust Leadership Team**

The pay and remuneration of Key Management Personnel is considered by the HR & OD subgroup who are advised by the Trust's Head of Organisational Development. The evaluation of a role for Leadership payscale remuneration purposes uses a mixture of National Joint Council and Hay job evaluation methodologies, which is also independently reviewed by an external consultant adviser.

## Groups that report to the Board

The Trust aims to ensure the Charity's values are reflected in all our work and that the ethos and the culture of the organisation underpin the delivery of all activities. Our special purpose subgroups and school and college governing bodies meet regularly to undertake specific tasks on which they report to the Board to assist its function, decision-making and continued improvement.

**School and College Governing Bodies** – Each governing body has its own constitution approved by the Board. The Board appoints Trustees to be the Chair and Vice Chair of each governing body.
Trustees who served as a Chair to a Trust education governing body during the reporting period were: -

Ashcroft School – Anthony Farnworth
Bridge College – Roger Horne
Inscape House School - Giles Gaddum

**The Together Trust Fostering Panel** - the panel is made up of people with a range of skills, knowledge and experience and includes staff members from the Together Trust fostering agency. Some panel members have a professional background in child or social care, and others have direct experience with the fostering process. Our panel members also have access to legal and medical advice should they need it as well as each other's skills and expertise.

The panel considers fostering applications and makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants. This also includes making recommendations about the number, age range and backgrounds of the children placed with Together Trust foster carers.

## Board Subgroups

The Board maintains several Trustee-led, special purpose subgroups that undertake specific tasks which contribute to the Charity's governance and operation to meet the aims within the 'Stronger Together' plan.

The Board has ensured that each of its subgroups terms of authority and reference and strategic theme responsibilities are in line with the Charity's strategic plans and reflect the Charity Governance Code. All subgroups monitor and evaluate relevant KPIs to help drive continuous improvement with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement. The subgroup terms also ensure each area of activity supports the Trust's commitment to social value and improved equity, diversity and inclusion for governance, the workforce, and the people the Charity supports.

Each subgroup receives updates on performance, evaluation, and risk in core areas of operational and infrastructure services at the Charity.

The Board receives reports, including Key Performance Indicators (KPI) rated Red, Amber, Green ("RAG") performance from each subgroup in line with the organisation's planning and performance management cycle.

### Governance Subgroup

The subgroup meets quarterly to assist the Board to oversee the methods by which the Board, subgroups and governing bodies monitor and share progress to ensure supportive, effective, and inclusive governance. The group is assisted by the EDI Governance Steering Group to ensure the recruitment of Members, Trustees and Governors, their training, responsibilities and the proper arrangements of supervision and appraisal (where relevant) are in place and follow best practice.

The Trust aims to create an environment where divergent views are welcomed, and individuals feel confident sharing their ideas. To achieve this, trust and mutual respect is essential - both between Board members and between the Trustees and the Executive Team and wider workforce.

### EDI Governance Steering Subgroup

The subgroup reports to the Governance Subgroup and oversees the strategic approach to building a more equitable and diverse organisational governance culture, ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles are embedded to help deliver the best possible outcomes for the people we support. The group was formed in 2021 to assist Trustee and Governor understanding of systems and culture at the Together Trust. Following successful recruitment of Trustees with EDI expertise, they have context- specific and realistic goals, taking action and monitoring EDI governance performance in the future.

### Finance & Audit Subgroup

The subgroup meets six times a year to inform the Honorary Treasurers and the Chair of Trustees of the financial position and performance of the Charity, and the operational detail behind the management accounts that are presented at each Board meeting. It oversees the annual budget process and any special issues with financial implications that are to be reported to the Board.

The subgroup also reviews funding strategy, growth plans and matters in respect of the Charity's pension schemes. It ensures that third party partners and suppliers are procured in line with policy and the Trust conducts its business in a commercially responsible way to achieve maximum positive impact for communities, people and the environment.

The subgroup is responsible for the appointment and removal of the external auditor, the ongoing relationship and liaison with the auditor and for monitoring management's responsiveness to external audit findings and recommendations.

## Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) Subgroup

The subgroup meets regularly to ensure that the Trust can attract, retain and motivate the highest calibre of staff to deliver value for money for the Charity's beneficiaries, in line with strategic objectives and financial parameters. The subgroup assists the Board to oversee the approach to an effective People Strategy including fair pay and reward for all staff including key management personnel.

The subgroup ensures our staff have clear learning and development opportunities and supports staff with the day-to-day challenges they face, in work and outside. We know that the Trust can be a challenging working environment and resilience is important for all. The group ensures effective staff engagement and that the outcomes from staff surveys are received and acted upon.

The group oversees the Charity's approach to workforce equity, diversity and inclusion, effective engagement with and development of the Staff Council and ensures safer recruitment procedures operate effectively. The subgroup also ensures that the Charity can attract, retain and motivate high levels of volunteers and oversees external accreditation of HR/training-related standards including Investors in People which we have been awarded the Gold standard.

## Supporting People Subgroup

The subgroup meets six times a year and has responsibility for overseeing and advising Trustees to ensure the Together Trust is aligned to the needs of the people it supports and commissioners. It also reviews how the Charity continuously improves and addresses the needs of the people and families who use its services. The group monitors and evaluates all relevant quality improvement and most regulatory activity in services. It oversees participation, co-production and customer engagement, aiming to create accessible and regular programmes of effective communication, impact and social value reporting to our external stakeholders. It oversees campaigns, advocacy and participation and external accreditation of customer relationship standards ensuring results are acted upon effectively.

The subgroup also ensures that the Charity's complaints policy is transparent, well-publicised and effective, and that complaints are handled constructively, impartially and dealt with following a pre-agreed timeline.

## Safeguarding Scrutiny Subgroup

The subgroup has lead responsibility for effective governance of safeguarding at the Trust. This is achieved by scrutiny of operational actions and quality assurance of safeguarding standards and processes at the Charity. The day-to-day operational safeguarding responsibility is held with the designated safeguarding officer for the Trust who is also the Service Director.

The subgroup scrutinises leadership activity in respect of adherence to adopted safeguarding policies and procedures, is informed of safeguarding incidences at the Trust and scrutinises the management of risk. It ensures safeguarding policies at the Together Trust comply with local and national safeguarding standards. The subgroup maintains an overview of key performance indicators. The group works with the Safeguarding, Learning & Development Forum, which reports directly into the subgroup.

## Health and Safety, Risk & Environment Subgroup

This subgroup ensures that appropriate health and safety processes are in place to ensure a safe working environment which meets all legal requirements, including consultation arrangements. It ensures business continuity plans are reviewed regularly and agrees and monitors an organisational approach to environmental impact.

The subgroup also oversees the development of the Trust's property portfolio and ensures that it is fit for purpose, including compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), and monitors the effectiveness of the Charity's approach to risk management.

The Health and Safety Committee of this subgroup is made up of representatives from across the Charity who meet on a regular basis to promote efficient health and safety policies and methods across all areas. The Together Trust is a registered member of the Contractors Health and Safety Scheme under which its health and safety practice is reviewed each year. The Charity also subscribes to The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), for external guidance and advice where required.

## Digital Subgroup

The subgroup meets quarterly to oversee how technology can reach and support our workforce and the people we support with the aim of delivering practical, efficient and cost-effective solutions. It oversees how the Charity creates a culture in which digital can flourish and the accountabilities for digital development within the Charity ensuring that, where possible, digital is an integral part of business design.

We take a digital-led approach, and our aim is to share learning to enable our workforce and the people we support to:

- Develop the right skills required to use technology effectively and safely
- Make it easier to communicate with the Trust
- Explore how technology can encourage independence and wellbeing
- Ensure effective information management and compliance reporting including GDPR

## Service Visitor Subgroup

A programme of visits aims to ensure that all the Together Trust operations and central support services will be visited by Trustees at least once in each financial year. This enables Trustees to broaden their knowledge and awareness of issues relating to the activities of the workforce and for the people who use the Charity's services. The aim is to promote positive working relationships between Trustees and our workforce.

*Fifth anniversary celebrations were held at care home, Haines House in Salford, which included raising £235 towards a pendulum garden swing*

## Fundraising

All Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission guidance CC20. The Fundraising Department works closely with the Trust's Information Governance Manager, who oversees data protection compliance for the Charity, to ensure best practice is embedded in all that we do including, but not limited to, our Fundraising database which is administered in the Fundraising Department and the continuance of permission-based communications with individual supporters.

There have been no formal complaints concerning our fundraising practices during the reporting period. The Together Trust actively promotes a Complaints and Compliments Policy, which can be found on the Charity's website.

The Charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator. The Together Trust does not engage in face-to-face fundraising, telephone fundraising or direct mail campaigns. There were no licensed street collections in the reporting period.

## Statutory and Regulatory

The Together Trust's subsidiaries, as listed in note 16 to the financial statements, have not traded during the year, have no income and bore no expenditure.

# Environment and Sustainability

## Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)

The Board is focused on its long-term and strategic charitable aims as set out in the Stronger Together Plan described in the Strategic Report section of this report. We are committed to moving the Trust to more sustainable practices and we continue to review our operational environments to identify areas for development and improvement. One of the aims of the Health and Safety, Risk and Environment Subgroup is to agree and monitor an organisational approach to environmental impact. This sub-group also oversees the development of the Trust's property portfolio to ensure that it is fit for purpose while being as green and sustainable as cost effectively possible.

The information and data to calculate energy usage is taken from meter readings for gas and electricity and from fuel card readings for the Trust fleet of vehicles. Employee business mileage claims have been used to calculate the energy usage of the 'grey' fleet, where employees use their own vehicles for Trust business purposes.

All fuel conversions to kWh and $CO_2$ emissions data have been calculated in line with UK Government environmental reporting guidance, using UK Government Green House Gas (GHG) conversion factors for company reporting.

The table below summaries our energy usage and emissions for the year.

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| Total Energy Consumption (TEC) (kWh) | 3,742,822 | 3,955,757 |
| Carbon Emissions (tonnes of carbon dioxide) | 594.4 | 668.4 |
| | | |
| Annual quantity of carbon emissions resulting from: | | |
| - transport activities, including the grey fleet, and the use of gas | 573.1 | 615.7 |
| - Electricity usage | 21.2 | 52.7 |
| - Total | 594.3 | 668.4 |
| | | |
| Intensity ratio: | | |
| Average tonnes of carbon emissions per employee (tonnes of carbon dioxide per employee) | 0.7 | 0.8 |
| | | |

The environmental impact of the Trust's activities has reduced with a reduction in carbon emissions of 11.1% (2023 4.2%).

The most significant impact has been from our electricity use where our consumption has fallen slightly but the emissions from that usage has fallen significantly. As electricity energy contracts have renewed during the year, we have been able to renew supply contracts on a zero carbon basis so reducing our emissions.

We continue to review our property portfolio, in particular our main Cheadle campus site. We have started the process of investing in the future transition to more use of electric vehicles, by equipping five of our residential homes with electric vehicle charging points, with plans to continue this work in more of our homes in 2024/25. We are reviewing our fleet of vehicles and forming plans to how we can transition to a greener fleet through the use of electric vehicles.

# How we meet Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006

This section of the Report describes how the Directors have had regard to the matters set out in section 172(1) (a) to (f), and forms the Directors' statement required under section 414CZA, of the Companies Act 2006.

### a) The likely consequences of any decision in the long term

The Trustees are responsible for the Trust's strategy and overall direction. Our Stronger Together Strategic Plan establishes an approach to achieve our vision of a society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities. The long term sustainability of our operating model is regularly reviewed to enable change where required to achieve our goals. The Trustees recognise that the long-term success of the Together Trust is dependent on having regard to the interests of its stakeholders who include the people we support, their families, carers, commissioners, our workforce and our regulators and the Trustees consider the likely long term consequences of key decisions taken throughout the year taking into account the impact on key stakeholders.

### b) The interests of the company's employees

Our staff are the force that enable us to deliver our charitable objectives and we take great pride in our workforce. We are proud to have such a wonderful, dedicated team of caring staff who are passionate about what they do. We strive to maintain effective employee engagement and information on how we do this can be found in the Strategic Achievements and Performance section which sets out our progress towards our Stronger Together Aim 4 which relates to our workforce.

The Charity's pay and reward structure follows a Job Family Model which aims to set out pay and reward in an equal, fair and consistent manner, and at a level to recruit and retain the necessary calibre of staff. Each job family contains different levels, each reflecting different job outputs, skills, knowledge, and experience. However, the essential nature of the activities carried out and the basic skills used are similar. The number of levels varies for each job family depending on the scope and range of responsibilities.

The Trust makes substantial provision for the qualification, training and development of its staff and volunteers. It offers a wide variety of learning and development opportunities to support organisational, team and individual development linked to achieving the very best outcomes for the people we support. The Charity is committed to working with all colleagues to support their development needs and provides a variety of learning and development events, training, and role specific qualifications.

Our HR & OD Subgroup oversees effective workforce engagement and that the outcomes from staff and volunteer surveys are received and acted upon. This group also oversees the organisation's approach to workforce equity, diversity and inclusion and monitors and evaluates all relevant KPIs with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement.

The Trust seeks to listen, understand and act upon our staff's views through the Staff Council. The Staff Council is an elected group of colleagues from across all our services who meet on a quarterly basis. The meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive and have Trustee attendance. As a consultative body for employees, the Trust has extended and is strengthening the Staff Council's role to ensure that, as strategy is developed and plans are implemented, Staff Council representatives help to communicate and engage better with our workforce. They review how successfully initiatives have been delivered.

The Charity's workforce can access an employee assistance service which is a free and confidential support programme to help support staff and volunteers in many aspects of their lives, in and out of the workplace. The Trust is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and continues to champion a number of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to enable staff to feel supported both at work and home. Over 50 mental health first aiders in our workforce offer initial support for mental health and wellbeing through non-judgemental listening and guidance. All members of the workforce are also able to self-refer for support from Able Futures, who give guidance from a mental health specialist to help staff learn coping mechanisms, build resilience, access therapy or work with the Charity to make adjustments to help mental health at work.

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is recognised for eligible employees and all other staff may join a defined contribution pension scheme, which is available to them from the commencement of their employment.

The Charity is aware of its responsibilities in accordance with statutory legislation, and all relevant appointments are subject to satisfactory references, Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks and overseas checks.

### c) The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

The Trustees recognise that the success of the Together Trust is dependent on our relationships with our stakeholders who include those who commission our services, our suppliers, our foster carers and our regulators. Developing positive and effective relationships forms a vital role in our ability to deliver our services to the people that we support.

The Trust's procurement policy has been developed to help the Trust achieve best value in the use of limited resources, supporting the Trust in achieving its overall aims and objectives. It also supports addressing the requirements of the Charity Governance Code and the 2010 Bribery Act by emphasising the responsibility of all staff involved to conduct procurement legally and ethically, as well as securing value for money.
All procurement activity adheres to the following key principles:

- transparency – clear procedures to be followed and evidence of adherence retained for audit
- equal treatment – for all potential suppliers to ensure a level playing field, no favouritism and best value is obtained
- wherever possible we endeavour to source potential suppliers from the local area where this can be justified in terms of best value and/or social value
- suppliers will be required to follow the Trust's safeguarding standards where applicable

Our partnerships with local authorities and other funders are extremely important to us and we work closely with our commissioners agreeing fair value for our services and aim to work collaboratively with them.

The Board recognises the importance of open and honest dialogue with regulators who include Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission and continue to work with regulators to provide the best possible outcomes for the people we support.

### d) The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment

The Together Trust continues to take a strategic approach to the implementation of social value measurement and reporting, both as an organisation and through its contracts, which measure and report our overall social footprint. The Charity is already delivering social value; however, it needs to improve data capture and reporting to its stakeholders to improve impact, evidence social value delivery and support it in developing a stronger and more robust approach to bidding. The Charity continues to build upon the activities previously undertaken to establish a structured process for target setting, measurement and contract management of the social, economic and environmental impacts of each project from bidding, project management through to completion.

Our Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting report in the Environment & Sustainability section of this report details our regard of the impact of our operations on the community and the environment.

### e) The desirability of the company in maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct

The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure its charitable business activities are undertaken in accordance with regulatory requirements and best practice. As a registered Charity, the Directors' responsibility also extends to ensuring that the affairs and objectives of the Together Trust are managed in a way that enhances public trust and support.

As a registered Charity the Together Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission and the Board receives regular updates on legal, regulatory and compliance matters when it meets. Board subgroups receive more frequent updates in line with their specialisms, as set out in the Corporate Governance section of this report.

Our procurement policy and practices support addressing the requirements of the Charity Governance Code, the 2010 Bribery Act, and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by taking a zero tolerance approach towards fraud, bribery and corruption and emphasising the responsibility of all staff involved to conduct procurement legally and ethically, as well as securing value for money.

### f) The need to act fairly as between members of the company.

The Together Trust is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It does not have shareholders and its members are limited to the Trustees of the Company. The Trust has a conflict of interest policy which Trustees must follow. All Trustees receive the same information about the strategy, operational activities and finances of the Trust and have an equal vote in decision making.

# Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

**AUDITOR**

RSM UK Audit LLP was reappointed during the year and has expressed their willingness to continue in office as auditor and a resolution to reappoint RSM UK Audit LLP as auditor will be proposed.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report and the directors report as required by company law, was approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by

**Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

**Dated: 8th November 2024**

# Independent auditor's report to the members of The Together Trust

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of The Together Trust (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 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 charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of 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 Companies Act 2006.

**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 charitable company 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.

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 charitable company'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 other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. 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.

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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

**Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report or the Strategic Report included within the Trustees' Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

**Responsibilities of trustees**
As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 36, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) 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 charitable company'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 charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's 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.

**The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**
Irregularities are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The objectives of our audit are to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding compliance with laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, to perform audit procedures to help identify instances of non-compliance with other laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements, and to respond appropriately to identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations identified during the audit.

In relation to fraud, the objectives of our audit are to identify and assess the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud, to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud through designing and implementing appropriate responses and to respond appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

However, it is the primary responsibility of management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, to ensure that the entity's operations are conducted in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations and for the prevention and detection of fraud.

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud, the audit engagement team:

- obtained an understanding of the nature of the sector, including the legal and regulatory framework that the charitable company operates in and how the charitable company is complying with the legal and regulatory framework;
- inquired of management, and those charged with governance, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, including any known actual, suspected or alleged instances of fraud;
- discussed matters about non-compliance with laws and regulations and how fraud might occur including assessment of how and where the financial statements may be susceptible to fraud.

As a result of these procedures we consider the most significant laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements are FRS 102, Charities SORP (FRS 102), Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, and the charitable company's governing document. We performed audit procedures to detect non-compliances which may have a material impact on the financial statements which included reviewing the financial statements including the Trustees' Report, and remaining alert to new or unusual transactions which may not be in accordance with the governing documents.

The most significant laws and regulations that have an indirect impact on the financial statements are the Education Inspection Framework under the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Keeping Children Safe in Education under the Education Act 2002, Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulations, and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). We performed audit procedures to inquire of management whether the charitable company is in compliance with these law and regulations and inspected correspondence with regulatory authorities.

The audit engagement team identified the risk of management override of controls as the area where the financial statements were most susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. Audit procedures performed included but were not limited to testing manual journal entries and other adjustments, evaluating the business rationale in relation to significant, unusual transactions and transactions entered into outside the normal course of business and challenging judgments and estimates.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**Use of our report**
This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

RSM UK Audit LLP

Laura Inglesby FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of RSM UK AUDIT LLP, Statutory Auditor
Chartered Accountants,
14th Floor
20 Chapel Street
Liverpool
L3 9AG

Dated: 8th November 2024

# Financial Statements

## Statement of financial activities

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2024 (including income and expenditure account)

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2024 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2024 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2024 £'000 | **Total Funds 2024 £'000** | **Total Funds 2023 £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME FROM:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 179 | 115 | - | **294** | **231** |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 38,084 | 3 | - | **38,087** | **33,375** |
| Investments | 6 | 116 | - | - | **116** | **146** |
| Other | 7 | 8 | - | - | **8** | **1** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | | **38,387** | **118** | **-** | **38,505** | **33,753** |
| **EXPENDITURE ON:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 281 | 2 | 1 | **284** | **226** |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 38,376 | 109 | - | **38,485** | **33,844** |
| Charitable activities - Exceptional costs | 10 | 805 | - | - | **805** | **-** |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | | **39,462** | **111** | **1** | **39,574** | **34,070** |
| Net gains/(losses) on investments | 16 | 50 | - | 12 | **62** | **(66)** |
| **Net (expenditure)/income for the year** | | **(1,025)** | **7** | **11** | **(1,007)** | **(383)** |
| Transfers between funds | | 98 | (98) | - | **-** | **-** |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial loss on defined benefit pension scheme | 25 | (530) | - | - | **(530)** | **(277)** |
| Other gains | 13 | - | - | - | **-** | **109** |
| **NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS** | | **(1,457)** | **(91)** | **11** | **(1,537)** | **(551)** |
| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 27,362 | 477 | 157 | **27,996** | **28,547** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | (1,457) | (91) | 11 | **(1,537)** | **(551)** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 23 | **25,905** | **386** | **168** | **26,459** | **27,996** |

There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed above and the net (expenditure)/income for the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

See note 22 for comparative Statement of Financial Activities analysed by funds.

# Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2024

| | Note | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **FIXED ASSETS** | | | |
| Tangible assets | 15 | **18,382** | **18,098** |
| Investments | 16 | **999** | **924** |
| | | **19,381** | **19,022** |
| **CURRENT ASSETS** | | | |
| Debtors | 17 | **4,673** | **3,178** |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | **7,385** | **9,340** |
| | | **12,058** | **12,518** |
| **CREDITORS:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | 18 | **(2,766)** | **(2,520)** |
| **NET CURRENT ASSETS** | | **9,292** | **9,998** |
| **TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES** | | **28,673** | **29,020** |
| **CREDITORS:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due after more than one year | 19 | **(643)** | **(712)** |
| Provisions for liabilities | 21 | **(847)** | **-** |
| Pension deficit | 25 | **(724)** | **(312)** |
| **NET ASSETS** | | **26,459** | **27,996** |
| **FUNDS OF THE CHARITY** | | | |
| Unrestricted funds: | | | |
| General | | **15,038** | **16,108** |
| Revaluation reserve | | **6,739** | **6,845** |
| Designated | | **4,128** | **4,409** |
| | | **25,905** | **27,362** |
| Restricted funds | | **386** | **477** |
| Endowment funds | | **168** | **157** |
| **TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS** | 23,24 | **26,459** | **27,996** |

These financial statements on pages 40 to 69 of The Together Trust (registered number 301722) were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 8th November 2024. They were signed on its behalf by:

**Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

**Anthony Farnworth**
**Honorary Treasurer**

# Cash flow statement

For the year ended 31 March 2024

| | Note | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES** | | | |
| Net movement in funds | | **(1,537)** | (551) |
| Adjustments for: | | | |
| Depreciation | | **905** | 802 |
| (Gains)/losses on investments | | **(62)** | 66 |
| Income from investments | | **(21)** | (21) |
| Profit on the sale of fixed assets | | **(8)** | (1) |
| Interest receivable | | **(95)** | (125) |
| Interest payable | | **45** | 53 |
| Increase in debtors | | **(1,495)** | (215) |
| Increase/(decrease) in creditors | | **246** | (65) |
| Increase in provisions | | **847** | - |
| Net movement of pension service cost | | **99** | 98 |
| Net cash outflow from defined benefit scheme pension contributions | | **(217)** | (63) |
| Interest rate swap liability gain | | **-** | (109) |
| Pension scheme actuarial loss | | **530** | 277 |
| **Net cash flows from operating activities** | | **(763)** | 146 |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES** | | | |
| Interest received | | **87** | 125 |
| Income from investments | | **21** | 21 |
| Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment | | **8** | 1 |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | | **(1,189)** | (730) |
| Proceeds from sale of investments | | **120** | 358 |
| Purchase of investments | | **(134)** | (387) |
| **Net cash flows from investing activities** | | **(1,087)** | (612) |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES** | | | |
| Interest paid | | **(45)** | (53) |
| Repayments of borrowings | | **(60)** | (58) |
| **Net cash flows from financing activities** | | **(105)** | (111) |
| Net decrease in cash in the year | | **(1,955)** | (577) |
| Cash at the beginning of the year | | **9,340** | 9,917 |
| **Cash at the end of the year** | 20 | **7,385** | 9,340 |

See note 20 for the analysis of changes in net debt.

# Notes to the financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

## 1. Accounting policies

### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of listed investments and derivatives which are held at fair value.

The financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019)" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective 1 January 2019, and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are presented in Sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest one thousand sterling pounds.

### Group financial statements

The Charity is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial statements by virtue that all subsidiary undertakings may be excluded from consolidation as they are not material and have not operated in the financial year. These financial statements therefore present information about the Charity as an individual undertaking rather than as a group.

### Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have prepared budgets and projections which indicate that, taking account of the impact on cash levels and financial resources of the increase in the Charity's pay and reward offer to staff, the resources it devotes to recruitment, capital and funds expenditure and the risk of being able to secure annual fee increases for its services, the Charity is able to continue as a going concern and maintain sustainable cash reserves for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing these financial statements. The Trustees have considered a period in excess of twelve months from the date of the approval of these financial statements in making their assessment.

### Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes, although in practice they may represent the funding of fixed assets.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes, including the development fund described below. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The purpose of the development fund reserve is to earmark funds to provide for ongoing maintenance, repair and refurbishment of the Together Trust homes and schools, in compliance with standards set by inspecting bodies such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The age and fabric of the establishments necessitate constant repairs, which have been highlighted by comprehensive surveys carried out by an appointed architect and reviewed annually. The programme for refurbishment for any new financial year is specified prior to the previous year end.

The Revaluation reserve arose when fixed assets were revalued, prior to the adoption of FRS102, at a value higher than their previous carrying value and the increase in value is accounted for within the revaluation reserve. It forms part of unrestricted funds.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used by the Charity for particular purposes as specified by the donor. The costs of administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The purpose of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

**Fund accounting (continued)**
Endowment funds are a form of restricted fund where the assets are required to be invested or retained for actual use rather than expended. An endowment fund where there is no power to convert the capital into income is known as a permanent endowment fund which must generally be held indefinitely.

Expendable endowment is an endowment fund where the Trustees have the power to convert the assets (i.e. land, buildings, investments or cash) into expendable income. The Charity holds permanent and expendable endowment funds. The permanent funds are not considered to be material.

**Income**
Income is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met (generally by delivery of contracted services), it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from grants includes grants where entitlement to funding is subject to specific performance conditions. Performance conditions may be stipulated explicitly by the funder or may be implicit as per the Charity's funding proposal. Income is deferred when the funder has imposed conditions, which must be met before the Charity has unconditional entitlement or the funder has specified the funds can only be utilised in future accounting periods.

Donated goods and services are included at the lower of their value to Charity and their estimated market value. No amount is included for services donated by volunteers. The full value of leasehold peppercorn rent is not valued due to the prohibitive cost of doing so. Income from fundraising activities is included in donations.

Fees invoiced in advance of services provided are carried forward as deferred income until the service is delivered.

**Expenditure**
Expenditure is recognised when there is a constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income and those incurred in generating fundraising income

- Charitable expenditure includes all expenditure associated with activities directly attributable to the service delivery of the Charity's charitable objectives, in respect of residential, respite, outreach, educational, fostering and social work services

- Support costs are costs of those functions that assist the work of the Charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include central head office costs (for example finance, human resources and governance costs) and have been allocated to charitable activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

**Operating lease agreements**
Rentals applicable to operating leases, where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor, are charged against income on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

**Liabilities**
Liabilities are recognised where the Charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amount.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

**Trustees**
The Trustees have elected that the Charity apply a policy of non-remuneration for Trustees, excluding out of pocket expenses.

**Tangible fixed assets**
The transitional arrangements of FRS 102 were adopted on transition to FRS102 to freeze the tangible fixed assets valuation of freehold and leasehold properties as deemed cost, and hence tangible fixed assets are stated at deemed cost (being 2014 market value net of depreciation to the adoption of FRS 102) less depreciation and any provision for impairment. Costs of maintenance are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they are incurred. Assets below a value of £2,500 are not capitalised.

Depreciation is provided on each tangible fixed asset, other than freehold land which is not depreciated, at rates calculated to write-off the cost, less its estimated residual value, on a straight line basis over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Properties | - buildings | - 2% - 3% per annum |
| | - improvements | - 6% - 20% per annum |
| Leasehold property improvements | | - over the life of lease |
| Motor vehicles | | - 20% per annum |
| Ancillary equipment | | - 20% per annum |

Impairment reviews are conducted when events and changes in circumstances indicate that an impairment may have occurred. If any asset is found to have a carrying value higher than its recoverable amount, it is written down accordingly.

**Investment assets**
Investments are included in the balance sheet at fair value as measured by middle market price values at the year end. The Trustees do not consider there to be any material difference in the valuation as measured by bid price. Movements in values during the year are included in the Statement of Financial Activities for any realised and unrealised gains and losses.

**Employee benefits**
For defined benefit schemes, the amounts charged to the Statement of Financial Activities are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. The interest cost and the expected return on assets are shown as a net amount of other finance gains or losses. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. The Trust recognises a plan surplus as a defined benefit plan asset only to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan.

For defined contribution schemes, the amount charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of pension costs is the contributions payable in the year. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments in the balance sheet as appropriate.

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme. The Charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme and therefore has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

**Financial instruments**
The Charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102, in full, to all of its financial instruments.

*Recognition and measurement of financial instruments*
Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Charity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

*Classification of financial instruments*
Financial instruments are classified as liabilities and equity instruments according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the Charity after deducting all of its liabilities.

*Financial assets and liabilities at amortised cost*
Trade and all other debtors (including accrued income) which are receivable within one year are initially measured at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being the transaction price less any amounts settled and any impairment losses.

A provision for impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the amounts due will not be collected according to the original terms of the contract. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities for the excess of the carrying value of the trade debtor over the present value of the future cash flows discounted using the original effective interest rate. Subsequent reversals of an impairment loss that objectively relate to an event occurring after the impairment loss was recognised, are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Trade, and all other creditors (including accruals) payable within one year that do not constitute a financing transaction are initially measured at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being transaction price less any amounts settled.

Where the arrangement with a creditor constitutes a financing transaction, the creditor is initially measured at the present value of future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar instrument and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being transaction price less any amounts settled and the cumulative amortisation (using the effective interest method) of any difference between the amount at initial recognition and the maturity amount. The effective interest rate is the rate that discounts estimated future cash payments to the carrying amount of the financial liability.

Borrowings are initially recognised at the transaction price, including transaction costs (unless the arrangement constitutes, in effect, a financing transaction, in which case it is initially recognised at the present value of future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument) and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and other similar expenses.

Trade investments are equity investments over which the Charity has no significant influence, joint control or control and are initially measured at transaction price. Transaction price includes transaction costs, except where trade investments are measured at fair value through profit or loss when transaction costs are expensed to profit or loss as incurred. Trade investments are measured at fair value through profit or loss, or cost less impairment if fair value cannot be measured reliably. The fair value of trade investments quoted on a recognised stock exchange is the quoted bid price.

*Derecognition of financial assets and liabilities*
A financial asset is derecognised only when the contractual rights to cash flows expire or are settled, or substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are transferred to another party, or if some (but not substantially all) risks and rewards of ownership are retained but control of the asset has transferred to another party that is able to sell the asset in its entirety to an unrelated third party.

A financial liability (or part thereof) is derecognised when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

*Derivative financial instruments*
The Charity uses derivative financial instruments to reduce exposure to interest rate movements. The Charity does not hold or issue derivative financial instruments for speculative purposes. Derivatives are initially recognised at fair value at the date a derivative contract is entered into and are subsequently remeasured to their fair value at each reporting date. The resulting gain or loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities immediately.

**Provisions**
Provisions are recognised when the Charity has an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event which it is probable will result in the transfer of economic benefits and that obligation can be estimated reliably. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar expenses

## 2. Company, charitable and legal status of the Trust
The Together Trust, a public benefit entity, is incorporated in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The members of the company are the Trustees and the current Trustees are named on page 70. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member. The company is a registered Charity and has no liability to corporation tax on its charitable activities. The registered office is given on page 70.

## 3. Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty
In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, which are described in note 1, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated 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 ongoing 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 both current and future periods.

In respect of the defined benefit pension scheme, the Charity has an obligation to pay pension benefits to certain employees. The cost of these benefits and the present value of the obligation depend on a number of factors including life expectancy, salary increases, asset valuations and the discount rate on corporate bonds. The Trustees estimate these factors in determining the net pension obligation in the balance sheet. The assumptions reflect historical experience and current trends as set out in note 25.

Provisions such as dilapidation and closure costs involve assumptions and estimation techniques. These are based on the experience and knowledge of management and evidence, in particular to closure costs, from the outcome occurring after the year end.

Other than the above, the Trustees do not consider there are any other critical judgements or sources of estimation uncertainty requiring disclosure.

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

### 4. Analysis of income from donations

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| Donations | **294** | 231 |

### 5. Analysis of income from charitable activities

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| Social & Therapy Care Services * | **20,692** | 16,663 |
| Educational services | **17,395** | 16,712 |
| | **38,087** | 33,375 |

* In prior years, Other services (which was our Fostering service), was presented separately, however this year this service has been incorporated into Social & Therapy Care Services as this better represents how the service is managed and reported internally within the Trust. Prior year figures have been represented accordingly.

### 6. Analysis of income from investments

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| Investment income | **21** | 21 |
| Bank interest | **95** | 125 |
| | **116** | 146 |

### 7. Analysis of other income

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| Net gain on disposal of fixed assets | **8** | 1 |

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

### 8. Analysis of expenditure on raising funds

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | **189** | 151 |
| Service provision costs | **16** | 21 |
| Service administration costs | **35** | 19 |
| Other service costs | **44** | 35 |
| | **284** | 226 |

### 9. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

| Expenditure | Social & Therapy Care Services * 2024 £'000 | Education Services 2024 £'000 | Total 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 15,024 | 11,860 | **26,884** |
| Premises costs | 804 | 1,216 | **2,020** |
| Service provision costs | 771 | 766 | **1,537** |
| Service administration costs | 631 | 517 | **1,148** |
| Other service costs | 658 | 765 | **1,423** |
| Head Office support costs (note 11) | 2,939 | 2,534 | **5,473** |
| | **20,827** | **17,658** | **38,485** |

| Expenditure | Social & Therapy Care Services* 2023 £'000 | Education Services 2023 £'000 | Total 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 13,443 | 10,498 | **23,941** |
| Premises costs | 757 | 1,164 | **1,921** |
| Service provision costs | 634 | 728 | **1,362** |
| Service administration costs | 344 | 441 | **785** |
| Other service costs | 430 | 725 | **1,155** |
| Head Office support costs (note 11) | 2,341 | 2,339 | **4,680** |
| | **17,949** | **15,895** | **33,844** |

* In prior years, Other services (which was our Fostering service), was presented separately, however this year this service has been incorporated into Social & Therapy Care Services as this better represents how the service is managed and reported internally within the Trust. Prior year figures have been represented accordingly.

**Expenditure**
Total expenditure comprises direct costs incurred in the delivery of Trust services and head office support costs which are apportioned between services. Direct costs include all direct staff, premises and service provision in the day-to-day delivery of the service. It also includes other costs related to the provision of the service at each location such as insurance, depreciation and interest.

## 10. Exceptional costs

During the year ended 31 March 2024, the charity has made a provision totalling £805,000 (2023 £nil), for the costs associated with the closure of one of its educational services.

The costs provided for relate primarily to operational losses to be incurred while the obligation to deliver services continued through to its conclusion, along with the cost of staff redundancies of £189,000.

The Trustees consider these costs to be exceptional due to their non-recurring nature and significant impact on the financial results of the charity for the year.

## 11. Analysis of Head Office support costs

| | Social & Therapy Care Services* 2024 £'000 | Education Services 2024 £'000 | Total 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 1,533 | 1,323 | **2,856** |
| Premises costs | 218 | 187 | **405** |
| Office administration costs | 815 | 702 | **1,517** |
| Governance costs | 154 | 133 | **287** |
| Other costs | 219 | 189 | **408** |
| | **2,939** | **2,534** | **5,473** |

| | Social & Therapy Care Services* 2023 £'000 | Education Services 2023 £'000 | Total 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 1,322 | 1,321 | **2,643** |
| Premises costs | 130 | 130 | **260** |
| Office administration costs | 515 | 515 | **1,030** |
| Governance costs | 127 | 127 | **254** |
| Other costs | 247 | 246 | **493** |
| | **2,341** | **2,339** | **4,680** |

* In prior years, Other services (which was our Fostering service), was presented separately, however this year this service has been incorporated into Social & Therapy Care Services as this better represents how the service is managed and reported internally within the Trust. Prior year figures have been represented accordingly.

**Head Office support costs allocation**
There is a head office function, which provides all the support services of the Trust's activities. These services include Communications and Marketing, Business Development, Finance, Human Resources & Organisational Development, IT services and Facilities Management and the services of the Executive Directors. Cost recovery apportionment is based on the level of income for each of the services.

## 12. Net expenditure for the year

Net expenditure for the year is stated after charging/(crediting):

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Auditor's remuneration | | |
| - audit | **60** | 40 |
| - other audit services | **3** | 3 |
| - non-audit services | **62** | 13 |
| Interest paid on bank loan | **53** | 36 |
| Interest (received)/paid on interest rate swap contracts | **(8)** | 17 |
| Depreciation of owned assets | **905** | 802 |
| Rental under operating leases | **155** | 130 |

These costs include central head office costs where applicable and have been allocated to activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

## 13. Other gains

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Gains on interest rate swap contract | **-** | 109 |

## 14. Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

The average number of staff employed during the financial year, excluding relief and bank supply staff, amounted to:

| Headcount | 2024 Number | 2023 Number |
|---|---|---|
| Social & Therapy Care services staff * | **454** | 382 |
| Education services staff | **319** | 348 |
| Fundraising and Support staff | **86** | 79 |
| | **859** | 809 |

* In prior years, Other services (which was our Fostering service), was presented separately, however this year this service has been incorporated into Social & Therapy Care Services as this better represents how the service is managed and reported internally within the Trust. Prior year figures have been represented accordingly.

The aggregate staff employment costs were:

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Wages and salaries | **23,038** | 19,720 |
| Social security costs | **2,202** | 1,898 |
| Pension – defined contribution schemes | **1,887** | 1,658 |
| Pension – defined benefit scheme operating costs | **99** | 98 |
| | **27,226** | 23,374 |

During the year the Trust incurred redundancy costs of £201,000 (2023 £22,000).

Although the Trust maintains a pool of bank relief and supply staff to cover unforeseen absences, where this is insufficient to meet operational need, agency staff are engaged in the short term. In addition to the above staff costs, agency costs for the year were £2,018,000 (2023 £2,141,000).

In addition to the above staff costs, foster carer fees amounted to £1,057,000 (2023 £1,076,000).

**Employee emoluments over £60,000**

The number of employees whose emoluments, excluding pension contributions and employer's national insurance contributions, but including benefits in kind, were in excess of £60,000 was:

| | 2024 Number | 2023 Number |
|---|---|---|
| £60,001 to £70,000 | **3** | 5 |
| £70,001 to £80,000 | **4** | - |
| £80,001 to £90,000 | **1** | - |
| £90,001 to £100,000 | **-** | 1 |
| £110,001 to £120,000 | **-** | 1 |
| £120,001 to £130,000 | **1** | 1 |
| £130,001 to £140,000 | **1** | - |

Of the above 10 employees, 1 employee (2023 1) was accruing pension benefits under a defined benefit pension scheme.

The key management personnel are detailed on page 28. The total remuneration (including pension contributions and employers' national insurance contributions) of the key management personnel of the Trust for the year totalled £548,000 (2023 £585,000).

**Trustees' remuneration**

None of the Trustees receive any remuneration for their services to the Trust. During the year, no Trustees received reimbursement of expenses (2023 £nil).

## 15. Tangible fixed assets

| | Land and Buildings | Property Improvement | Motor Vehicles | Ancillary Equipment | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COST** | **£'000** | **£'000** | **£'000** | **£'000** | **£'000** |
| At 1 April 2023 | **22,208** | **1,269** | **1,083** | **301** | **24,861** |
| Additions | 799 | 12 | 308 | 70 | **1,189** |
| Disposals | - | - | (48) | - | **(48)** |
| **At 31 March 2024** | **23,007** | **1,281** | **1,343** | **371** | **26,002** |
| **DEPRECIATION** | | | | | |
| At 1 April 2023 | **4,430** | **1,266** | **822** | **245** | **6,763** |
| Charge for the year | 735 | 2 | 135 | 33 | **905** |
| On disposals | - | - | (48) | - | **(48)** |
| **At 31 March 2024** | **5,165** | **1,268** | **909** | **278** | **7,620** |
| **NET BOOK VALUE** | | | | | |
| **At 31 March 2024** | 17,842 | 13 | 434 | 93 | 18,382 |
| At 31 March 2023 | 17,778 | 3 | 261 | 56 | 18,098 |

The freehold and leasehold properties were professionally valued on 31 March 2014 and this became the deemed cost on transition to the accounting standard FRS 102.

Included within land and buildings above is a long leasehold property with a net book value of £4,473,000 (2023 £4,589,000). The Charity pays a peppercorn rent for the related land.

Certain property is pledged as security on the Charity's bank loan. The net book value of these properties is £4,473,000 (2023 £4,589,000).

The comparable amounts for fixed assets included above at a valuation determined according to the historical cost accounting rules are:

| | Land and Buildings £'000 |
|---|---|
| Cost | 15,782 |
| Accumulated Depreciation | 4,676 |
| Net book value at 31 March 2024 | **11,106** |
| Net book value at 31 March 2023 | 10,929 |

## 15. Tangible Fixed assets (continued)

**List of charitable properties:**

| Property | Description |
|---|---|
| **Schools Hill** | The main administrative centre for the Charity, which accommodates around 60 staff. The campus also is home to the following Together Trust operational services:<br><br>**Inscape House School** – a school for young people aged 5 – 19 years with autism. During 2023-24, the school could accommodate up to 105 young people<br><br>**Ashcroft School** – special education for young people with complex emotional difficulties aged 8 – 18 years. The school can accommodate up to 60 pupils |
| **Ashcroft College** | Specialist support and teaching in four vocational areas (including construction) to students aged 14 to 16 who may have been excluded or close to being excluded from mainstream education |
| **Bridge College** | Property held on long lease as a specialist further education college for students up to 25 years old with learning difficulties, disabilities and complex needs, communication disorders and autism |
| **Corbar** | A 5 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Crosskeys** | A 2 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Greg** | A residential property purchased during the year |
| **Haines House** | A 5 bedded residential service |
| **Lerryn** | A 6 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Meridian** | A 5 bedded short break service for young people with autism |
| **Newbridge** | A specialist day service provision |
| **Norvent** | A specialist therapeutic residential provision for two young people |
| **Pearce Lodge** | A 5 bedded unit for disabled young people aged 16 to adulthood |
| **Pendlebury House** | A shared care service for up to 6 young people with autism and behavioural needs |
| **Pocket Nook** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people with autism and other special requirements |
| **Swann Lane** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Ventnor** | A 3 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Woodlands** | A 5 bedded short break service for disabled young people |

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

### 16. Investments

**Listed investments**

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| UK listed investments | **999** | 924 |

**Movement in market value**

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| At start of year | **924** | 976 |
| Additions | **134** | 387 |
| Disposal proceeds | **(120)** | (358) |
| Net investment gains/(losses) | **62** | (66) |
| Movement in cash held by investment managers | **(1)** | (15) |
| At end of year | **999** | 924 |
| Market value is analysed between: | | |
| Investments | **983** | 907 |
| Cash held by investment managers | **16** | 17 |
| | **999** | 924 |

**Unlisted investments**

The company's investments at the balance sheet date in the share capital of companies include the following:

**Subsidiary:**

1. Together (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 3 March 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of £1 ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

2. BGWS (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 1 September 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of £1 ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

3. Boys and Girls Welfare Society Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of incorporation: 6 May 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Limited by guarantee**

None of these companies has traded during the year (2023 dormant) and they are not consolidated in the financial statements of The Together Trust on the grounds of immateriality.

## 17. Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Trade debtors | 3,899 | 2,225 |
| Prepayments and accrued income | 435 | 949 |
| Other debtors | 339 | 4 |
| | 4,673 | 3,178 |

## 18. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bank loans | 61 | 60 |
| Trade creditors | 541 | 1,105 |
| Accruals | 743 | 398 |
| Deferred income | 487 | 100 |
| Taxation and social security | 522 | 447 |
| Other creditors | 412 | 410 |
| | 2,766 | 2,520 |

Deferred income movement

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Balance at start of year | 100 | 209 |
| Amount released in the year | (100) | (209) |
| Amount deferred in the year | 487 | 100 |
| Balance at end of year | 487 | 100 |

Deferred income comprises income received or invoiced in advance of service delivery.

## 19. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bank loans | **629** | 690 |
| Financial derivatives (see note 26) | **14** | 22 |
| | **643** | 712 |

The bank loan is repayable as follows:

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Payable within one year | **61** | 60 |
| Payable between 1 and 2 years | **64** | 61 |
| Payable between 2 to 5 years | **203** | 197 |
| Payable after 5 years | **362** | 432 |
| | **690** | 750 |

The bank loan matures on 31 December 2033 and is secured on certain property (see note 15) with a debenture dated 26 November 2021.

Interest is payable at a variable rate of UK base rate plus 2.25% on the principal amount. Interest payable in the year was £53,000 (2023 £36,000).

The Trust is a party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. Under this swap contract, the Charity has agreed to exchange the difference between fixed and floating rate interest amounts. This allows the Charity to mitigate the risk of changing interest rates and cash flows on the variable rate debt held. See note 26 for further details.

## 20. Analysis of changes in net debt

| | Note | At the start of the year £'000 | Cash-flows £'000 | Fair value Move-ments £'000 | At the end of the year £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | | 9,340 | (1,955) | - | 7,385 |
| Bank loans falling due within one year | 18 | (60) | (1) | - | (61) |
| Bank loans falling due after more than one year | 19 | (690) | 61 | - | (629) |
| Interest rate swap | 24 | (22) | - | 8 | (14) |
| | | **8,568** | **(1,895)** | **8** | **6,681** |

## 21. Provision for liabilities

| | Dilapidations £'000 | Service Closure £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| At 1 April 2023 | - | - | - |
| Amount provided in year | 65 | 805 | 870 |
| Amount utilised in year | (23) | - | (23) |
| **At 31 March 2024** | **42** | **805** | **847** |
| | | | |
| **At 31 March 2023** | **-** | **-** | **-** |

The dilapidations provision represents the estimated costs of payments required to make good leased property upon the termination of the lease. These costs are expected to be settled within the next two years.

The Service Closure provision relates to the cost of closing one of the education services. Amounts provided for include the cost of redundancy, the cost of completion of onerous contracts and the impairment of fixed assets and are expected to be settled within 12 months.

## 22. Comparative statement of financial activities

### Year ended 31 March 2023

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2023 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2023 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2023 £'000 | **Total Funds 2023 £'000** | **Total Funds 2022 £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME FROM:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 86 | 145 | - | **231** | **237** |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 33,375 | - | - | **33,375** | **32,278** |
| Investments | 6 | 142 | - | 4 | **146** | **24** |
| Other | 7 | 1 | - | - | **1** | **29** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | | **33,604** | **145** | **4** | **33,753** | **32,568** |
| **EXPENDITURE ON:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 220 | 5 | 1 | **226** | **176** |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 33,714 | 130 | - | **33,844** | **31,019** |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | | **33,934** | **135** | **1** | **34,070** | **31,195** |
| Net losses on investments | 16 | (55) | - | (11) | **(66)** | **(26)** |
| **Net income/(expenditure) for the year** | | **(385)** | **10** | **(8)** | **(383)** | **1,347** |
| Transfers between funds | | 53 | (53) | - | **-** | **-** |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial (losses)/gains on definedbenefit pension scheme | 25 | (277) | - | - | **(277)** | **4** |
| Other gains | 13 | 109 | - | - | **109** | **103** |
| **NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS** | | **(500)** | **(43)** | **(8)** | **(551)** | **1,454** |
| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 27,862 | 520 | 165 | **28,547** | **27,093** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | (500) | (43) | (8) | **(551)** | **1,454** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 23 | **27,362** | **477** | **157** | **27,996** | **28,547** |

### 23. Movement on funds

| | 1 April 2023 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | **16,108** | 38,387 | (39,272) | (480) | 295 | **15,038** |
| Revaluation reserve | **6,845** | - | - | - | (106) | **6,739** |
| Designated | **4,409** | - | (190) | - | (91) | **4,128** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **27,362** | **38,387** | **(39,462)** | **(480)** | **98** | **25,905** |
| **Restricted funds** | **477** | 118 | (111) | - | (98) | **386** |
| **Endowment funds** | **157** | - | (1) | 12 | - | **168** |
| | **27,996** | **38,505** | **(39,574)** | **(468)** | **-** | **26,459** |

Year ended 31 March 2023 comparatives

| | 1 April 2022 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | **16,939** | 33,604 | (33,705) | (223) | (507) | **16,108** |
| Revaluation reserve | **6,951** | - | - | - | (106) | **6,845** |
| Designated | **3,972** | - | (229) | - | 666 | **4,409** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **27,862** | **33,604** | **(33,934)** | (223) | **53** | **27,362** |
| **Restricted funds** | **520** | 145 | (135) | - | (53) | **477** |
| **Endowment funds** | **165** | 4 | (1) | (11) | - | **157** |
| | **28,547** | **33,753** | **(34,070)** | (234) | **-** | **27,996** |

**Unrestricted Designated Funds**

Designated funds have been set aside to support the investments required to achieve our corporate strategy, in particular to support digital transformation, our property portfolio and its associated review. It is anticipated that this strategy will result in significant outlay being made over the course of around the next five years.

These funds comprise:

- a development fund which was established to ring-fence funds for the maintenance of the Charity's homes and schools in compliance with standards set for the services by inspecting bodies. This expenditure is expected to be incurred on an ongoing basis.
- service transformation re-development funds established to ring-fence funds for the delivery of the Trust's service innovation plans, property review and digital investment. The timing of this expenditure being incurred is over a period of a number of years.
- a number of other voluntary income funds which have been agreed on the basis that 'unspent' unrestricted donations which have been generated during the year will be spent specifically and directly on the children and young people that the Trust supports. The Together Trust operates a 'wish list' process whereby the children and young people submit their 'wishes' and as far as the fund will allow these are considered and met during the year. This expenditure is expected to be incurred on an ongoing basis.

## 23 Movements on funds (continued)

### Restricted Funds

| | 1 April 2023 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ashcroft | **56** | - | (2) | - | **54** |
| Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | - | - | - | **96** |
| Eyegaze Technology fund | **-** | 26 | - | - | **26** |
| Other | **325** | 92 | (109) | (98) | **210** |
| | **477** | **118** | **(111)** | **(98)** | **386** |

2023 comparatives

| | 1 April 2022 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ashcroft | **63** | 1 | (8) | - | **56** |
| Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | - | - | - | **96** |
| Eyegaze Technology fund | **-** | - | - | - | **-** |
| Other | **361** | 144 | (127) | (53) | **325** |
| | **520** | **145** | **(135)** | **(53)** | **477** |

**Ashcroft –** Funds from corporate supporters allocated to specific projects for Ashcroft School
**Bridge Transitional fund** - this is a fund for Bridge College, being grant monies from Central Government to enable Colleges to develop alternative income streams.
**Eyegaze Technology fund –** this is a fund for our Clinical Services service being various grant monies received to enable the purchase of digital assistive technology to support young people with conditions that impact on speech intelligibility and conditions that impact direct access to technology. It is anticipated that this equipment will be purchased in the forth coming year.
**Other –** This represents a number of individual service funds, generally established from donations restricted for use by a particular service.

Transfers from restricted to unrestricted funds represents, where permitted, the transfer of funds which remain unspent following completion of the specific projects to which they related.

## 23 Movements on funds (continued)

### Endowment Funds

| | 1 April 2023 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 101 | - | (1) | 8 | - | 108 |
| Other funds | 56 | - | - | 4 | - | 60 |
| | **157** | **-** | **(1)** | **12** | **-** | **168** |

2023 comparatives

| | 1 April 2022 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 106 | 3 | (1) | (7) | - | 101 |
| Other funds | 59 | 1 | - | (4) | - | 56 |
| | 165 | 4 | (1) | (11) | - | 157 |

**Jubilee Trust Fund**
This fund forms part of the Charity's investment portfolio and, as a permanent endowment fund, the restrictions on capital and use of income must be followed and spent in accordance with the Jubilee Trust Fund objects. TheTogether Trust is the sole trustee of the Jubilee Trust Fund and the two charities are linked with The Together Trust being the reporting Charity for both.

**Other Funds**
These are expendable endowment funds held by the Charity to be used in accordance with the individual fund objects. These funds are as follows:

- Hoyer Trust Fund
- Thomas Hunt Trust Fund
- William Melland Trust Fund
- Ragged & Industrial Trust Fund
- Ann Street Wardle Trust Fund
- Harold Grimshaw Trust Fund

## 24. Analysis of assets and liabilities between funds

| | Unrestricted 2024 £'000 | Restricted 2024 £'000 | Endowment 2024 £'000 | Total 2024 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,382 | - | - | **18,382** |
| Investments | 831 | - | 168 | **999** |
| Debtors | 4,673 | - | - | **4,673** |
| Cash | 6,999 | 386 | - | **7,385** |
| Current liabilities | (2,766) | - | - | **(2,766)** |
| Long term liabilities | (643) | - | - | **(643)** |
| Provisions | (847) | - | - | **(847)** |
| Pension deficit | (724) | - | - | **(724)** |
| Total net assets | **25,905** | **386** | **168** | **26,459** |

2023 Comparatives

| | Unrestricted 2023 £'000 | Restricted 2023 £'000 | Endowment 2023 £'000 | Total 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,098 | - | - | 18,098 |
| Investments | 767 | - | 157 | 924 |
| Debtors | 3,178 | - | - | 3,178 |
| Cash | 8,863 | 477 | - | 9,340 |
| Current liabilities | (2,520) | - | - | (2,520) |
| Long term liabilities | (712) | - | - | (712) |
| Provisions | - | - | - | - |
| Pension deficit | (312) | - | - | (312) |
| Total net assets | 27,362 | 477 | 157 | 27,996 |

## 25. Pensions

### Together Trust Final Salary Scheme

The Charity operates a defined benefit scheme, the Together Trust final salary scheme. The provider of the scheme is The Pensions Trust. The scheme was closed to new entrants when it became 'paid up' with effect from 31 March 2000.

This scheme is a separate Trustee administered fund holding the pension scheme assets to meet long-term pension liabilities. An actuarial valuation was carried out as at 30 September 2021 by a qualified actuary, independent of the scheme's sponsoring employer. Scheme liabilities have been based on liability information as at 30 September 2021 updated to 31 March 2024 by a qualified actuary, independent of the scheme's sponsoring employer. The major assumptions used by the actuary are shown below.

The most recent completed actuarial valuation showed a deficit of £687,000 as at 30 September 2021. The Together Trust has agreed with the scheme's Trustee that it would aim to eliminate the deficit over a period of 5 years and 6 months by the payment of annual contributions of £148,000 (payable monthly) in respect of the deficit, with payments beginning from 1 April 2023 and these payments are being made.

In addition, and in accordance with the actuarial valuation, the Charity has agreed with the Scheme Trustee that it will pay £63,000 per annum up to 31 March 2023 and £69,000 per annum thereafter, increasing by 3% per annum each 1 April, to meet expenses of the Scheme and levies to the Pension Protection Fund.

Assumptions
The key assumptions used in the actuarial valuation were:

| | Valuation at | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2024 | 2023 |
| | % per annum | % per annum |
| Discount rate | 4.87 | 4.89 |
| Inflation (RPI) | 3.19 | 3.21 |
| Inflation (CPI) | 2.89 | 2.86 |
| Allowance for revaluation of deferred pensions of RPI or 5% p.a. if less | 3.19 | 3.21 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 5% pa if less | 2.82 | 2.79 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 3% pa if less | 2.26 | 2.25 |

| | % of maximum allowance | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2024 | 2023 |
| Allowance for commutation of pension for cash at retirement | 75 | 75 |

The mortality assumptions adopted imply the following life expectancies on retirement:

| | Life expectancy at age 65 (years) | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2024 | 2023 |
| Retiring today: | | |
| Males | 21.2 | 21.5 |
| Females | 23.8 | 23.9 |
| Retiring in 20 years: | | |
| Males | 22.8 | 23.1 |
| Females | 25.2 | 25.4 |

## 25. Pensions (continued)

The amount included in the balance sheet arising from the Trust's obligations in respect of the defined benefit scheme is as follows:

| | **2024 £'000** | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets | **6,395** | 6,713 |
| Present value of defined benefit obligations | **(7,119)** | (7,025) |
| Deficit in plan and net liability recognised in the balance sheet | **(724)** | (312) |

Movements in the fair value of scheme assets were as follows:

| | **2024 £'000** | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets at start of year | **6,713** | 9,294 |
| Interest income | **324** | 254 |
| Return on assets excluding interest income | **(480)** | (2,499) |
| Expenses | **(87)** | (98) |
| Contributions paid by the employer | **217** | 63 |
| Benefits paid and expenses | **(292)** | (301) |
| Fair value of scheme assets at end of year | **6,395** | 6,713 |

The actual return of the plan assets over the reporting period was a loss of £156,000 (2023 a loss of £2,245,000).

The analysis of assets were as follows:

| | **2024 £'000** | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Asset Category | | |
| Equity | **19** | - |
| Bonds | **4,051** | 3,410 |
| Property | **725** | 840 |
| Other | **1,600** | 2,463 |
| Total assets | **6,395** | 6,713 |

## 25. Pensions (continued)

Movements in the present value of defined benefit obligations were as follows:

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Defined benefit obligation at start of year | **7,025** | 8,951 |
| Interest expense | **336** | 245 |
| Experience losses on liabilities | **57** | 478 |
| Gain on change of assumptions | **(7)** | (2,348) |
| Benefits paid | **(292)** | (301) |
| Defined benefit obligation at end of year | **7,119** | 7,025 |

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of the defined benefit scheme are as follows:

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Expenses | **(87)** | (98) |
| Interest income on assets | **324** | 254 |
| Interest cost on defined benefit obligation | **(336)** | (245) |
| Interest effect of asset ceiling | **-** | (9) |
| Net cost recognised within net expenditure for the year | **(99)** | (98) |
| Return on scheme assets (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – loss | **(480)** | (2,499) |
| Experience gains and losses arising on the scheme liabilities – loss | **(57)** | (478) |
| Effects of changes in the demographic and financial assumptions underlying the present value of the scheme liabilities – gain | **7** | 2,348 |
| Effects of changes in the amount of surplus that is not recoverable (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – gain | **-** | 352 |
| Total actuarial losses | **(530)** | (277) |
| Total cost relating to defined benefit scheme recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities | **(629)** | (375) |

The Charity is aware that the Court of Appeal has recently upheld the decision in the Virgin Media vs NTL Pension Trustees II Limited case. The decision puts into question the validity of any amendments made in respect of the rules of a contracted-out pension scheme between 6 April 1997 and 5 April 2016. The judgment means that some historic amendments affecting s.9(2B) rights could be void if the necessary actuarial confirmation under s.37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993 was not obtained. Until further investigations have been completed by the scheme trustees and/or any legislative action taken by the government, the potential impact, if any, on the valuation of scheme liabilities remains unknown. Investigations by the scheme Trustees are envisaged to be undertaken alongside the court application in respect of the ongoing benefits review referred to in Note 29.

## 25. Pensions (continued)

The Charity has participated in 2 (2023: 2) pension schemes for its staff and these are described below.

### (i) Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS).

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pensions 2014. Membership is automatic for teachers in schools and other educational establishments. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment. The TPS is an unfunded scheme and members contribute on a 'pay as you go' basis – these contributions along with those made by employers are credited to the Exchequer. The Trust has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Trust has set out below the information available on the scheme.

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2023 (the Directions) published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020 in accordance with the Directions and the Employer Contribution Rate was assessed using agreed assumptions in line with the Directions and was accepted at the original assessed rate as there was no cost control mechanism breach.

The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 26 October 2023. The key elements of the valuation are:

- total scheme liabilities for service (the capital sum needed at 31 March 2020 to meet the stream of future cash flows in respect of benefits earned) of £262 billion
- value of notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the proceeds from the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222 billion
- notional past service deficit of £39.8 billion (2016 £22 billion)
- discount rate is 1.7% in excess of CPI (2016 2.4% in excess of CPI) (this change has had the greatest financial significance)

As a result of the valuation, new employer contribution rates have been set at 28.6% of pensionable pay from 1 April 2024 until 1 April 2028 (compared to 23.68% under the previous valuation including a 0.08% administration levy).

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documents can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website www.teacherspensions.co.uk.

The TPS is a multi-employer pension scheme. The Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme. Accordingly, the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Trust has set out above the information available on the scheme and the implications for the Trust in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The pension costs paid to the TPS in the year amounted to £816,000 (2023: £748,000) and have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as an expense with £62,000 (2023: £70,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date. The liability and expense have been allocated in full to unrestricted funds. The allocation of the expense to activities is explained in note 9.

**(ii) Group Personal Pension Plan**

The Charity also provides eligible staff the opportunity to contribute to a personal pension through a Group Personal Pension Plan, which is a defined contribution scheme. It is made available to all staff excluding those eligible for the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Provision of the scheme is made through pension provider Standard Life.

In the year ended 31 March 2024 the pension contributions payable in respect of staff participating in the Group Personal Pension Plan were £1,088,000 (2023: £906,000) with £93,000 (2023: £79,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date.

## 26. Derivative financial instruments

The following table details the notional principal amounts and remaining terms of interest rate swap contracts outstanding as at the reporting date:

**Outstanding contracts - receive floating pay fixed contracts**

| | Average contract fixed interest rate | | Notional Principal value | | Fair value | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2024** | 2023 | **2024** | 2023 | **2024** | 2023 |
| | **%** | % | **£'000** | £'000 | **£'000** | £'000 |
| 5 years + | **4.21** | 4.21 | **836** | 896 | **14** | 22 |

The Trust is party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. The interest rate swap contract expires on 31 March 2031.

The fair value of the derivative is calculated by discounting the future cash flows to the maturity date of 31 March 2031. The product gives the Trust increased certainty over future costs and cash flows, and the liability should be considered within the context of the length of the loan period and interest rates existing when the loan agreement was made in December 2010.

The interest rate swap settles on a quarterly basis. The floating rate on the interest rate swap is based on UK base rate. The Trust settles the difference between the fixed and floating interest rate on a net basis.

Gains of £8,000 (2023: £109,000) in respect of the interest rate swap contract have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

## 27. Related party transactions

No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the Charity during the year (2023 £nil). There were no other related party transactions during the current or prior years that require disclosure.

## 28. Financial commitments

### Operating lease commitments

The total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases were:

| | Land & Buildings | | Other | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2024 £'000** | 2023 £'000 | **2024 £'000** | 2023 £'000 |
| - due within one year | **53** | - | **22** | 17 |
| - due between one and five years | **3** | - | **26** | 17 |
| - due after five years | **-** | - | **-** | - |
| | **56** | - | **48** | 34 |

## 29. Contingent Liabilities

The Charity has been informed by The Pensions Trust that some benefit changes in regard to the final salary-based pension scheme, which closed to new members in 2000, may not have been in accordance with the scheme rules. The Pensions Trust are seeking Court direction in relation to this, the outcome of which is not expected to be known until 2025. As the outcome of the case is awaited, at present, no obligation of a liability has arisen as a result of the past benefit changes and therefore no amounts are provided for. If the Court directs these changes were made in a way not permitted by the scheme rules, then this would give rise to additional pension liabilities for the Charity in the future, which the Scheme's Actuary has estimated to be in the region of £6.1m. This figure is estimated on a non-accounting basis, using actuarial assumptions derived using the Trustee's Technical Provisions basis as at 30 September 2021, where this relates to service prior to the date of change and has been calculated from the preliminary results of the actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2021 allowing for market conditions at that date. It is not possible to determine the financial implications for the Charity at this stage, therefore the above details are disclosed as a contingent liability in order to provide stakeholders with information about the potential impact of this matter.

## 30. Ultimate controlling party

The Together Trust is under the control of its Members and there is no ultimate controlling party. Any person who is appointed as a Trustee will automatically, by virtue of that appointment, become a Member. No person other than a Trustee may be admitted as a Member. The Trustees, as Charity Trustees, have control of the Charity and there is no one individual controlling party.

# Reference & administrative information

The Non-executive and Executive leadership, as at the date of this report, are set out below:

**Board of Trustees (Non-executive)**

*Chair*
Giles Gaddum

*Vice Chair*
Norah Flood

*Lead Honorary Treasurer*
Anthony Farnworth

*Assistant Honorary Treasurer*
Ian Johnson

Geoff Durbin
Marcell Edwards
Jane Grime
Michael Henshaw
Roger Horne
Gani Martins
Rebekah Pierre
Steven Pitt
Dilal Ranasinghe
Jane Walapu

*President*
Brian Chesworth OBE

**Trust LeadershipTeam (Executive)**

*Chief Executive*
Mark Lee

*Service Director*
Jill Sheldrake MBE

*Commercial Director*
Dr Paul Jarvis

*People and Culture Director*
Roland Guy

*Executive Head of Education Services*
Sara Bayley

*Associate Director of Finance*
Clare Morrissy

**Principal Professional Advisers**

*Bankers*
Barclays Bank PLC
3 Hardman Street
Spinningfields
Manchester
M3 3HF

*Investment Managers*
Brewin Dolphin Limited
1 The Avenue
Spinningfields Square
Manchester
M3 3AP

*Legal Advisers*
Trowers & Hamlins LLP
55 Princess Street
Manchester
M2 4EW

*Auditor*
RSM UK Audit LLP
14th Floor
20 Chapel Street
Liverpool
L3 9AG

*HR & Health & Safety Advisers*
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)
28 Calthorpe Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 1RP

| | |
|---|---|
| *Charity name:* | The Together Trust |
| *Charity registration number:* | 209782 |
| *Company registration number*: | 301722 |
| *Registered Office:* | Together Trust Centre<br>Schools Hill<br>Cheadle<br>Cheshire<br>SK8 1JE |
| Telephone: | 0161 283 4848 |
| Email: | enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk |
| Website: | www.togethertrust.org.uk |

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Classics

**The Together Trust**
Together Trust Centre
Schools Hill, Cheadle,
Cheshire, SK8 1JE

**0161 283 4848**
**enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk**

A digital copy of this publication
can be downloaded at
**togethertrust.org.uk/what-we-do**

TOGETHER TRUST charity

**THE TOGETHER TRUST**

England & Wales - Charity number 209782

# Accounts

TOGETHER TRUST

# Trustees' report and financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2023

The Together Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Registered charity number 209782
Company registration number 00301722

# About the Together Trust

We are one of the North West's leading disability charities. We help children, adults, parents, and carers, delivering individual care, support and education to thousands of people each year.

For over 150 years, we have been championing and caring for people with disabilities, autism, and complex health needs. And providing life-changing support for looked-after children and care-experienced people.

## Our mission

We are the Together Trust. We're here to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support – they are at the heart of everything we do. We stand by them, and we work together for change.

## Our vision

A society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities.

## Our values

## We will always strive to be:

- **Positive**
  We take pride in celebrating the difference we make.

- **Professional**
  We act in a fair and respectable way that recognises our collective expertise.

- **Passionate**
  We encourage creative ideas and inspire one another.

- **Supportive**
  We are considerate and caring towards one another.

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# Reference and administrative information

## Board of Trustees (Non-executive)

*Chair*
Giles Gaddum

*Vice Chair*
Lynne Ridsdale (retired 01.03.23)
Norah Flood (appointed 17.04.23)

*Lead Honorary Treasurer*
Anthony Farnworth

*Assistant Honorary Treasurer*
Ian Johnson

Geoff Durbin
Marcell Edwards
Norah Flood (see above)
David Freeston
Maria Greenwood
Jane Grime
Michael Henshaw
Roger Horne
Simon Lees-Jones
Nick Lowry
Gani Martins
Tristan Morris
Rebekah Pierre
Steven Pitt
Dilal Ranasinghe
Jane Walapu

*President*
Brian Chesworth OBE

*Registered Office*
Together Trust Centre
Schools Hill
Cheadle
Cheshire
SK8 1JE

0161 283 4848
enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk
www.togethertrust.org.uk

## Trust LeadershipTeam (Executive)

*Chief Executive*
Mark Lee

*Resource Director*
Brian White

*Service Director*
Jill Sheldrake MBE

*Governance & ExternalAffairs Director*
Julie Isted (resigned 04.11.22)

*Executive Head of Education Services*
Sara Bayley (appointed 01.02.23)

## Principal Professional Advisers

*Bankers*
Barclays Bank PLC
3 Hardman Street
Spinningfields
Manchester
M3 3HF

*Investment Managers*
Brewin Dolphin Limited
1 The Avenue
Spinningfields Square
Manchester
M3 3AP

*Legal Advisers*
Trowers & Hamlins LLP
55 Princess Street
Manchester
M2 4EW

*Auditor*
RSM UK Audit LLP
14th Floor
20 Chapel Street
Liverpool
L3 9AG

*HR & Health & Safety Advisers*
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)
28 Calthorpe Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 1RP

# Chair's introduction

On behalf of the Trustees of the Together Trust, who are also Directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, I am pleased to present our annual report for the Together Trust, our progress towards the goals in our Stronger Together Strategic Plan (the Strategic Report), the financial statements and auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Our vision is a society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities. The Trust is deeply rooted in its values and aspires to be person-centred in all its plans, practices and behaviours. The complex needs of our beneficiaries mean that the people we support do not often benefit from generic, off-the-shelf solutions but require specialist support that is tailored to their needs. I am pleased to report that the Charity has successfully managed its risks to date, to ensure that we are able to continue to support the people who need our services in a financially sustainable manner.

Today our care, special education, community, and clinical services support over 3,000 children, adults, and families each year. To do this our team of over 800 people, at dozens of sites, put the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support at the heart of all that they do. We work for the Together Trust because we are passionate about improving the lives of people with disabilities, autism, mental health needs, care leavers and their families.

I am immensely proud of our achievements this year and on behalf of our Board, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our workforce for their dedication and loyalty. I thank also our Leadership Team on their continued diligence and care in steering the Charity through the challenging times in which we live. More than ever, the essential support our staff, volunteers and donors provide enables our services to adapt and evolve to meet the lifelong changing needs of people and families.

Giles Gaddum
Chair of Trustees

# Charitable objectives, structure, and management

The Together Trust ("the Charity" or "the Company") is a registered Charity and a company limited by guarantee, which is governed by Articles of Association, last amended on 2 December 2022. The Together Trust serves children, young people, adults, and families whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autism.

The Charity's objects are:

To give aid, assistance, and care to those with disabilities or in need, including to children and/or young persons; and
To promote the education, training and advancement in life of those with disabilities or in need, including that of children and/or young persons.

The Charity's work reflects the main themes and ideas within Department for Education plans and the direction of current and future adult social care and health provision. Most of the Trust's services are based in the North West of England and surrounding areas however, the Charity accepts referrals from all parts of the UK.

### The Trust's Leadership Team (Executive) – Key Management

The Chief Executive is assisted in the day-to-day management of the Charity by Operational Directors, listed on page 1, who each have responsibility for an area of its activities, resources, performance, and operations. Within the year the Governance and External Affairs Director resigned, and an Executive Head of Education Services was appointed to oversee Inscape House School, Ashcroft Schools and Bridge College. Following a governance review the Trust has, since the year end, appointed a new Head of Governance reporting to the Executive team.

### Statutory and Regulatory

The Together Trust's subsidiaries, as listed in note 15 to the financial statements, have not traded during the year, have no income and bore no expenditure.

# Corporate governance

Governance handbooks for Members, Trustees and Governors support the Charity Articles by setting out the policies, procedures and practices the Board and our Governing Bodies adopt in the fulfilment of their responsibility for the activities of the Trust and are provided to each on induction to the Trust.
The Charity seeks to secure its future governance responsibilities by an active Trustee Governance Subgroup which is responsible for recruiting Trustees. New Trustees bring knowledge and abilities to the Charity that have been derived from various perspectives including business and commerce or professional, occupational, charitable or lived experience.

### Members

We seek to secure future governance responsibilities by an active subgroup that reports to the Board which is responsible for recruiting new Members of the Charity who contribute to governance activity in different ways.

The Together Trust is a private company limited by guarantee and currently has 19 registered Members. The interests of the Trust and its Members are aligned with the common purpose of carrying out the objects of the Charity.

During the year the Trust's Articles of Association were updated to reflect best practice and evolve membership. At the Annual General Meeting in December 2022, Members approved that any person who is appointed as a Trustee will automatically, by virtue of that appointment, become a Member. No person other than a Trustee may be admitted as a member.

The Together Trust holds an AGM every 12 months, which all Members are entitled to attend either personally or by proxy.

There are Conflicts of Interest and Gift in Kind policies in place for Members, Trustees and Governors to manage any actual and perceived conflicts that might arise. The Board of Trustees (Non-executive)

The Together Trust is shaping a strategic plan to 2025/26, known as 'Stronger Together', to deliver even greater impact for the people and families we support. Our Trustees and Governors have a key role in shaping and influencing this plan. We are also on a journey to improve equality, diversity and inclusion across our governance and leadership structure, our workforce, and our services.

Our plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to new ways of improving how the Charity works. More information about this can be found in the Future strategy section of this report.

We believe we will deliver long lasting social impact when our Board and leadership teams better reflect the community of people and families the Trust serves. Improving Board diversity is crucial for us in terms of our values as an organisation. It means we are more effective, make better decisions and is key to effective delivery of our mission.

20 Trustees served during the financial year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023:

Geoff Durbin
Anthony Farnworth
Norah Flood
Maria Greenwood
Michael Henshaw (appointed 10.12.22)
Kirsteen Hughes (retired 19.12.22)
Simon Lees-Jones
Gani Martins
Lynne Ridsdale (retired 1.3.23)
Helen Stevenson (retired 12.10.22)
Marcell Edwards
David Freeston
Giles Gaddum
Jane Grime
Roger Horne
Ian Johnson
Nick Lowry
Tristan Morris
Lyndsey Stark (retired 7.3.23)
Jane Walapu

Since the year end, the following Trustees were appointed

Rebekah Pierre (appointed 17.4.23)
Steven Pitt (appointed 6.6.23)
Dilal Ranasinghe (appointed 28.4.23)

Michael Henshaw was appointed as Trustee during the year while Rebekah Pierre, Dilal Ranasinghe and Steven Pitt were recruited during the year and appointed as Trustees since the year end. Together, they bring a range of new skills and lived experience, strengthening the Board's oversight to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support. The Board would like to thank Kirsteen Hughes, Lynne Ridsdale, Lyndsey Stark and Helen Stevenson for their service as Trustees. All 4 Trustees ended their trusteeships during the reporting period.

The Board holds responsibility for agreeing the strategic direction of the organisation, setting the budgetary framework, and deciding upon major undertakings. Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Charity is delegated to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive reports fully to the Trustees at each Board meeting and to the Chair on a regular basis. This allows the Board to monitor progress in a well informed and incremental manner and to agree any strategic or budgetary adjustments which may become necessary in the year.

The Trustees have the benefit of a qualifying third-party indemnity provision as defined by section 234 Companies Act 2006. The Charity purchased and maintained throughout the year directors' and officers' liability insurance in respect of itself and its trustees.

## Groups that report to the Board

The Trust aims to ensure the Charity's values are reflected in all our work and that the ethos and the culture of the organisation underpin the delivery of all activities. Our special purpose subgroups and school and college governing bodies meet regularly to undertake specific tasks on which they report to the Board to assist its function, decision-making and continued improvement.

**School and College Governing Bodies** – Each governing body has its own constitution approved by the Board. The Board appoints Trustees to be the Chair and Vice Chair of each governing body.
Trustees who served as a Chair to a Trust education governing body during the reporting period were: -

**Ashcroft School** – Anthony Farnworth
**Bridge College** – Roger Horne
**Inscape House School** - Giles Gaddum

**The Together Trust Fostering Panel** - the panel is made up of people with a range of skills, knowledge and experience and includes staff members from the Together Trust fostering agency. Some panel members have a professional background in child or social care, and others have direct experience with the fostering process. Our panel members also have access to legal and medical advice should they need it as well as each other's skills and expertise.

The panel considers fostering applications and makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants. This also includes making recommendations about the number, age range and backgrounds of the children placed with Together Trust foster carers.

**Board Subgroups**
The Board maintains several Trustee-led, special purpose subgroups that undertake specific tasks which contribute to the Charity's governance and operation to meet the aims within the 'Stronger Together' plan.

The Board undertook a comprehensive review of its subgroups to ensure their terms of authority and reference were in line with the Charity's new plans and approved revisions to strategic theme responsibilities for each subgroup in May 2022. All subgroups monitor and evaluate relevant KPIs to help drive continuous improvement with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement. The revised subgroup terms also now ensure each area of activity supports the Trust's commitment to social value and improved equity, diversity and inclusion for governance, the workforce, and the people the Charity supports.

Each subgroup receives updates on performance, evaluation, and risk in core areas of operational and infrastructure services at the Charity. The terms for each subgroup reflect the Charity Governance Code.

The Board receives reports, including KPI Red, Amber, Green ("RAG") rated performance from each subgroup in line with theorganisation's planning and performance management cycle.

**Governance Subgroup –** the subgroup meets quarterly to assist the Board to oversee the methods by which the Board, subgroups and governing bodies monitor and share progress to ensure supportive, effective, and inclusive governance. The group is assisted by the EDI Governance Steering Group to ensure the recruitment of Members, Trustees and Governors, their training, responsibilities and the proper arrangements of supervision and appraisal (where relevant) are in place and follow best practice.

The Trust aims to create an environment where divergent views are welcomed, and individuals feel confident sharing their ideas. To achieve this, trust and mutual respect is essential - both between Board members and between the Trustees and the Executive Team and wider workforce.

The **EDI Governance Steering Subgroup** reports to the Governance Subgroup and oversees the strategic approach to building a more equitable and diverse organisational governance culture, ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles are embedded to help deliver the best possible outcomes for the people we support. The group was formed in 2021 to assist Trustee and Governor understanding of systems and culture at the Together Trust. Following successful recruitment of Trustees with EDI expertise, they have context-specific and realistic goals, taking action and monitoring EDI governance performance in the future.

**Supporting People Subgroup –** the subgroup meets six times a year to ensure the Together Trust is aligned to the needs of the people it supports and commissioners. It also reviews how the Charity continuously improves and addresses the needs of the people who use its services. The group monitors and evaluates all relevant quality improvement and most regulatory activity in services. It oversees participation, co-production and customer engagement, aiming to create accessible and regular programmes of effective communication, impact and social value reporting to our external stakeholders. It oversees campaigns, advocacy and participation and external accreditation of customer relationship standards, including Investor in Customers, ensuring results are acted upon effectively.

The subgroup also ensures that the Charity's complaints policy is transparent, well-publicised and effective, and that complaints are handled constructively, impartially and dealt with following a pre-agreed timeline.

**Finance and Audit Subgroup –** the subgroup meets six times a year to inform the Honorary Treasurers and the Chair of Trustees of the financial position and performance of the Charity and the operational detail behind the management accounts that are presented at each Board meeting. It oversees the annual budget process and any special issues with financial implications that are to be reported to the Board.

The subgroup also reviews funding strategy, growth plans and matters in respect of the Charity's pension schemes. It ensures that third party partners and suppliers are procured in line with policy and the Trust conducts its business in a commercially responsible way to achieve maximum positive impact for communities, people and the environment.

The subgroup is responsible for the appointment and removal of the external auditor, for the ongoing relationship and liaison with the auditor and for monitoring management's responsiveness to external audit findings and recommendations.

**Human Resources and Organisational Development Subgroup** – the subgroup meets regularly to ensure that the Trust is able to attract, retain, and motivate the highest calibre of staff to deliver value for money for the Charity's beneficiaries in line with strategic objectives and financial parameters. The subgroup assists the Board to oversee the approach to an effective People Strategy including fair pay and reward for all staff including the Key Management Personnel. Further information on the Trusts' pay and reward structure can be found later in this report in the section on Workforce and Workforce Engagement.

The group ensures our staff have clear learning and development opportunities and supports staff with the day-to-day challenges they face, in work and outside. We know that the Trust can be a challenging working environment and resilience is important for us all. The group ensures effective staff engagement and that the outcomes from staff surveys are received and acted upon.

The group oversees the Charity's approach to workforce equality, diversity and inclusion, effective engagement with and development of the Staff Council and ensures safer recruitment procedures operate effectively.

The subgroup also ensures that the Charity can attract, retain and motivate high levels of volunteers and oversees external accreditation of HR/training-related standards including Investors in People.

**Safeguarding Scrutiny Subgroup** – the subgroup has lead responsibility for effective governance of safeguarding at the Trust. This is achieved by scrutiny of operational actions and quality assurance of safeguarding standards and processes at the Charity. The day-to-day operational safeguarding responsibility is held with the designated safeguarding officer for the Trust who is also the Service Director.

The subgroup scrutinises leadership activity in respect of adherence to adopted safeguarding policies and procedures, is informed of safeguarding incidences at the Trust and scrutinises the management of risk. It ensures safeguarding policies at the Together Trust comply with local and national safeguarding standards. The subgroup maintains an overview of key performance indicators. The group works with the Safeguarding Learning & Development Forum, which reports directly into the subgroup.

**Health and Safety, Risk and Environment Subgroup –** this subgroup ensures that appropriate health and safety processes are in place to ensure a safe working environment which meets all legal requirements, including consultation arrangements. It ensures business continuity plans are reviewed regularly and agrees and monitors an organisational approach to environmental impact.

The subgroup also oversees the development of the Trust's property portfolio and ensures that it is fit for purpose, including compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), and monitors the effectiveness of

the Charity's approach to risk management.

**Health and Safety Committee** is made up of representatives from across the Charity who meet on a regular basis to promote efficient health and safety policies and methods across all areas. The Together Trust is a registered member of the Contractors Health and Safety Scheme under which its health and safety practice is reviewed each year. The Charity also subscribes to The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), for external guidance and advice where required.

**Digital Transformation Subgroup** – the subgroup meets quarterly to oversee how technology can reach and support our workforce and the people we support with the aim of delivering practical, efficient and cost-effective solutions. It oversees how the Charity creates a culture in which digital can flourish and the accountabilities for digital development within the Charity ensuring that, where possible, digital is an integral part of business design.
We take a digital-led approach, and our aim is to share learning to enable our workforce and the people we support to:

- Develop the right skills required to use technology effectively and safely
- Make it easier to communicate with the Trust
- Explore how technology can encourage independence and wellbeing
- Ensure effective information management and compliance reporting including GDPR

**Service Visitor Subgroups** – a programme of visits aims to ensure that all the Together Trust operations and central support services will be visited by Trustees at least once in each financial year. This enables Trustees to broaden their knowledge and awareness of issues relating to the activities of the workforce and for the people who use the Charity's services. The aim is to promote positive working relationships between Trustees and our workforce.

# Strategic Report

## Section 172 statement

This section of the Report describes how the Directors have had regard to the matters set out in section 172(1) (a) to (f), and forms the Directors' statement required under section 414CZA, of the Companies Act 2006.

The Directors recognise that the long-term success of the Together Trust is dependent on having regard to the interests of its stakeholders. As a registered Charity, the Directors' responsibility also extends to ensuring that the affairs and objectives of the Together Trust are managed in a way that enhances public trust and support. The Board has identified and documented its stakeholders in the Together Trust's Stronger Together Strategic Plan. Key stakeholders include the people we support, their families, carers, commissioners, our workforce and our regulators.

Our Annual Review Report describes our impact, and is available to download on the Trust's website www.togethertrust.org.uk.

**Beneficiaries**
The Board recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders, understanding their views and interests in order to be successful over the long term. Dialogue with stakeholders can help the Board to understand significant changes in the landscape, help inform future developments and trends, and develop strategy that is aligned with stakeholder interests.

The Charity works tirelessly towards a brighter future for the people we support and their families and to build communities where everyone feels valued and can thrive. The people we support tell us that they face daily discrimination, hardship and barriers in their lives.Things must change. Every day, we listen and learn from the people we support so we can work together for change. We take a pro-active approach to helping the people we support to influence local, regional and national policy. We also work closely with national organisations such as the Disabled Children's Partnership and Children England to help the people we support to influence future policy and provision.

The Board actively engages with its beneficiaries, both informally and formally, to understand the impact of its charitable activities and the interests of its beneficiaries. The Together Trust retained the highest award possible for its customer service and relationship management following an independent assessment by Investor in Customers (IIC) in 2017, 2019 and 2021. IIC registered the Charity as having 'exceptional' customer service levels and awarded the Charity gold status across all four IIC principles. The independent assessment of excellence in the field of customer service and customer relationships is based on internal and external perceptions of the customer experience.

The Supporting People subgroup described earlier in this report, reports directly to the Board and has responsibility for overseeing and advising Trustees to ensure the Together Trust is aligned to the needs of its customers and commissioners. The subgroup reviews how the Charity continuously improves and addresses the needs of the people and families who use its services.

The Charity continues to work to formalise a participation strategy and is listening closely to the people we support about the issues that affect them inside and outside of the Trust. Our aim in this area is to be a trusted partner to the people we support and empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision.

We continue to work in partnership with charitable organisations such as the Disabled Children's Partnership, Children England and lead an Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers subgroup, bringing together more than 40 organisations through our campaigning work. During the year we campaigned successfully to change the government's policy to reduce levels of homelessness among young people who have care experience.

During the year we have campaigned at a European level to amplify the views of the people we support. The Together Trust has consistently responded to government consultations, sharing evidence and insight from the people we support and our workforce around our strategic priorities.

In 2022 the Together Trust also contributed to Free Loaves on Friday; a book written by care experienced people about the care system. The anthology is a collection of stories, letters, and poems from care-experienced people of diverse backgrounds. The aim of the book is to give a loud, clear message that care-experienced voices matter.

**Workforce and Workforce Engagement**
The Charity takes great pride in its workforce on whom it depends for the delivery of its charitable objectives.

During the year the Together Trust employed an average of 809 people in the fields of care, education, community, clinical, management and infrastructure support. In June 2022 the Trust became a Real Living Wage employer.

The Charity's pay and reward structure follows a Job Family Model which aims to set out pay and reward in an equal, fair and consistent manner, and at a level to recruit and retain the necessary calibre of staff. Each job family contains different levels, each reflecting different job outputs, skills, knowledge, and experience. However, the essential nature of the activities carried out and the basic skills used are similar. The number of levels varies for each job family, depending on the scope and range of responsibilities.

The Trust makes substantial provision for the qualification, training and development of its staff and volunteers. It offers a wide variety of learning and development opportunities to support organisational, team and individual development linked to achieving the very best outcomes for the people we support. The Charity is committed to working with all colleagues to support their development needs and provides a variety of learning and development events, training, and role specific qualifications.

The Charity's workforce can access an employee assistance service which is a free and confidential support programme to help support staff and volunteers in many aspects of their lives, in and out of the workplace. The Trust is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and continues to champion a number of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to enable staff to feel supported both at work and at home. With over 40 mental health first aiders in our workforce, they offer initial support for mental health and wellbeing through non-judgemental listening and guidance. All members of the workforce are also able to self-refer for support from Able Futures, who give guidance from a mental health specialist to help staff learn coping mechanisms, build resilience, access therapy or work with the Charity to make adjustments to help mental health at work.

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is recognised for eligible employees and all other staff may join a defined contribution pension scheme, which is available to them from the commencement of their employment.

The Charity is aware of its responsibilities in accordance with statutory legislation and all relevant appointments are subject to satisfactory references, Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks and overseas checks.

**Investing in people**
In 2021 the Trust was assessed at 'beyond the standard' for Investors in People ("IIP") and it achieved the prestigious 'Gold' award. The Trust regards the IIP standard as an effective way to improve its practices, measure performance and demonstrate excellence. The IIP framework is used as a key part of developing the Together Trust's people strategy.

The Charity is committed to eliminating discrimination and to treating all individuals fairly in all aspects of its work. The Trust promotes the employment of disabled people through its Equality and Diversity & Disclosure of Disability policies that support equality of opportunity in the recruitment, employment and retention of staff and volunteers, including access to training and promotion. The Charity ensures that EDI is at the forefront of all service delivery and workforce support. Our aim is for long-lasting change that sees EDI become part of the Trust's DNA.

The Trust is committed to improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion engagement plans for its workforce and the people it supports.

**Volunteering**
A three-year volunteering strategy was agreed in autumn 2020 and which has been updated in 2023. The Charity aims to have an effective and inclusive volunteering programme that delivers tangible and valuable outcomes for our beneficiaries, supporting the delivery of the Charity's Stronger Together Plan. Sixty volunteers have supported the Trust over the past year. From governance, education, residential services and community services to support roles including fundraising, communications and organisational development.

Over the reporting period, our regular volunteers (not including Governors or Trustees) gave more than 3,000 hours of their precious time to help the Trust (more than double the hours in the previous reporting year). Their contribution equates to over £28,500 if valued in terms of the national living wage. In addition, almost 950 hours of time was contributed by volunteers, including corporate groups, helping at our events during the course of the year.

**Effective workforce engagement**
A Human Resources and Organisational Development Subgroup reports direct to the Board and oversees effective workforce engagement and that the outcomes from staff and volunteer surveys are received and acted upon. This group also oversees the organisation's approach to workforce equity, diversity and inclusion and monitors and evaluates all relevant KPIs with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement. More information about the work of this subgroup can be found on page 6 of this report.

The Trust seeks to listen, understand and act upon our staff views through the Staff Council. The Staff Council is an elected group of colleagues from across all our services who meet on a quarterly basis. As a consultative body for employees, the Trust has extended and is strengthening the Staff Council's role to ensure that, as strategy is developed and plans are implemented, Staff Council representatives help to communicate and engage better with our workforce. They review how successfully initiative have been delivered. The meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive and have Trustee attendance.

**Suppliers**
The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure its charitable business activities are undertaken in accordance with regulatory requirements and best practice. The Trust's procurement policy has been developed to help the Trust achieve best value in the use of limited resources to support the Trust in achieving its overall aims and objectives. It also supports addressing the requirements of the Charity Governance Code and the 2010 Bribery Act by emphasising the responsibility of all staff involved to conduct procurement legally and ethically, as well as securing value for money.

All procurement activity adheres to the following key principles:
- transparency – clear procedures to be followed and evidence of adherence retained for audit
- equal treatment – for all potential suppliers to ensure a level playing field, no favouritism and to ensure best value is obtained
- wherever possible we endeavour to source potential suppliers from the local area where this can be justified in terms of best value and/or social value
- suppliers will be required to follow Trust safeguarding standards where applicable

The Trust also measures and reports on its supplier payment practices to Trustees on a regular basis.

**Wider Community and Environment**
The Board is focused on its long-term and strategic charitable aims as set out in the Stronger Together Plan described in the Future Strategy section of this report. One of the aims of the Health and Safety, Risk and Environment Subgroup, created in 2021, is to agree and monitor an organisational approach to environmental impact. This group oversees the development of the Trust's property portfolio to ensure that it is fit for purpose while being as green and sustainable as cost effectively possible. The group monitors the effectiveness of the Charity's approach to risk management (including the annual risk register). The group also monitors and evaluates all relevant KPIs to help address areas requiring improvement.

The Board recognises the importance of open and honest dialogue with Regulators who include Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. As a registered Charity the Together Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission. The Board receive regular updates on legal, regulatory and compliance matters when it meets six times a year. Board subgroups receive more frequent updates in line with their specialisms, as set out in the Corporate Governance section of this report.

**Measuring, managing and reporting the Together Trust's social value**
The Together Trust continues to take a strategic approach to the implementation of social value measurement and reporting, both as an organisation and through its contracts, which measure and report our overall social footprint. The Charity is already delivering social value however, it needs to improve data capture and reporting to its stakeholders to improve impact, evidence social value delivery and support it in developing a stronger and more robust approach to bidding. During 2022/23 the Charity established a structured process for target setting, measurement and contract management of the social, economic and environmental impacts of each project from bidding, project management to completion. The National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) social value framework tools was adopted during 2022/23.

**Monitoring Progress**
The Board monitors progress against strategic aims in the Stronger Together Plan by measuring key performance indicators relating to specific areas of the Charity's operations and support services. Each Board subgroup, described in the Corporate Governance section of this report, receives KPIs relating to their specialist area either monthly or quarterly.

**Stronger Together Scorecard Themes**

More information about the measures and results can be found in the Strategic achievements and performance section of this report.

# Strategic achievements and performance

In the year to 31 March 2023, the Together Trust provided over 47 social care, special education, community and family support services to over 3,200 children, young people, vulnerable adults and families, whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Like many other charities, demand for the majority of the Trust's services continues to grow.

In the main, the Trust's services were carried out on behalf of local authorities, public sector bodies and service users in the North West of England and surrounding areas including Staffordshire and the West Midlands. All Special Educational Services are Ofsted regulated. Residential Care Services, along with Domiciliary Care and Community Support Services, are regulated by either the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

During the reporting period the Together Trust's services were:

**Special Educational Services**

**Inscape House School** – a non-maintained special school that meets the needs of children and young people, aged 5 to 19 years, with autism spectrum conditions and related social communication difficulties. The school also runs its own café as a social enterprise.

**Bridge College** – a specialist Further Education Day college that supports students up to 25 years withlearning difficulties and disabilities, complex needs, communication disorders and autism.

**Ashcroft School** - an independent special school catering for children and young people, aged 8 to 18 years, who have struggled to cope in other settings because of their individual barriers to learning. Ashcroft also offers Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) services, vocational learning for 14 to 19 year-olds and operates Ashcroft College which support students, aged 14 to 16 years, who may have been excluded or are close to being excluded from mainstream education.

**Social & Therapy Care Services – Residential Care Services**

12 Ofsted registered homes for children and young people including:

- 1 short break/overnight respite service for young people with autism/learning disabilities
- 1 short break/overnight respite service for young people with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities
- 2 shared care service provisions for young people with autism/learning disabilities
- 2 emergency provisions
- 5 mainstream Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) provisions
- 2 therapeutic services for young people with complex autism/learning disabilities
- 1 home for disabled adults with complex health needs (CQC registered)

**Social & Therapy Care Services - Domiciliary Care and Community Support Services**

- 6 supported living services for adults with complex needs
- Weekend club for young people with complex needs in Stockport (opened in January 2022)
- Evening youth activity clubs for young people with disabilities/autism in Stockport
- The Hub at the Humphrey Booth Centre in Ordsall, Salford – a community space for the people of Salford
- A learning support service based at Bolton College, supporting students, aged 16 to 26 years, with complex needs and/ or disabilities
- Adult day services at Newbridge and SK30+ centres in Stockport
- Specialist Positive Behaviour Support Services in Stockport and Salford
- SEND mediation and dispute resolution services in Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, St Helens, Stoke on Trent and Telford and Wrekin.
- SEND Information and Advice Service in Stockport

**Social & Therapy Care Services - Clinical services**

Together Trust multi-disciplinary teams work in mainstream and SEND schools and colleges providing:

- Observation, assessment, individual and group interventions
- Support to update and deliver on Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP) recommendations
- Staff coaching and training
- Sleep support (Trafford and Rochdale, and Children in Need funded services in the wider area)

**Other services – Fostering services**

We provide a Fostering service with support and training so our Foster carers can provide safe, caring, nurturing homes for children who need them.

## Our activity and key performance indicator (KPI) results in 2022/23

During the year, the Charity renewed its commitment to its strategic plan, known as Stronger Together, which has been updated to 2025/26. The plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to innovative ways of improving how the Charity works. More information about this can be found in Future Strategy section of this report.

During 2022/23, the Charity continued to deliver results against four key strategic goals, set originally in 2017/18, as set out on the following pages.

### Stronger Together Aim 1

**Our needs led, community based, integrated services deliver high-quality, person-centred support. We adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families.**

### Our progress in 2022/23

Referrals for the majority of Trust services remains high, though fostering placements were fewer in the year. The Charity continues to invest in supporting and recruiting foster carers to meet increased demand for foster placements. Many of the young people we support in children's homes benefit from long term placement stability. This remains a good indicator for the outcomes for young people in the Charity's care, as is their attendance in full-time education. The Trust supports national and local campaigns aimed at improving the longevity of residential placements for children that reach 16+ and encourage and support young people to remain in care until they reach 18+. Many young people in our foster care also benefit from long term placement stability and we are actively looking at how we can continue to provide a consistent level of support to our cohort of care leavers.

Many young people produced excellent award results, thanks to the dedication and support of our workforce. The redevelopment of Newbridge, a service for people with individual and often complex needs in Stockport, was approved by the Board in April 2019. The expansion of this Stockport service was delayed as a result of the COVID pandemic; however, redevelopment has begun with support from a fundraising appeals during 2022/23 and 2023/24.

**At 31 March 2023 all Trust services were graded Good by Ofsted/CQC with only one exception. All of the Charity's CQC and Ofsted educational inspection reports are available as a download from www.togethertrust.org.uk**

**Service Occupancy – Placement Numbers**

| | 31 March 2023 | Target |
|---|---|---|
| Community Services achieving a minimum of 95% of contracted hours : | 87% | 100% |
| Clinical Services achieving a minimum of 95% of contracted hours: | 99% | 100% |
| Average occupancy across all children's homes: | 86% | 100% |

A major project commenced in the year to consider the redevelopment of the Together Trust's Cheadle campus. The Board will continue to consider proposals and options into 2023/24.

## Stronger Together Aim 2

**We are a trusted partner – we empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision.**

### Our progress in 2022/23

During the year Inscape House School won the National Association of Special School's Breaking Barriers award **https://www.nasschools.org.uk/2022/10/13/nass-award-winners-2022/**

The Trust was also shortlisted and highly commended in the Stockport Business Awards' category of best not for profit organisation.

Participation and co-production development continues to help the people we support to change government policy and future development and practice at the Trust. More information about this can be found on page 8 of this report.

We campaign based on the feedback from the people we support, and their families, about what matters to them and from their perspective what good looks like.

Our current campaigns and policy priorities are:

- Improved outcomes for care leavers
- Improved mental health support for young people
- Greater employment and opportunity for people with disabilities
- Better support for young people who are transitioning services

Investor in Customers (IIC) registered the Charity as having 'exceptional' customer service levels and awarded the Trust gold status across all four of its principles in 2021. The independent assessment of excellence in the field of customer service, and customer relationships, is based on internal and external perceptions of customers and staff. The Trust has retained this standard since 2017.

For latest news and developments at the Together Trust visit our **website** **www.togethertrust.org.uk**

**Investor in Customers biennial accreditation results (December 2021):**
**90.4%** of respondents agree that the Trust's staff provide a consistently high-quality service and good support.
**90.9%** of respondents view the Trust as a trusted service provider.
**84.8%** of respondents said that the Trust focuses on putting customer and individuals who use our services first.

## Stronger Together Aim 3

**We grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs. We maximise fundraising opportunities and aim to demonstrate our social, environmental, and economic value from everything that we do.**

### Our progress in 2022/23

During the year, the Together Trust won new contracts and joined or reconfirmed its position on the following frameworks:

- Manchester City Council – Learning Disability and/or Autism Early Intervention and Prevention Service: 3 years and 6 months from April 2023
- Tameside MBC – SEND Information, Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS): 1 year contract from July 2022
- Stockport MBC – Youth Club (short breaks for children with disabilities): 1 year contract from April 2022
- Lancashire County Council - Flexible Agreement for the Provision of Fostering Agency Placements: 10 years from May 2022
- Manchester City Council - Flexible Purchasing System for Alternative Education Provision: 10 years from May 2022
- Cheshire East Council – SEND Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Service: 2 years re-award from March 2023

- Stockport MBC – Enhanced Therapies Service: 1 year re-award from August 2022 (subsequently to be re-awarded for further year in August 2023)
- Trafford MBC – Sleep Tight Service: 1 year re-award from July 2022
- NHS GM Integrated Care Board – Rochdale Sleep Service:1 year re-award from April 2023
- Stockport MBC – EOTAS Service (Education Other Than at School): 1 year contract from September 2022
- Liverpool City Council - Schools Outreach Service – various individual school contracts for Speech & Language and Occupational Therapy, and Advisory Teachers services across Liverpool

Significant investment continues to be made in IT/digital transformation to upgrade equipment and improve digital platforms for the people we support and our workforce. Migration to cloud storage continues across Trust settings and major projects include updating the Trust's finance and billing platforms. Work has begun to improve CRM systems and centralise referrals. A programme board governance framework oversees project management and reporting.

Income rose to £33.75m during the year (2021/22 £32.57m). Fundraising team income was £231,000 in donations (2021/22 £237,000).

The Trust continued to deliver awareness of its heritage and archive thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2022, enabling it to plan a number of learning and participation heritage-themed events for volunteers, young people and the wider community. The grant, to mark the Trust's 150th anniversary, was delivered differently due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. In agreement with the National Lottery, completion of this work was achieved in summer 2022.

The grant delivery culminated with an exhibition of the Charity's heritage at Manchester Central Library in spring 2022. Our 150th heritage activity can be viewed by visiting https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/150

## Stronger Together Aim 4

**Our flexible, talented and diverse workforce treat people equitably and inclusively. They have clear learning and development opportunities. We listen to our workforce, look after their wellbeing and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement.**

### Our progress in 2022/23

| As at 31 March 2023: | |
|---|---|
| Staff turnover in operational service areas | 23% (21/22 27%) |
| Length of service in operational service areas | 42% with 5 years or more service |

During 2022/23 the Together Trust continued to focus on its workforce. The Charity is committed to a transparent system for pay and reward in order to attract and retain staff, as our ability to recruit and retain staff continues to be a key risk.

The Charity published its latest gender pay report in April 2023. A copy of this can be downloaded from: https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/Charity-information

The Trust has continued to work closely with the Staff Council which represents the workforce and acts as our workforce's voice. It is a forum for colleague consultation and two-way information sharing, informing colleagues and leaders about important information and influencing the Together Trust's strategies, policies, procedures and ways of working.

The Trust was awarded Investors in People Gold in May 2021 and continues to invest heavily in its learning and development programme, giving staff the opportunity to develop their skills and providing them with opportunities to progress within the Charity. It has further developed its leadership and management training for staff. More information about workforce development can be found in the Section 172 statement on Workforce and Workforce Engagement of this report.

A recruitment and early retention plan has been developed to help secure appropriate staffing levels in services and further investment has been made in strengthening the recruitment team, together with utilising technology and the continuing successful use of an employee referral app.

Around sixty volunteers have supported the Trust in a variety of roles from trustees and governors to reading supporters and musicians. Where possible, volunteering outcomes have been tracked for the services supported and for the volunteers themselves. You can read more about our volunteers in the Section 172 statement on Volunteers of this report.

The Trust is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and, during the year, championed a number of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to enable staff to feel supported both at work and home. With over 40 mental health first aiders in the workforce, they offer initial support for mental health and wellbeing through non- judgemental listening and guidance.

Further information about the Together Trust's impact can be found in our Annual Review Report and is available to download on the Trust's website.

**Energy Usage and Sustainability**

The information and data to calculate energy usage in 2022/23 is taken from meter readings for gas and electricity and from fuel card readings for the Trust fleet of vehicles. Mileage claims have been used to calculate the 'grey' fleet. All fuel conversions to kWh and $CO_2$ emissions data have been calculated in line with UK Government environmental reporting guidance, using UK Government GHG conversion factors for company reporting.

The Total Energy Consumption (TEC) in 2022/23 amounts to 3,955,757 kWh (2021/22 4,071,620 kWh*) resulting in carbon emissions of 668 tonnes of carbon dioxide (2021/22 697 tonnes*). The annual quantity of emissions resulting from our transport activities, including the grey fleet, and the use of gas was 615.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide (2021/22 627.5 tonnes*). Electricity usage accounted for 52.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide (2021/22 69.9 tonnes*).

The average tonnes of carbon emissions per employee was 0.83 (2021/22 0.85).

The annual emissions from the Trust central site, including Inscape House and Ashcroft schools and the Central Administration office (but excluding transport), amounted to 186 tonnes of carbon dioxide being 27.8% of the total emissions (2021/22 192 tonnes accounting for 27.5%). Transport in total accounted for 26.5% of carbon emissions (2021/22 25.7%). There has been a reduction of 4.2% in the environmental impact of the Trust's activities and it is anticipated that by the end of March 2024 the Trust will have 100% zero carbon electricity as contracts are renewed.

The Trust is in the process of developing a masterplan for the redevelopment of its main site at Cheadle with a key objective to ensure that it is as green and sustainable as is cost effectively possible. A review of the Trust's vehicle fleet continues with the aims of progressing to the use of more energy efficient vehicles and updating infrastructure to accommodate charging points for electric vehicles. Environment factors and lower energy efficiencies are among the factors that are considered when energy suppliers contracts are being renewed.

**The comparative figures for 2021/22 have been restated to correct an error in their evaluation last year, resulting in electricity consumption being understated and gas consumption being overstated and a net overstatement of 19 tonnes of carbon dioxide.*

# Financial review

While the majority of Trust income is from local authority fees for education and care services provided, it is noted that authorities continue to face significant funding gaps and the financial outlook for the sector is challenging, which indicates a premium being put on continuing to provide services which represent good value for money to local authorities in the future.

The Charity's services are essential for those who we support and the majority of people who receive our services require a funding decision from the responsible local authority or other such public agency. Most of the Trust's fees are received for services to individuals, although some services are purchased on a block contract basis by local authorities who wish to ensure they have guaranteed access to the Charity as their provider of choice. The Charity is also in a variety of partnership arrangements with a number of local authorities, although more recent new business has been awarded via formal tender processes.

For 2022/23 the Trust reports net expenditure for the year of £0.38m which is down from net income of £1.35m in 2021/22. After transfers between funds and other gains and losses there is a reduction in funds of £0.55m compared to an increase in funds of £1.45m in 2021/22.

Overall Social & Therapy Care Services made a loss of £1.38m on income of £14.57m (2021/22 a surplus of £0.07m on income of £14.28m) due to lower occupancy across services. Turnover of staff in the sector has been high, albeit lower than last year, and despite strong demand for services it has been difficult to recruit staff in sufficient numbers to meet demand despite increases in pay and conditions and as a result there was increased reliance on agency staff. Education services made a reduced surplus of £0.82m on an increased turnover of £16.71m (2021/22 a surplus of £0.92m on income of £15.57m), while other services (fostering) made a surplus of £0.1m on income of £2.10m (2021/22 a surplus of £0.27m on income of £2.43m).

| **2022/23** | **Income £'m** | **Expenditure £'m** | **Net £'m** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Donations | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.00 |
| Social and Therapy Care services | 14.57 | 15.95 | (1.38) |
| Education services | 16.71 | 15.89 | 0.82 |
| Other services - Fostering | 2.10 | 2.00 | 0.10 |

**Comparative for the year ending March 2022**

| 2021/22 | **Income £'m** | **Expenditure £'m** | **Net £'m** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Donations and Fundraising activities | 0.24 | 0.18 | 0.06 |
| Social Care services | 14.28 | 14.21 | 0.07 |
| Education services | 15.57 | 14.65 | 0.92 |
| Other services - Fostering | 2.43 | 2.16 | 0.27 |

### a) Income

In 2022/23 the Together Trust has seen its income increase by 3.7% from £32.57m to £33.76m with the main increase being in education services where income increased by 7.3% due to fee increases and increased student numbers at Bridge College. Social & Therapy Care Services saw an increase in income of 2.0% through fee increases although occupancy of residential services was down due largely to difficulties recruiting staff, while other services (which is mainly our fostering service), saw a reduction in income of 13.6% with less foster placements in the year.

- Investment policy and returns

The investment portfolio of the Charity is invested with the main purpose of ensuring the underlying security of the investment, while achieving growth wherever possible against a series of benchmarks and the regular advice of our investment managers is taken to help achieve this. At the year end, the market value of investments was £924,000 (2021/22 £976,000).

- Fundraising

In 2022/23 fundraising income, including donations, all grants and gifts in kind, was £0.23m (2021/22 £0.24m). Notable contributions were received from a diverse group of supporters, both long-standing relationships and friends to the Charity. The Together Trust is extremely grateful for the generous support received from a variety of individuals, community and corporate supporters, and for the increasing number of grant-making trusts who have chosen to support our young people and families.

As the impact of the COVID pandemic receded, 2022/23 saw the fundraising team return to community events including the fully accessible Join Together Festival. The festival, formerly known as the Family Fun Day, was relaunched, and welcomed by supporters existing and new. We would like to extend particular thanks to the companies and organisations who supported the relaunch of this event. In particular BUPA, the High Sheriff's Police Trust and Primark and the ongoing support of our other key partners throughout 2022/2023 who include: Manchester City Football Club, Kingsmill/AB Foods, John Lewis, Just Teachers, L'Oreal, UDP, The Booth Charities and WNS Assistance.

The Together Trust would like to thank the public for their support of its 2022/23 events, both in person and virtual, including:

Grow Together
Declutter and Donate
Join Together Festival
World Cup Watchalong
Quiz Together
All raffles; and
50:50 Lottery

During the year the charity's online retail channels expanded. This has proved successful and supports most activities undertaken by the fundraising team.

The Trust would like to acknowledge support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to extend grant delivery into 2022/23 and acknowledges the many other individual donors, grant funders and corporate supporters who have made donations or gifts in-kind during the year.

A capital appeal to redevelop Newbridge, one of the Trust's adult centres in Stockport, was delayed into 2021/22 however, work on the capital appeal commenced in 2022/23. The planned expansion of Inscape House School was also put on hold and now forms part of the Trust's redevelopment plan for the Cheadle Campus.

All Trustees are aware of the CC20 guidance from the Charity Commission. The Fundraising Department works closely with the Trust's Information Governance Manager, who oversees data protection compliance for the Charity, to ensure best practice is embedded in all that we do including, but not limited to, a Fundraising database which is administered in the Fundraising Department and the continuance of permission-based communications with individual supporters.

There have been no formal complaints concerning our fundraising practices during the reporting period. Together Trust actively promotes a Complaints and Compliments Policy, which can be found on the Charity's website: https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/who-we-are/policies

The Charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator. The Together Trust does not engage in face-to-face fundraising (known as chugging), telephone fundraising, or direct mail campaigns. There were no licensed street collections in the reporting period. The Together Trust does not use commercial participators.

## b) Expenditure

The Charity reports expenditure of £34.07m in the year (2021/22 £31.20m), an increase of 9.2% compared to an increase in income of 3.6%. This resulted in net expenditure, before gains and losses, of £0.32m compared to net income of £1.37m last year.

Of the increase in expenditure, payroll costs increased by 8.3% following a cost-of-living annual pay increase of 4.5% and a 25% pay enhancement for weekend working, topping up of the sleep-in allowance and further increases due to incremental pay scale progression. In addition, annual leave entitlements were increased. Agency costs increased by £0.65m in the year to £2.14m as a result of more dependency on agency staff. After some years of low inflation, it rose by 10.1% in the 12 months to March 2023.

Social & Therapy Care Services expenditure increased from £14.21m in 2022 to £15.95m in 2023, an increase of 12.2% with the growth in therapy services and staff costs including agency increasing by 14.4%, while education services expenditure increased by 8.5% to £15.90m, being largely an increase in staffing and agency costs. Other services expenditure (being largely fostering), reduced by 7.4% to £2.00m reflecting the reduction in foster placements.

The average number of employees during the year was 809 (2021/22 821). Payroll costs are reported at £23.3m (2021/22 £21.5m), an increase of 8.4% on the previous year.

Whilst the Government continues to actively seek partnership with the voluntary sector, there seems little prospect of them altering their position over VAT. It continues to be a significant burden and the Charity's non-recoverable VAT element amounted to £1,084,000 (2021/22 £894,000).

An actuarial loss of £277,000 on the defined benefit (final salary) pension scheme (which has been closed to new members since 2000) has been suffered during the year (2021/22 actuarial gain of £4,000). The pension scheme has moved from an (unrecognised) asset as at 31 March 2022 to a liability as at 31 March 2023, primarily due to the reduction in return on its assets.

## c) Public Benefit

In setting its plans and priorities for areas of work, the Trustees of the Together Trust have referred to the guidance from the Charity Commission on the provision of public benefit. The summary of the Charity's Strategic Plan and the analysis of the achievements to date as shown in the Strategic Achievements and Performance section of this report, together with more specific examples of the Charity's activities set out in its performance reports, demonstrate how the Charity has sought to fulfil its principal charitable objective which is to give aid, assistance and care to those with disabilities or in need.

Access to all the Together Trust services is based on an objective assessment of need by Together Trust staff and/or a commissioning local authority and is not based on financial ability to pay. In the case of Independent Advice and Support Services and Independent Supporter Services, any parent/legal guardian whose child attends school in the area the service operates may have access to these services.

### d) Reserves

The Trustees periodically review the reserves policy of the Charity and during the last review moved it towards a policy based on an assessment of the Trust's cash flow and the risks it faces. In the current uncertain times, the Together Trust takes a prudent view where, as a minimum, the level of cash reserves must not fall below £2.5m at each month end and it should hold cash reserves of at least six weeks expenditure at the year end. The Trust has significantly increased its designated reserves in the previous year to help support the achievement of our corporate strategy, which has been updated, and in particular to support digital transformation and a property review. It is anticipated that this strategy will result in significant outlay being made over the course of the next four years.

As at 31 March 2023, reserves totalled £28.00m (2021/22 £28.55m), of which £0.48m (2021/22 £0.52m) relates to Restricted Funds and £0.16m (2021/22 £0.17m) relates to Endowment Funds. Of the remaining balance of £27.36m (2021/22 £27.86m), £20.52m (2021/22 £20.91m) relates to general funds (of which £4.41m (2021/22 £3.97m) has been designated to set aside funds towards investment plans) and £6.84m (2021/22 £6.95m) relates to revaluation reserves.

Of the £27.36m (2021/22 £27.86m) unrestricted funds, £19.02m (2021/22 £19.15m) is represented by fixed assets and a further £4.41m (2021/22 £3.97m) has been Designated to set aside funds towards investment plans and both are therefore not available as working capital.

The table below sets out available reserves.

| | **2023** **£'000** | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Net current assets | **9,998** | 10,282 |
| Less long-term creditors and provisions | **(1,024)** | (881) |
| Net reserves | **8,974** | 9,401 |
| Less restricted, designated and endowment funds | **(5,043)** | (4,657) |
| Available reserves | **3,931** | 4,744 |

At the year-end available cash funds were £8,863,000, against the equivalent of six weeks' worth of expenditure of £3,915,000 (2021/22 available cash funds were £9,397,000 against £3,575,000 of expenditure).

### e) Fixed assets

To monitor and control its fixed assets, the Charity makes use of a fixed asset register, which details the organisation's properties, vehicles and other capitalised equipment.

There have fixed asset additions of £0.7m during the year (2021/22 £0.6m), with 2 vehicles (2021/22 6 vehicles) being purchased during the year along with property renovations and improvements at various properties within the property portfolio being undertaken. The changes in tangible fixed assets are summarised in the notes to the financial statements (see note 14).

### f) Going Concern

The key challenge for the Trust going forward, which is common to the Care sector in particular, is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff in a shrinking labour market. To help address this the Trust has reviewed and increased its pay and reward offer to staff and the resources it devotes to recruitment. The Trust has prepared budgets and cash projections taking account of the impact on its financial resources of the increase in the Charity's pay and reward offer to staff, the resources it devotes to recruitment, funds and capital expenditure, and the risk of being able to secure annual fee increases for its services.

The level of brought forward unrestricted reserves and available cash funds have also been considered and we do not believe there are material uncertainties that call into doubt the Together Trust's ability to continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

# Future strategy

**'Stronger Together' Strategic Plan**

The Together Trust provides a wide range of care, community, clinical and education services, which have provided it with a degree of resilience during the last few years of challenge in the age of austerity. The Charity has sought to develop and build upon these areas of expertise.

During the previous year the Charity renewed its commitment to Stronger Together, its strategic plan, which was updated to 2025/26. The plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to innovative ways of improving how the Charity works.

The financial projections supporting the Stronger Together strategy, illustrate growth in current service provision across all service areas.

**Beyond 2022/23**

During the prior year the Trust began work to build a new five-year strategic plan. The Board endorsed proposals evidencing growth opportunities where the Charity will seek to strengthen existing and form new partnerships and alliances. The plan will also use stakeholder feedback, including the Investor in Customers accreditation work, to give the Charity greater insights to inform future planning and service development.

Our Stronger Together strategic aims are:

1. Our needs led, community based, integrated services deliver high quality, person centred support. We adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families
2. We are a trusted partner – we empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision
3. We grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs. We maximise fundraising opportunities and aim to demonstrate our social, environmental and economic value from everything that we do
4. Our flexible, talented and diverse workforce treat people equitably and inclusively. They have clear learning and development opportunities. We listen to our workforce, look after their wellbeing and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement

The Board has endorsed this approach, including a property review of the Cheadle site, and substantial funds have been set aside in designated reserves for this purpose. Work is continuing to comprehensively review the service environment to support the wider goals and challenges of commissioners and families that we work alongside.

In line with a needs-led pathway, our aim is to develop a model to provide services with the individual central to the package of support. This model will grow capacity, support local authorities and expand our reach by developing community-based provision that works flexibly with our resources.

Our progress will continue to be measured by key performance indicators relating to specific areas of the Charity's operations and support services.

# Principal risks and uncertainties

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring effective risk management and ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to manage risks. On an ongoing basis risks are reported to every main Board meeting (six per year) to keep them abreast and up to date with the main, current risks and issues and the actions being taken to mitigate these risks. We have recently undertaken a review of our risks and risk methodology to improve the management and reporting of risk.

Throughout the year the impact of the coronavirus pandemic continued to reduce down to manageable levels and overall, our key risks have not changed in the last year and relate to our ability to recruit and retain sufficient staff to run our services cost effectively.

Although, during the initial stages of the pandemic in 2020/21, staff turnover reduced, it increased in 2021/22 to 27% of the workforce which was common throughout our sector, but which had a major impact on our ability to run services. In 2022/23 we have seen staff turnover reduce to 23% for the year with a steady reduction throughout the year following significant increases and improvements to our pay and terms and conditions and we continue to remain a Real Living Wage employer. We have strong learning and development opportunities available to staff, as well as staff wellbeing support and a new staff reward platform providing additional benefits.

The continued financial success of the Trust is particularly dependent on securing annual fee increases for its services and we have been largely successful in securing these in recent years. Fee increases are becoming increasingly necessary with recent high inflation rates and the need to keep our pay competitive, but we are aware that Local Authorities who fund our services are under increasing financial pressures themselves, but demand for our services remains high and they recognise the reasons for these increases.

The Charity continues to review its resource requirements and in particular the need to update its digital infrastructure and property portfolio to ensure that it remains competitive in the future, Significant investment has already been made in our digital team and systems upgrades and this will continue. We have recently concluded a masterplan for the main Cheadle site in consultation with key stakeholders and are progressing with the first phase.

Safeguarding continues to be an area of potential risk and the Charity has established a robust accountability, control and review framework involving officers and Trustees.

The Charity has been informed by The Pensions Trust that some benefit changes in regard to the final salary-based pension scheme, which closed to new members in 2000, may not have been in accordance with the scheme rules. The Pensions Trust are seeking Court direction in relation to this, the outcome of which is not expected to be known until early 2025. As outcome of the case is awaited, at present, no obligation of a liability has arisen as a result of the past benefit changes and therefore no amounts are provided for. If the Court directs that changes were made in a way not permitted by the scheme rules, then this would give rise to additional pension liabilities for the Charity in the future, which the Scheme's Actuary has estimated to be in the region of £6.1m. This figure is estimated on a non-accounting basis, using actuarial assumptions derived using the Trustee's Technical Provisions basis as at 30 September 2021 where this relates to service prior to the date of change and has been calculated from the preliminary results of the actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2021 allowing for market conditions at that date. It is not possible to determine the financial implications for the Charity at this stage, therefore the above details are disclosed as a contingent liability in order to provide stakeholders with information about the potential impact of this matter.

# Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

**AUDITOR**

RSM UK Audit LLP was appointed during the period and has expressed their willingness to continue in office as auditor and a resolution to reappoint RSM UK Audit LLP as auditor will be proposed at the forthcoming annual general meeting.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report and the directors report as required by company law, was approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by

**Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

**10 November 2023**

# Independent auditor's report to the members of The Together Trust

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of The Together Trust (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 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 charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of 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 Companies Act 2006.

**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 charitable company 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.

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 charitable company'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 other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. 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.

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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

**Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report or the Strategic Report included within the Trustees' Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

**Responsibilities of trustees**
As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 23, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) 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 charitable company'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 charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's 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.

**The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**
Irregularities are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The objectives of our audit are to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding compliance with laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, to perform audit procedures to help identify instances of non-compliance with other laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements, and to respond appropriately to identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations identified during the audit.

In relation to fraud, the objectives of our audit are to identify and assess the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud, to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud through designing and implementing appropriate responses and to respond appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

However, it is the primary responsibility of management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, to ensure that the entity's operations are conducted in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations and for the prevention and detection of fraud.

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud, the audit engagement team:

- obtained an understanding of the nature of the sector, including the legal and regulatory framework that the charitable company operates in and how the charitable company is complying with the legal and regulatory framework;
- inquired of management, and those charged with governance, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, including any known actual, suspected or alleged instances of fraud;
- discussed matters about non-compliance with laws and regulations and how fraud might occur including assessment of how and where the financial statements may be susceptible to fraud.

As a result of these procedures we consider the most significant laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements are FRS 102, Charities SORP (FRS 102), Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, and the charitable company's governing document. We performed audit procedures to detect non-compliances which may have a material impact on the financial statements which included reviewing the financial statements including the Trustees' Report, and remaining alert to new or unusual transactions which may not be in accordance with the governing documents.

The most significant laws and regulations that have an indirect impact on the financial statements are the Education Inspection Framework under the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Keeping Children Safe in Education under the Education Act 2002, Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulations, and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). We performed audit procedures to inquire of management whether the charitable company is in compliance with these law and regulations and inspected correspondence with regulatory authorities.

The audit engagement team identified the risk of management override of controls as the area where the financial statements were most susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. Audit procedures performed included but were not limited to testing manual journal entries and other adjustments, evaluating the business rationale in relation to significant, unusual transactions and transactions entered into outside the normal course of business and challenging judgments and estimates.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**Use of our report**
This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Laura Inglesby

Laura Inglesby FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of RSM UK AUDIT LLP, Statutory Auditor
Chartered Accountants,
14th Floor
20 Chapel Street
Liverpool
L3 9AG

10 November 2023

# Statement of financial activities

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2023 (including income and expenditure account)

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2023 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2023 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2023 £'000 | **Total Funds 2023 £'000** | **Total Funds 2022 £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME FROM:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 86 | 145 | - | **231** | **237** |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 33,375 | - | - | **33,375** | **32,278** |
| Investments | 6 | 142 | - | 4 | **146** | **24** |
| Other | 7 | 1 | - | - | **1** | **29** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | | **33,604** | **145** | **4** | **33,753** | **32,568** |
| **EXPENDITURE ON:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 220 | 5 | 1 | **226** | **176** |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 33,714 | 130 | - | **33,844** | **31,019** |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | | **33,934** | **135** | **1** | **34,070** | **31,195** |
| Net losses on investments | 15 | (55) | - | (11) | **(66)** | **(26)** |
| **Net (expenditure)/income for the year** | | **(385)** | **10** | **(8)** | **(383)** | **1,347** |
| Transfers between funds | | 53 | (53) | - | **-** | **-** |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial (loss)/gain on defined benefit pension scheme | 22 | (277) | - | - | **(277)** | **4** |
| Other gains | 12 | 109 | - | - | **109** | **103** |
| **NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS** | | **(500)** | **(43)** | **(8)** | **(551)** | **1,454** |
| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 27,862 | 520 | 165 | **28,547** | **27,093** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | (500) | (43) | (8) | **(551)** | **1,454** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 20 | **27,362** | **477** | **157** | **27,996** | **28,547** |

There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed above and the net (expenditure)/income for the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

See note 19 for comparative Statement of Financial Activities analysed by funds.

# Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2023

| | Note | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **FIXED ASSETS** | | | |
| Tangible assets | 14 | 18,098 | 18,170 |
| Investments | 15 | 924 | 976 |
| | | 19,022 | 19,146 |
| **CURRENT ASSETS** | | | |
| Debtors | 16 | 3,178 | 2,963 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 9,340 | 9,917 |
| | | 12,518 | 12,880 |
| **CREDITORS:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | 17 | (2,520) | (2,598) |
| **NET CURRENT ASSETS** | | 9,998 | 10,282 |
| **TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES** | | 29,020 | 29,428 |
| **CREDITORS:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due after more than one year | 18 | (712) | (881) |
| **Provision for pension scheme liabilities** | 22 | (312) | - |
| **NET ASSETS** | | 27,996 | 28,547 |
| **FUNDS OF THE CHARITY** | | | |
| Unrestricted funds: | | | |
| General | | 16,108 | 16,939 |
| Revaluation reserve | | 6,845 | 6,951 |
| Designated | | 4,409 | 3,972 |
| | | 27,362 | 27,862 |
| Restricted income funds | | 477 | 520 |
| Endowment funds | | 157 | 165 |
| **TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS** | 20,21 | 27,996 | 28,547 |

These financial statements on pages 27 to 55 of The Together Trust (registered number 301722) were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 10th November 2023. They were signed on its behalf by:

**Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

**Anthony Farnworth**
**Honorary Treasurer**

# Cash flow statement

For the year ended 31 March 2023

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| **NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Net movement in funds | **(551)** | 1,454 |
| Adjustments for: | | |
| Depreciation | **802** | 731 |
| Losses on investments | **66** | 26 |
| Income from investments | **(21)** | (9) |
| Profit on the sale of fixed assets | **(1)** | (29) |
| Interest receivable | **(125)** | (15) |
| Interest payable | **53** | 60 |
| Decrease in debtors | **(215)** | 4,080 |
| (Decrease)/increase in creditors | **(65)** | (2,155) |
| Net movement of pension service cost | **98** | 67 |
| Net cash outflow from defined benefit scheme pension contributions | **(63)** | (63) |
| Interest rate swap liability gain | **(109)** | (103) |
| Pension scheme actuarial gain | **277** | (4) |
| **Net cash flows from operating activities** | **146** | 4,040 |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Interest received | **125** | 15 |
| Income from investments | **21** | 9 |
| Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment | **1** | 32 |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | **(730)** | (612) |
| Proceeds from sale of investments | **358** | 21 |
| Purchase of investments | **(387)** | (701) |
| **Net cash flows from investing activities** | **(612)** | (1,236) |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Interest paid | **(53)** | (60) |
| Repayments of borrowings | **(58)** | (71) |
| **Net cash flows from financing activities** | **(111)** | (131) |
| Net (decrease)/increase in cash in the year | **(577)** | 2,673 |
| Cash at the beginning of the year | **9,917** | 7,244 |
| **Cash at the end of the year** | **9,340** | 9,917 |

**Analysis of changes in net debt**

| | Note | At the beginning of the year £'000 | Cash flows £'000 | Fair value movements £'000 | At the end of the year £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | | **9,917** | **(577)** | **-** | **9,340** |
| Bank loans | **18** | **(808)** | **58** | **-** | **(750)** |
| Interest rate swap | **23** | **(131)** | **-** | **109** | **(22)** |
| | | **8,978** | **(519)** | **109** | **8,568** |

# Notes to the financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2023

1. **Accounting policies**

**Basis of preparation**
The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of listed investments and derivatives which are measured at market value.

The financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019)" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective 1 January 2019, and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in Sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest one thousand sterling pounds.

**Group financial statements**
The Charity is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial statements by virtue that all subsidiary undertakings may be excluded from consolidation as they are not material and have not operated in the financial year. These financial statements therefore present information about the Charity as an individual undertaking rather than as a group.

**Going concern**
The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have prepared budgets and projections which indicate that, taking account of the impact on cash levels and financial resources of the increase in the Charity's pay and reward offer to staff, the resources it devotes to recruitment, capital and funds expenditure and the risk of being able to secure annual fee increases for its services, the Charity is able to continue as a going concern and maintain sustainable cash reserves for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing these financial statements. The Trustees have considered a period in excess of twelve months from the date of the approval of these financial statements in making their assessment.

**Fund accounting**
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes, although in practice they may represent the funding of fixed assets.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes, including the development fund described below. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The purpose of the development fund reserve is to earmark funds to provide for ongoing maintenance, repair and refurbishment of the Together Trust homes and schools, in compliance with standards set by inspecting bodies such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The age and fabric of the establishments necessitate constant repairs, which have been highlighted by comprehensive surveys carried out by an appointed architect and reviewed annually. The programme for refurbishment for any new financial year is specified prior to the previous year end.

The Revaluation reserve arose when fixed assets were revalued, prior to the adoption of FRS102, at a value higher than their previous carrying value and the increase in value is accounted for within the revaluation reserve. It forms part of unrestricted funds.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used by the Charity for particular purposes as specified by the donor. The costs of administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The purpose of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

Endowment funds are a form of restricted fund where the assets are required to be invested or retained for actual use rather than expended. An endowment fund where there is no power to convert the capital into income is known as a permanent endowment fund which must generally be held indefinitely.

Expendable endowment is an endowment fund where the Trustees have the power to convert the assets (i.e. land, buildings, investments or cash) into expendable income. The Charity holds permanent and expendable endowment funds. The permanent funds are not considered to be material.

**Income**
Income is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met (generally by delivery of contracted services), it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from grants includes grants where entitlement to funding is subject to specific performance conditions. Performance conditions may be stipulated explicitly by the funder or may be implicit as per the Charity's funding proposal. Income is deferred when the funder has imposed conditions, which must be met before the Charity has unconditional entitlement or the funder has specified the funds can only be utilised in future accounting periods.

Donated goods and services are included at the lower of their value to Charity and their estimated market value. No amount is included for services donated by volunteers. The full value of leasehold peppercorn rent is not valued due to the prohibitive cost of doing so. Income from fundraising activities is included in donations.

Fees invoiced in advance of services provided are carried forward as deferred income until the service is delivered.

**Expenditure**
Expenditure is recognised when there is a constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income and those incurred in generating fundraising income

- Charitable expenditure includes all expenditure associated with activities directly attributable to the service delivery of the Charity's charitable objectives, in respect of residential, respite, outreach, educational, fostering and social work services

- Support costs are costs of those functions that assist the work of the Charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include central head office costs (for example finance, human resources and governance costs) and have been allocated to charitable activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

**Operating lease agreements**
Rentals applicable to operating leases, where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor, are charged against income on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

**Liabilities**
Liabilities are recognised where the Charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amount.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

**Trustees**
The Trustees have elected that the Charity apply a policy of non-remuneration for Trustees, excluding out of pocket expenses.

**Tangible fixed assets**
The transitional arrangements of FRS 102 were adopted on transition to FRS102 to freeze the tangible fixed assets valuation of freehold and leasehold properties as deemed cost, and hence tangible fixed assets are stated at deemed cost (being 2014 market value net of depreciation to the adoption of FRS 102) less depreciation and any provision for impairment. Costs of maintenance are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they are incurred. Assets below a value of £2,500 are not capitalised.

Depreciation is provided on each tangible fixed asset, other than freehold land which is not depreciated, at rates calculated to writeoff the cost, less its estimated residual value, on a straight line basis over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Properties | - buildings | - 2% - 3% per annum |
| | - improvements | - 6% - 20% per annum |
| Leasehold property improvements | | - over the life of lease |
| Motor vehicles | | - 20% per annum |
| Ancillary equipment | | - 20% per annum |

**Investment assets**
Investments are included in the balance sheet at fair value as measured by middle market price values at the year end. The Trustees do not consider there to be any material difference in the valuation as measured by bid price. Movements in values during the year are included in the Statement of Financial Activities for any realised and unrealised gains and losses.

**Employee benefits**
For defined benefit schemes, the amounts charged to the Statement of Financial Activities are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. The interest cost and the expected return on assets are shown as a net amount of other finance gains or losses. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet. The Trust recognises a plan surplus as a defined benefit plan asset only to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan.

For defined contribution schemes, the amount charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of pension costs is the contributions payable in the year. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments in the balance sheet as appropriate.

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme. The Charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme and therefore has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

**Financial instruments**
The Charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102, in full, to all of its financial instruments.

*Recognition and measurement of financial instruments*
Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Charity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

*Classification of financial instruments*
Financial instruments are classified as liabilities and equity instruments according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the Company after deducting all of its liabilities.

*Financial assets and liabilities at amortised cost*
Trade and all other debtors (including accrued income) which are receivable within one year are initially measured at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being the transaction price less any amounts settled and any impairment losses.

A provision for impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the amounts due will not be collected according to the original terms of the contract. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities for the excess of the carrying value of the trade debtor over the present value of the future cash flows discounted using the original effective interest rate. Subsequent reversals of an impairment loss that objectively relate to an event occurring after the impairment loss was recognised, are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Trade, and all other creditors (including accruals) payable within one year that do not constitute a financing transaction are initially measured at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being transaction price less any amounts settled.

Where the arrangement with a creditor constitutes a financing transaction, the creditor is initially measured at the present value of future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar instrument and subsequently measured at amortised cost, being transaction price less any amounts settled and the cumulative amortisation (using the effective interest method) of any difference between the amount at initial recognition and the maturity amount. The effective interest rate is the rate that discounts estimated future cash payments to the carrying amount of the financial liability.

Borrowings are initially recognised at the transaction price, including transaction costs (unless the arrangement constitutes, in effect, a financing transaction, in which case it is initially recognised at the present value of future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument) and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and other similar expenses.

Trade investments are equity investments over which the Company has no significant influence, joint control or control and are initially measured at transaction price. Transaction price includes transaction costs, except where trade investments are measured at fair value through profit or loss when transaction costs are expensed to profit or loss as incurred. Trade investments are measured at fair value through profit or loss, or cost less impairment if fair value cannot be measured reliably. The fair value of trade investments quoted on a recognised stock exchange is the quoted bid price.

*Derecognition of financial assets and liabilities*
A financial asset is derecognised only when the contractual rights to cash flows expire or are settled, or substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are transferred to another party, or if some (but not substantially all) risks and rewards of ownership are retained but control of the asset has transferred to another party that is able to sell the asset in its entirety to an unrelated third party.

A financial liability (or part thereof) is derecognised when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires.

*Derivative financial instruments*
The Charity uses derivative financial instruments to reduce exposure to interest rate movements. The Charity does not hold or issue derivative financial instruments for speculative purposes. Derivatives are initially recognised at fair value at the date a derivative contract is entered into and are subsequently remeasured to their fair value at each reporting date. The resulting gain or loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities immediately.

**2. Company, charitable and legal status of the Trust**
The Together Trust, a public benefit entity, is incorporated in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member. The company is a registered Charity and has no liability to corporation tax on its charitable activities. The registered office is given on page 1.

**3. Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty**
In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, which are described in note 1, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated 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 ongoing 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 both current and future periods.

In respect of the defined benefit pension scheme, the Charity has an obligation to pay pension benefits to certain employees. The cost of these benefits and the present value of the obligation depend on a number of factors including life expectancy, salary increases, asset valuations and the discount rate on corporate bonds. The Trustees estimate these factors in determining the net pension obligation in the balance sheet. The assumptions reflect historical experience and current trends as set out in note 22**Error! Reference source not found.**.

Other than the above, the Trustees do not consider there are any other critical judgements or sources of estimation uncertainty requiring disclosure.

## 4. Analysis of income from donations

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Donations | **231** | 237 |

## 5. Analysis of income from charitable activities

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Social & Therapy Care Services | **14,566** | 14,281 |
| Educational services | **16,712** | 15,570 |
| Other services | **2,097** | 2,427 |
| | **33,375** | 32,278 |

Government grants of £nil (2022 £38,000) are included within income from charitable activities (Social & Therapy Care Services) and relate to HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

## 6. Analysis of income from investments

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Investment income | **21** | 9 |
| Bank interest | **125** | 15 |
| | **146** | 24 |

## 7. Analysis of other income

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Net gain on disposal of fixed assets | **1** | 29 |
| | **1** | 29 |

## 8. Analysis of expenditure on raising funds

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | **151** | 125 |
| Service provision costs | **21** | 10 |
| Service administration costs | **19** | 6 |
| Other service costs | **35** | 35 |
| | **226** | 176 |

## 9. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

| Expenditure | Social & Therapy Care Services 2023 £'000 | Education Services 2023 £'000 | Other Services 2023 £'000 | Total 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 11,913 | 10,498 | 1,530 | **23,941** |
| Premises costs | 735 | 1,164 | 22 | **1,921** |
| Service provision costs | 613 | 728 | 21 | **1,362** |
| Service administration costs | 260 | 441 | 84 | **785** |
| Other service costs | 379 | 725 | 51 | **1,155** |
| Head Office support costs (note 10) | 2,045 | 2,339 | 296 | **4,680** |
| | **15,945** | **15,895** | **2,004** | **33,844** |

**Comparatives for the year ended 31 March 2022**

| Expenditure | Social & Therapy Care Services 2022 £'000 | Education Services 2022 £'000 | Other Services 2022 £'000 | Total 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 10,410 | 9,807 | 1,671 | **21,888** |
| Premises costs | 584 | 944 | 20 | **1,548** |
| Service provision costs | 627 | 649 | 9 | **1,285** |
| Service administration costs | 269 | 575 | 97 | **941** |
| Other service costs | 479 | 647 | 50 | **1,176** |
| Head Office support costs (note 10) | 1,841 | 2,026 | 314 | **4,181** |
| | **14,210** | **14,648** | **2,161** | **31,019** |

**Expenditure**
Total expenditure comprises direct costs incurred in the delivery of Trust services and head office support costs which are apportioned between services. Direct costs include all direct staff, premises and service provision in the day-to-day delivery of the service. It also includes other costs related to the provision of the service at each location in respect of insurance, depreciation, and interest.

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

### 10. Analysis of Head Office support costs

| | Social Care Services 2023 £'000 | Education Services 2023 £'000 | Other Services 2023 £'000 | Total 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 1,155 | 1,321 | 167 | **2,643** |
| Premises costs | 114 | 130 | 16 | **260** |
| Office administration costs | 450 | 515 | 65 | **1,030** |
| Governance costs | 111 | 127 | 16 | **254** |
| Other costs | 215 | 246 | 32 | **493** |
| | **2,045** | **2,339** | **296** | **4,680** |

**Comparatives for the year ended 31 March 2022**

| | Social Care Services 2022 £'000 | Education Services 2022 £'000 | Other Services 2022 £'000 | Total 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 1,042 | 1,148 | 178 | **2,368** |
| Premises costs | 87 | 97 | 15 | **199** |
| Office administration costs | 358 | 393 | 61 | **812** |
| Governance costs | 119 | 130 | 20 | **269** |
| Other costs | 235 | 258 | 40 | **533** |
| | **1,841** | **2,026** | **314** | **4,181** |

**Head Office support costs allocation**

There is a head office function, which provides all the support services of the Trust's activities. These services include Communications and Marketing, Business Development, Finance, Human Resources & Organisational Development, IT services and Facilities Management and the services of the Executive Directors. Cost recovery apportionment is based on the level of income for each of the services.

## 11. Net income for the year

Net (expense)/income for the year is stated after charging:

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Auditor's remuneration | | |
| - audit | **40** | 27 |
| - other audit services | **3** | 3 |
| - non-audit services | **13** | - |
| Interest paid on bank loan | **36** | 20 |
| Interest paid on interest rate swap contracts | **17** | 40 |
| Depreciation of owned assets | **802** | 731 |
| Rental under operating leases | **130** | 35 |

These costs include central head office costs where applicable and have been allocated to activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

## 12. Other gains

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Gains on interest rate swap contract | **109** | 103 |

## 13. Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

The average number of staff employed during the financial year, excluding relief and supply staff, amounted to:

| | 2023 Headcount No. | 2022 Headcount No. |
|---|---|---|
| Social & Therapy Care Services staff | **370** | 369 |
| Education services staff | **348** | 365 |
| Other services staff | **12** | 13 |
| Other support staff | **79** | 74 |
| | **809** | 821 |

The aggregate staff employment costs were:

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Wages and salaries | **19,720** | **18,325** |
| Social security costs | **1,898** | **1,660** |
| Pension | **1,658** | **1,503** |
| | **23,276** | **21,488** |

During the year the Trust incurred redundancy costs of £22,000 (2022 £7,000).

Although the Trust maintains a pool of bank relief and supply staff to cover unforeseen absences, where this is insufficient to meet operational need, agency staff are engaged in the short term. In addition to the above staff costs, agency costs for the year were £2,141,000 (2022 £1,495,000).

In addition to the above staff costs, foster carer fees amounted to £1,076,000 (2022 £1,233,000).

**Employee emoluments over £60,000**

The number of employees whose emoluments, excluding pension contributions and employer's national insurance contributions, but including benefits in kind, were in excess of £60,000 was:

| | **2023** | 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| | **No.** | No. |
| £60,001 to £70,000 | **5** | 4 |
| £80,001 to £90,000 | **-** | 1 |
| £90,001 to £100,000 | **1** | 1 |
| £100,001 to £110,000 | **-** | 1 |
| £110,001 to £120,000 | **1** | 1 |
| £120,001 to £130,000 | **1** | - |

The key management personnel are detailed on page 3. The total remuneration (including pension contributions and employers' national insurance contributions) of the key management personnel of the Trust for the year totalled £585,000 (2022 £504,000).

**Trustees' remuneration**

None of the Trustees receive any remuneration for their services to the Trust. During the year, no Trustees received reimbursement of expenses (2022 nil).

## 14. Tangible fixed assets

| COST | Land and Buildings £'000 | Property Improvement £'000 | Motor Vehicles £'000 | Ancillary Equipment £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| At 1 April 2022 | **21,553** | **1,269** | **1,047** | **293** | **24,162** |
| Additions | 658 | - | 67 | 5 | **730** |
| Disposals | - | - | (31) | - | **(31)** |
| Transfers | (3) | - | - | 3 | **-** |
| **At 31 March 2023** | **22,208** | **1,269** | **1,083** | **301** | **24,861** |
| **DEPRECIATION** | | | | | |
| At 1 April 2022 | **3,784** | **1,265** | **725** | **218** | **5,992** |
| Charge for the year | 646 | 1 | 128 | 27 | **802** |
| On disposals | - | - | (31) | - | **(31)** |
| **At 31 March 2023** | **4,430** | **1,266** | **822** | **245** | **6,763** |
| **NET BOOK VALUE** | | | | | |
| **At 31 March 2023** | **17,778** | **3** | **261** | **56** | **18,098** |
| At 31 March 2022 | 17,769 | 4 | 322 | 75 | 18,170 |

The freehold and leasehold properties were professionally valued on 31 March 2014 and this became the deemed cost on transition to the accounting standard FRS 102.

Included within land and buildings above is a long leasehold property with a net book value of £4,589,000 (2022 £4,706,000). The Charity pays a peppercorn rent for the related land.

Certain property is pledged as security on the Charity's bank loan. The net book value of these properties is £4,589,000 (2022 £4,706,000).

The comparable amounts for fixed assets included above at a valuation determined according to the historical cost accounting rules are:

| | Land and Buildings £'000 |
|---|---|
| Cost | 14,983 |
| Accumulated Depreciation | 4,054 |
| Net book value at 31 March 2023 | **10,929** |
| Net book value at 31 March 2022 | 10,812 |

## 14. Tangible Fixed assets (continued)

**List of charitable properties:**

| Property | Description |
|---|---|
| **Corbar Road** | A 5 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Crosskeys** | A 2 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Haines House** | A 5 bedded residential service |
| **Schools Hill** | The main administrative centre for the Charity, which accommodates 60 staff. The campus also is home to the following Together Trust services:<br><br>**Inscape House School** – a school for young people aged 5 – 19 years with autism. The school can accommodate up to 105 young people<br><br>**Ashcroft School** – special education for young people with complex emotional difficulties aged 8 – 18 years. The school can accommodate up to 60 pupils |
| **Ashcroft College** | Specialist support and teaching in four vocational areas (including construction) to students aged 14 to 16 who may have been excluded or close to being excluded from mainstream education |
| **Bridge College** | Property held on long lease as a specialist further education college for students up to 25 years old with learning difficulties, disabilities and complex needs, communication disorders and autism |
| **Lerryn** | A 6 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Meridian** | A 5 bedded short break service for young people with autism |
| **Newbridge** | A specialist day service provision |
| **Norvent** | A specialist therapeutic residential provision for two young people |
| **Pearce Lodge** | A 5 bedded unit for disabled young people aged 16 to adulthood |
| **Pendlebury House** | A shared care service for up to 6 young people with autism and behavioural needs |
| **Pocket Nook** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people with autism and other special requirements |
| **Swann Lane** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Ventnor Road** | A 3 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Woodlands** | A 5 bedded short break service for disabled young people |

## 15. Investments

### Listed investments

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| UK listed investments | **924** | 976 |

### Movement in market value

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| At start of year | **976** | 302 |
| Additions | **387** | 701 |
| Disposal proceeds | **(358)** | (21) |
| Net investment losses | **(66)** | (26) |
| Movement in cash held by investment managers | **(15)** | 20 |
| At end of year | **924** | 976 |
| Market value is analysed between: | | |
| Investments | **907** | 944 |
| Cash held by investment managers | **17** | 32 |
| | **924** | 976 |

### Unlisted investments

The company's investments at the balance sheet date in the share capital of companies include the following:

**Subsidiary:**

1. Together (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 3 March 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of £1 ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

2. BGWS (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 1 September 2005 Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of £1 ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

3. Boys and Girls Welfare Society Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of incorporation: 6 May 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Limited by guarantee**

None of these companies has traded during the year (2022 dormant) and they are not consolidated in thefinancial statements of The Together Trust on the grounds of immateriality.

## 16. Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Trade debtors | **2,225** | 2,215 |
| Prepayments and accrued income | **949** | 747 |
| Other debtors | **4** | 1 |
| | **3,178** | 2,963 |

## 17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bank loans | **60** | 58 |
| Trade creditors | **1,105** | 967 |
| Accruals | **398** | 471 |
| Deferred income | **100** | 209 |
| Taxation and social security | **447** | 407 |
| Other creditors | **410** | 486 |
| | **2,520** | 2,598 |

Deferred income movement

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Balance at start of year | **209** | 2,681 |
| Amount released in the year | **(209)** | (2,681) |
| Amount deferred in the year | **100** | 209 |
| Balance at end of year | **100** | 209 |

Deferred income comprises income received or invoiced in advance of service delivery.

## 18. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Bank loans | 690 | 750 |
| Financial derivatives (see note 23) | 22 | 131 |
| | 712 | 881 |

The bank loan is repayable as follows:

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Payable within one year | 60 | 58 |
| Payable between 1 and 2 years | 61 | 60 |
| Payable between 2 to 5 years | 197 | 191 |
| Payable after 5 years | 432 | 499 |
| | 750 | 808 |

The bank loan matures on 31 December 2033 and is secured on certain property (see note 14) with a debenture dated 26 November 2021.

In prior years interest was payable at a variable rate of LIBOR plus 2.25% on the principal amount during the year. During the prior year the prevailing interest rate transitioned to UK base rate following the discontinuance of LIBOR. Interest payable in the year was £36,000 (2022 £20,000).

The Trust is a party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. Under this swap contract, the Charity has agreed to exchange the difference between fixed and floating rate interest amounts. This allows the Charity to mitigate the risk of changing interest rates and cash flows on the variable rate debt held. See note 23 for further details.

## 19. Comparative statement of financial activities

**For the year ended 31 March 2022**

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2022 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2022 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2022 £'000 | **Total Funds 2022 £'000** | **Total Funds 2021 £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME FROM:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 107 | 130 | - | **237** | **194** |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 32,240 | 38 | - | **32,278** | **30,455** |
| Investments | 6 | 18 | - | 6 | **24** | **21** |
| Other | 7 | 29 | - | - | **29** | **25** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | | **32,394** | **168** | **6** | **32,568** | **30,695** |
| **EXPENDITURE ON:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 169 | 2 | 5 | **176** | **198** |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 30,811 | 208 | - | **31,019** | **29,101** |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | | **30,980** | **210** | **5** | **31,195** | **29,299** |
| Net (losses)/gains on investments | 15 | (50) | - | 24 | **(26)** | **43** |
| **Net income/(expenditure) for the year** | | **1,364** | **(42)** | **25** | **1,347** | **1,439** |
| Transfers between funds | | 35 | (35) | - | **-** | **-** |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme | 22 | 4 | - | - | **4** | **22** |
| Other gains | 12 | 103 | - | - | **103** | **57** |
| **NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS** | | **1,506** | **(77)** | **25** | **1,454** | **1,518** |
| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 26,356 | 597 | 140 | **27,093** | **25,575** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | 1,506 | (77) | 25 | **1,454** | **1,518** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 20 | **27,862** | **520** | **165** | **28,547** | **27,093** |

## 20. Movement on funds

| | 1 April 2022 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | **16,939** | 33,604 | (33,705) | (223) | (507) | **16,108** |
| Revaluation reserve | **6,951** | - | - | - | (106) | **6,845** |
| Designated | **3,972** | - | (229) | - | 666 | **4,409** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **27,862** | **33,604** | **(33,934)** | **(223)** | **53** | **27,362** |
| **Restricted funds** | **520** | 145 | (135) | - | (53) | **477** |
| **Endowment funds** | **165** | 4 | (1) | (11) | - | **157** |
| | **28,547** | **33,753** | **(34,070)** | **(234)** | **-** | **27,996** |

**Year ended 31 March 2022 comparatives**

| | 1 April 2021 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | 15,295 | 32,394 | (30,672) | 57 | (135) | **16,939** |
| Revaluation reserve | 7,057 | - | - | - | (106) | **6,951** |
| Designated | 4,004 | - | (308) | - | 276 | **3,972** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **26,356** | **32,394** | **(30,980)** | **57** | **35** | **27,862** |
| **Restricted funds** | 597 | 168 | (210) | - | (35) | **520** |
| **Endowment funds** | 140 | 6 | (5) | 24 | - | **165** |
| | **27,093** | **32,568** | **(31,195)** | **81** | **-** | **28,547** |

**Unrestricted Designated Funds**

These funds comprise:

- a development fund which was established to ring-fence funds for the maintenance of the Charity's homes and schools in compliance with standards set for the services by inspecting bodies. This expenditure is expected to be incurred on an ongoing basis.
- service re-development funds established to ring-fence funds for the delivery of the Trust's service innovation plans, property review and digital investment. The timing of this expenditure being incurred is over a number of years.
- a number of other voluntary income funds which have been agreed on the basis that 'unspent' unrestricted donations which have been generated during the year will be spent specifically and directly on the children and young people that the Trust supports. The Together Trust operates a 'wish list' process whereby the children and young people submit their 'wishes' and as far as the fund will allow these are considered and met during the year. This expenditure is expected to be incurred on an ongoing basis.

## 20. Movements on funds (continued)

**Restricted Funds**

| | | 1 April 2022 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inscape grants | **58** | - | - | (58) | **-** |
| 2. | Ashcroft | **63** | 1 | (8) | - | **56** |
| 3. | Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | - | - | - | **96** |
| 4. | Youth Music Fuse fund | **12** | - | (2) | - | **10** |
| 5. | 150th anniversary fund | **23** | 10 | (7) | (20) | **6** |
| 6. | Miscellaneous | **268** | 134 | (118) | 25 | **309** |
| | | **520** | **145** | **(135)** | **(53)** | **477** |

**2022 comparatives**

| | | 1 April 2021 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inscape grants | **58** | - | - | - | **58** |
| 2. | Ashcroft | **63** | - | - | - | **63** |
| 3. | Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | - | - | - | **96** |
| 4. | Youth Music Fuse fund | **22** | **7** | **(17)** | - | **12** |
| 5. | 150th anniversary fund | **20** | **42** | **(39)** | - | **23** |
| 6. | Miscellaneous | **338** | **119** | **(154)** | **(35)** | **268** |
| | | **597** | **168** | **(210)** | **(35)** | **520** |

1. **Inscape grants** – Funds from grants for specific purposes for Inscape.
2. **Ashcroft –** Funds from Corporate supporters allocated to specific projects for Ashcroft School
3. **Bridge Transitional fund** - this is a fund for Bridge College, being grant monies from Central Government to enable Colleges to develop alternative income streams.
4. **Youth Music Fuse fund –** this is a fund for a project to support young people to enjoy and learn music across all Together Trust education settings
5. **150th Anniversary fund –** a National Lottery funded project to celebrate the heritage and archive of the Trust's 150 years of providing aid, assistance and care to children and young people
6. **Miscellaneous –** This represents a number of individual service funds, generally established from donations restricted for use by a particular service.

Transfers from restricted to unrestricted funds represents, where permitted, the transfer of funds which remain unspent following completion of the specific projects to which they related.

## 20 Movements on funds (continued)

### Endowment Funds

| | 1 April 2022 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 106 | 3 | (1) | (7) | - | 101 |
| Other funds | 59 | 1 | - | (4) | - | 56 |
| | **165** | **4** | **(1)** | **(11)** | **-** | **157** |

### 2022 comparatives

| | 1 April 2021 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 79 | 5 | (5) | 27 | - | 106 |
| Other funds | 61 | 1 | - | (3) | - | 59 |
| | 140 | 6 | (5) | 24 | - | 165 |

**Jubilee Trust Fund**
This fund forms part of the Charity's investment portfolio and, as a permanent endowment fund, the restrictions on capital and use of income must be followed and spent in accordance with the Jubilee Trust Fund objects. The Together Trust is the sole trustee of the Jubilee Trust Fund and the two charities are linked with The Together Trust being the reporting Charity for both.

**Other Funds**
These are expendable endowment funds held by the Charity to be used in accordance with the individual fund objects. These funds are as follows:

- Hoyer Trust Fund
- Thomas Hunt Trust Fund
- William Melland Trust Fund
- Ragged & Industrial Trust Fund
- Ann Street Wardle Trust Fund
- Harold Grimshaw Trust Fund

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

### 21. Analysis of assets and liabilities between funds

| | Unrestricted 2023 £'000 | Restricted 2023 £'000 | Endowment 2023 £'000 | Total 2023 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,098 | - | - | 18,098 |
| Investments | 767 | - | 157 | 924 |
| Debtors | 3,178 | - | - | 3,178 |
| Cash | 8,863 | 477 | - | 9,340 |
| Current liabilities | (2,520) | - | - | (2,520) |
| Long term liabilities | (1,024) | - | - | (1,024) |
| Total net assets | **27,362** | **477** | **157** | **27,996** |

**2022 Comparatives**

| | Unrestricted 2022 £'000 | Restricted 2022 £'000 | Endowment 2022 £'000 | Total 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,170 | - | - | 18,170 |
| Investments | 811 | - | 165 | 976 |
| Debtors | 2,963 | - | - | 2,963 |
| Cash | 9,397 | 520 | - | 9,917 |
| Current liabilities | (2,598) | - | - | (2,598) |
| Long term liabilities | (881) | - | - | (881) |
| Total net assets | **27,862** | **520** | **165** | **28,547** |

## 22. Pensions

### Together Trust Final Salary Scheme

The Charity operates a defined benefit scheme, the Together Trust final salary scheme. The provider of the scheme is The Pensions Trust. The Scheme was closed to new entrants when it became 'paid up' with effect from 31 March 2000.

This scheme is a separate Trustee administered fund holding the pension scheme assets to meet long-term pension liabilities. An actuarial valuation was carried out as at 30 September 2021 by a qualified actuary, independent of the scheme's sponsoring employer. Scheme liabilities have been based on liability information as at 30 September 2021 updated, by a qualified actuary independent of the Scheme's sponsoring employer, to 31 March 2023. The major assumptions used by the actuary are shown below.

The most recent completed actuarial valuation showed a deficit of £687,000 as at 30 September 2021. The Together Trust has agreed with the scheme's Trustee that it would aim to eliminate the deficit over a period of 5 years and 6 months by the payment of annual contributions of £148,000 (payable monthly) in respect of the deficit with payments beginning from 1 April 2023 and these payments are being made.

In addition, and in accordance with the actuarial valuation, the Charity has agreed with the Scheme Trustee that it will pay £63,000 per annum up to 31 March 2023 and £69,000 per annum thereafter, increasing by 3% per annum each 1 April, to meet expenses of the Scheme and levies to the Pension Protection Fund.

Assumptions
The key assumptions used in the actuarial valuation were:

| | Valuation at 2023 | Valuation at 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| | % per annum | % per annum |
| Discount rate | 4.89 | 2.78 |
| Inflation (RPI) | 3.21 | 3.62 |
| Inflation (CPI) | 2.86 | 3.22 |
| Allowance for revaluation of deferred pensions of RPI or 5% p.a. if less | 3.21 | 3.62 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 5% pa if less | 2.79 | 3.09 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 3% pa if less | 2.25 | 2.41 |

| | % of maximum allowance 2023 | % of maximum allowance 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| Allowance for commutation of pension for cash at retirement | 75 | 75 |

The mortality assumptions adopted imply the following life expectancies on retirement:

| | Life expectancy at age 65 (years) 2023 | Life expectancy at age 65 (years) 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| Retiring today: | | |
| Males | 21.5 | 21.7 |
| Females | 23.9 | 24.1 |
| Retiring in 20 years: | | |
| Males | 23.1 | 23.3 |
| Females | 25.4 | 25.6 |

## 22. Pensions (continued)

The amount included in the balance sheet arising from the Trust's obligations in respect of the defined benefit scheme is as follows:

| | **2023 £'000** | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets | **6,713** | 9,294 |
| Present value of defined benefit obligations | **(7,025)** | (8,951) |
| (Deficit)/surplus in plan | **(312)** | 343 |
| Unrecognised surplus | **-** | (343) |
| Net liability recognised in the balance sheet | **(312)** | - |

The Trust recognises a plan surplus as a defined benefit plan asset only to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan.

Movements in the fair value of scheme assets were as follows:

| | **2023 £'000** | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets at start of year | **9,294** | 9,390 |
| Interest income | **254** | 189 |
| Return on assets excluding interest income | **(2,499)** | 54 |
| Expenses | **(98)** | (69) |
| Contributions paid by the employer | **63** | 63 |
| Benefits paid and expenses | **(301)** | (333) |
| Fair value of scheme assets at end of year | **6,713** | 9,294 |

The actual return of the plan assets over the reporting period was a loss of £2,245,000 (2022 a gain of £243,000).

Analysis of assets

| | **2023 £'000** | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Asset Category | | |
| Bonds | **3,410** | 5,840 |
| Property | **840** | 1,075 |
| Other | **2,463** | 2,379 |
| Total assets | **6,713** | 9,294 |

## 22. Pensions (continued)

Movements in the present value of defined benefit obligations were as follows:

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Defined benefit obligation at start of year | **8,951** | 9,311 |
| Interest expense | **245** | 187 |
| Experience losses on liabilities | **478** | 303 |
| Gain on change of assumptions | **(2,348)** | (517) |
| Benefits paid | **(301)** | (333) |
| Defined benefit obligation at end of year | **7,025** | 8,951 |

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of the defined benefit scheme are as follows:

| | 2023 £'000 | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Expenses | **(98)** | (69) |
| Interest income on assets | **254** | 189 |
| Interest cost on defined benefit obligation | **(245)** | (187) |
| Interest effect of asset ceiling | **(9)** | (2) |
| Net cost recognised within net expenditure for the year | **(98)** | (69) |
| Return on scheme assets (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – (loss)/gain | **(2,499)** | 54 |
| Experience gains and losses arising on the scheme liabilities – loss | **(478)** | (303) |
| Effects of changes in the demographic and financial assumptions underlying the present value of the scheme liabilities – gain | **2,348** | 517 |
| Effects of changes in the amount of surplus that is not recoverable (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – gain/(loss) | **352** | (262) |
| Total actuarial (losses)/gains | **(277)** | 6 |
| Total cost relating to defined benefit scheme recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities | **(375)** | (63) |

## 22. Pensions (continued)

The Charity has participated in two (2022: two) pension schemes for its staff and these are described below.

### (i) Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS").

The TPS provides pensions to teachers who have worked in schools and other educational establishments in England and Wales. The Scheme is an unfunded statutory public service pension scheme with the benefits underwritten by the Government. The Scheme is financed by payments from the employer and from those current employees who are members of the Scheme who pay contributions at different rates which depend on their salaries.

Every four years, the Government Actuary's Department carries out a valuation of all unfunded public service pension schemes, including the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2016 in accordance with The Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 (as amended).

The valuation report was published by the Government's Actuary's Department on 5 March 2019. The key results of the valuation and the subsequent consultation were that employer contribution rates were set at 23.68% with effect from 1 September 2019.

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documents can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website www.teacherspensions.co.uk.

The 2020 valuation result is expected to be implemented from 1 April 2024.

The TPS is a multi-employer pension scheme. The Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme. Accordingly, the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Trust has set out above the information available on the scheme and the implications for the Trust in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The pension costs paid to the TPS in the year amounted to £748,000 (2022: £679,000) and have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as an expense with £70,000 (2022: £57,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date. The liability and expense have been allocated in full to unrestricted funds. The allocation of the expense to activities is explained in note 9.

### (ii) Group Personal Pension Plan

The Charity also provides eligible staff the opportunity to contribute to a personal pension through a Group Personal Pension Plan, which is a defined contribution scheme. It is made available to all staff excluding those eligible for the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Provision of the scheme is made through pension provider Standard Life.

In the year ended 31 March 2023 the pension contributions payable in respect of staff participating in the Group Personal Pension plan was £906,000 (2022: £814,000) with £79,000 (2022: £68,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date.

## 23. Derivative financial instruments

The following table details the notional principal amounts and remaining terms of interest rate swap contracts outstanding as at the reporting date:

**Outstanding contracts - receive floating pay fixed contracts**

| | Average contract fixed interest rate | | Notional Principal value | | Fair value | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2023** | 2022 | **2023** | 2022 | **2023** | 2022 |
| | **%** | % | **£'000** | £'000 | **£'000** | £'000 |
| 5 years + | **4.21** | 4.21 | **896** | 952 | **22** | 131 |

The Trust is party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. The interest rate swap contract expires on 31 March 2031.

The fair value of the derivative is calculated by discounting the future cash flows to the maturity date of 31 March 2031. The product gives the Trust increased certainty over future costs and cash flows, and the liability should be considered within the context of the length of the loan period and interest rates existing when the loan agreement was made in December 2010.

The interest rate swap settles on a quarterly basis. In prior years, the floating rate on the interest rate swap was three months' LIBOR. As a result of the discontinuance of LIBOR, from 31 December 2021, the floating rate on the interest rate swap transitioned from LIBOR to UK Base Rate. The Trust settles the difference between the fixed and floating interest rate on a net basis.

Gains of £109,000 (2022: £103,000) in respect of the interest rate swap contract have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

### 24. Related party transactions

No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the Charity during the year (2022 £nil). There were no other related party transactions during the current or prior years that require disclosure.

### 25. Financial commitments

**Capital commitments**

| | **2023 £'000** | 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Contracts for capital expenditure not provided for | **-** | 82 |

**Operating lease commitments**

The total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases were:

| | **Land & Buildings** | | **Other** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2023 £'000** | 2022 £'000 | **2023 £'000** | 2022 £'000 |
| - due within one year | **-** | 4 | **17** | 15 |
| - due between one and five years | **-** | - | **17** | 16 |
| - due after five years | **-** | - | **-** | - |
| | **-** | 4 | **34** | 31 |

### 26. Contingent Liabilities

The Charity has been informed by The Pensions Trust that some benefit changes in regard to the final salary-based pension scheme, which closed to new members in 2000, may not have been in accordance with the scheme rules. The Pensions Trust are seeking Court direction in relation to this, the outcome of which is not expected to be known until early 2025. As outcome of the case is awaited, at present, no obligation of a liability has arisen as a result of the past benefit changes and therefore no amounts are provided for. If the Court directs these changes were made in a way not permitted by the scheme rules, then this would give rise to additional pension liabilities for the Charity in the future, which the Scheme's Actuary has estimated to be in the region of £6.1m. This figure is estimated on a non-accounting basis, using actuarial assumptions derived using the Trustee's Technical Provisions basis as at 30 September 2021, where this relates to service prior to the date of change and has been calculated from the preliminary results of the actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2021 allowing for market conditions at that date. It is not possible to determine the financial implications for the Charity at this stage, therefore the above details are disclosed as a contingent liability in order to provide stakeholders with information about the potential impact of this matter.

### 27. Ultimate controlling party

The Together Trust is the ultimate controlling party and is under the control of its Members. Any person who is appointed as a Trustee will automatically, by virtue of that appointment, become a Member. No person other than a Trustee may be admitted as a Member. The Trustees, as Charity Trustees, have control of the Charity and there is no one individual controlling party.

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**enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk**

A digital copy of this publication
can be downloaded at
**togethertrust.org.uk/what-we-do**

TOGETHER TRUST

**THE TOGETHER TRUST**

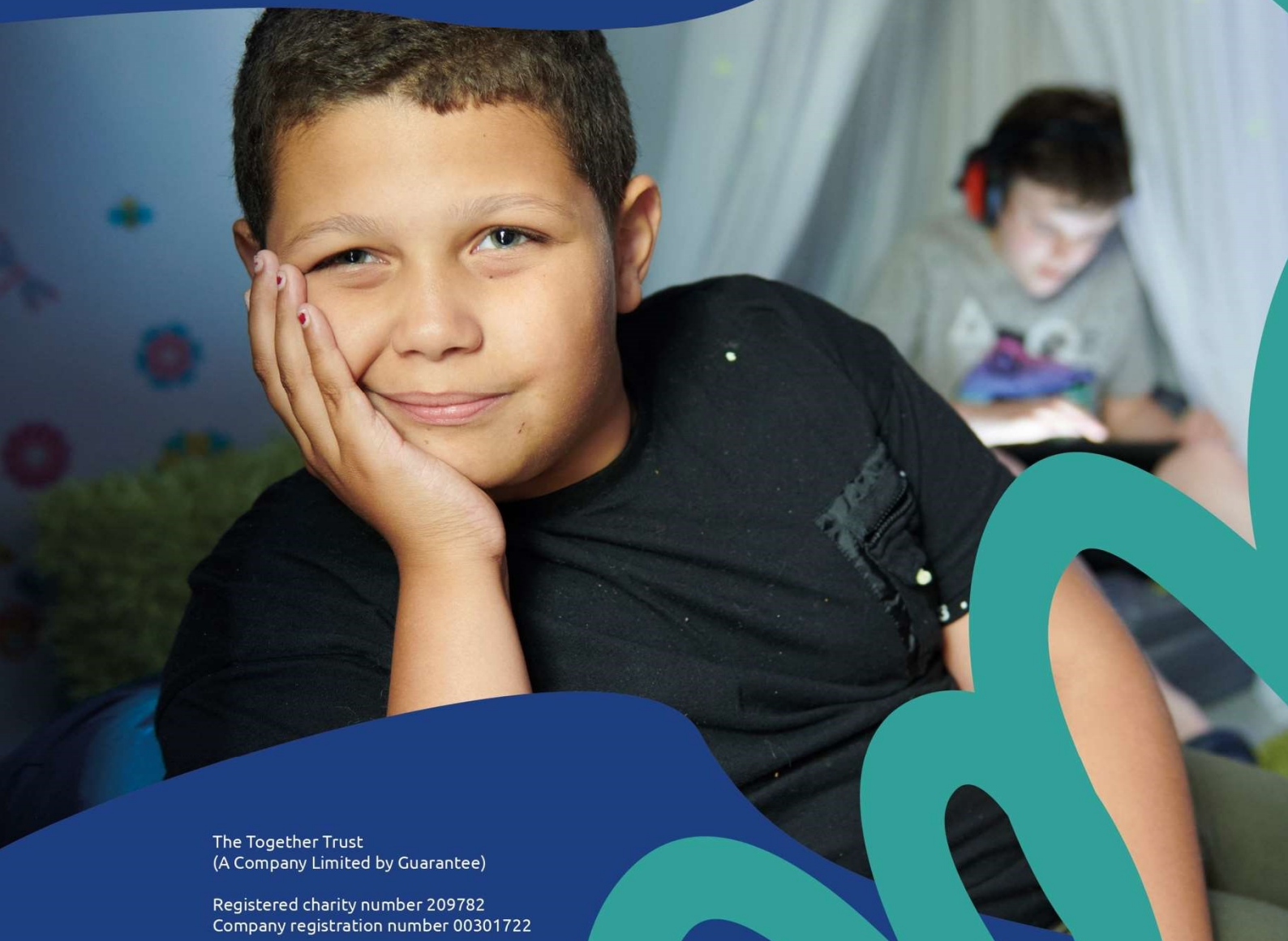
England & Wales - Charity number 209782

# Accounts

TOGETHER TRUST

# Trustees' report and financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2022



The Together Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Registered charity number 209782
Company registration number 00301722

# About the Together Trust

We are one of the North West's leading disability charities. We help children, adults, parents, and carers, delivering individual care, support and education to thousands of people each year.

For over 150 years, we have been championing and caring for people with disabilities, autism, and complex health needs. And providing life-changing support for looked-after children and care-experienced people.

# Our mission

We are the Together Trust. We're here to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support – they are at the heart of everything we do. We stand by them, and we work together for change.

# Our vision

A society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities.

# Our values

**We will always strive to be:**

- **Positive**
  We take pride in celebrating the difference we make.

- **Professional**
  We act in a fair and respectable way that recognises our collective expertise.

- **Passionate**
  We encourage creative ideas and inspire one another.

- **Supportive**
  We are considerate and caring towards one another.

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# 1. Reference and administrative information

## Board of Trustees (Non-executive)

*Chair*
Giles Gaddum

*Vice Chair*
Lynne Ridsdale

*Lead Honorary Treasurer*
Anthony Farnworth

*Assistant Honorary Treasurer*
Ian Johnson

Geoff Durbin
Marcell Edwards
Norah Flood
David Freeston
Maria Greenwood
Jane Grime
Roger Horne
Kirsteen Hughes
Simon Lees-Jones
Nick Lowry
Gani Martins
Tristan Morris
Lyndsey Stark
Helen Stevenson
Jane Walapu

*President*
Brian Chesworth OBE

## Trust LeadershipTeam (Executive)

*Chief Executive*
Mark Lee

*Resource Director*
Brian White

*Service Director*
Jill Sheldrake MBE

*Governance & ExternalAffairs Director*
Julie Isted

## Principal Professional Advisers

*Bankers*
Barclays Bank PLC
3 Hardman Street
Spinningfields
Manchester
M3 3HF

*Investment Managers*
Brewin Dolphin Limited
1 The Avenue
Spinningfields Square
Manchester
M3 3AP

*Legal Advisers*
Trowers & Hamlins LLP
55 Princess Street
Manchester
M2 4EW

*Auditor*
Deloitte LLP
The Hanover Building
Corporation Street
Manchester
M4 4AH

*HR & Health & Safety Advisers*
Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)
RoSPA House
EdgbastonPark
353 Bristol Road
Birmingham
B5 7ST

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*Registered Office* Together Trust Centre
Schools Hill
Cheadle Cheshire
SK8 1JE

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enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk
www.togethertrust.org.uk

## 2. Chair's introduction

On behalf of the Trustees of the Together Trust, who are also Directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, I am pleased to present our annual report for the Together Trust, our progress towards the goals in our Stronger Together Strategic Plan (the Strategic Report), the financial statements and auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2022. This can be read in conjunction with the Together Trust's Annual Review 2021/22.

Our vision is a society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities. The Trust is deeply rooted in its values and aspires to be person-centred in all its plans, practices and behaviours. The complex needs of our beneficiaries mean that the people we support do not often benefit from generic, off-the-shelf solutions but require specialist support that is tailored to their needs. Although during the early stages of 2021/22, the coronavirus pandemic continued to have a significant impact on some of the operations of the Trust, I am pleased to report that the Charity has successfully managed its risks to date, to ensure that we are able to continue to support the people who need our services in a financially sustainable manner.

Today our care, special education, community, and clinical services support over 2,900 children, adults, and families each year. To do this our team of over 800 people, at dozens of sites, put the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support at the heart of all that they do. We work for the Together Trust because we are passionate about improving the lives of people with disabilities, autism, mental health needs, care leavers and their families.

I am immensely proud of our achievements this year and on behalf of our Board, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our workforce for their dedication and loyalty. More than ever, the essential support our staff, volunteers and donors provide enables our services to adapt and evolve to meet the lifelong changing needs of people and families.

Giles Gaddum
Chair of Trustees

As part of our 150th anniversary celebrations, we unveiled a heritage plaque in July 2021, to mark our very first home – the Night Refuge for Homeless Boys – at 16 Quay Street in Manchester.

# 3. Charitable objectives, structure, and management

The Together Trust ("the Charity" or "the Company") is a registered Charity and a company limited by guarantee, which is governed by Articles of Association, last amended on 29 November 2019. The Together Trust serves children, young people, adults, and families whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autism.

The Charity's objects are:

(a) To give aid, assistance, and care to those with disabilities or in need, including to children and/or young persons; and
(b) To promote the education, training and advancement in life of those with disabilities or in need, including that of children and/or young persons.

The Charity's work reflects the main themes and ideas within Department for Education plans and the direction of current and future adult social care and health provision. The majority of the Trust's services are based in the North West of England and surrounding areas however, the Charity accepts referrals from all parts of the UK.

## The Trust's Leadership Team (Executive) – Key Management

The Chief Executive is assisted in the day-to-day management of the Charity by three Operational Directors, listed on page 1, who each have responsibility for an area of its activities, resources, performance, and operations.

## Statutory and Regulatory

The Together Trust's subsidiaries, as listed in note 15 to the financial statements, have not traded during the year, have no income and bore no expenditure.

# 4. Corporate governance

Governance handbooks for Members, Trustees and Governors support the Charity Articles by setting out the policies, procedures and practices the Board and our Governing Bodies will adopt in the fulfilment of their responsibility for the activities of the Trust.

**Members**

We seek to secure future governance responsibilities by an active subgroup that reports to the Board which is responsible for recruiting new Members of the Charity who may contribute to governance activity in different ways.

The Together Trust is a private company limited by guarantee and currently has 45 registered Members. The interests of the Trust and its Members are aligned with the common purpose of carrying out the objects of the Charity.

The Together Trust holds an AGM every 12 months, which all Members are entitled to attend either personally or by proxy. Corporate Members are entitled to attend general meetings by their authorised representatives. At the time of reporting, the Company has no Corporate Members.

At the time of reporting the Board is considering whether Membership should be reviewed and is taking legal advice in this respect.

There are Conflicts of Interest and Gift in Kind policies in place for Members, Trustees and Governors to manage any actual and perceived conflicts that might arise.

**The Board of Trustees (Non-executive)**

The Together Trust is shaping a strategic plan to 2025/26, known as 'Stronger Together', to deliver even greater impact for the people and families we support. Our Trustees and Governors have a key role in shaping and influencing this plan. We are also on a journey to improve equality, diversity and inclusion across our governance and leadership structure, our workforce, and our services.

Our plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to new ways of improving how the Charity works. More information about this can be found in Section 8 of this report.

At the time of reporting, a review of governance/regulatory standings for Together Trust education and vocational service delivery is underway as the Trust considers future development to cope with increasing demand for its services.

We believe we will deliver long lasting social impact when our Board and leadership teams better reflect the community of people and families the Trust serves. Improving Board diversity is crucial for us in terms of our values as an organisation. It means we are more effective, make better decisions and is key to effective delivery of our mission.

Twenty-three Trustees served during the financial year from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The Board embarked on a significant recruitment campaign for Trustees with new skills or lived experience in 2021 and we were able to successfully appoint Jakeb Braden, Geoff Durbin, Marcel Edwards, Jane Grime, Rachel Jones, Gani Martins, Simon Lees-Jones, Nick Lowry, Lyndsey Stark and Jane Walapu during the year.

The following Trustees served during the year:

Roger Bagguley (retired 26 Nov 2021)
Jakeb Braden (appointed 7 Oct 2021; deceased 12 Nov 2021)
Geoff Durbin (appointed 14 Dec 2021)
Marcell Edwards (appointed 22 Feb 2022)
Anthony Farnworth
James Flood (retired 7 Oct 2021)
Norah Flood
David Freeston
Giles Gaddum
Maria Greenwood
Jane Grime (appointed 7 Oct 2021)
Roger Horne
Kirsteen Hughes
Ian Johnson
Rachel Jones (appointed 7 Oct 2021; Retired 19 Feb 2022)
Simon Lees-Jones (appointed 25 Jan 2022)
Nick Lowry (appointed 14 Dec 2021)
Gani Martins (appointed 7 Oct 2021)
Tristan Morris
Lynne Ridsdale
Lyndsey Stark (appointed 7 Oct 2021)
Helen Stevenson
Jane Walapu (appointed 25 Jan 2022)

Giles Gaddum was formally appointed as Chair of Trustees in November 2021, having served as Acting Chair from April 2021.

The Trustees would like to pay tribute to Jakeb Braden who cared deeply about the physical and mental health issues that many care-experienced people of all ages face. It was tragic that he passed away after a short illness in 2021. His lived experience would have been a huge asset to our Board.

The Board would also like to thank Roger Bagguley, Jim Flood and Rachel Jones for their service as Trustees. All 3 Trustees ended their trusteeships during the reporting period. Roger retired after many years' service and made a long-standing impact at both Ashcroft School and Inscape House School where he served as a governor for many years.

The Board holds responsibility for agreeing the strategic direction of the organisation, setting the budgetary framework, and deciding upon major undertakings. Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Charity is delegated to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive reports fully to the Trustees at each Board meeting and to the Chair on a regular basis. This allows the Board to monitor progress in a well informed and incremental manner and to agree any strategic or budgetary adjustments which may become necessary in the year.

**Groups that report to the Board**

The Trust aims to ensure the Charity's values are reflected in all our work and that the ethos and the culture of the organisation underpin the delivery of all activities. Our special purpose subgroups and school and college governing bodies[1] meet regularly to undertake specific tasks on which they report to the Board to assist its function, decision-making and continued improvement.

**School and College Governing Bodies** – Each governing body has its own constitution approved by the Board. The Board appoints Trustees to be the Chair and Vice Chair of each governing body.

Trustees who served as a Chair to a Trust education governing body during the reporting period were:-

**Ashcroft School** – Anthony Farnworth (November 2021 to present), Roger Bagguley (retired November 2021)
**Bridge College** – Roger Horne
**Inscape House School** - Giles Gaddum

**The Together Trust Fostering Panel** - the panel is made up of people with a range of skills, knowledge and experience and includes staff members from the Together Trust fostering agency. Some panel members havea professional background in child or social care, and others have direct experience with the fostering process. Our panel members also have access to legal and medical advice should they need it as well as each other's skills and expertise.

The panel considers fostering applications and makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants. This also includes making recommendations about the number, age range and backgrounds of the childrenplaced with Together Trust foster carers.

**Board Subgroups**
The Board maintains several Trustee-led, special purpose subgroups that undertake specific tasks which contribute to the Charity's governance and operation to meet the aims within the 'Stronger Together' plan.

During the year, the Board undertook a comprehensive review of its subgroups to ensure their terms of authority and reference were in line with the Charity's new plans. The Board approved revisions to strategic theme responsibilities for each subgroup in May 2022. All subgroups monitor and evaluate relevant KPIs to help drive continuous improvement with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement. The revised subgroup terms also now ensure each area of activity supports the Trust's commitment to social value and improved equity, diversity and inclusion for governance, the workforce, and the people the Charity supports.

Each subgroup receives updates on performance, evaluation, and risk in core areas of operational and infrastructure services at the Charity. The terms for each subgroup reflect the Charity Governance Code.

The Board receives reports, including KPI RAG rated performance from each subgroup in line with theorganisation's planning and performance management cycle.

**Governance Subgroup –** the subgroup meets quarterly to assist the Board to oversee the methods by which the Board, subgroups and governing bodies monitor and share progress to ensure supportive, effective, and inclusive governance. The group is assisted by the EDI Governance Steering Group to ensure the recruitment of Members, Trustees and Governors, their training, responsibilities and the proper arrangements of supervision and appraisal (where relevant) are in place and follow best practice.

The Trust aims to create an environment where divergent views are welcomed, and individuals feel confident sharing their ideas. To achieve this, trust and mutual respect is essential - both between Board members and between the Trustees and the Executive Team and wider workforce.

[1] Refer to Instruments & Articles of Inscape House School, Ashcroft School and Bridge College as laid out ingovernance handbooks for educational services.

The **EDI Governance Steering Subgroup** reports to the Governance Subgroup and oversees the strategic approach to building a more equitable and diverse organisational governance culture, ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles are embedded to help deliver the best possible outcomes for the people we support. The group was formed in 2021 to assist Trustee and Governor understanding of systems and culture at the Together Trust. Following successful recruitment of Trustees with EDI expertise in 2021/22, they will be setting context-specific and realistic goals, taking action and monitoring EDI governance performance in the future.

**Supporting People Subgroup –** the subgroup meets six times a year to ensure the Together Trust is aligned to the needs of the people it supports and commissioners. It also reviews how the Charity continuously improves and addresses the needs of the people who use its services. The group monitors and evaluates all relevant quality improvement and most regulatory activity in services. It oversees participation, co-production and customer engagement, aiming to create accessible and regular programmes of effective communication, impact and social value reporting to our external stakeholders. It oversees campaigns, advocacy and participation and external accreditation of customer relationship standards, including Investor in Customers, ensuring results are acted upon effectively.

The subgroup also ensures that the Charity's complaints policy is transparent, well-publicised and effective, and that complaints are handled constructively, impartially and dealt with following a pre-agreed timeline.

**Finance and Audit Subgroup –** the subgroup meets six times a year to inform the Honorary Treasurers and the Chair of Trustees of the financial position and performance of the Charity and the operational detail behind the management accounts that are presented at each Board meeting. It oversees the annual budget process and any special issues with financial implications that are to be reported to the Board.

The subgroup also reviews funding strategy, growth plans and matters in respect of the Charity's pension schemes. It ensures that third party partners and suppliers are procured in line with policy and the Trust conducts its business in a commercially responsible way to achieve maximum positive impact for communities, people and the environment.

**Human Resources and Organisational Development Subgroup** – the subgroup meets regularly to ensure that the Trust is able to attract, retain, and motivate the highest calibre of staff to deliver value for money for the Charity's beneficiaries in line with strategic objectives and financial parameters. The subgroup assists the Board to oversee the approach to an effective People Strategy including fair pay and reward.

The group ensures our staff have clear learning and development opportunities and supports staff with the day-to-day challenges they face, in work and outside. We know that the Trust can be a challenging working environment and resilience is important for us all. The group ensures effective staff engagement and that the outcomes from staff surveys are received and acted upon.

The group oversees the Charity's approach to workforce equality, diversity and inclusion, effective engagement with and development of the Staff Council and ensures safer recruitment procedures operate effectively.

The subgroup also ensures that the Charity can attract, retain and motivate high levels of volunteers and oversees external accreditation of HR/training-related standards including Investors in People.

Staff member, Ian Riley clocked up an amazing 30 years of service with the Together Trust in 2022.

Ian said ***"It doesn't feel like 30 years at all – the time has gone so quickly, and I feel like I have had many different jobs during this time - all as part of the Together Trust! … The Trust has given me all the training, qualifications and support necessary to do my job, and I always tell people that if you are hard-working, there will always be opportunities".***

**Safeguarding Scrutiny Subgroup** – the subgroup has lead responsibility for effective governance of safeguarding at the Trust. This is achieved by scrutiny of operational actions and quality assurance of safeguarding standards and processes at the Charity. The day-to-day operational safeguarding responsibility is held with the designated safeguarding officer for the Trust who is also the Service Director.

The subgroup scrutinises leadership activity in respect of adherence to adopted safeguarding policies and procedures, is informed of safeguarding incidences at the Trust and scrutinises the management of risk. It ensures safeguarding policies at the Together Trust comply with local and national safeguarding standards. The subgroup maintains an overview of key performance indicators. The group works with the Safeguarding Learning & Development Forum, which reports directly into the subgroup.

**Health and Safety, Risk and Environment Subgroup –** this subgroup ensures that appropriate health and safety processes are in place to ensure a safe working environment which meets all legal requirements, including consultation arrangements. It ensures business continuity plans are reviewed regularly and agrees and monitors an organisational approach to environmental impact.

The subgroup also oversees the development of the Trust's property portfolio and ensures that it is fit for purpose, including compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), and monitors the effectiveness of the Charity's approach to risk management.

**Health and Safety Committee** is made up of representatives from across the Charity who meet on a regular basis to promote efficient health and safety policies and methods across all areas. The Together Trust is a registered member of the Contractors Health and Safety Scheme under which its health and safety practice is reviewed each year. The Charity also subscribes to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents(RoSPA), for external guidance and advice where required.

**Digital Transformation Subgroup** – the subgroup meets quarterly to oversee how technology can reach and support our workforce and the people we support with the aim of delivering practical, efficient and cost-effective solutions. It oversees how the Charity creates a culture in which digital can flourish and the accountabilities for digital development within the Charity ensuring that, where possible, digital is an integral part of business design.

We take a digital-led approach, and our aim is to share learning to enable our workforce and the people we support to:

- Develop the right skills required to use technology effectively and safely
- Make it easier to communicate with the Trust
- Explore how technology can encourage independence and wellbeing
- Ensure effective information management and compliance reporting including GDPR

**Service Visitor Subgroups** – a programme of visits aims to ensure that all the Together Trust operations and central support services will be visited by Trustees at least once in each financial year. This enables Trustees to broaden their knowledge and awareness of issues relating to the activities of the workforce and for the people who use the Charity's services. The aim is to promote positive working relationships between Trustees and our workforce. In order to ensure the strong link between Trustees and service delivery was maintained during COVID-19 restrictions, service visits took place on-line with Trustees meeting staff teams virtually in line with risk assessments.

# 5. Section 172 statement

This section of the Report describes how the Directors have had regard to the matters set out in section 172(1) (a) to (f), and forms the Directors' statement required under section 414CZA, of the Companies Act 2006.

The Directors recognise that the long-term success of the Together Trust is dependent on having regard to the interests of its stakeholders. As a registered Charity, the Directors' responsibility also extends to ensuring that the affairs and objectives of the Together Trust are managed in a way that enhances public trust and support. The Board has identified and documented its stakeholders in the Together Trust's Stronger Together Strategic Plan Key stakeholders include the people we support, their families, carers, commissioners, our workforce and our regulators.

Our 2021 annual review describes our impact, is available on the Trust's website and can be downloaded here. Our 2022 annual review will be published in December 2022.

*"Knowledgeable, caring, friendly staff with excellent understanding of children with additional needs as individuals."*

Residential short break services - family feedback Investor in Customers.
October 2021

**Beneficiaries**
The Board recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders, understanding their views and interests in order to be successful over the long term. Dialogue with stakeholders can help the Board to understand significant changes in the landscape, help inform future developments and trends, and develop strategy that is aligned with stakeholder interests.

The Charity works tirelessly towards a brighter future for the people we support and their families and to build communities where everyone feels valued and can thrive. The people we support tell us that they face daily discrimination, hardship and barriers in their lives. Things must change. Every day, we listen and learn from the people we support so we can work together for change. We take a pro-active approach to helping the people we support to influence local, regional and national policy. We also work closely with national organisations such as the Disabled Children's Partnership and Children England to help the people we support to influence future policy and provision.

The Board actively engages with its benefit ciaries, both informally and formally, in order to understand the impact of its charitable activities and the interests of its beneficiaries. In 2021 the Together Trust was granted the highest award possible for its customer service and relationship management following an independent assessment by Investor in Customers (IIC). IIC registered the Charity as having 'exceptional' customer service levels and awarded the Charity gold status across all four IIC principles. The independent assessment of excellence in the field of customer service and customer relationships is based on internal and external perceptions of the customer experience. The Trust was first awarded this standard in 2017 and has retained the gold standard since that time.

The Supporting People subgroup described on page 6, reports directly to the Board and has responsibility for overseeing and advising Trustees to ensure the Together Trust is aligned to the needs of its customers and commissioners. The subgroup reviews how the Charity continuously improves and addresses the needs of the people and families who use its services

The Charity has begun work to formalise a participation strategy and is listening closely to the people we support about the issues that affect them inside and outside of the Trust. Our aim in this area is to be a trusted partner to the people we support and empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision.

During the reporting period we have worked across a range of policy areas (children in care and care leavers, SEND reforms, mental health), with the aim of making sure that stakeholders understand the Government's proposals and have the ability to feedback their views. More information about this can be found on page 14 of this report.

**Workforce and Workforce Engagement**
The Charity takes great pride in its workforce on whom it depends for the delivery of its charitable objectives.

During the year the Together Trust employed an average of 821 people in the fields of care, education, community, clinical, management and infrastructure support. After the period covered by this report, in June 2022, the Trust became a Real Living Wage employer.

The Charity's pay and reward structure follows a Job Family Model which aims to set out pay and reward in an equal, fair and consistent manner, and at a level to recruit and retain the necessary calibre of staff. Each job family contains different levels, each reflecting different job outputs, skills, knowledge, and experience. However, the essential nature of the activities carried out and the basic skills used are similar. The number of levels varies for each job family, depending on the scope and range of responsibilities.

The Trust makes substantial provision for the qualification, training and development of its staff and volunteers. It offers a wide variety of learning and development opportunities to support organisational, team

and individual development linked to achieving the very best outcomes for the people we support. The Charity is committed to working with all colleagues to support their development needs and provides a variety of learning and development events, training and role specific qualifications.

The Charity's workforce can access an employee assistance service which is a free and confidential support programme to help support staff and volunteers in many aspects of their lives, in and out of the workplace. The Trust is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and continues to champion a number of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to enable staff to feel supported both at work and at home. With over 40 mental health first aiders in our workforce, they offer initial support for mental health and wellbeing through non-judgemental listening and guidance. All members of the workforce are also able toself-refer for support from Able Futures, who give guidance from a mental health specialist to help staff learn coping mechanisms, build resilience, access therapy or work with the Charity to make adjustments to help mental health at work.

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is recognised for eligible employees and all other staff may join a defined contribution pension scheme, which is available to them from the commencement of their employment.

The Charity is aware of its responsibilities in accordance with statutory legislation and all relevant appointments are subject to satisfactory references, Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks and overseas checks.

**Investing in people**

The Trust first achieved the Investors in People (IIP) standard in March 2001 and opted for its seventh review in spring 2021. This was first time the Trust was assessed at 'beyond the standard' and it achieved the prestigious 'Gold' award. The Trust regarded the IIP standard as an effective way to improve practices, measure performance and gain accreditation to demonstrate excellence in its particular field. Therefore, the IIP framework was used, and is continuing to be used, as a key part of its developing people strategy, aimed specifically at improving its competitive positioning in the specific sector.

***"Continuous improvement, training and personal development are fundamental to the Together Trust, as they believe they are essential to the future well-being of its business."***

Investors in People, Feedback Report
May 2021

The Charity is committed to eliminating discrimination and to treating all individuals fairly in all aspects of its work. The Trust promotes the employment of disabled people through its Equality and Diversity & Disclosure of Disability policies that support equality of opportunity in the recruitment, employment and retention of staff and volunteers, including access to training and promotion. The Charity ensures that EDI is at the forefront of all service delivery and workforce support. Our aim is for long-lasting change that sees EDI become part of the Trust's DNA.

The Trust is committed to improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion engagement plans for its workforce and the people it supports.

## Volunteering

A three-year volunteering strategy was agreed in autumn 2020. The Charity aims to have an effective and inclusive volunteering programme that delivers tangible and valuable outcomes for our beneficiaries, supporting the delivery of the Charity's Stronger Together Plan. Sixty volunteers have supported the Trust over the past year. From governance, education, residential services and community services to support roles including fundraising, communications and organisational development.

Our annual volunteering report highlights that, over the period April 2021 - March 2022, our regular volunteers (not including Governors or Trustees) gave more than 1,300 hours of their precious time to help the Trust.

***"I chose the Together Trust because it had a range of different services to support individuals … I love working with disabled young people because they all learn and behave in unique ways."***

Rachel Cartin
Volunteer Literary Assistant

Their contribution equates to over £12,000 when valued in terms of the national living wage. In addition, 149 hours of time was logged by volunteers helping at our events.

**Effective workforce engagement**

A Human Resources and Organisational Development Subgroup reports direct to the Board and oversees effective workforce engagement and that the outcomes from staff and volunteer surveys are received and acted upon. This group also oversees the organisation's approach to workforce equity, diversity and inclusion and monitors and evaluates all relevant KPIs with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement. More information about the work of this subgroup can be found on page 6 of this report.

The Trust seeks to listen, understand and act upon our staff views through the Staff Council. The Staff Council is an elected group of colleagues from across all our services who meet on a quarterly basis. As a consultative body for employees, the Trust has extended and is strengthening the Staff Council's role to ensure that, as strategy is developed and plans are implemented, Staff Council representatives help to communicate and engage better with our workforce. They review how successfully initiative have been delivered. The meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive and have Trustee attendance.

**Suppliers**

The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure its charitable business activities are undertaken in accordance with regulatory requirements and best practice. The Trust's procurement policy has been developed to help the Trust achieve best value in the use of limited resources to support the Trust in achieving its overall aims and objectives. It also supports addressing the requirements of the Charity Governance Code and the 2010 Bribery Act by emphasising the responsibility of all staff involved to conduct procurement legally and ethically, as well as securing value for money.

All procurement activity adheres to the following key principles:

- transparency – clear procedures to be followed and evidence of adherence retained for audit
- equal treatment – for all potential suppliers to ensure a level playing field, no favouritism and to ensure best value is obtained
- wherever possible we endeavour to source potential suppliers from the local area where this can bejustified in terms of best value and/or social value
- suppliers will be required to follow Trust safeguarding standards where applicable

The Trust also measures and reports on its supplier payment practices to Trustees on a regular basis.

**Wider Community and Environment**

The Board is focused on its long-term and strategic charitable aims as set out in the Stronger Together Plan described on pages 13 to 17 of this report. One of the aims of a new Health and Safety, Risk and Environment Subgroup, created in 2021, is to agree and monitor an organisational approach to environmental impact. This group will also oversee the development of the Trust's property portfolio to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The group monitors the effectiveness of the Charity's approach to risk management (including the annual risk register). The group also monitors and evaluates all relevant KPIs to help address areas requiring improvement.

The Board recognises the importance of open and honest dialogue with Regulators who include Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. As a registered Charity the Together Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission. The Board receive regular updates on legal, regulatory and compliance matters when it meets six times a year. Board subgroups receive more frequent updates in line with their specialisms, as set out on pages 5 to 7 of this report.

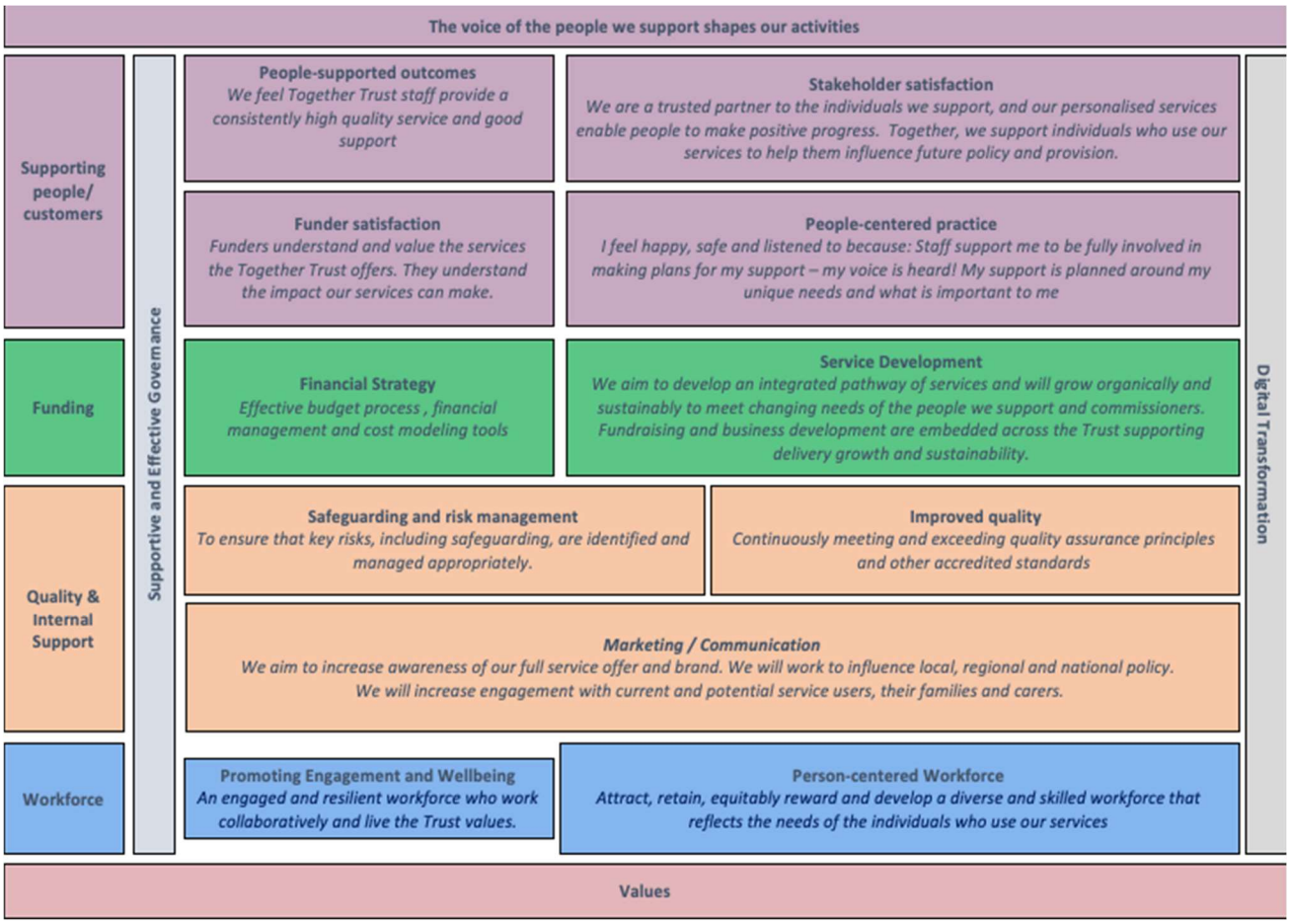
**Measuring, managing and reporting the Together Trust's social value**

During the year, the Together Trust has taken a more strategic approach to the implementation of social value measurement and reporting, both as an organisation and through its contracts, which measure and report our overall social footprint. The Charity is already delivering social value however, it needs to improve data capture and reporting to its stakeholders to improve impact, evidence social value delivery and support it in developing a stronger and more robust approach to bidding. During 2022/23 the Charity will be aiming to demonstrate its contribution effectively and establish a structured process for target setting, measurement and contract management of the social, economic and environmental impacts of each project from bidding, project management to completion. National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) social value framework tools will be adopted during 2022/23.

## Monitoring Progress

The Board monitors progress against strategic aims in the Stronger Together Plan by measuring key performance indicators relating to specific areas of the Charity's operations and support services. Each Board subgroup, described on pages 5 to 7 of this report, receives KPIs relating to their specialist area either monthly or quarterly.

## Stronger Together Scorecard Themes




More information about the measures and results can be found on pages 13 to 17 of this report.

# 6. Strategic achievements and performance

In the year to 31 March 2022, the Together Trust provided over 50 social care, special education, community and family support services to over 2,900 children, young people, vulnerable adults and families, whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Like many other charities, demand for the majority of the Trust's services continues to grow. Throughout the period of the report, several services reduced or temporarily closed because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic however, all have now returned to operation.

In the main, the Trust's services were carried out on behalf of local authorities, public sector bodies and service users in the North West of England and surrounding areas including Staffordshire and the West Midlands. All Special Educational Services are Ofsted regulated. Residential Care Services, along with Domiciliary Care and Community Support Services, are regulated by either the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

During the reporting period the Together Trust's services were:

**Special Educational Services**

**Inscape House School** – a non-maintained special school that meets the needs of children and young people, aged 5 to 19 years, with autism spectrum conditions and related social communication difficulties. The school also runs its own café as a social enterprise.

**Bridge College** – a specialist Further Education Day college that supports students up to 25 years withlearning difficulties and disabilities, complex needs, communication disorders and autism.

**Ashcroft School** - an independent special school catering for children and young people, aged 8 to 18 years, who have struggled to cope in other settings because of their individual barriers to learning. Ashcroft also offers Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) services, vocational learning for 14- to 19-year-olds and operates Ashcroft College which support students, aged 14 to 16 years, who may have been excluded or are close to being excluded from mainstream education.

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**Social Care Services – Residential Care Services**

12 Ofsted registered homes for children and young people including:

- 1 short break/overnight respite service for young people with autism/learning disabilities
- 1 short break/overnight respite service for young people with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities
- 2 shared care service provisions for young people with autism/learning disabilities
- 2 emergency provisions
- 5 mainstream Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) provisions
- 2 therapeutic services for young people with complex autism/learning disabilities
- 1 home for disabled adults with complex health needs (CQC registered)

**Social Care Services - Domiciliary Care and Community Support Services**

- 6 supported living services for adults with complex needs
- Outreach support for adults, children and young people with disabilities/autism (serviced closed December 2021)
- Weekend club for young people with complex needs in Stockport (opened in January 2022)
- Evening youth activity clubs for young people with disabilities/autism in Stockport
- The Hub at the Humphrey Booth Centre in Ordsall, Salford – a community space for the people of Salford
- A learning support service based at Bolton College, supporting students, aged 16 to 26 years, with complex needs and/ or disabilities
- Adult day services at Newbridge and SK30+ centres in Stockport
- Specialist Positive Behaviour Support Services in Stockport and Salford
- SEND mediation and dispute resolution services in Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, St Helens, Stoke on Trent and Telford and Wrekin.
- SEND Information and Advice Service in Stockport

**Social Care Services - Clinical services**

Together Trust multi-disciplinary teams work in mainstream and SEND schools and colleges providing:

- Observation, assessment, individual and group interventions
- Support to update and deliver on Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP) recommendations
- Staff coaching and training
- Sleep support (Trafford and Rochdale, and Children in Need funded services in the wider area)

**Our activity and key performance indicator (KPI) results in 2021/22**

During the year, the Charity renewed its commitment to its strategic plan, known as Stronger Together, which has been updated to 2025/26. The plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to innovative ways of improving how the Charity works. More information about this can be found in Section 8 of this report.

However, for the period 2021/22, the Charity continued to deliver results against four key strategic goals, set originally in 2017/18, as set out on the following pages.

**Stronger Together Aim 1**

**Deliver high quality, person-centred, effective and cost-efficient services to vulnerable individuals and families. Our integrated services adapt and evolve to meet the lifelong changing needs of individuals. We work in partnership to achieve the very best outcomes possible for the individuals we support.**

**Our progress in 2021/22**

With creative and flexible support thanks to its workforce, the Trust continued to operate in most service areas despite COVID-19 restrictions which continued into 2021/22. A number of Education, Clinical, Community and Mediation and Disagreement Resolution services were delivered virtually providing families and young people with the opportunity to receive continuity of support. Virtual service delivery was successful in most settings and has continued into 2022.

Referrals for the majority of Trust services continued to remain high. The Charity continues to invest in supporting and recruiting foster carers to meet increased demand for foster placements. Many of the young people we support in children's homes benefit from long term placement stability. This remains a good indicator for the outcomes for young people in the Charity's care, as is their attendance in full-time education. The Trust supports national and local campaigns aimed at improving the longevity of residential placements for children that reach 16+ and encourage and support young people to remain in care until they reach 18+. Many young people in our foster care also benefit from long term placement stability and we are actively looking at how we can continue to provide a consistent level of support to our cohort of care leavers.

The people we support continue to benefit from grants from funders who help to provide additional family support services, including grant funding for improving physical activity and autism sleep support. Grant delivery thanks to funding from Youth Music and the National Lottery was extended into 2021/22 with the permission of funders due to pandemic restrictions.

Despite the challenges our students faced as pandemic restrictions continued in the 2020/21 academic year, students were able to produce excellent award results, thanks to the dedication and support of our workforce. A clinical quality and governance framework was implemented, and service level agreements were introduced in clinical services. A project to redevelop Newbridge in Stockport, and its services for people with individual and often complex needs, was approved by the Board in April 2019. The expansion of this Stockport service was delayed as a result of the pandemic, but improvements have begun and will hopefully be part-funded by a fundraising appeal during 2022/23 and 2023/24. As COVID guidelines were relaxed in spring 2021 many of the people we support were able to return to Newbridge and SK30+ in a planned and supported manner.

**At 30 June 2022 all Trust services were graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted/CQC. All of the Charity's CQC and Ofsted educational inspection reports are available as a download from www.togethertrust.org.uk**

| Occupancy levels | 31 March 2022 | (31 March 2021) |
|---|---|---|
| Community services | 78% | (35%)* |
| Residential services | 86% | (78%) |
| Fostered children in placement | 100% | (100%) |

Occupancy levels returned to pre-pandemic levels especially in community services once lockdown restrictions eased and young people and adults were able to safely return to services.

*The Trust continued to adapt its service provision safely as a result of COVID-19 guidelines and risk management. In some cases, this meant service provision was temporarily closed. The Government's furlough scheme was utilised most notably in a number of community services, as demand for specialist provision reduced as a result of the pandemic. Our services worked closely with the people we support, their families and local authorities to re-open provision when it was safe to do so, and the majority of furloughed staff were eventually able to return to work as Government guidelines were eased.

## Stronger Together Aim 2

**Be a trusted partner to the individuals we support. Our personalised services enable people to make positive progress. Together, we support individuals who use our services to help them influence future policy and provision.**

### Our progress in 2021/22

During the year the Trust won the Business of the Year (over 20 employees) at the Greater Manchester Business Awards 2021 for its resilience and care of people during the pandemic.

Since the Independent Review of Children's Social Care began in March 2021, we have campaigned to ensure the views of the people we support are represented and amplified through our involvement with Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers and heard in our response to the case for change.

Further resources were allocated to the development of participation and co-production for the organisation, and to help the people we support change government policy and future development and practice at the Trust. More information about this can be found on page 6 of this report.

We campaign based on the feedback from the people we support, and their families, about what matters to them and from their perspective what good looks like. We have begun work to improve participation and co-production in many aspects of the Trust's work and to ensure that staff have the skills to do this well.

As a result of research our current campaigns and policy priorities are:

- Improved outcomes for care leavers
- Improved mental health support for young people

- Greater employment and opportunity for people with disabilities
- Better support for young people who are transitioning services

Investor in Customers (IIC) registered the Charity as having 'exceptional' customer service levels and awarded the Trust gold status across all four of its principles in 2021. The independent assessment of excellence in the field of customer service, and customer relationships, is based on internal and external perceptions of customers and staff. The Trust has retained this standard since 2017.

A number of partnerships continued in 2021/22 including:
- An agreement with the National Youth Theatre and the Trust to deliver creative work with NYT practitioners and students.
- An agreement between the UK Innovation Agency, the Trust and LuxAI which aims to support behaviours for students with autism at Bridge College and Inscape House School
- Association of Colleges support at Bridge College to improve careers advice in collaboration with other local providers, mental health initiatives and technical innovation.
- A collaboration with 42nd Street to delivery LGBTQ+ learning opportunities with learners
- Manchester City Football Club's support of the Trust's achievement awards
- Manchester United Football Club Foundation accreditation at Inscape House School. A copy of the impact report for this partnership is available on request.

For latest news and developments at the Together Trust visit our website www.togethertrust.org.uk

**Investor in Customers biennial accreditation results (December 2021):**
**90.4%** of respondents agree that the Trust's staff provide a consistently high-quality service and good support.
**90.9%** of respondents view the Trust as a trusted service provider.
**84.8%** of respondents said that the Trust focuses on putting customer and individuals who use our services first.

**The Trust retained its Investor in Customers 'Gold' accreditation for the third time in 2021. Refer to page 11 for further information.**

### Stronger Together Aim 3

**Grow, develop and expand our reach as a provider of choice to maximise our impact and ensure that we can sustain our future as an organisation. We develop integrated pathway services and will grow organically and sustainably to meet the changing needs of the individuals we support and funders' requirements.**

### Our progress in 2021/22

During the year, the Together Trust won new contracts and joined or reconfirmed its position on the following frameworks:
- Manchester City Council: Short Breaks Support for Children & Young People Flexible Purchasing System – 10 years from August 2021
- Manchester City Council: Manchester Secondary PRU / Key Stage 4 Alternative Education – 1 year re-award from September 2021
- Manchester City Council: Management and operation of Residential Care Service – 5 years from December 2021
- St Helen's MBC: Mediation & Disagreement Resolution Service – 3 years from December 2021
- Trafford MBC: 'Sleep Tight' Sleep Management Service – 1 year contract re-award from July 2021
- Lancashire County Council: Fostering Framework Agreement – 1 year from August 2021
- Stockport MBC: Short Breaks Grant – 1 year from April 2022
- Manchester City Council: Alternative Education Flexible Purchasing System – 10 years from June 2022

- Lancashire County Council: Fostering Agency Placements Agreement covering Lancashire, Blackburn, Cumbria, Blackpool – 10 years from May 2022
- Heywood, Rochdale & Middleton Clinical Commissioning Group: Sleep Tight' Sleep Management Service – 3 years contract re-award from April 2022.

During the year significant investment was made in IT/digital budgets to upgrade equipment and improve digital platforms for the people we support and our workforce. Migration to cloud storage continues across Trust settings. CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring) has been introduced in key and will be rolled out further if initial use is effective. Work has begun to improve CRM systems and centralise referrals. A programme board governance framework has also been recently introduced to improve project management and reporting.

Togethernet, the staff portal, has been significantly redeveloped to improve access to information.

Income rose to £32.57m during the year (2021/21 £30.69m). Fundraising team income was £139,000 in donations and a further £95,000 from grant applications giving a total income generated of £234,000 (2020/21 £290,000). As the pandemic continued to have an adverse impact on some service developments, work to finalise two key developments was postponed thus delaying the launch of a capital appeal for funds into 2022/23.

The Trust continued to deliver awareness of its heritage and archive thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2021, enabling it to plan a number of learning and participation heritage-themed events for volunteers, young people and the wider community during 2020/21 and into 2022. The grant, to mark the Trust's 150th anniversary, was delivered differently due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. In agreement with the National Lottery, completion of this work was achieved in summer 2022.

The grant delivery culminated with an exhibition of the Charity's heritage at Manchester Central Library in spring 2022. Our 150th heritage activity can be viewed by visiting https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/150

### Stronger Together Aim 4

**We aim to attract and retain a skilled and motivated workforce who are treated equitably and fairly and have clear learning and development opportunities.**

**Our workforce is dedicated to helping those in need, work collaboratively and live our values. We listen to our workforce and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement.**

**Our progress in 2021/22**

During 2021/22 the Together Trust continued to focus on its people strategy. The Charity is committed to a transparent system for pay and reward in order to attract and retain staff.

The Charity published its latest gender pay report in April 2022. A copy of this can be downloaded from: https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/Charity-information

The Trust continues to invest heavily in its learning and development programme, giving staff the opportunity to develop their skills and providing them with opportunities to progress within the Charity. It was awarded Investors in People Gold in May 2021. More information about workforce development can be found on page 8 of this report.

Staff members from across the Together Trust volunteered to get involved in the Equality Marches during Manchester Pride Festival. August 2022

An attraction strategy was introduced to help secure appropriate staffing levels in services. Investment has been made in an employee referral app and a specialist recruitment agency for care vacancies.

Approximately, 60 volunteers are in a variety of roles from trustees and governors to reading supporters and musicians. Where possible, volunteering outcomes have been tracked for the services supported and for the

volunteers themselves. You can read more about our volunteers on page 9 of this report.

The Trust is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and, during the year, championed a number of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to enable staff to feel supported both at work and home. With over 60 mental health first aiders in the workforce, they offer initial support for mental health and wellbeing through non-judgemental listening and guidance.

**As at 31 March 2022:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Staff retention: | **78%** | (2021 90%) |
| Staff attendance: | **95%** | (2021 95%) |
| Staff turnover: | **7%** | (2021 3%) |

During the COVID pandemic staff turnover reduced and retention increased as staff nationally tended to remain in their current jobs due to the high level of uncertainty around the impact of the pandemic on jobs.

Further information about the Together Trust's impact can be found in The Together Trust's Annual Review 2021/22. A copy of our latest Annual Review will be available from December 2022 and can be downloaded from: https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/Charity-information

**Energy Usage and Sustainability**

The information and data to calculate energy usage in 2021/22 is taken from meter readings for gas and electricity and from fuel card readings for the Trust fleet of vehicles. Mileage claims have been used to calculate the 'grey' fleet. All fuel conversions to kWh and $CO_2$ emissions data have been calculated in line with UK Government environmental reporting guidance, using UK Government GHG conversion factors for company reporting.

The Total Energy Consumption (TEC) in 2021/22 amounts to 4,976,000 kWh (2020/21 3,690,000kWh) resulting in carbon emissions of 716 tonnes of carbon dioxide (2020/21 571). The annual quantity of emissions resulting from our transport activities, including the grey fleet, and the use of gas was 673 tonnes of carbon dioxide (2020/21 554). Electricity usage accounted for 43.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide(2020/21 16.4 tonnes).

For information, the annual emissions from the Trust central site, including Inscape and Ashcroft schools and the central office (but excluding transport), amounted to 196 tonnes of carbon dioxide being 27.4% of the total emissions (2020/21 179 tonnes accounting for 31.4%). Transport in total accounted for 25% of carbon emissions (2020/21 22.4%). The increase in the environmental impact of the Trust's energy usage is due to the fact that in 2020/21, during the period of the COVID pandemic. The Trust's educational facilities were operating at reduced capacity and the Trust's vehicles and grey fleet were not used to the same extent as in previous years, as some services were largely closed and more staff were working from home.

The Trust is investing in an Environmental and Sustainability Manager to identify opportunities for continuous environmental improvement and implement programmes to deliver these to reduce the environmental impact of Trust activities.

# 7. Financial review

As the Trust continues to manage the effects of the COVID pandemic it has reported another good year financially with increased income, however net income for the year has seen a small decrease. While the majority of the Trust income is from local authority fees for education and care services provided, it is noted that authorities face significant funding gaps and the financial outlook for the sector is concerning, which indicates a premium being put on continuing to provide services which represent good value for money to local authorities in the future.

### a) Income

In 2021/22 the Together Trust has seen its income increase by £1.88m from £30.69m to £32.57m with the main increase being in social care services where income increased by £1.32m due to fee increases and increased service provision following COVID reductions in 2020/21. Education and Other services (which is mainly our fostering service), saw increases in income of £0.22m and £0.28m respectively largely due to fee increases in Education and a marginal growth in fostered young people.

Social care services made a small surplus of £0.07m on income of £14.3m (2021 a deficit of £0.04m on income of £13.0m). Education services made a surplus of £0.92m on a turnover of £15.57m (2021 a surplus of £1.05m on income of £15.35m), while other services (fostering) made a surplus of £0.27m on income of £2.43m (2021 a surplus of £83,000 on income of £2.14m).

The Charity's services are essential for those who we support and the majority of people who receive our services require a funding decision from the responsible local authority or other such public agency. The majority of fees are received for services to individuals, although some services are purchased on a block contract basis by local authorities who wish to ensure they have guaranteed access to the Charity as their provider of choice. The Charity is also in a variety of partnership arrangements with a number of local authorities, although more recent new business has been awarded via formal tender processes.

#### i) Income

| | **2022 £'m** | **2022 %** | 2021 £'m | 2021 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Donations - Voluntary Income & Fundraising Activities | **0.24** | **0.7** | 0.19 | 0.6 |
| Fees for Social Care Services | **14.28** | **43.8** | 12.96 | 42.2 |
| Fees for Educational Services | **15.57** | **47.9** | 15.35 | 50.1 |
| Fees for Other Services | **2.43** | **7.5** | 2.14 | 7.0 |
| Investments & Other Income | **0.05** | **0.1** | 0.05 | 0.1 |
| | **32.57** | **100.0** | 30.69 | 100.0 |

#### ii) Investment policy and returns

The investment portfolio of the Charity is invested with the main purpose of ensuring the underlying security of the investment, while achieving growth wherever possible against a series of benchmarks and the regular advice of our investment managers is taken to help achieve this. During the year, the Charity made a cash investment of £700,000 to its portfolio. At the year end, the market value of investments was £976,000 (2021 £302,000).

#### iii) Fundraising

In 2021/22 fundraising income, including donations, all grants and gifts in kind, was £0.24m (2020/21 £0.19m).Notable contributions were received from a diverse group of supporters, both long-standing relationships and friends to the Charity. The Together Trust is extremely grateful for the generous support received from a variety of individuals, community and corporate supporters, and for the increasing number of grant-making trusts who have chosen to support our young people and families.

The Trust particularly wishes to thank all donors who have given generously to support our work, either financially or with significant donations in-kind including:

**Association of Colleges**
**Booth Charities**
**Children in Need**
**Federation of School Lodges**
**Manchester City Football Club**
**National Lottery Heritage Fund**
**Sport England**
**Youth Music**

The Trust would like to acknowledge the support from its grant funders to pause grant delivery for some projects during 2021/22 because of the pandemic and acknowledges the many other individual donors,funders and corporate supporters who have made donations or gifts in-kind during the year.

For over 20 years, Roughley's Bikers have been roaring into our Cheadle campus to donate sweet treats in the much-anticipated Easter Egg Drop.

The pandemic continued to bring challenges for the fundraising team despite the use of the Government's furlough scheme. Work with the majority of local corporates, community groups, schools, and in-person events were put on hold to ensure compliance with Government guidelines and respect for the local community. A capital appeal to redevelop Newbridge, one of the Trust's adult centres in Stockport, was significantly delayed during 2020/21 however, work on the capital appeal will be able to commence in 2022/23. The planned expansion of Inscape House School was also put on hold. The Charity plans to return to face-to-face fundraising events as soon as it is safe to do so.

All Trustees are aware of the CC20 guidance from the Charity Commission. The Fundraising Department works closely with the Trust's Records, Archives & Information Manager, who oversees data protection compliance for the Charity, to ensure best practice is embedded in all that we do including, but not limited to, a Fundraising database which is administered in the Fundraising Department and the continuance of permission-based communications with individual supporters.

There have been no formal complaints concerning our fundraising practices during the reporting period. Together Trust actively promotes a Complaints and Compliments Policy, which can be found on the Charity'swebsite: https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/who-we-are/policies

The Charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator. The Together Trust does not engage in face-to-face fundraising (known as chugging), telephone fundraising, or direct mail campaigns. There were no licensed street collections in the reporting period. The Together Trust does not use commercial participators.

### b) Expenditure

The Charity reports expenditure of £31.2m in the year (2021 £29.30m), an increase of 6.5% compared to an increase in income of 6.1%. This resulted in a marginal fall in net income, before gains and losses, to £1.37m compared to £1.40m last year.

Of the increase in expenditure, payroll costs increased by 2.8% following a cost-of-living annual pay increase of 2% and further pay increases due to incremental payscale progression. Agency costs increased by £0.6m in the year to £1.5m as a result of more dependency on agency staff during the continuance of the pandemic. After some years of near zero inflation, in 2021/22 inflation averaged 4%.

Social care services expenditure increased from £13.31m in 2020/21 to £14.21m in 2021/22, an increase of 6.8%, while education services expenditure increased by 6.7% to £14.65m, to support

increased income and pupil numbers. Other services expenditure (being largely fostering), increased by 4.9% to £2.16m.

**i) Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2022**

| | 2022 £'m | 2022 % | 2021 £'m | 2021 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Raising funds | **0.18** | **0.6** | **0.20** | **0.7** |
| Cost of providing Social Care services | **14.21** | **45.5** | **13.31** | **45.4** |
| Cost of providing Education services | **14.65** | **47.0** | **13.73** | **46.9** |
| Cost related to Other Services | **2.16** | **6.9** | **2.06** | **7.0** |
| | **31.20** | **100.0** | **29.30** | **100.0** |

The average number of employees during the year was 821 (2021 866). Payroll costs are reported at £21.5m (2021 £20.9m), an increase of almost 3% on the previous year following a 2% pay increase and incremental payscale progression.

Whilst the Government continues to actively seek partnership with the voluntary sector, there seems little prospect of them altering their position over VAT. It continues to be a significant burden and the Charity's non-recoverable VAT element amounted to £894,000 (2021 £764,000).

**c) Public Benefit**

In setting its plans and priorities for areas of work, the Trustees of the Together Trust have referred to the guidance from the Charity Commission on the provision of public benefit. The summary of the Charity's Strategic Plan and the analysis of the achievements to date as shown on pages 13 to 17 of this report, together with more specific examples of the Charity's activities set out in its performance reports, demonstrate how the Charity has sought to fulfil its principal charitable objective which is to give aid, assistance and care to those with disabilities or in need.

Access to all the Together Trust services is based on an objective assessment of need by Together Trust staff and/or a commissioning local authority and is not based on financial ability to pay. In the case of Independent Advice and Support Services and Independent Supporter Services, any parent/legal guardian whose child attends school in the area the service operates may have access to these services.

**d) Reserves**

The Trustees periodically review the reserves policy of the Charity and during the last review moved it towards a policy based on an assessment of the Trust's cash flow and the risks it faces. In the current uncertain times, the Together Trust takes a prudent view where, as a minimum, the level of cash reserves must not fall below £2.5m at each month end and it should hold cash reserves of at least six weeks expenditure at the year end. The Trust has significantly increased its designated reserves in the previous year to help support the achievement of our corporate strategy, which has been updated, and in particular to support digital transformation and a property review. It is anticipated that this strategy will result in significant outlay being made over the course of the next four years.

The table below sets out available reserves.

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Net current assets | 10,282 | 9,523 |
| Less long-term creditors | (881) | (1,037) |
| Net reserves | 9,401 | 8,486 |
| Less restricted, designated and endowment funds | (4,657) | (4,741) |
| Available reserves | **4,744** | **3,745** |

At the year-end available cash funds were £9,397,000, against the equivalent of six weeks' worth of expenditure of £3,575,000 (2021 cash funds were £7,244,000 against £3,381,000 of expenditure).

**e) Fixed assets**

To monitor and control its fixed assets, the Charity makes use of a fixed asset register, which details the organisation's properties, vehicles and other capitalised equipment.

The changes in tangible fixed assets are summarised in the notes to the financial statements (see note 14).

**f) Going Concern**

While the Coronavirus pandemic continued to have an operational impact in the year it was significantly reduced from 2020/21 with a much-reduced impact on income and expenditure although the peaks and troughs continue to be challenging in managing staffing levels. The key challenge for the Trust going forward, which is common to the Care sector in particular, is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff in a shrinking labour market. To help address this the Trust has reviewed and increased its pay and reward offer to staff and the resources it devotes to recruitment, but we do not believe there are material uncertainties that call into doubt the Together Trust's ability to continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

# 8. Future strategy

**'Stronger Together' 2022/23 – 2025/26**

The Together Trust provides a wide range of care, community, clinical and education services, which have provided it with a degree of resilience during the last few years of challenge in the age of austerity. The Charity has sought to develop and build upon these areas of expertise.

During the year the Charity renewed its commitment to Stronger Together, it's strategic plan which has been updated to 2025/26. The plan builds on both existing expertise and commits to innovative ways of improving how the Charity works.

The current four-year financial projections through to 31 March 2026 illustrate income growth in current service provision across all service areas, taking income to £43.2m in 2025/26 with investment over the period in services and infrastructure of over £10m.

**Beyond 2021/22**

During the year the Trust began work to build a new five-year strategic plan. The Board endorsed proposals in autumn 2021 evidencing growth opportunities where the Charity will seek to strengthen existing and form new partnerships and alliances. The plan will also use stakeholder feedback including the Investor in Customers accreditation work to give the Charity greater insights to inform future planning and service development. Our revised strategic aims are:

1. Our needs led, community based, integrated services deliver high quality, person centred support. We adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of people and families
2. We are a trusted partner – we empower people to make positive progress to influence our service development, campaigns, future policy and provision
3. We grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs. We maximise fundraising opportunities and aim to demonstrate our social, environmental and economic value from everything that we do
4. Our flexible, talented and diverse workforce treat people equitably and inclusively. They have clear learning and development opportunities. We listen to our workforce, look after their wellbeing and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement

The Board has endorsed this approach, including a property review, and substantial funds have been set aside in designated reserves for this purpose. Work is currently underway to comprehensively review the service environment to support the wider goals and challenges of commissioners and families that we work alongside.

In line with a needs-led pathway, our aim is to develop a model to provide services with the individual central to the package of support. This model will grow capacity, support local authorities and expand our reach by developing community-based provision that works flexibly with our resources.

Our progress will continue to be measured by key performance indicators relating to specific areas of the Charity's operations and support services.

# 9. Principal risk and uncertainties

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring effective risk management and ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to manage risks. On an ongoing basis risks are reported to every main Board meeting (six per year) to keep them abreast and up to date with the main, current issues and the actions being taken to mitigate these risks.

Although, during the initial stages of the pandemic in 2020/21, staff turnover reduced, staff turnover has increased in 2021/22 and the ability to recruit and retain staff remains a key risk which we aim to address through the implementation of a new attraction strategy and our continued commitment to a fair and consistent approach to pay and reward including now being an accredited Real Living Wage employer. We have also greatly expanded the learning and development opportunities available to staff, as well as staff wellbeing support and a new staff reward platform. In April 2022 we increased pay by 4.5%, introduced a 25% enhancement for weekend working, increased annual leave entitlements and introduced new categories of leave.

The continued financial success of the Trust is particularly dependent on securing annual fee increases for its services and we have been largely successful in securing these in recent years. Fee increases are becoming increasingly necessary with high inflation rates and the need to keep our pay competitive, but we are aware that Local Authorities who fund our services are under increasing financial pressures themselves.

The Charity continues to review its resource requirements and in particular the need to update its digital infrastructure and property portfolio to ensure that it remains competitive in the future, Significant investment has already been made in our digital team and systems upgrades and this will continue. We have commenced a major property review and are currently developing a masterplan for the main Cheadle site in consultation with key stakeholders to include funding options.

Safeguarding continues to be an area of potential risk and the Charity has established a robust accountability, control and review framework involving officers and Trustees.

The Charity has been informed by The Pensions Trust that some benefit changes in regard to the final salary-based pension scheme, which closed to new members in 2000, may not have been in accordance with the scheme rules. The Pensions Trust are seeking Court direction in relation to this, the outcome of which is not expected to be known until late 2024. If the Court directs that changes were made in a way not permitted by the scheme rules, then this would give rise to additional pension liabilities for the Trust in the future, which the Scheme's Actuary has estimated to be in the region of £6.1m. This figure is estimated using actuarial assumptions derived using the Trustee's Technical Provisions basis as at 30 September 2021 where this relates to service prior to the date of change and has been calculated from the preliminary results of the actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2021 allowing for market conditions at that date.

## 10. Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

**AUDITOR**

Deloitte LLP was reappointed during the period but will not be reappointed at the forthcoming annual general meeting. A tender process is being undertaken to appoint new auditors.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by

**Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

# Independent auditor's report to the members of the Together Trust

**Report on the audit of the financial statements**

**Opinion**
In our opinion the financial statements of The Together Trust (the 'charitable company'):

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland"; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

We have audited the financial statements which comprise:

- the statement of financial activities;
- the balance sheet;
- the cash flow statement;
- the statement of accounting policies; and
- the related notes 1 to 26.

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).

**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 charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's (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.

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 charitable company'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 other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. 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.

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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

**Responsibilities of trustees**
As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law) 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 charitable company'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 charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's 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.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the FRC's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**
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 extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

We considered the nature of the charitable company's industry and its control environment and reviewed the charitable company's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to fraud and compliance with laws and regulations. We also enquired of management about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the charitable company operates in, and identified the key laws and regulations that:

- had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. These included UK Charities Act, UK Companies Act, pensions legislation; and
- do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the charitable company's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. These included Ofsted regulations and Care Quality Commission regulations.

We discussed among the audit engagement team including relevant internal specialists such as pensions regarding the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements.

As a result of performing the above, we identified the greatest potential for fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations in the following areas, and our specific procedures performed to address them are described below:

- we presume a risk of material misstatement due to potential fraud in revenue recognition which is related to cut-off of education income and the possible recognition of such income in the incorrect accounting

period. To address this risk we tested a sample of deferred income calculations for service users, and tested completeness of the deferred income report to ensure all students on the school register have been considered for revenue cut-off.

In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override. In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

In addition to the above, our procedures to respond to the risks identified included the following:

- reviewing financial statement disclosures by testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- enquiring of management concerning actual and potential litigation and claims, and instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance, reviewing correspondence with Ofsted and Care Quality Commission.

**Report on other legal and regulatory requirements**

**Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

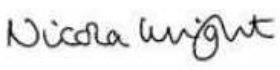
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**
Under the Companies Act 2006 we are required to report in respect of the following matters if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

**Use of our report**
This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Nicola Wright (Senior statutory auditor)
For and on behalf of Deloitte LLP, Statutory Auditor
Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom
18 November 2022

# Statement of financial activities

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2022 (including income and expenditure account)

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2022 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2022 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2022 £'000 | **Total Funds 2022 £'000** | **Total Funds 2021 £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME FROM:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 107 | 130 | - | **237** | **194** |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 32,240 | 38 | - | **32,278** | **30,455** |
| Investments | 6 | 18 | - | 6 | **24** | **21** |
| Other | 7 | 29 | - | - | **29** | **25** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | | **32,394** | **168** | **6** | **32,568** | **30,695** |
| **EXPENDITURE ON:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 169 | 2 | 5 | **176** | **198** |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 30,811 | 208 | - | **31,019** | **29,101** |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | | **30,980** | **210** | **5** | **31,195** | **29,299** |
| Net (losses)/gains on investments | 15 | (50) | - | 24 | **(26)** | **43** |
| **Net income/(expenditure) for the year** | | **1,364** | **(42)** | **25** | **1,347** | **1,439** |
| Transfers between funds | | 35 | (35) | - | **-** | **-** |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme | 22 | 4 | - | - | **4** | **22** |
| Other gains | 12 | 103 | - | - | **103** | **57** |
| **NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS** | | **1,506** | **(77)** | **25** | **1,454** | **1,518** |
| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 26,356 | 597 | 140 | **27,093** | **25,575** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | 1,506 | (77) | 25 | **1,454** | **1,518** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 20 | **27,862** | **520** | **165** | **28,547** | **27,093** |

There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed above and the net income for the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

See note 19 for comparative Statement of Financial Activities analysed by funds.

# Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2022

| | Note | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **FIXED ASSETS** | | | |
| Tangible assets | 14 | **18,170** | 18,292 |
| Investments | 15 | **976** | 302 |
| | | **19,146** | 18,594 |
| **CURRENT ASSETS** | | | |
| Debtors | 16 | **2,963** | 7,043 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | **9,917** | 7,244 |
| | | **12,880** | 14,287 |
| **CREDITORS:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | 17 | **(2,598)** | (4,751) |
| **NET CURRENT ASSETS** | | **10,282** | 9,536 |
| **TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES** | | **29,428** | 28,130 |
| **CREDITORS:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due after more than one year | 18 | **(881)** | (1,037) |
| **Provision for pension scheme liabilities** | 22 | **-** | - |
| **NET ASSETS** | | **28,547** | 27,093 |
| **FUNDS OF THE CHARITY** | | | |
| Unrestricted funds: | | | |
| General | | **16,939** | 15,295 |
| Revaluation reserve | | **6,951** | 7,057 |
| Designated | | **3,972** | 4,004 |
| | | **27,862** | 26,356 |
| Restricted income funds | | **520** | 597 |
| Endowment funds | | **165** | 140 |
| **TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS** | 20,21 | **28,547** | 27,093 |

These financial statements on pages 28 to 55 of The Together Trust (registered number 301722) were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 11 November 2022. They were signed on its behalf by:

**Mr Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

**Mr Anthony Farnworth**
**Honorary Treasurer**

## Cash flow statement

For the year ended 31 March 2022

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| **NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Net movement in funds | **1,454** | 1,518 |
| Adjustments for: | | |
| Depreciation | **731** | 756 |
| Losses/(gains) on investments | **26** | (43) |
| Income from investments | **(9)** | (8) |
| Profit on the sale of fixed assets | **(29)** | (25) |
| Interest receivable | **(15)** | (13) |
| Interest payable | **60** | 64 |
| Decrease in debtors | **4,080** | 353 |
| (Decrease)/increase in creditors | **(2,155)** | 122 |
| Net movement of pension service cost | **67** | 85 |
| Interest rate swap liability gain | **(103)** | (57) |
| Pension scheme actuarial gain | **(4)** | (22) |
| **Net cash flows from operating activities** | **4,103** | 2,730 |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Interest received | **15** | 13 |
| Income from investments | **9** | 8 |
| Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment | **32** | 25 |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | **(612)** | (537) |
| Proceeds from sale of investments | **21** | 43 |
| Purchase of investments | **(701)** | (30) |
| **Net cash flows from investing activities** | **(1,236)** | (478) |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Interest paid | **(60)** | (64) |
| Repayments of borrowings | **(71)** | (121) |
| Net cash outflow from defined benefit scheme pension contributions | **(63)** | (63) |
| **Net cash flows from financing activities** | **(194)** | (248) |
| Net increase in cash in the year | **2,673** | 2,004 |
| Cash at the beginning of the year | **7,244** | 5,240 |
| **Cash at the end of the year** | **9,917** | 7,244 |

### Analysis of changes in net debt

| | Note | At the beginning of the year £'000 | Cash flows £'000 | Fair value movements £'000 | At the end of the year £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | | **7,244** | **2,673** | **-** | **9,917** |
| Bank loans | **18** | **(879)** | **71** | **-** | **(808)** |
| Interest rate swaps | **23** | **(234)** | **-** | **103** | **(131)** |
| | | **6,131** | **2,744** | **103** | **8,978** |

# Notes to the financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2022

1. **Accounting policies**

**Basis of preparation**
The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019)" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective 1 January 2019, and the Companies Act 2006.

**Going concern**
The Trustees have prepared budgets and projections, taking into account possible changes to future income and expenditure, which show that the entity is able to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing these financial statements. The Trustees have considered a period in excess of twelve months from the date of the approval of these financial statements in making their assessment.

**Fund accounting**
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes, although in practice they may represent the funding of fixed assets.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes, including the development fund described below. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The purpose of the development fund reserve is to earmark funds to provide for ongoing maintenance, repair and refurbishment of the Together Trust homes and schools, in compliance with standards set by inspecting bodies such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The age and fabric of the establishments necessitate constant repairs, which have been highlighted by comprehensive surveys carried out by an appointed architect and reviewed annually. The programme for refurbishment for any new financial year is specified prior to the previous year end.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used by the Charity for particular purposes as specified by the donor. The costs of administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The purpose of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

Endowment funds are a form of restricted fund where the assets are required to be invested or retained for actual use rather than expended. An endowment fund where there is no power to convert the capital into income is known as a permanent endowment fund which must generally be held indefinitely.

Expendable endowment is an endowment fund where the Trustees have the power to convert the assets (i.e. land, buildings, investments or cash) into expendable income. The Charity holds permanent and expendable endowment funds. The permanent funds are not considered to be material.

**Income**
Income is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met (generally by delivery of contracted services), it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from grants includes grants where entitlement to funding is subject to specific performance conditions. Performance conditions may be stipulated explicitly by the funder, or may be implicit as per the Charity's funding proposal. Income is deferred when the funder has imposed conditions, which must be met before the Charity has unconditional entitlement or the funder has specified the funds can only be utilised in future accounting periods.

Donated goods and services are included at the lower of their value to Charity and their estimated market value. No amount is included for services donated by volunteers. The full value of the freehold peppercorn rent is not valued due to the prohibitive cost of doing so. Income from fundraising activities is included in donations.

Fees invoiced in advance of services provided are carried forward as deferred income until the service is delivered.

**Expenditure**
Expenditure is recognised when there is a constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income and those incurred ingenerating fundraising income

- Charitable expenditure includes all expenditure associated with activities directly attributable to the servicedelivery of the Charity's charitable objectives, in respect of residential, respite, outreach, educational, fostering and social work services

- Support costs are costs of those functions that assist the work of the Charity but do not directly undertakecharitable activities. Support costs include central head office costs (for example finance, human resources and governance costs) and have been allocated to charitable activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

**Operating lease agreements**
Rentals applicable to operating leases, where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor, are charged against income on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

**Trustees**
The Trustees have elected that the Charity apply a policy of non-remuneration for Trustees, excluding out of pocket expenses.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

**Tangible fixed assets**
Transitional arrangements of FRS 102 have been adopted to freeze the tangible fixed assets valuation of freehold and leasehold properties as its equivalent cost, and hence tangible fixed assets are stated at equivalent cost (being 2014 market value net of depreciation to the adoption of FRS 102) less depreciation and any provision for impairment. Costs of maintenance are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they are incurred. Assets below a value of £2,500 are not capitalised.

Depreciation is provided on each tangible fixed asset, other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less its estimated residual value, on a straight line basis over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Properties | - buildings | - 2% per annum |
| | - improvements | - 20% per annum |
| Leasehold property improvements | | - over the life of lease |
| Motor vehicles | | - 20% per annum |
| Ancillary equipment | | - 20% per annum |

**Investment assets**
Investments are included in the balance sheet at fair value as measured by middle market price values at the year end. The Trustees do not consider there to be any material difference in the valuation as measured by bid price. Movements in values during the year are included in the Statement of Financial Activities for any realised and unrealised gains and losses. Realised gains or losses are transferred to reserves upon realisation.

**Employee benefits**
For defined benefit schemes, the amounts charged to the Statement of Financial Activities are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. The interest cost and the expected return on assets are shown as a net amount of other finance gains or losses. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet.

For defined contribution schemes, the amount charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of pension costs is the contributions payable in the year. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments in the balance sheet as appropriate.

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme. The Charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme and therefore has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

**Group financial statements**
The Charity is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial statements by virtue that all subsidiary undertakings may be excluded from consolidation as they are not material and have not operated in the financial year. These financial statements therefore present information about the Charity as an individual undertaking rather than as a group.

## 1. Accounting policies (continued)

**Financial instruments**
Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Trust becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. All financial assets and liabilities are initially measured at transaction price.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value. Debt instruments which meet relevant conditions are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

The Charity uses derivative financial instruments to reduce exposure to interest rate movements. The Charity does not hold or issue derivative financial instruments for speculative purposes. Derivatives are initially recognised at fair value at the date a derivative contract is entered into and are subsequently remeasured to their fair value at each reporting date. The resulting gain or loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities immediately.

**2. Company, charitable and legal status of the Trust**
The Together Trust, a public benefit entity, is incorporated in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member. The company is a registered Charity and has no liability to corporation tax on its charitable activities. The registered office is given on page 1.

**3. Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty**
In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, which are described in note 1, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated 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 ongoing 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 both current and future periods.

In respect of the defined benefit pension scheme, the Charity has an obligation to pay pension benefits to certain employees. The cost of these benefits and the present value of the obligation depend on a number of factors including life expectancy, salary increases, asset valuations and the discount rate on corporate bonds. The Trustees estimate these factors in determining the net pension obligation in the balance sheet. The assumptions reflect historical experience and current trends as set out in note 22.

Other than the above, the Trustees do not consider there are any other critical judgements or sources of estimation uncertainty requiring disclosure.

## 4. Analysis of income from donations

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Donations | **237** | 194 |

Government grants of £nil (2021 £29,000) are included within donations and relate to HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

## 5. Analysis of income from charitable activities

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Social care services | **14,281** | 12,964 |
| Educational services | **15,570** | 15,347 |
| Other services | **2,427** | 2,144 |
| | **32,278** | 30,455 |

Government grants of £38,000 (2021 £179,000) are included within income from charitable activities (social care services) and relate to HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

## 6. Analysis of income from investments

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Investment income | **9** | 8 |
| Bank interest | **15** | 13 |
| | **24** | 21 |

## 7. Analysis of other income

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Net gain on disposal of fixed assets | **29** | 25 |
| | **29** | 25 |

## 8. Analysis of expenditure on raising funds

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | **125** | 148 |
| Service provision costs | **10** | 4 |
| Service administration costs | **6** | 3 |
| Other service costs | **35** | 43 |
| | **176** | 198 |

## 9. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

| Expenditure | Social Care Services 2022 £'000 | Education Services 2022 £'000 | Other Services 2022 £'000 | Total 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 10,410 | 9,807 | 1,671 | **21,888** |
| Premises costs | 584 | 944 | 20 | **1,548** |
| Service provision costs | 627 | 649 | 9 | **1,285** |
| Service administration costs | 269 | 575 | 97 | **941** |
| Other service costs | 479 | 647 | 50 | **1,176** |
| Head Office support costs (note 10) | 1,841 | 2,026 | 314 | **4,181** |
| | **14,210** | **14,648** | **2,161** | **31,019** |

**Comparatives for the year ended 31 March 2021**

| Expenditure | Social Care Services 2021 £'000 | Education Services 2021 £'000 | Other Services 2021 £'000 | Total 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 9,671 | 9,469 | 1,617 | **20,757** |
| Premises costs | 554 | 700 | 21 | **1,275** |
| Service provision costs | 469 | 539 | 13 | **1,021** |
| Service administration costs | 177 | 358 | 85 | **620** |
| Other service costs | 858 | 789 | 59 | **1,706** |
| Head Office support costs (note 10) | 1,582 | 1,873 | 267 | **3,722** |
| | **13,311** | **13,728** | **2,062** | **29,101** |

**Expenditure**
Total expenditure comprises direct costs incurred in the delivery of Trust services and head office support costs which are apportioned between services. Direct costs include all direct staff, premises and service provision in the day-to-day delivery of the service. It also includes other costs related to the provision of the service at each location in respect of insurance, depreciation, and interest.

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

### 10. Analysis of Head Office support costs

| | Social Care Services 2022 £'000 | Education Services 2022 £'000 | Other Services 2022 £'000 | Total 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 1,042 | 1,148 | 178 | **2,368** |
| Premises costs | 87 | 97 | 15 | **199** |
| Office administration costs | 358 | 393 | 61 | **812** |
| Governance costs | 119 | 130 | 20 | **269** |
| Other costs | 235 | 258 | 40 | **533** |
| | **1,841** | **2,026** | **314** | **4,181** |

**Comparatives for the year ended 31 March 2021**

| | Social Care Services 2021 £'000 | Education Services 2021 £'000 | Other Services 2021 £'000 | Total 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 884 | 1,048 | 149 | **2,081** |
| Premises costs | 82 | 97 | 14 | **193** |
| Office administration costs | 267 | 316 | 45 | **628** |
| Governance costs | 111 | 130 | 19 | **260** |
| Other costs | 238 | 282 | 40 | **560** |
| | **1,582** | **1,873** | **267** | **3,722** |

**Head Office support costs allocation**

There is a head office function, which provides all the support services of the Trust's activities. These services include Communications and Marketing, Business Development, Finance, Human Resources & Organisational Development, IT services and Facilities Management and the services of the Executive Directors. Cost recovery apportionment is based on the level of income for each of the services.

## 11. Net income for the year

Net income for the year is stated after charging:

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Auditor's remuneration - audit | **27** | 26 |
| Auditor's remuneration – other audit services | **3** | 3 |
| Interest paid on bank loan | **20** | 23 |
| Interest paid on interest rate swap contracts | **40** | 41 |
| Depreciation of owned assets | **731** | 756 |
| Rental under operating leases | **35** | 99 |
| Insurance | **402** | 403 |
| PR and marketing | **133** | 142 |

These costs include central head office costs where applicable and have been allocated to activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

## 12. Other gains

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Gains on interest rate swap contract | **103** | 57 |

## 13. Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

The average number of staff employed during the financial year, excluding relief and supply staff, amounted to:

| | 2022 Headcount No. | 2021 Headcount No. |
|---|---|---|
| Social care services staff | **369** | 401 |
| Education services staff | **365** | 376 |
| Other services staff | **13** | 15 |
| Other support staff | **74** | 74 |
| | **821** | 866 |

The aggregate staff costs were:

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Wages and salaries | **18,325** | 17,881 |
| Social security costs | **1,660** | 1,559 |
| Pension | **1,503** | 1,457 |
| | **21,488** | 20,897 |

During the year the Trust incurred redundancy costs of £7,000 (2021 £13,000).

Although the Trust employs a pool of relief and supply staff to cover unforeseen absences, where this is insufficient to meet operational need, agency staff are employed in the short term. Agency costs for the year were £1,495,000 (2021 £871,000).

In addition to the above staff costs, foster carer fees amounted to £1,233,000 (2021 £1,171,000).

**Employee emoluments over £60,000**

The number of employees whose emoluments, excluding pension contributions and employer's national insurance contributions, but including benefits in kind, were in excess of £60,000 was:

| | 2022 No. | 2021 No. |
|---|---|---|
| £60,001 to £70,000 | **4** | 3 |
| £70,001 to £80,000 | **-** | - |
| £80,001 to £90,000 | **1** | 1 |
| £90,001 to £100,000 | **1** | 1 |
| £100,001 to £110,000 | **1** | 1 |
| £110,001 to £120,000 | **-** | 1 |
| £120,001 to £130,000 | **1** | - |

The key management personnel are detailed on page 3. The total remuneration (including pension contributions and employers' national insurance contributions) of the key management personnel of the Trust for the year totalled £504,000 (2021 £485,000).

**Trustees' remuneration**

None of the Trustees receive any remuneration for their services to the Trust. During the year, no Trustees received reimbursement of expenses. In 2021, 1 Trustee received reimbursement of travel expenses incurred totalling £110.

## 14. Tangible fixed assets

| COST | Land and Buildings £'000 | Property Improvement £'000 | Motor Vehicles £'000 | Ancillary Equipment £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| At 1 April 2021 | 21,088 | 1,269 | 1,032 | 308 | **23,697** |
| Additions | 465 | - | 129 | 18 | **612** |
| Disposals | - | - | (114) | (33) | **(147)** |
| **At 31 March 2022** | **21,553** | **1,269** | **1,047** | **293** | **24,162** |
| **DEPRECIATION** | | | | | |
| At 1 April 2021 | 3,214 | 1,259 | 706 | 226 | **5,405** |
| Charge for the year | 570 | 6 | 130 | 25 | **731** |
| On disposals | - | - | (111) | (33) | **(144)** |
| **At 31 March 2022** | **3,784** | **1,265** | **725** | **218** | **5,992** |
| **NET BOOK VALUE** | | | | | |
| **At 31 March 2022** | **17,769** | **4** | **322** | **75** | **18,170** |
| At 31 March 2021 | 17,874 | 10 | 326 | 82 | **18,292** |

The land and buildings were last professionally valued by Bentley Higgs on 31 March 2014. The Trustees consider there to be no material change in value since that date. Properties other than specialised properties were valued on an existing use basis using a market value basis (for properties occupied for operational purposes). Specialised properties were valued on an existing use basis using a depreciated replacement cost basis.

Included within land and buildings above is a long leasehold property with a net book value of £4,706,000 (2021 £4,823,000). The Charity pays a peppercorn rent for the related land.

Certain property is pledged as security on the Charity's bank loan. The net book value of these properties is £4,706,000 (2021 £4,823,000).

The comparable amounts for fixed assets included above at a valuation determined according to the historical cost accounting rules are:

| | Land and Buildings £'000 |
|---|---|
| Cost | 14,324 |
| Accumulated Depreciation | 3,512 |
| Net book value at 31 March 2022 | **10,812** |
| Net book value at 31 March 2021 | 10,816 |

## 14. Tangible Fixed assets (continued)

**List of charitable properties:**

| Property | Description |
|---|---|
| **Corbar Road** | A 5 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Crosskeys** | A 2 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Haines House** | A 5 bedded residential service |
| **Schools Hill** | The main administrative centre for the Charity, which accommodates 60 staff. The campus also is home to the following Together Trust services:<br><br>**Inscape House School** – a school for young people aged 5 – 19 years with autism. The school can accommodate up to 105 young people<br><br>**Ashcroft School** – special education for young people with complex emotional difficulties aged 8 – 18 years. The school can accommodate up to 60 pupils |
| **Ashcroft College** | Specialist support and teaching in four vocational areas (including construction) to students aged 14 to 16 who may have been excluded or close to being excluded from mainstream education |
| **Bridge College** | Property held on long lease as a specialist further education college for students up to 25 years old with learning difficulties, disabilities and complex needs, communication disorders and autism |
| **Lerryn** | A 6 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Meridian** | A 5 bedded short break service for young people with autism |
| **Newbridge** | A specialist day service provision |
| **Norvent** | A specialist therapeutic residential provision for two young people |
| **Pearce Lodge** | A 5 bedded unit for disabled young people aged 16 to adulthood |
| **Pendlebury House** | A shared care service for up to 6 young people with autism and behavioural needs |
| **Pocket Nook** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people with autism and other special requirements |
| **Swann Lane** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Ventnor Road** | A 3 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Woodlands** | A 5 bedded short break service for disabled young people |

## 15. Investments

### Listed investments

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| UK listed investments | **976** | 302 |

### Movement in market value

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| At start of year | **302** | 262 |
| Additions | **701** | 30 |
| Disposal proceeds | **(21)** | (43) |
| Net investment (losses)/gains | **(26)** | 43 |
| Movement in cash held by investment managers | **20** | 10 |
| At end of year | **976** | 302 |
| Market value is analysed between: | | |
| Investments | **944** | 290 |
| Cash held by investment managers | **32** | 12 |
| | **976** | 302 |

### Unlisted investments

The company's investments at the balance sheet date in the share capital of companies include the following:

**Subsidiary:**

1. Together (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 3 March 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

2. BGWS (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 1 September 2005 Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

3. Boys and Girls Welfare Society Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of incorporation: 6 May 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Limited by guarantee**

None of these companies has traded during the year (2021 same) and they are not consolidated in the financial statements of The Together Trust on the grounds of immateriality.

## 16. Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Trade debtors | **2,215** | 6,290 |
| Prepayments and accrued income | **747** | 733 |
| Other debtors | **1** | 20 |
| | **2,963** | 7,043 |

## 17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bank loans | **58** | 76 |
| Trade creditors | **967** | 944 |
| Accruals | **471** | 327 |
| Deferred income | **209** | 2,681 |
| Taxation and social security | **407** | 366 |
| Other creditors | **486** | 357 |
| | **2,598** | 4,751 |

Deferred income movement

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Balance at start of year | **2,681** | 2,984 |
| Amount released in the year | **(2,681)** | (2,984) |
| Amount deferred in the year | **209** | 2,681 |
| Balance at end of year | **209** | 2,681 |

## 18. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Bank loans | 750 | 803 |
| Financial derivatives (see note 23) | 131 | 234 |
| | 881 | 1,037 |

The bank loan is repayable as follows:

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Payable within one year | 58 | 76 |
| Payable between 1 and 2 years | 60 | 68 |
| Payable between 2 to 5 years | 191 | 205 |
| Payable after 5 years | 499 | 530 |
| | 808 | 879 |

The bank loan matures on 31 March 2031 and is secured on certain property (see note 14).

Interest was payable at a variable rate of LIBOR plus 2.25% on the principal amount during the year (2021 – same). Since the year end, this has this has transitioned to UK base rate following the discontinuance of LIBOR. Interest payable in theyear was £20,000 (2021 £23,000).

The Trust is a party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. Under this swap contract, the Charity has agreed to exchange the difference between fixed and floating rate interest amounts. This allows the Charity to mitigate the risk of changing interest rates and cash flows on the variable rate debt held. See note 23 for further details.

## 19. Comparative statement of financial activities

**For the year ended 31 March 2021**

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2021 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2021 £'000 | **Total Funds 2021 £'000** | **Total Funds 2020 £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME FROM:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 77 | 117 | - | **194** | **239** |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 30,178 | 277 | - | **30,455** | **29,540** |
| Investments | 6 | 17 | - | 4 | **21** | **25** |
| Other | 7 | 25 | - | - | **25** | **14** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | | **30,297** | **394** | **4** | **30,695** | **29,818** |
| **EXPENDITURE ON:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 164 | 29 | 5 | **198** | **211** |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 28,708 | 393 | - | **29,101** | **28,479** |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | | **28,872** | **422** | **5** | **29,299** | **28,690** |
| Net gains/(losses) on investments | 15 | 23 | - | 20 | **43** | **(29)** |
| **Net income/ (expenditure)** | | **1,448** | **(28)** | **19** | **1,439** | **1,099** |
| Transfers between funds | | (10) | 10 | - | **-** | **-** |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension scheme | 22 | 22 | - | - | **22** | **(307)** |
| Other gains/(losses) | 12 | 57 | - | - | **57** | **(25)** |
| **NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS** | | 1,517 | (18) | 19 | **1,518** | **767** |
| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 24,839 | 615 | 121 | **25,575** | **24,808** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | 1,517 | (18) | 19 | **1,518** | **767** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 20 | **26,356** | **597** | **140** | **27,093** | **25,575** |

## 20. Movement on funds

| | 1 April 2021 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | 15,295 | 32,394 | (30,672) | 57 | (135) | **16,939** |
| Revaluation reserve | 7,057 | - | - | - | (106) | **6,951** |
| Designated | 4,004 | - | (308) | - | 276 | **3,972** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **26,356** | **32,394** | **(30,980)** | **57** | **35** | **27,862** |
| **Restricted funds** | 597 | 168 | (210) | - | (35) | **520** |
| **Endowment funds** | 140 | 6 | (5) | 24 | - | **165** |
| | **27,093** | **32,568** | **(31,195)** | **81** | **-** | **28,547** |

**Year ended 31 March 2021 comparatives**

| | 1 April 2020 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | **17,461** | 30,297 | (28,722) | 102 | (3,843) | **15,295** |
| Revaluation reserve | **7,162** | - | - | - | (105) | **7,057** |
| Designated | **216** | - | (150) | - | 3,938 | **4,004** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **24,839** | **30,297** | **(28,872)** | **102** | **(10)** | **26,356** |
| **Restricted funds** | **615** | 394 | (422) | - | 10 | **597** |
| **Endowment funds** | **121** | 4 | (5) | 20 | - | **140** |
| | **25,575** | **30,695** | **(29,299)** | **122** | **-** | **27,093** |

**Unrestricted Designated Funds**

These funds comprise:

- a development fund which was established to ring-fence funds for the maintenance of the Charity's homes and schools in compliance with standards set for the services by inspecting bodies.
- service re-development funds established to ring-fence funds for the delivery of the Trust's service innovation plans, property review and digital investment.
- a number of other voluntary income funds which have been agreed on the basis that 'unspent' donations which have been generated during the year will be spent specifically and directly on the children and young people that the Trust supports. The Together Trust operates a 'wish list' process whereby the children and young people submit their 'wishes' and as far as the fund will allow these are considered and met during the year.

## 20. Movements on funds (continued)

**Restricted Funds**

| | | 1 April 2021 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inscape grants | **58** | - | - | - | **58** |
| 2. | Ashcroft | **63** | - | - | - | **63** |
| 3. | Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | - | - | - | **96** |
| 4. | Youth Music Fuse fund | **22** | 7 | (17) | - | **12** |
| 5. | 150th anniversary fund | **20** | 42 | (39) | - | **23** |
| 6. | Miscellaneous | **338** | 119 | (154) | (35) | **268** |
| | | **597** | 168 | (210) | (35) | **520** |

**2021 comparatives**

| | | 1 April 2020 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inscape grants | **58** | - | - | - | **58** |
| 2. | Ashcroft | **63** | - | - | - | **63** |
| 3. | Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | - | - | - | **96** |
| 4. | Youth Music Fuse fund | **36** | 27 | (41) | - | **22** |
| 5. | 150th anniversary fund | **48** | - | (28) | - | **20** |
| 6. | Miscellaneous | **314** | 367 | (353) | 10 | **338** |
| | | **615** | 394 | (422) | 10 | **597** |

1. **Inscape grants** – Funds from grants for specific purposes for Inscape.
2. **Ashcroft –** Funds from Corporate supporters allocated to specific projects for Ashcroft School
3. **Bridge Transitional fund** - this is a fund for Bridge College, being grant monies from Central Government to enable Colleges to develop alternative income streams.
4. **Youth Music Fuse fund –** this is a fund for a project to support young people to enjoy and learn music across all Together Trust education settings
5. **150th Anniversary fund –** a National Lottery funded project to celebrate the heritage and archive of the Trust's 150 years of providing aid, assistance and care to children and young people
6. **Miscellaneous –** This represents a number of individual service funds, generally established from donations restricted for use by a particular service.

Transfers from restricted to unrestricted funds represents, where permitted, the transfer of funds which remain unspent following completion of the specific projects to which they related.

## 20 Movements on funds (continued)

### Endowment Funds

| | 1 April 2021 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 79 | 5 | (5) | 27 | - | 106 |
| Other funds | 61 | 1 | - | (3) | - | 59 |
| | 140 | 6 | (5) | 24 | - | 165 |

### 2021 comparatives

| | 1 April 2020 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 70 | 2 | (4) | 11 | - | 79 |
| Other funds | 51 | 2 | (1) | 9 | - | 61 |
| | 121 | 4 | (5) | 20 | - | 140 |

**Jubilee Trust Fund**
This fund forms part of the Charity's investment portfolio and, as a permanent endowment fund, the restrictions on capital and use of income must be followed and spent in accordance with the Jubilee Trust Fund objects. The Together Trust is the sole trustee of the Jubilee Trust Fund and the two charities are linked with The Together Trust being the reporting Charity for both.

**Other Funds**
These are expendable endowment funds held by the Charity to be used in accordance with the individual fund objects. These funds are as follows:

- Hoyer Trust Fund
- Thomas Hunt Trust Fund
- William Melland Trust Fund
- Ragged & Industrial Trust Fund
- Ann Street Wardle Trust Fund
- Harold Grimshaw Trust Fund

## 21. Analysis of assets and liabilities between funds

| | Unrestricted 2022 £'000 | Restricted 2022 £'000 | Endowment 2022 £'000 | Total 2022 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,170 | - | - | 18,170 |
| Investments | 811 | - | 165 | 976 |
| Debtors | 2,963 | - | - | 2,963 |
| Cash | 9,397 | 520 | - | 9,917 |
| Current liabilities | (2,598) | - | - | (2,598) |
| Long term liabilities | (881) | - | - | (881) |
| Total net assets | **27,862** | **520** | **165** | **28,547** |

2021 Comparatives

| | Unrestricted 2021 £'000 | Restricted 2021 £'000 | Endowment 2021 £'000 | Total 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,292 | - | - | 18,292 |
| Investments | 162 | - | 140 | 302 |
| Debtors | 7,043 | - | - | 7,043 |
| Cash | 6,647 | 597 | - | 7,244 |
| Current liabilities | (4,751) | - | - | (4,751) |
| Long term liabilities | (1,037) | - | - | (1,037) |
| Total net assets | **26,356** | **597** | **140** | **27,093** |

## 22. Pensions

### Together Trust Final Salary Scheme

The Charity operates a defined benefit scheme, the Together Trust final salary scheme. The provider of the scheme is The Pensions Trust. The Scheme became 'paid up' with effect from 31 March 2000.

This scheme is a separate Trustee administered fund holding the pension scheme assets to meet long-term pension liabilities. An actuarial valuation was carried out at 30 September 2018 and was updated to 31 March 2020 by a qualified actuary, independent of the scheme's sponsoring employer. The major assumptions used by the actuary are shown below.

The most recent completed actuarial valuation showed a deficit of £277,000 as at 30 September 2018. The Together Trust has previously agreed with the scheme's Trustee that it would eliminate the deficit by the payment of contributions to de-risk the deficit and these payments have all been made.
The Trust has further agreed with the Trustee that it will continue to make payments to meet the expenses of the scheme and levies to the Pension Protection Fund.

Assumptions
The key assumptions used in the actuarial valuation were:

| | Valuation at 2022 | Valuation at 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | % per annum | % per annum |
| Discount rate | 2.78 | 2.05 |
| Inflation (RPI) | 3.62 | 3.35 |
| Inflation (CPI) | 3.22 | 2.90 |
| Allowance for revaluation of deferred pensions of RPI or 5% p.a. if less | 3.62 | 3.35 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 5% pa if less | 3.09 | 2.85 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 3% pa if less | 2.41 | 2.25 |

| | % of maximum allowance 2022 | % of maximum allowance 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Allowance for commutation of pension for cash at retirement | 75 | 75 |

The mortality assumptions adopted imply the following life expectancies on retirement:

| | Life expectancy at age 65 (years) 2022 | Life expectancy at age 65 (years) 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Retiring today: | | |
| Males | 21.7 | 21.5 |
| Females | 24.1 | 23.4 |
| Retiring in 20 years: | | |
| Males | 23.3 | 22.8 |
| Females | 25.6 | 25.0 |

## 22. Pensions (continued)

The amount included in the balance sheet arising from the Trust's obligations in respect of the defined benefit scheme is as follows:

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets | **9,294** | 9,390 |
| Present value of defined benefit obligations | **(8,951)** | (9,311) |
| Surplus in plan | **343** | 79 |
| Unrecognised surplus | **(343)** | (79) |
| Net asset recognised in the balance sheet | **-** | - |

Movements in the fair value of scheme assets were as follows:

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets at start of year | **9,390** | 9,559 |
| Interest income | **189** | 216 |
| Return on assets excluding interest income | **54** | (80) |
| Expenses | **(69)** | (68) |
| Contributions paid by the employer | **63** | 63 |
| Benefits paid and expenses | **(333)** | (300) |
| Fair value of scheme assets at end of year | **9,294** | 9,390 |

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bond type | **5,840** | 6,562 |
| Property | **1,075** | 848 |
| Other | **2,379** | 1,980 |
| Total assets | **9,294** | 9,390 |

## 22. Pensions (continued)

Movements in the present value of defined benefit obligations were as follows:

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Defined benefit obligation at start of year | **9,311** | 8,186 |
| Interest expense | **187** | 185 |
| Past service cost – plan amendments | **-** | 17 |
| Experience losses/(gains) on liabilities | **303** | (45) |
| (Gain)/loss on change of assumptions | **(517)** | 1,268 |
| Benefits paid | **(333)** | (300) |
| Defined benefit obligation at end of year | **8,951** | 9,311 |

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of the defined benefit scheme are as follows:

| | 2022 £'000 | 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Expenses | **(69)** | (68) |
| Benefit changes | **-** | (17) |
| Interest income on assets | **189** | 216 |
| Interest cost on defined benefit obligation | **(187)** | (185) |
| Interest effect of asset ceiling | **(2)** | (31) |
| Net cost recognised within net income/(expenditure) for the year | **(69)** | (85) |
| Return on scheme assets (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – gain/(loss) | **54** | (80) |
| Experience gains and losses arising on the scheme liabilities – (loss)/gain | **(303)** | 45 |
| Effects of changes in the demographic and financial assumptions underlying the present value of the scheme liabilities – gain/(loss) | **517** | (1,268) |
| Effects of changes in the amount of surplus that is not recoverable (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – (loss)/gain | **(262)** | 1,325 |
| Total actuarial gains | **6** | 22 |
| Total cost relating to defined benefit scheme recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities | **(63)** | (63) |

## 22. Pensions (continued)

The Charity has participated in two (2021: two) pension schemes for its staff and these are described below.

### (i) Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS").

The TPS provides pensions to teachers who have worked in schools and other educational establishments in England and Wales. The Scheme is an unfunded statutory public service pension scheme with the benefits underwritten by the Government. The Scheme is financed by payments from the employer and from those current employees who are members of the Scheme who pay contributions at different rates which depend on their salaries.

Every four years, the Government Actuary's Department carries out a valuation of all unfunded public service pension schemes, including the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2016 in accordance with The Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 (as amended).

The valuation report was published by the Government's Actuary's Department on 5 March 2019. The key results of the valuation and the subsequent consultation were that employer contribution rates were set at 23.68% with effect from 1 September 2019.

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documents can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website at the following location:

https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/news/employers/2019/04/teachers-pensions-valuation-report.aspx

The TPS is a multi-employer pension scheme. The Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme. Accordingly, the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Trust has set out above the information available on the scheme and the implications for the Trust in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The pension costs paid to the TPS in the year amounted to £679,000 (2021: £662,000) and have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as an expense with £57,000 (2021: £54,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date. The liability and expense have been allocated in full to unrestricted funds. The allocation of the expense to activities is explained in note 9.

### (ii) Group Personal Pension Plan

The Charity also provides eligible staff the opportunity to contribute to a personal pension through a Group Personal Pension Plan, which is a defined contribution scheme. It is made available to all staff excluding those eligible for the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Provision of the scheme is made through pension provider Standard Life.

In the year ended 31 March 2022 the pension contributions payable in respect of staff participating in the Group Personal Pension plan was £814,000 (2021: £785,000) with £68,000 (2021: £65,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date.

## 23. Derivative financial instruments

The following table details the notional principal amounts and remaining terms of interest rate swap contracts outstanding as at the reporting date:

**Outstanding contracts - receive floating pay fixed contracts**

| | Average contract fixed interest rate | | Notational Principal value | | Fair value | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2022** | 2021 | **2022** | 2021 | **2022** | 2021 |
| | **%** | % | **£'000** | £'000 | **£'000** | £'000 |
| 5 years + | **4.21** | 4.21 | **952** | 1,005 | **131** | 234 |

The Trust is party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. The interest rate swap contract expires on 31 March 2031.

The fair value of the derivative is calculated by discounting the future cash flows to the maturity date of 31 March 2031. The product gives the Trust increased certainty over future costs and cash flows, and the liability should be considered within the context of the length of the loan period and interest rates existing when the loan agreement was made in December 2010.

The interest rate swap settles on a quarterly basis. The floating rate on the interest rate swap was three months' LIBOR. As a result of the discontinuance of LIBOR, from 31 December 2021, the floating rate on the interest rate swap transitioned from LIBOR to UK Base Rate. The Trust settles the difference between the fixed and floating interest rate on a net basis.

Gains of £103,000 (2021: £57,000) in respect of the interest rate swap contract have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

### 24. Related party transactions

No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the Charity during the year (2021 £nil). There were no other related party transactions during the current or prior years that require disclosure.

### 25. Financial commitments

**Capital commitments**

| | **2022** | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| Contracts for capital expenditure not provided for | **82** | - |

**Operating lease commitments**

The total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases were:

| | **Land & Buildings** | | **Other** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2022** | 2021 | **2022** | 2021 |
| | **£'000** | £'000 | **£'000** | £'000 |
| - due within one year | **4** | 33 | **15** | 12 |
| - due between one and five years | **-** | 9 | **16** | 17 |
| - due after five years | **-** | - | **-** | - |
| | **4** | 42 | **31** | 29 |

### 26. Contingent Liabilities

The Charity has been informed by The Pensions Trust that some benefit changes in regard to the final salary-based pension scheme, which closed to new members in 2000, may not have been in accordance with the scheme rules. The Pensions Trust are seeking Court direction in relation to this, the outcome of which is not expected to be known until late 2024. If the Court directs these changes were made in a way not permitted by the scheme rules, then this would give rise to additional pension liabilities for the Trust in the future, which the Scheme's Actuary has estimated to be in the region of £6.1m. This figure is estimated using actuarial assumptions derived using the Trustee's Technical Provisions basis as at 30 September 2021 where this relates to service prior to the date of change and has been calculated from the preliminary results of the actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2021 allowing for market conditions at that date.

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Cheshire, SK8 1JE

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**enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk**

A digital copy of this publication
can be downloaded at
**togethertrust.org.uk/what-we-do**

TOGETHER TRUST

**THE TOGETHER TRUST**

England & Wales - Charity number 209782

# Accounts

# Trustees' report and financial statements
# Year ended 31 March 2021

The Together Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
Charity Number 209782
Company Registration Number 0030172

TOGETHER TRUST

# Our mission

We are the Together Trust. We're here to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support – they are at the heart of everything we do. We stand by them and we work together for change.

# Our vision

A society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities.

# Our values

**We will always strive to be:**

- **Positive**
  We take pride in celebrating the difference we make.

- **Professional**
  We act in a fair and respectable way that recognises our collective expertise.

- **Passionate**
  We encourage creative ideas and inspire one another.

- **Supportive**
  We are considerate and caring towards one another.

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# 1. Reference and administrative information

**The Board of Trustees (Non-executive)**

*Chair*
Giles Gaddum (Acting Chair 1.4.21 – 4.11.21 appointed 5.11.21)

*Chair*
Ralph Ellerton (retired 8.3.21)

*Vice Chair*
Giles Gaddum (to 31.3.21)
Position vacant

*Lead Honorary Treasurer*
Anthony Farnworth

*Assistant Honorary Treasurer*
Ian Johnson

Roger Bagguley
Jakeb Braden (appointed 7.10.21)
James Flood (appointed 30.4.20, retired 7.10.21)
Norah Flood
David Freeston (appointed 15.10.20)
Maria Greenwood
Jane Grime (appointed 7.10.21)
George Herbert (retired 4.12.20)
Roger Horne
Kirsteen Hughes (appointed 21.4.20)
Rachel Jones (appointed 7.10.21)
Simon Lees-Jones (retired 4.12.20)
Gani Martins (appointed 7.10.21)
Tristan Morris (appointed 01.5.20)
Lynne Ridsdale (appointed 28.4.20)
Lyndsey Stark (appointed 7.10.21)
Helen Stevenson (appointed 30.4.20)
Robert Stevenson (retired 4.12.20)

*President*
Brian Chesworth OBE

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*Registered Office*
Together Trust Centre
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Cheadle
Cheshire
SK8 1JE

Tel: 0161 283 4848
e-mail: enquiries@togethertrust.org.uk
Website: www.togethertrust.org.uk

**The Trust's Leadership Team (Executive)**

*Chief Executive*
Mark Lee

*Resource Director*
Brian White

*Service Director*
Jill Sheldrake MBE

*Governance & External Affairs Director*
Julie Isted

**Principal Professional Advisers**

*Bankers*
Barclays Bank PLC
3 Hardman Street
Spinningfields
Manchester
M3 3HF

*Investment Managers*
Brewin Dolphin Securities Limited
1 The Avenue
Spinningfields Square
Manchester
M3 3AP

*Legal Advisers*
Trowers & Hamlins
55 Princess Street
Manchester
M2 4EW

*Auditor*
Deloitte LLP
The Hanover Building
Corporation Street
Manchester
M4 4AH

*HR & Health & Safety Advisers*
Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)
RoSPA House, Edgbaston Park
353 Bristol Road
Birmingham
B5 7ST

## 2. Chair's introduction

On behalf of the Trustees of the Together Trust, who are also Directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, I am pleased to present our annual report for the Together Trust, our progress towards the goals in our Stronger Together Strategic Plan (the Strategic Report), the financial statements and auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2021. This can be read in conjunction with the Charity's Annual Review 2020/21.

Our vision is a society where everyone thrives because they are valued within their communities. The Charity is deeply rooted in its values and aspires to be person centred in all its plans, practices, and behaviours. The complex needs of our beneficiaries mean that the people we support do not often benefit from generic, off the shelf solutions but require specialist support that is tailored to their needs. Throughout 2020/21, the coronavirus pandemic continued to have a significant effect on the operations of the Trust, but I am pleased to report that the charity has successfully managed the risks to date, to ensure that we are able to continue to support the people who need our services, in a financially sustainable manner.

On behalf of our Board, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our workforce for their dedication and loyalty. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted more than ever the importance of the essential work we do for the people we support. Across the whole organisation we witnessed an inspiring sense of commitment and we watched with admiration as colleagues responded to the challenges the crisis has presented. By adopting a 'whatever it takes' attitude our staff and volunteers have looked after the people we support, their families and each other admirably.

The Trust has come a long way since 1870, when Leonard Shaw and Richard Taylor founded a 'Night Refuge for Homeless boys' on Quay Street in Manchester. In the 151 years that followed we have added new homes, opened our doors to adults as well as young people, added new services for our communities and opened special education services, training and a fostering service.

Today our care, special education, community and family support services support over 1,800 children, adults and families each year. To do this our team of over 800 people, at dozens of sites, put the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support at the heart of all that they do.

The work of our founders continues to inspire our modern-day values. We work for the Together Trust because we are passionate about improving the lives of people with disabilities, autism, mental health needs, care leavers and their families.

I am immensely proud of our achievements this year and I would like to extend my personal thanks to our staff, supporters and volunteers.

**Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

# 3. Charitable objectives, structure and management

The Together Trust ("the Charity" or "the Company") is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, which is governed by Articles of Association, last amended on 29 November 2019. The Charity serves children, young people, adults and families whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autism spectrum conditions.

The Charity's objects are:

(a) To give aid, assistance and care to those with disabilities or in need, including to children and/or young persons; and

(b) To promote the education, training and advancement in life of those with disabilities or in need, including that of children and/or young persons.

The Charity's work reflects the main themes and ideas within Department for Education plans and the direction of current and future adult social care and health provision. Together Trust services are based in the North West of England and surrounding areas however, the Charity accepts referrals from all parts of the UK.

### The Trust's Leadership Team (Executive) – Key Management

The Chief Executive is assisted in the day-to-day management of the Charity by three Operational Directors, listed on page 1, who each have responsibility for an area of its activities' resources, performance and operations.

### Statutory & Regulatory

Together Trust's subsidiaries, as listed in note 15 to the financial statements, have not traded during the year, have no income and bore no expenditure.

# 4. Corporate governance

Governance handbooks for Members, Trustees and Governors support the Charity Articles by setting out the policies, procedures and practices the Trustees will adopt in the fulfilment of their responsibility for the activities of the Charity.

The Charity seeks to secure its future governance responsibilities by an active Trustee governance sub-group which is responsible for recruiting new Members of the Charity who may contribute to governance activity in different degrees and be the main, but not exclusive, source of new Trustees. New Members and Trustees bring knowledge and abilities to the Charity that have been derived from various perspectives, these being either business and commerce or professional, occupational or charitable experience.

**Members**

The Together Trust is a private company limited by guarantee and currently has 44 registered Members. The interests of the Trust and its Members are aligned with the common purpose of carrying out the objects of the Company. This ensures that the views of beneficiaries are communicated to the Board as a whole and considered.

The Together Trust holds an AGM every 12 months, which all members are entitled to attend either personallyor by proxy. Corporate Members are entitled to attend general meetings by their authorised representatives. At the time of reporting, the Company has no Corporate Members.

There are Conflicts of Interest and Gift in Kind policies in place for Members, Trustees and Governors to manage any actual and perceived conflicts that might arise.

**The Board of Trustees (Non-executive)**

Together Trust's Board of Trustees ("The Board") meets six times per year. The Board proposes and approves new Trustees who receive a formal induction programme that covers obligations, documentation, strategic and operational frameworks, staffing structures, annual budget process, management accounts, strategic objectives, delivery plans and visits to Together Trust services.

17 Trustees served during the financial year from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. James Flood, Robert Stevenson, Simon Lees-Jones, George Herbert and former Chair Ralph Ellerton all retired during the reporting period. All individuals who left trusteeship during the year made a long-standing impact on the Charity's performance and effectiveness during their years of office. The Trustees would like to pay tribute to retired Trustees Robert Stevenson and David Claxton who sadly passed away in spring 2021. Both individuals made a significant contribution to the Trust during their terms of office. Giles Gaddum was Acting Chair for a period and the Board formally appointed to this post and its other Honorary Officers in November 2021. In 2020 the charity was delighted to appoint IT and digital specialists Helen Stevenson, James Flood and Tristan Morris, project manager David Freeston and HR and recruitment specialists Kirsteen Hughes and Lynne Ridsdale to the Board. During October 2021 the Board appointed Jakeb Braden, Jane Grime, Rachel Jones, Gani Martins and Lyndsey Stark who bring new skills or lived experience to the charity at trustee level.

We are committed to ensuring our Board reflects the communities we work with. Wherever possible we will seek to recruit Trustees with lived experience to ensure our decision making is informed and supportive of the people we support.

The Board holds responsibility for agreeing the strategic direction of the organisation, setting the budgetary framework and deciding upon major undertakings. Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Charity is delegated to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive reports fully to the Trustees at each Board meeting and to the Chair on a regular basis. This allows the Board to monitor progress in a well informed and incremental manner and also to agree any strategic or budgetary adjustments which may become necessary in the year.

During 2014, the Board of Trustees agreed a six year strategic plan known as 'Stronger Together'. In early 2018, the Charity updated its strategic vision and goals. The revised plan laid out the Charity's vision for how it will become stronger together between 2018 - 2022, building on its existing expertise and exploring innovative ways of improving how it works. More recently it has begun work on a new plan beyond 2022 and more information about this can be found in Section 8 of this report.

**Groups that report to the Board**

The Trust aims to ensure the charity's values are reflected in all our work and that the ethos and the culture of the organisation underpin the delivery of all activities. Our special purpose sub-groups and school and college governing bodies[1] meet regularly to undertake specific tasks on which they report to the Board to assist its function, decision-making and continued improvement.

**School & College Governing Bodies** – Each governing body has its own constitution approved by the Board. The Board appoints Trustees to be the Chair and Vice Chair of each governing body. Trustees who served as Chairs to the Charity's Governing Bodies during the reporting period were:-

**Ashcroft School** – Roger Bagguley
**Bridge College** – Roger Horne
**Inscape House School** - Giles Gaddum

**The Together Trust Fostering Panel** - the panel is made up of people with a range of skills, knowledge and experience and includes staff members from the Together Trust fostering agency. Some panel members have a professional background in child or social care, and others have direct experience with the fostering

[1] Refer to Instruments & Articles of Inscape House School, Ashcroft School and Bridge College as laid out in governance handbooks for educational services

process. Our panel members also have access to legal and medical advice should they need it as well as each other's skills and expertise.

The panel considers fostering applications and makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants. This also includes making recommendations about the number, age range and backgrounds of the children placed with carers.

**Sub-groups**
The Board maintains several Trustee led special purpose sub-groups that undertake specific tasks which contribute to the Charity's governance and operation in order to meet the ambitious aims within the 'Stronger Together' plan. In keeping with its declared governance precepts, the Board does not create sub-committees with defined constitutions and powers.

During the year the Board undertook a comprehensive review of its subgroups to ensure their terms of authority and reference were in line with the charity's latest plans. The Board approved revisions to strategic theme responsibilities for each subgroup in January 2020. All subgroups monitor and evaluate relevant KPIs to help drive continuous improvement with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement. The revised terms also now ensure each area of activity supports the Trust's commitment to social value and improved equity, diversity and inclusion for governance, the workforce and the people the charity supports.

Each sub-group receives updates on performance, evaluation and risk in core areas of operational and infrastructure services at the Charity. The terms for each sub-group reflect the Charity Governance Code[2].

The Board receives reports, including KPI RAG rated performance from each sub-group in line with the organisation's planning and performance management cycle.

**Governance Sub-group –** the sub-group meets quarterly to assist the Board to maintain its target group of Members, Governors and Trustees ensuring that the right balance of skills and competences is maintained within each group in order to ensure effective succession planning and governance.

The sub-group also assists the Board by reviewing recruitment of Members, Trustees and Governors, their responsibilities and the proper arrangements of supervision and appraisal (where relevant); the methods which the Board and Governing Bodies use to monitor their own performance; how the Charity evaluates the Board in the governance statement in the Trustees' Annual Report and completes an annual audit of skills, experience and diversity of Trustees to help inform recruitment and training.

**EDI Governance Steering Sub-group** – reporting to the Governance subgroup this group was formed in summer 2020. This group will oversee the strategic approach to building a greater equitable and diverse organisational governance culture, ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles are embedded to help deliver the best possible outcomes for the people we support. They will review the composition of their board and governing bodies and address any countering imbalances of power, perspective and opportunity. As they assess their understanding of systems and culture at the Together Trust, they will be setting context-specific and realistic goals, taking action and monitoring EDI performance.

The Trust aims to create an environment where divergent views are welcomed, and individuals feel confident sharing their ideas. To achieve this, trust and mutual respect is essential — both between Board members and between the Trustees and the Executive Team and wider workforce.

**Supporting People Sub-group –** the sub-group meets quarterly to ensure the Together Trust is aligned to the needs of its customers and commissioners and reviews how the Charity continuously improves and addresses the needs of the people who use its services. The sub-group also ensures there is consistency of process across the organisation to facilitate collaborative working and exchange best practices.

It ensures an effective, accessible and regular programme of effective communication, impact and social value reporting to our external stakeholders and oversees high quality, effective person-centred care is delivered in line with best practice. It oversees external accreditation of customer relationship standards including Investor in Customers ensuring results are acted upon effectively.

[2] https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en

The subgroup also ensures that the Charity's complaints policy is transparent, well-publicised and effective and that complaints are handled constructively, impartially and dealt with following a pre-agreed timeline.

**Finance & Audit Sub-group –** the sub-group meets six times a year to inform the Honorary Treasurers and the Chair of the financial position and performance of the Charity and the operational detail behind the management accounts that are presented at each Board meeting. It oversees the annual budget process and any special issues with financial implications that are to be reported to the Board.

The sub-group also reviews funding strategy, growth plans and matters in respect of the Charity's pension schemes. It ensures that third party partners and suppliers are procured in line in the best interests of the charity and its values.

**Human Resources and Organisational Development Sub-group** – the sub-group meets regularly to ensure that the Together Trust is able to attract, retain, and motivate the highest calibre of staff to deliver value for money for the Charity's beneficiaries in line with strategic objectives and financial parameters. The sub-group assists the Board to maintain a view as to the comparability of Together Trust's pay and reward policy. During the reporting period the sub-group has worked closely with the Charity's officers to oversee a more strategic approach to EDI for its workforce.

The sub-group also ensures that the Charity can attract, retain and motivate high levels of volunteers and oversees external accreditation of HR/training-related standards including Investors in People. It ensures safer recruitment procedures operate in the Charity effectively. It also considers the arrangements for workforce engagement and the outcomes and action planning from workforce survey results.

**Human Resources Remuneration Sub-group** – this subgroup advises the Chair on annual remuneration considerations and other terms and conditions for the Chief Executive and Directors that may be put to the Board of Trustees. The remit of this group supplements the Human Resources and Organisational Development Sub-group given that the latter group's remit is to focus on workforce development and employment conditions at the Charity.

**Safeguarding Scrutiny Sub-group** – The group meets regularly and oversees the content of safeguarding reports to the Board of Trustees and other stakeholders and ensures arrangements for safeguarding within the Charity are adopted effectively to meet national standards to help the people who use our services to achieve the outcome they need in the safest and most effective way.

The group ensures the Charity's training and development programme meets safeguarding standards. It audits and evaluates the effectiveness of safeguarding and whistle blowing policies and procedures ensuring evidence is in place that demonstrates the Charity discharges its functions effectively and that the interests of the people that use the Charity's services are promoted.

The group identifies and disseminates learning from Practice Learning Reviews and Serious Case Reviews. It audits outcome measurement results on safeguarding and clinical activity to ensure it is reliable, consistent and patterns and trends are analysed in order that necessary safeguarding actions are taken across the organisation. It identifies and disseminates learning from good and poor practice.

**Health & Safety, Risk and Environment Sub-group –** this subgroup oversees the appropriate consultation and planning arrangements to enable employer and employees to co-operate effectively in promoting and developing measures to ensure effective health and safety performance in line with latest legislation and good practice as delivered by a H&S Committee. It ensures business continuity plans are reviewed regularly, agrees and monitors an organisational approach to environmental impact and oversees the development of the Trust's property portfolio to ensure that it is fit for purpose including compliance with the DDA.

It monitors the effectiveness of the charity's approach to risk management (including the annual risk register).

**Health & Safety Committee** - made up of representatives from across the Charity who meet on a regular basis to promote efficient health and safety policies and methods across all areas. The Together Trust is a registered member of the Contractors Health and Safety Scheme under which its health and safety practice is

reviewed each year. The Charity also subscribes to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), for external guidance and advice where required.

**Digital Transformation Sub-group** – the sub-group meets quarterly to oversee how technology can reach and support stakeholders with the aim of delivering practical, efficient and cost effective solutions to influence the Charity to create a culture in which digital can flourish. The sub-group also oversees the accountability for digital development within the Charity ensuring that where possible, digital is an integral part of business design. It ensures the Charity takes a digital led approach and learning is shared to enable stakeholders to:

- Develop the right skills required to use IT and digital tools effectively and safely
- Make it easier to communicate with the Trust
- Explore how technology (eg assistive technology) can encourage independence and wellbeing
- Ensure effective information management and compliance including GDPR

**Service Visitor Sub-groups** – a programme of visits aims to ensure that all Together Trust operations and central support services will be visited by Trustees at least once in each financial year. This enables Trustees to broaden their knowledge and awareness of issues relating to the activities of the workforce and for the people who use the Charity's services. The aim is to promote positive working relationships between Trustees and staff members. In order to ensure the strong link between Trustees and service delivery was maintained during COVID-19 restrictions, service visits have taken place on-line with Trustees meeting staff teams virtually in line with risk assessments.

# 5. Section 172 statement

This section of the Report describes how the Directors have had regard to the matters set out in section 172(1) (a) to (f), and forms the Directors' statement required under section 414CZA, of the Companies Act 2006.

The Directors recognise that the long-term success of the Company is dependent on having regard to the interests of its stakeholders. As a registered Charity, the Directors' responsibility also extends to ensuring that the affairs and objectives of the Together Trust are managed in a way that enhances public trust and support. The Board has identified and documented its stakeholders in the Together Trust's Stronger Together Strategic Plan. Key stakeholders include the people supported by the charity, their families, carers, commissioners, our workforce and our regulators.

**Beneficiaries**
The Board recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders, understanding their views and interests in order to be successful over the long-term. Dialogue with stakeholders can help the Board to understand significant changes in the landscape, predict future developments and trends, and develop strategy that is aligned with stakeholder interests.

The Charity works tirelessly towards a brighter future for all and to build communities where everyone feels valued and can thrive. The people we support tell us that they face daily discrimination, hardship and barriers. Things must change. Every day, we listen and learn from the people we support so we can work together for change. During the year, following extensive stakeholder consultation the Board agreed a more pro-active approach to helping the people we support to influence local, regional and national policy. Our work in this area has included:

**Children in care and care leavers**
Our Keep Caring to 18 is a campaign which challenges the use of unregulated accommodation. The Charity believes that every child in care should be guaranteed care up to the age of 18 but new government legislation will leave thousands of children without care every year. During the year 2,650 people have taken action in support of our campaign about unregulated accommodation – leading to 1,300 new Trust supporters and potential donors.

During the reporting period we have also:

- Submitted evidence to the Education Select Committee Children's Homes inquiry
- Produced a joint submission with members of Family for Every Child for the UN Day of General Discussion on Children's Rights and Alternative Care
- Highlighted issues around care leaver access to records highlighted by BBC North West Tonight and The Guardian
- Submitted a witness statement to support Article 39's legal action against the government
- Contributed to the Government's Care Review attending four roundtables of children's rights, the challenges for disabled children and their families, children in care and care leavers and residential care. The Trust's case for change was submitted as part of the Review's call for evidence.

More recently we have begun work to influence the Government's health and social care and SEND reform plans and as member of cabinet office regional stakeholder group we are campaigning for better employment opportunities for disabled people.

The Board actively engages with its beneficiaries, both informally and formally, in order to understand the impact of its charitable activities and the interests of its beneficiaries. In 2019 the Together Trust was granted the highest award possible for its customer service and relationship management following an independent assessment by Investor in Customers (IIC). IIC registered the Charity as having 'exceptional' customer service levels, and awarded the Charity gold status across all four IIC principles. The independent assessment of excellence in the field of customer service and customer relationships is based on internal and external perceptions of the customer experience. The Trust was first awarded this standard in 2017 and was delighted to retain it in August 2019. At the time of reporting, it is currently mid-way through a re-assessment for the award.

The supporting people subgroup reports directly to the Board and has responsibility for overseeing and advising Directors to ensure the Together Trust is aligned to the needs of its customers and commissioners and reviews how the Charity continuously improves and addresses the needs of the people who use its services. More detailed information about the terms for this subgroup can be found on page 5 of this report.

The Board is committed to receiving direct feedback from the people it supports. Beneficiaries often speak at Board and Workforce meetings alongside colleagues. Other forms of engagement include regular meetings and communications with beneficiaries across a range of services; joining Trustees at service visits; presentations at key events; invitations to parents and carers to join our governing subgroups; online surveys to establish need within beneficiary groups; social media channels; publications/reports; signposting to tools and guidance on the website including a resource hub to assist families in a variety of matters especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Workforce & Workforce Engagement**

The Charity takes great pride in its workforce on whom it depends for the delivery of its charitable objectives.

During the year the Together Trust employed an average of 866 over the year in the fields of care, education, community, clinical, management and infrastructure support.

The Charity's pay and reward structure follows a Job Family model which aims to set out pay and reward in an equal, fair and consistent manner and at a level to recruit and retain the necessary calibre of staff. Each job family contains different levels, each reflecting different job outputs, skills, knowledge and experience. However, the essential nature of the activities carried out and the basic skills used are similar. The number of levels varies for each job family, depending on the scope and range of responsibilities. The Trust has eight different job families. These were agreed following a number of workshops, which included the Trust leadership team and the operational leadership team, and after consultation with the staff council.

The Trust makes substantial provision for the qualification, training and development of its staff and volunteers. It offers a wide variety of learning and development opportunities to support organisational, team and individual development linked to achieving the very best outcomes for the people we support. The Charity is committed to working with all colleagues to support their development needs and provides a variety of learning and development events, training and role specific qualifications.

The Charity's workforce is able to access an employee assistance service which is a free and confidential support programme to help support staff and volunteers in many aspects of their lives, in and out of the workplace. The Trust is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and continues to champion a number of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to enable staff to feel supported both at work and at home. With over 80 mental health first aiders in our workforce they offer initial support for mental health and wellbeing through non-judgemental listening and guidance. All members of the workforce are also able to self-refer for support from Able Futures who give guidance from a mental health specialist to help staff learn coping mechanisms, build resilience, access therapy or work with the charity to make adjustments to help mental health at work.

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is recognised for eligible employees and all other staff may join the defined contribution pension scheme, which is available to them from the commencement of their employment.

**Investing in people**
The Trust first achieved the Investors in People (IIP) standard in March 2001 and opted for its seventh review in spring 2021. This was first time the Trust was assessed at 'beyond the standard' and it achieved the prestigious 'Gold' award. The Trust regarded the IIP standard as an effective way to improve practices, measure performance and gain accreditation to demonstrate excellence in its particular field. Therefore, the IIP framework was used and is continuing to be used as a key part of its developing people strategy, aimed specifically at improving its competitive positioning in the specific sector it operated in.

*"(The Trust) demonstrated a major commitment to its staff which manifested itself with a workforce that is highly motivated and committed and who enjoyed working at The Together Trust. The management discussions were based around the fundamental goals and ambition of The Together Trust which was to continue to develop the Trust with a spirit of co-operation, mutual support and a sense of identity, which allowed The Together Trust to grow and thrive in an increasingly competitive environment. Learning and Development was being given a high priority in the Together Trust. This was to ensure sustainability and the continued success of the Trust. The Together Trust had been successful during these testing times having grown carefully with their main asset being their high quality workforce which they have retained. The Trust had been awarded the IIP 'standard' level six times but had been working hard for over the last three years towards IIP Gold of which it has now been successful.*

*The Together Trust demonstrated to the IIP Practitioner that it is a truly cutting-edge organisation which operated at high levels of people management practice using the Investors in People framework to drive the organisation forward."*

*Investors in People, Feedback Report May 2021*

The Charity is committed to eliminating discrimination and to treating all individuals fairly in all aspects of its work. The Trust promotes the employment of disabled people through its Equality and Diversity & Disclosure of Disability policies that support equality of opportunity in the recruitment, employment and retention of staff and volunteers, including access to training and promotion. During 2020/21 the charity prioritised this work to ensure EDI is the forefront of all service delivery and workforce support. Our aim is for long-lasting change that sees EDI become part of the Trust's DNA.

Work has begun with an external provider, the Trust is committed to creating a new EDI strategy and engagement plans for its workforce and the people it supports.

**Volunteering** – the Together Trust made a strategic commitment to volunteering in its People Strategy in 2018 and has ambition to increase the social value we offer to service users through their involvement. A new three year volunteering strategy was agreed in autumn 2020. The Charity aims to have an effective and inclusive volunteering programme that delivers tangible and valuable outcomes for our beneficiaries, supporting the delivery of the Charity's Stronger Together Plan.

For several months during the first UK Covid 19 lockdown in 2020, a group of committed volunteers stepped forwards to form our Shop & Drop Team, supporting our residential and community services who were struggling with the added pressures brought on by the pandemic. These individuals, who had no previous involvement with the Together Trust, came from numerous walks of life, all with the same intention: to do their bit to help our service users and staff through the most worrying and exhausting collective experience since the second world war. In so doing, they not only provided practical assistance in the form of carrying out 50 shopping trips, but also eased the anxieties of those they delivered to, raised awareness of the Trust within their networks, and boosted the recognition within services of the valuable role volunteers can play.

A Human Resources & Organisational Development subgroup reports direct to the Board and oversees effective workforce engagement and that the outcomes from staff and volunteer surveys are received and acted upon. This group also oversees the organisation's approach to workforce equity, diversity and inclusion and monitors and evaluates all relevant KPIs with focused plans to address areas requiring improvement. More information about the work of this subgroup can be found on page 6 of this report.

The Trust seeks to listen and act upon our staff voice and understand the views of our workforce though the Staff Council. The Staff Council is an elected group of colleagues from across all our services who meet on a quarterly basis. As a consultative body for employees, the Trust has extended and is strengthening the Staff Council's role to ensure that, as strategy is developed and plans are implemented, Staff Council representatives help to communicate and engage better with our workforce. They review how successfully initiatives have been delivered. The meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive and have Trustee attendance.

The Charity is aware of its responsibilities in accordance with statutory legislation and all relevant appointments are subject to satisfactory references, Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks and overseas checks.

**Suppliers**

The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure charitable business activities are undertaken in accordance with regulatory requirements and best practice.

The Trust's procurement policy has been developed to help the Trust achieve best value in the use of limited resources to support the Trust in achieving its overall aims and objectives. It also supports addressing the requirements of the Charity Governance Code and the 2010 Bribery Act by emphasising the responsibility of all staff involved to conduct procurement legally and ethically as well as securing value for money.

All procurement activity adheres to the following key principles:

- transparency – clear procedures to be followed and evidence of adherence retained for audit
- equal treatment – for all potential suppliers to ensure a level playing field, no favouritism and to ensure best value is obtained
- wherever possible we endeavour to source potential suppliers from the local area where this can be justified in terms of best value and/or social value
- suppliers will be required to follow Trust safeguarding standards where applicable

The Trust also measures and reports on its supplier payment practices to Trustees on a regular basis.

**Wider Community and Environment**

The Board is focused on its long-term and strategic charitable aims as set out in the Stronger Together plan described on pages 14 to 18 of this report. One of the aims of a new H&S, Risk and Environment Subgroup created in January 2021 is to agree and monitor an organisational approach to environmental impact. This group will also oversee the development of the Trust's property portfolio to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The group monitors the effectiveness of the charity's approach to risk management (including the annual risk register). The group also monitors and evaluates all relevant KPIs to help address areas requiring improvement.

The Board recognises the importance of open and honest dialogue with Regulators who include Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. As a registered charity the Together Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission. The Board receive regular updates on legal, regulatory and compliance matters when it meets six times per year. Board subgroups receive more frequent updates in line with their specialisms as set out on pages 5 to 8 of this report.

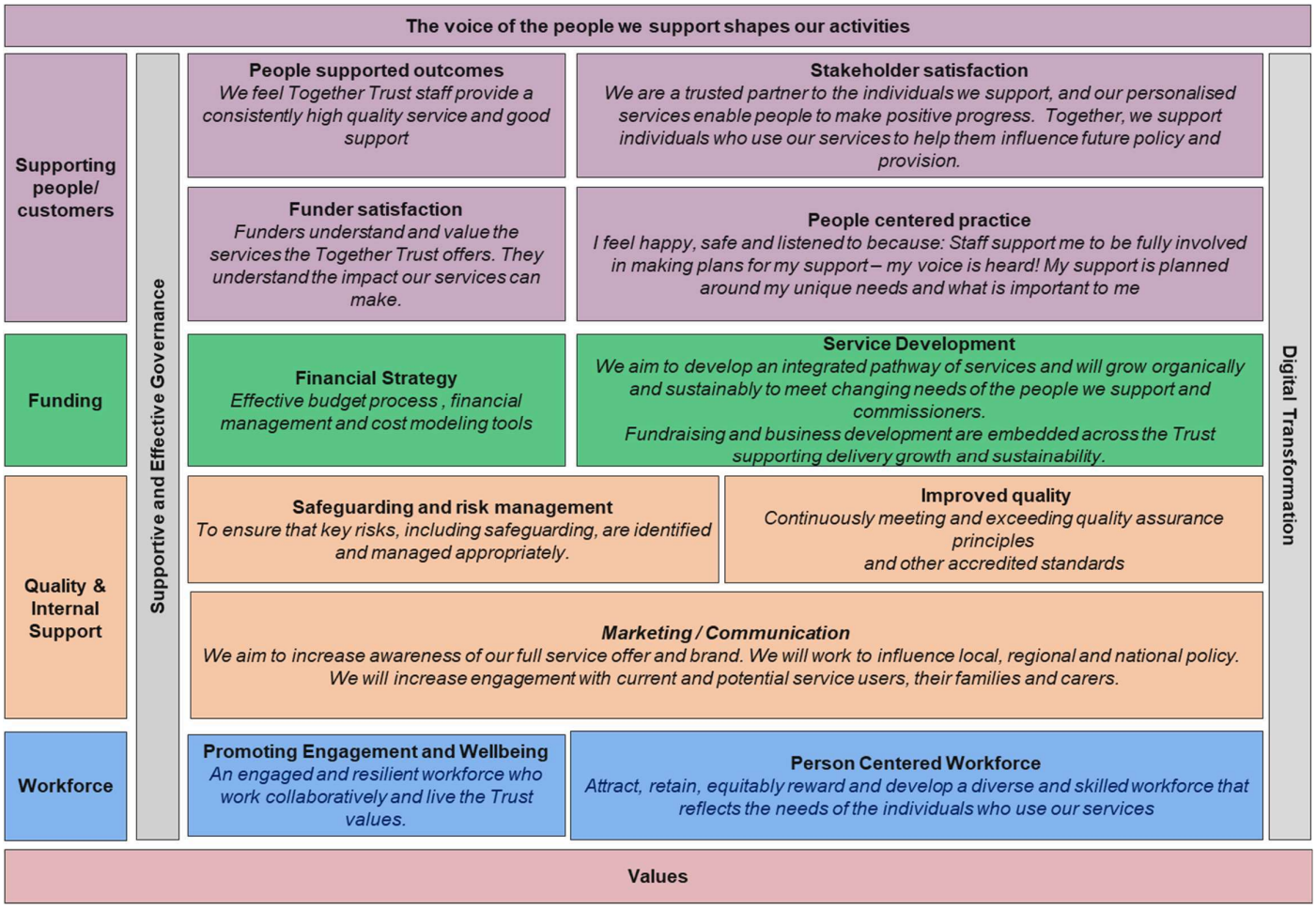
**Measuring, Managing and Reporting Together Trust's Social Value**

During the year the Together Trust has taken a more strategic approach to the measurement, management and delivery of social value both as an organisation and through its contracts, which measure and report our overall social footprint. The Charity is already delivering social value however, it needs improved solutions to capture and communicate what it delivers to its stakeholders to improve impact and to evidence social value delivery to support it in developing a stronger and more robust approach to bidding. During 2021/22 the Charity will be aiming to effectively demonstrate its contribution and to establish a structured process for target setting, measurement and contract management of the social, economic and environmental impacts of each project from bidding, project management to completion.

## Monitoring Progress

The Board monitors progress against strategic aims in the Stronger Together plan by measuring Key Performance Indicators relating to specific areas of the Charity's operations and support services. Each Board subgroup described on pages 5 to 8 of this report receives KPIs relating to their specialist area either monthly or quarterly.

### The Stronger Together Scorecard Themes 2020/21




More information about the measures and results can be found on pages 14 to 18 of this report.

# 6. Strategic achievements and performance

In the year to 31 March 2021 Together Trust provided over 50 social care, special education, community and family support services to over 1,800 children, young people, vulnerable adults and families whose special needs fall within the areas of emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, physical disabilities, learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Like many other charities, demand for the majority of the Trust's services continues to grow but the challenges around COVID-19 still remain. Throughout the period of the report several services reduced or temporarily closed because of the impact of the pandemic however, at the time of reporting, all have now returned to operation.

In the main, the Trust's services were carried out on behalf of local authorities, public sector bodies and service users in the North West of England and surrounding areas. All Special Educational Services are Ofsted regulated. Residential Care Services along with Domiciliary care and Community Support services are regulated by either Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or Care Quality Commission (CQC).

During the reporting period the Together Trust's services were:-

**Special Educational Services**

**Inscape House School** – a non-maintained special school that meets the needs of children and young people aged 5 to 19 years with autism spectrum conditions and related social communication difficulties. The school also runs its own café as a social enterprise.

**Bridge College** – a specialist day Further Education college that supports students up to 25 years with learning difficulties and disabilities, complex needs, communication disorders and autism.

**Ashcroft School** - an independent special school catering for children and young people aged 8 to 18 years who have struggled to cope in other settings because of their individual barriers to learning. Ashcroft also offers vocational learning for 14 to 19 year olds, a Pupil Referral Unit and operates Ashcroft College who support students aged 14 to 16 who may have been excluded or are close to being excluded from mainstream education.

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**Social Care Services – Residential Care Services**

- 12 Ofsted registered homes for children and young people including:
- 1 short break/overnight respite service for young people with autism/learning disabilities
- 1 short break/overnight respite service for young people with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities
- 2 shared care service provisions for young people with autism/learning disabilities
- 2 emergency provisions
- 4 mainstream EBD provisions
- 2 therapeutic services for young people with complex autism/learning disabilities
- 1 home for disabled adults with complex health needs (CQC registered)

**Social Care Services - Domiciliary Care & Community Support Services**

- 6 Supported living services for adults with complex needs
- Outreach support for adults, children and young people with disabilities/autism
- Youth activity clubs
- The Hub at the Humphrey Booth Centre in Ordsall, Salford – a community space for the people of Salford
- A learning support service based at Bolton College, supporting students aged 16 to 26 years with complex needs and/ or disabilities
- Adult day services at Newbridge and SK30+ centres in Stockport
- Working & Training Together [WaTT] - offering young people aged 16+ the chance to gain catering industry experience and qualifications
- Specialist Positive Behaviour Support services in Stockport and Salford
- SEND Mediation and Dispute Resolution Services on behalf of Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Salford, Tameside, Manchester, Stoke-On Trent, Telford & Wrekin, Rochdale, Oldham, St Helens and Cheshire East Council.

**Social Care Services - Together for Families service provides independent advice and support**

- Autism support, assessment and training provision for families, professionals and other organisations
- Therapy services (including Speech & Language, Occupational Therapy and Positive Behaviour Support) direct to families or within schools and colleges
- Sleep support (Trafford and Rochdale & Children in Need funded services in the wider area)
- A range of early intervention services

A number of services including Clinical, Therapy and Specialist Support, some Community and Mediation and Disagreement Resolution services moved to virtual delivery during the pandemic providing families and young people with the opportunity to receive continuity of support. Virtual service delivery was successful in most settings and is likely to form part of our service provision in the future.

**Our Aims, Objectives & Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Results in 2020/21**

In 2018, the Charity updated its strategic vision and goals. The plan laid out the Charity's vision for how it will become stronger together between 2018 - 2022, building on its existing expertise and exploring innovative ways of improving how it works.

During 2020/21 the Charity began work to build a new five year innovation plan. The Board will receive a business case to deliver this new plan in autumn 2021. However, for the period of this report, the Charity has continued to deliver results against the four key strategic goals to enable it to be stronger together as set out on the following pages.

**Our aims, objectives & key performance indicator (KPI) results in 2020/21**

| Strategic goals | Developments/Progress | *Our KPI results* |
|---|---|---|
| (1)<br><br>Deliver high quality, person centred, effective and cost efficient services to vulnerable individuals and families.<br><br>Our integrated services adapt and evolve to meet the life-long changing needs of individuals. We work in partnership to achieve the very best outcomes possible for the individuals we support. | With creative and flexible support thanks to its workforce, the Trust was able to act quickly and change the way it worked as a result of COVID-19; whether it was reorganising shift patterns to minimise risk, creating digital classrooms, virtual support or moving to home-working, shielding or furlough during the reporting period.<br><br>Referrals for looked after children in care continued to remain high. The Charity also continues to invest in supporting and recruiting foster carers to meet increased demand for foster placements. The stability of the Trust's residential placements is high. This remains a good indicator for the outcomes for young people in the charity's care as is their attendance in full-time education. The Trust would like to improve the longevity of residential placements for children that reach 16+ and encourage and support young people to remain in care until they reach 18+. The Trust achieves this for young people in its foster care and in homes for young people with complex needs. We are actively looking at how we can continue to provide a consistent level of support to our cohort of care leavers.<br><br>The people we support continue to benefit from grants from funders who help to provide additional family support services including grant funding for improving physical activity, autism sleep support; positive behavioural support and participation events for young people. During the year a number of grant funders agreed to extend grant delivery time scales and adapt grant outputs in response to the impact of COVID19.<br><br>All students achieved excellent pass rates in awards with many student moving to virtual learning platforms during the year.<br><br>A project to redevelop Newbridge in Stockport and its services for people with individual and often complex needs was approved by the Board in April 2019. The expansion of this Stockport service was delayed as a result of the pandemic but will hopefully be part-funded by a fundraising appeal during 2021/22. | *All of the Charity's CQC and Ofsted educational inspection reports are available as a download from www.togethertrust.org.uk*<br><br>*At 31 March 2021 all Trust services were graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted/CQC.*<br><br>*Occupancy levels as at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020):*<br>*Education services* ***93%*** *(95%)*<br>*Community services* ***35%**** *(77%)*<br>*Residential services* ***78%*** *(80%)*<br>*Fostered children in placement* ***100%*** *(95%)*<br><br>** The Trust adapted its service provision safely as a result of COVID-19 guidelines and risk management. In some cases this meant service provision was temporarily closed. The Government's furlough scheme was utilised most notably in a number of Community services as demand for specialist provision reduced as a result of the pandemic. Our services worked closely with the people we support, their families and local authorities to re-open provision when it was safe to do so and the majority of furloughed staff were eventually able to return to work as Government guidelines were eased.* |

<table>
<tr><th>Strategic goals</th><th>Developments/Progress</th><th>Our KPI results</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)<br><br>Be a trusted partner to the individuals we support. Our personalised services enable people to make positive progress.<br><br>Together, we support individuals who use our services to help them influence future policy and provision.</td>
<td>Our mission is to champion the rights, needs and ambitions of the people we support - they are at the heart of everything we do. Our policy work enables the people we support to better influence future policy and provision.<br><br>During 2021 further resources were allocated to the development of participation and co-production for the organisation. And to help the people we support change government policy and future development and practice at the Trust.<br><br>Our aim is for greater service integration and effective change campaigns by acting on the feedback from the people we support and their families about what matters to them and from their perspective what good looks like. We will embed participation and coproduction into all aspects of the Trust's work and ensure that all staff have the skills to do this.<br><br>A new post has been created to develop participation and co-production systems. They will engage with the people we support and their families to ensure their voice heard, respected and acted on.<br><br>As a result of research our future campaigns and policy priorities are:<br>• Improved outcomes for care leavers<br>• Improved mental health support for young people<br>• Greater employment and opportunity for people with disabilities<br>• Better support for young people who are transitioning services<br><br>Investor in Customers (IIC) registered the Charity as having 'exceptional' customer service levels, and awarded the Trust gold status across all four of its principles in 2019. The independent assessment of excellence in the field of customer service and customer relationships is based on internal and external perceptions of the customers and staff. The Trust has retained this standard since 2017 and will be re-assessed in summer 2021.<br>As the Government's COVID-19 guidelines eased, participation events were also able to resume including arts based activities thanks to funding from the Arts Council and the charity's involvement with the Making of Us, a professional development programme supporting 15</td>
<td>Investor in Customers biennial accreditation results (Aug 2019)<br><br>
<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Customer satisfaction/experience from feedback surveys view the Together Trust as a trusted service provider (target 80%)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Audience</td><td>2017-18</td><td>2019-20</td></tr>
<tr><td>People we support & their families</td><td>87%</td><td>87%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commissioners</td><td>83%</td><td>84%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Practitioners</td><td>80%</td><td>82%</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">The Trust continues to focus on putting customers and the people we support first:</td></tr>
<tr><td>People we support & their families</td><td>87%</td><td>87%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commissioners</td><td>83%</td><td>84%</td></tr>
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| Strategic goals | Developments/Progress | *Our KPI results* |
|---|---|---|
| | mid-career socially engaged artists who live and work in Greater Manchester. Bringing together the cross-sector expertise of partners in the arts, social care and education sectors the project gives learning opportunities and new ways of collaborating with a focus on artists engaging young people. Funded by Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the programme was formed around a series of creative commissions across the Wigan, Stockport and Salford districts, delivered through partnerships with Wigan Targeted Youth Services and True Colours CIC and The Together Trust. | |
| (3)<br><br>Grow, develop and expand our reach as a provider of choice to maximise our impact and ensure that we can sustain our future as an organisation.<br><br>We develop integrated pathway services and will grow organically and sustainably to meet changing needs of the individuals we support and funders' requirements. | During the year, the Together Trust won new contracts and joined or reconfirmed its position on the following frameworks:<br>• Liverpool City Council – School Outreach FPS for Liverpool Schools (lot 1) – November 2020 for 3 years (new)<br>• Liverpool City Council – School Outreach FPS for Liverpool Schools (lots 3 & 4) – December 2020 for 3 years (new)<br>• Cheshire West & Chester Council – Children Services SEND Mediation contract – 3 years from April 2021 (new)<br>• NW FPS for Provision of Educational/Other Support Services for SEND – March 2021 for 10 years (new)<br>• Stockport MBC – contract for SEND Information, Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS) – January 2021 for 1 year (new)<br>• St Helen's Council – extension for delivery of SEND Mediation & Disagreement Resolution Service – December 2020 for 1 year<br>• Liverpool City Council – Alternative Education Provision Flexible Framework – extension for 9 months from April 2020<br>• Manchester City Council/Manchester Secondary PRU – Key Stage 4 – 1 year extension of contract from September 2020<br>• Trafford MBC - Sleep Tight service – contract re-awarded for 12 months from 1 July 2020<br>• Oldham Council - Mediation & Disagreement Resolution Service – contract extended from March 2021 for another 12 months<br>• Lancashire County Council - Fostering Framework Agreement (annual refresher) – from August 2020 for 1 year. | Income rose to £30.69m during the year (2019/20 £29.82m).<br><br>Fundraising team income was £100,000 in donations and a further £190,000 from grant applications giving a total income generated of £290,000 (2019/20 £285,000). The majority of grant application activity was paused and all face to face events cancelled as a result of the pandemic. Work to finalise two key developments were postponed thus delaying the launch of a capital appeal for funds into 2021/22.<br><br>The Trust was delighted to be the beneficiary of a substantial grant from the National Lottery in 2019 enabling it to plan a number of learning and participation heritage themed events for volunteers, young people and the wider community during 2020/21. The grant, to mark the Trust's 150th anniversary, was delivered successfully up until the onset of COVID-19 restrictions however, in agreement with the National Lottery, this work was paused twice both in spring and autumn 2020 due to Government guidelines at that time. However, the grant delivery was able to re-commence in October 2020 and many of the postponed activities were completed or moved to 2021 in agreement with the National Lottery. The 150th activity will now culminate with an exhibition of the charity's heritage at the Manchester Central Library from January to May 2022.<br><br>All our 150th heritage activity to date can be viewed by visiting https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/150 |

| Strategic goals | Developments/Progress | *Our KPI results* |
|---|---|---|
| (4)<br><br>We aim to attract and retain a skilled and motivated workforce who are treated equitably and fairly and have clear learning and development opportunities.<br><br>Our workforce are dedicated to helping those in need and who work collaboratively and live our values. We listen to our workforce and work with our Staff Council to ensure effective engagement. | During 2020/21 the Together Trust continued to focus on its workforce development strategy. The Charity is committed to a transparent system for pay and reward in order to attract and retain staff.<br>The Charity published its gender pay report in April 2021. A copy of this can be downloaded from: https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/charity-information<br>The Trust continues to invest heavily in its learning and development programme, giving staff the opportunity to develop their skills in providing them with opportunities to progress within the Charity. It was awarded Investors in People Gold in May 2021.<br><br>A greater focus has been placed on support to ensure appropriate staffing levels and an initiative to reduce agency workers and increase relief staff has continued.<br><br>A new strategic approach to volunteering was approved during the year.<br><br>More information about workforce development can be found on page 9 of this report.<br><br>The Trust is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its workforce and during the year championed a number of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to enable staff to feel supported both at work and at home. With over 80 mental health first aiders in its workforce they offer initial support for mental health and wellbeing through non-judgemental listening and guidance.<br><br>A new digital service delivery team were able to improve systems reliability and availability. During the year digital infrastructure improvements included a workforce move to cloud based systems via Office 365 with single service sign-on, helpdesk (Zendesk) introduced in a variety of support settings and virtual learning implemented in all education services. The team's business case for further digital investment will be included in the 2021/22 budget proposals. | ***As at 31 March 2021:***<br>***Staff retention: 90%*** *(2019/20 78%).*<br>***Staff attendance: 95%*** *(2019/20 94%)*<br>***Staff turnover: 3%*** *(2019/20 14%)* |

Further information about Together Trust's impact in the year can be found in The Together Trust's Annual Review 2021/22. A copy of our latest Annual Review can be downloaded from: https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/charity-information

**Energy Usage and Sustainability**

The information and data to calculate energy usage in 2020/21 is taken from meter readings for gas and electricity and from fuel card readings for the Trust fleet of vehicles. Mileage claims have been used to calculate the 'grey' fleet. All fuel conversions to kWh and $CO_2$ emissions data have been calculated in line with UK Government environmental reporting guidance using UK Government GHG conversion factors for company reporting.

The total energy consumption (TEC) in the reported period for Together Trust amounts to 3,690,000 kWh (2019/20 4,121,000kWh) resulting in carbon emissions of 571 tonnes of carbon dioxide (2019/20 910). The annual quantity of emissions resulting from our transport activities, including the grey fleet, and the use of gas was 554 tonnes of carbon dioxide (2019/20 665). Electricity usage accounted for 16.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide (2019/20 245).

For information, the annual emissions from the Trust Central site including Inscape and Ashcroft schools and the central office (but excluding transport) amounted to 179 tonnes of carbon dioxide being 31.4% of the total emissions (2019/20 261 tonnes accounting for 29%). Transport in total accounted for 22.4% of carbon emissions (2019/20 29.3%). The reduction in the environmental impact of the Trust's energy usage is due to the fact that a large number of the Trust's electricity contracts in place in the year were with suppliers whose energy supplies are nuclear based, so have zero carbon impact. Also, during the period of the COVID pandemic, the Trust's vehicles and grey fleet were not used to the same extent as in previous years, as some services were largely closed and more staff were working from home.

# 7. Financial review

In what has been a year with unprecedented challenges posed by the effects of COVID, the Trust has been pro-active and responded decisively with the result that the financial performance for the year has been very positive with net income for the year exceeding that of 2020. While the majority of the Trust income is from local authority fees for education and care services provided, it is noted that a recent report from the National Audit Office (NAO) has found that authorities face significant funding gaps and the financial outlook for the sector is concerning, which indicates a premium being put on continuing to provide services which represent good value for money to local authorities in the future.

**a) Income**

In 2020/21 the Together Trust has seen its income increase by £0.9m from £29.82m to £30.69m with the increase being in the Trust's Education services, where income increased by 6.5%. This reflected growth in student numbers and also fee increases. In Social Care there was a marginal fall in income with reduced occupancy, which has since improved. Other services (which is mainly our Fostering service), saw a marginal decrease in income.

Social Care services made a small deficit of £35,000 in the year on marginally reduced income of £13.0m (2020 a surplus of £68,000 on income of £13.0m). Education services made a surplus of £1.6m on an increased turnover of £15.35m (2020 a surplus of £1.05m on income of £14.4m) while Other services (Fostering) made a small surplus of £83,000 marginally reduced income of £2.14m (2020 a deficit of £54,000 on income of £2.15m).

The Charity's services are essential for those who we support and the majority of people who receive our services require a funding decision from the responsible Local Authority or other such public agency. The majority of fees are received for services to individuals, although some services are purchased on a block contract basis by local authorities who wish to ensure they have guaranteed access to the Charity as their provider of choice. The Charity is also in a variety of partnership arrangements with a number of local authorities although more recent new business has been awarded via formal tender processes.

**i) Income**

| | 2021 £'m | 2021 % | 2020 £'m | 2020 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Donations - Voluntary Income & Fundraising Activities | 0.19 | 0.6 | 0.24 | 0.8 |
| Fees for Social Care Services | 12.96 | 42.2 | 12.98 | 43.5 |
| Fees for Educational Services | 15.35 | 50.1 | 14.41 | 48.5 |
| Fees for Other Services | 2.14 | 7.0 | 2.15 | 7.2 |
| Investments & Other Income | 0.05 | 0.1 | 0.04 | 0.0 |
| | 30.69 | 100.0 | 29.82 | 100.0 |

**ii) Investment policy and returns**

The investment portfolio of the Charity is invested with the main purpose of ensuring the underlying security of the investment while achieving growth wherever possible against a series of benchmarks and the regular advice of our Investment Managers is taken to help achieve this. At the year end the market value of investments was £302,000 (2020 £262,000).

**iii) Fundraising**

In 2020/21 fundraising income, including donations, all grants and gifts in kind, of £290,000 (2020 £285,000). Notable contributions were received from a diverse group of supporters, both long-standing relationships and friends to the Charity.

The Together Trust is extremely grateful for the generous support received from a variety of individuals, community and corporate supporters, and for the increasing number of grant-making trusts who have chosen to support our young people and families. The Trust particularly wishes to thank all donors who have given generously to support our work either financially or with significant donations in-kind including:

The Arts Council
Cheadle Royal Hospital Charitable Trust
Manchester City Football Club
Sector 3
Youth Music
Booth Charities
Children in Need
National Lottery
Sport England

The Trust would like to acknowledge the support from its grant funders to pause grant delivery for some projects during 2020/21 as a result of the pandemic and acknowledges the many other individual donors, funders and corporate supporters who have made donations or gifts in kind during the year.

The charity would like to express its sincere thanks to author Andrew Simpson who explores the Together Trust's rich history from humble beginnings to supporting thousands of people in his book The Ever Open Door published in summer 2020 to mark the Charity's 150th.

The pandemic brought new challenges for fundraising despite the use of the Government's furlough scheme. Following consultation, the fundraising department was restructured which resulted in one redundancy. Work with the majority of local corporates, community groups, schools, and in person events were put on hold to ensure compliance with government guidelines and respect for the local community. The Trust is adapting to fundraising in an uncertain world and focussing on different ways to engage supporters. A capital appeal to redevelop Newbridge, one of the Trust's adult centres in Stockport, was significantly delayed as the service temporarily closed and plans were put on hold. However, it is hoped that once plans are finalised during 2021/22 the fundraising capital appeal can begin. The planned expansion of Inscape House School was also put on hold. The charity plans to return to face to face fundraising events as soon as it is safe to do so.

All Trustees are aware of the CC20 guidance from the Charity Commission. The Fundraising department work closely with the Trust's Records, Archives & Information Manager, who oversees data protection compliance for the Charity, to ensure best practice is embedded in all that we do including but not limited to a Fundraising database which is administered in the Fundraising department and the continuance of permission-based communications with individual supporters.

There have been no formal complaints concerning our fundraising practices during the reporting period. Together Trust actively promotes a Complaints and Compliments Policy, which can be found on the Charity's web site: https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/who-we-are/policies

The Charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator. The Together Trust does not engage in face to face fundraising (known as chugging), telephone fundraising, or direct mail campaigns. There were no licensed street collections in the reporting period. The Together Trust does not use commercial participators.

**b) Expenditure**

The Charity reports expenditure of £29.30m in the year, (2020 £28.69m), an increase of 2.1% compared to an increase in income of 2.9%. This resulted in an increase in net income before gains and losses for the year of £1.40m compared to £1.13m last year.

Of the increase in expenditure, payroll costs increased by 9.3% following a cost of living annual pay increase of 2% plus incremental pay increases following the implementation of the new pay structure in 2018. Agency costs decreased by £0.9m in the year to £0.9m as a result of less dependency on agency staff during the pandemic. After some years of near zero inflation, in 2019/20 inflation averaged 1.5%.

Social Care services expenditure increased from £12.91m in 2019/20 to £13.31m in 2020/21, an increase of 3.1%, while Education services expenditure increased by 2.8% to £13.73m, to support increased income and pupil numbers. Other Services expenditure (being largely Fostering), decreased by 6.6% to £2.06m.

**i) Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021**

| | 2021 £'m | 2021 % | 2020 £'m | 2020 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Raising funds | 0.20 | 0.7 | 0.21 | 0.7 |
| Cost of providing Social Care services | 13.31 | 45.4 | 12.91 | 45.0 |
| Cost of providing Education services | 13.73 | 46.9 | 13.36 | 46.6 |
| Cost related to Other Services | 2.06 | 7.0 | 2.21 | 7.7 |
| | 29.30 | 100.0 | 28.69 | 100.0 |

The average number of employees during the year was 866 (2020 846). Payroll costs are reported at £20.9m (2020 £19.1m), an increase of over 9% on the previous year.

Whilst the Government continues to actively seek partnership with the voluntary sector, there seems little prospect of them altering their position over VAT. It continues to be a significant burden and the Charity's non-recoverable VAT element amounted to £764,000 (2020 £969,000).

**c) Public Benefit**

In setting its plans and priorities for areas of work, the Trustees of Together Trust have referred to the guidance from the Charity Commission on the provision of public benefit. The summary of the Charity's Strategic Plan and the analysis of the achievements to date as shown on pages 14 to 18 of this report, together with more specific examples of the Charity's activities set out in its performance reports, demonstrate how the Charity has sought to fulfil its principal charitable objective which is to give aid, assistance and care to those with disabilities or in need.

Access to all Together Trust services is based on an objective assessment of need by Together Trust staff and/or a commissioning local authority and is not based on financial ability to pay. In the case of Independent Advice and Support Services and Independent Supporter Services, any parent/legal guardian whose child attends school in the area the service operates may have access to these services.

**d) Reserves**

The Trustees periodically review the reserves policy of the Charity and during the last review moved it towards a policy based on an assessment of the Trust's cash flow and the risks it faces. In the current uncertain times, Together Trust takes a prudent view where, as a minimum, the level of cash reserves must not fall below £2.5m at each month end and it should hold cash reserves of at least six weeks expenditure at the year end. The Trust has significantly increased its designated reserves in the period to help support the achievement of our corporate strategy, which is currently being updated, and in particular to support digital transformation and the property review. It is anticipated that this strategy will result in significant outlay being made over the course of the next four years.

The table below sets out available reserves.

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Net current assets | 9,523 | 8,000 |
| Less long term creditors | (1,037) | (1,198) |
| Net reserves | 8,486 | 6,802 |
| Less restricted, designated and endowment funds | (4,741) | (952) |
| Available reserves | **3,745** | **5,850** |

Together Trust has net current assets of £9,523,000 (2020 £8,000,000) and long term liabilities of £1,037,000 (2020 £1,198,000) leaving net reserves of £8,486,000 (2020 £6,802,000), of which £4,741,000 (2020 £952,000) is in the form of restricted, designated or endowment reserves. This leaves available reserves of £3,745,000 (2020 £5,850,000). At the year-end available cash funds were £7,244,000, against the equivalent of six weeks' worth of expenditure of £3,381,000 (2020 cash funds were £5,240,000 against £3,310,000 of expenditure).

**e) Fixed assets**

To monitor and control its fixed assets, the Charity makes use of a fixed asset register, which details the organisation's properties, vehicles and other capitalised equipment.

As at 31 March 2021 the Charity had 19 buildings and 63 vehicles on the register, which is reviewed on a monthly basis.

The changes in tangible fixed assets are summarised in the notes to the financial statements (see note 14).

**f) Going Concern**

In March 2020 the coronavirus disease was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. This has had a significant operational impact with our education establishments and community day services being closed for a period to all but key worker pupils, while our short stay residential and clinical services were also affected, seeing a reduction in demand. However, in line with Government guidance, Local Authorities continued to fund all education pupils where services were disrupted by COVID. In addition, the Trust was successful in most cases in applying for supplier relief payments from commissioning Councils, which reduced the impact of the reduction in income in Community services. Further, over 40 staff were furloughed where service provision was reduced, capital expenditure was deferred and some non-operational recruitment was also delayed to manage the financial impact. When completing the latest budget forecasts through to 2025 we were careful to consider the impact of COVID and although there are uncertainties resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, taking into account all factors, including the current strong cash position, we do not believe there are material uncertainties that call into doubt Together Trust's ability to continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

# 8. Future strategy

**'Stronger Together' 2018 - 2022**

Together Trust provides a wide range of social care and education services, which have provided it with a degree of resilience during the last few years of challenge in the age of austerity, and has sought to develop and build upon these areas of expertise.

In 2018, the Charity updated its strategic vision and goals. The plan laid out the Charity's vision for how it will become stronger together between 2018 - 2022, building on its existing expertise and exploring innovative ways of improving how it works.

The current four year financial projections through to 31 March 2025 illustrate income growth in current service provision across all service areas, taking income to £36.2m in 2023/24, an increase of 25.9% from 2018/19.

**Beyond 2022**

During 2020/21 the Trust began work to build a new five year innovation plan. The Board will receive proposals to deliver this new plan in autumn 2021 evidencing growth opportunities where the Charity will seek to strengthen existing and form new partnerships and alliances. The strategic review will also use the outcomes from the Investor in Customers accreditation work, in terms of stakeholder perceptions, to give the Charity greater insights to inform future planning and service development.

The Board has endorsed this approach, which will include a property review, and substantial funds have beenset aside in designated reserves for this purpose. Work is currently underway to comprehensively review theservice environment to support the wider goals and challenges of commissioners and families that we work alongside.

In line with a Needs Led pathway our aim is to develop a model to provide services with the individual central to the package of support. This model will grow capacity, support local authorities and expand our reach by developing locality hub based provision that works flexibly with our resources.

Our progress will continue to be measured by Key Performance Indicators relating to specific areas of the Charity's operations and support services.

## 9. Principal risk and uncertainties

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring effective risk management and ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to manage risks. On an ongoing basis risks are reported to every main board meeting (six per year) to keep them abreast and up to date with the main current issues and the actions being taken to mitigate these risks.

As the COVID-19 outbreak continued to present risk these were managed effectively although the impact of staff and service user illness led to the temporary closure of some services, with the associated impact on Trust finances. Significant management and staff resource has gone into successfully managing through this period including redeploying staff to key services, accessing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and making use of government funding schemes including furloughing staff. To date the Trust has been able to successfully mitigate the risks presented by COVID-19 and remains in a sound financial position.

Although during the pandemic staff turnover reduced, the ability to recruit and retain staff remains a key risk which we addressed through the implementation of a fair, equal and consistent job families based pay and reward framework, which remained financially viable for the Trust. This work concluded in March 2019 and we have also greatly expanded the learning and development opportunities available to staff as well as staff well-being support and have been reviewing the organisations we work with to support recruitment.

Although there is still uncertainty over the long term impact of COVID-19 and Brexit, the future effect on the Charity is likely to be limited to how these impact upon local authority funding and their priorities. Brexit may also have an effect on reducing the pool of job candidates in what is already a challenging recruitment market.

The finances of the Trust are particularly dependent on securing annual fee increases for its services and we have been largely successful in securing these in recent years. Fee increases are becoming increasingly necessary with positive inflation rates and the need to keep our pay competitive.

The Charity continues to review its property portfolio to ensure it is of a high standard for our service users and that we have the right property in the right places to support cost effective service delivery. A recent property review has reinforced the need to update some of our facilities to remain competitive in the future and we are looking at options to achieve this.

Safeguarding continues to be an area of potential risk and the Charity has established a robust accountability, control and review framework involving officers and Trustees. During the year, as part of a wider review, the Charity Commission visited the Charity to discuss the format of the Trust's incident reporting. The Commission has confirmed there are no concerns with the method of reporting the Charity makes to The Charity Commission.

The Charity has been informed by The Pensions Trust that some decisions it made in regard to the final salary based pension scheme, which closed to new members in 2000, may not have been in accordance with the scheme rules. The Pensions Trust are seeking Court direction in relation to this, the outcome of which is not expected to be known until late 2023. If the Court directs that changes were made in a way not permitted by the scheme rules, then this decision would give rise to additional pension liabilities for the Trust in the future.

## 10. Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

**AUDITOR**

Deloitte LLP was reappointed during the period and has expressed their willingness to continue in office as auditor and a resolution to reappoint Deloitte LLP as auditor will be proposed at the forthcoming annual general meeting.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by

**Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

12 November 2021

# Independent auditor's report to the members of the Together Trust

**Report on the audit of the financial statements**

**Opinion**
In our opinion the financial statements of The Together Trust (the 'charitable company'):

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland"; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

We have audited the financial statements which comprise:

- the statement of financial activities;
- the balance sheet;
- the cash flow statement;
- the statement of accounting policies; and
- the related notes 1 to 26.

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).

**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 charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's (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.

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 charitable company'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 other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. 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.

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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

**Responsibilities of trustees**
As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law) 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 charitable company'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 charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's 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.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the FRC's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**
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 extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

We considered the nature of the charitable company's industry and its control environment, and reviewed the charitable company's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to fraud and compliance with laws and regulations. We also enquired of management about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the charitable company operates in, and identified the key laws and regulations that:

- had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. These included UK Charities Act, UK Companies Act, pensions legislation; and
- do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the charitable company's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. These included Ofsted regulations and Care Quality Commission regulations.

We discussed among the audit engagement team including relevant internal specialists such as pensions regarding the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements.

As a result of performing the above, we identified the greatest potential for fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations in the following areas, and our specific procedures performed to address them are described below:

- we presume a risk of material misstatement due to potential fraud in revenue recognition which is related to cut-off of education income and the possible recognition of such income in the incorrect accounting

period. To address this risk we tested a sample of deferred income calculations for service users, and tested completeness of the deferred income report to ensure all students on the school register have been considered for revenue cut-off.

In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override. In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

In addition to the above, our procedures to respond to the risks identified included the following:

- reviewing financial statement disclosures by testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- enquiring of management concerning actual and potential litigation and claims, and instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance, reviewing correspondence with Ofsted and Care Quality Commission.

**Report on other legal and regulatory requirements**

**Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**
Under the Companies Act 2006 we are required to report in respect of the following matters if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

**Use of our report**
This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Sarah Anderson

Sarah Anderson FCCA (Senior statutory auditor)
For and on behalf of Deloitte LLP, Statutory Auditor
Manchester, United Kingdom

15 November 2021

# Statement of financial activities

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021 (including income and expenditure account)

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2021 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2021 £'000 | **Total Funds 2021 £'000** | **Total Funds 2020 £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME FROM:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 77 | 117 | - | **194** | **239** |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 30,178 | 277 | - | **30,455** | **29,540** |
| Investments | 6 | 17 | - | 4 | **21** | **25** |
| Other | 7 | 25 | - | - | **25** | **14** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | | **30,297** | **394** | **4** | **30,695** | **29,818** |
| **EXPENDITURE ON:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 164 | 29 | 5 | **198** | **211** |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 28,708 | 393 | - | **29,101** | **28,479** |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | | **28,872** | **422** | **5** | **29,299** | **28,690** |
| Net gains/(losses) on investments | 15 | 23 | - | 20 | **43** | **(29)** |
| **Net income/ (expenditure) for the year** | | **1,448** | **(28)** | **19** | **1,439** | **1,099** |
| Transfers between funds | | (10) | 10 | - | **-** | **-** |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension scheme | 22 | 22 | - | - | **22** | **(307)** |
| Other gains/(losses) | 12 | 57 | - | - | **57** | **(25)** |
| **NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS** | | 1,517 | (18) | 19 | **1,518** | **767** |
| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 24,839 | 615 | 121 | **25,575** | **24,808** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | 1,517 | (18) | 19 | **1,518** | **767** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 20 | **26,356** | **597** | **140** | **27,093** | **25,575** |

There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed above and the net income for the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

See note 19 for comparative Statement of Financial Activities analysed by funds.

# Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2021

| | Note | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **FIXED ASSETS** | | | |
| Tangible assets | 14 | 18,292 | 18,511 |
| Investments | 15 | 302 | 262 |
| | | 18,594 | 18,773 |
| **CURRENT ASSETS** | | | |
| Debtors | 16 | 7,043 | 7,396 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 7,244 | 5,240 |
| | | 14,287 | 12,636 |
| **CREDITORS:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | 17 | (4,751) | (4,636) |
| **NET CURRENT ASSETS** | | 9,536 | 8,000 |
| **TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES** | | 28,130 | 26,773 |
| **CREDITORS:** | | | |
| Amounts falling due after more than one year | 18 | (1,037) | (1,198) |
| **Provision for pension scheme liabilities** | 22 | - | - |
| **NET ASSETS** | | 27,093 | 25,575 |
| **FUNDS OF THE CHARITY** | | | |
| Unrestricted funds: | | | |
| General | | 15,295 | 17,461 |
| Revaluation reserve | | 7,057 | 7,162 |
| Designated | | 4,004 | 216 |
| | | 26,356 | 24,839 |
| Restricted income funds | | 597 | 615 |
| Endowment funds | | 140 | 121 |
| **TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS** | 20,21 | 27,093 | 25,575 |

These financial statements on pages 30 to 57 of The Together Trust (registered number 301722) were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on Friday 12th November 2021. They were signed on its behalf by:

**Mr Giles Gaddum**
**Chair of Trustees**

**Mr Anthony Farnworth**
**Honorary Treasurer**

# Cash flow statement

For the year ended 31 March 2021

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| **NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Net movement in funds | 1,518 | 767 |
| Adjustments for: | | |
| Depreciation | 756 | 710 |
| Losses/(gains) on investments | (43) | 29 |
| Income from investments | (8) | (9) |
| Profit on the sale of fixed assets | (25) | (14) |
| Interest receivable | (13) | (16) |
| Interest payable | 64 | 88 |
| Increase in debtors | 353 | (2,087) |
| Increase in creditors | 122 | 2,207 |
| Net movement of pension service cost | 85 | 67 |
| Interest rate swap liability (gain)/loss | (57) | 25 |
| Pension scheme actuarial (gain)/loss | (22) | 307 |
| **Net cash flows from operating activities** | 2,730 | 2,074 |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Interest received | 13 | 16 |
| Income from investments | 8 | 9 |
| Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment | 25 | 62 |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | (537) | (744) |
| Proceeds from sale of investments | 43 | - |
| Purchase of investments | (30) | - |
| **Net cash flows from investing activities** | (478) | (657) |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Interest paid | (64) | (88) |
| Repayments of borrowings | (121) | (1,603) |
| Net cash outflow from defined benefit scheme pension contributions | (63) | (374) |
| **Net cash flows from financing activities** | (248) | (2,065) |
| Net increase/(decrease) in cash in the year | 2,004 | (648) |
| Cash at the beginning of the year | 5,240 | 5,888 |
| **Cash at the end of the year** | 7,244 | 5,240 |

**Analysis of changes in net debt**

| | Note | At the beginning of the year £'000 | Cash flows £'000 | Fair value movements £'000 | At the end of the year £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | | 5,240 | 2,004 | - | 7,244 |
| Bank loans | 18 | (1,000) | 121 | - | (879) |
| Interest rate swaps | 23 | (291) | - | 57 | (234) |
| | | 3,949 | 2,125 | 57 | 6,131 |

# Notes to the financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2021

1. **Accounting policies**

**Basis of preparation**
The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019)" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), effective 1 January 2019, and the Companies Act 2006.

**Going concern**
The Trustees have prepared budgets and projections, taking into account possible changes to future income and expenditure, which show that the entity is able to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

In March 2020 the coronavirus disease was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. This had a significant operational impact with our education establishments and community day services being closed for a period to all but key worker pupils, while our short stay residential and clinical services were also affected, seeing a reduction in demand. However, in line with Government guidance, Local Authorities continued to fund all education pupils where services were disrupted by COVID. In addition, the Trust was successful in most cases in applying for supplier relief payments from commissioning Councils which reduced the impact of the reduction in income in Community services. Further, over 40 staff were furloughed where service provision was reduced, capital expenditure was deferred and some non-operational recruitment was also delayed to manage the financial impact. Looking at the future impact, when completing the latest budget forecasts through to 2025 we were careful to consider the impact of COVID and although there are uncertainties resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, taking into account all factors, including the current strong cash balance, we do not believe there are material uncertainties that call into doubt Together Trust's ability to continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing these financial statements. The Trustees have considered a period in excess of twelve months from the date of the approval of these financial statements in making their assessment.

**Fund accounting**
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes, although in practice they may represent the funding of fixed assets.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes, including the development fund described below. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The purpose of the development fund reserve is to earmark funds to provide for ongoing maintenance, repair and refurbishment of the Together Trust homes and schools, in compliance with standards set by inspecting bodies such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The age and fabric of the establishments necessitate constant repairs, which have been highlighted by comprehensive surveys carried out by an appointed architect and reviewed annually. The programme for refurbishment for any new financial year is specified prior to the previous year end.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used by the Charity for particular purposes as specified by the donor. The costs of administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The purpose of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

Endowment funds are a form of restricted fund where the assets are required to be invested or retained for actual use rather than expended. An endowment fund where there is no power to convert the capital into income is known as a permanent endowment fund which must generally be held indefinitely.

Expendable endowment is an endowment fund where the Trustees have the power to convert the assets (i.e. land, buildings, investments or cash) into expendable income. The Charity holds permanent and expendable endowment funds. The permanent funds are not considered to be material.

**Income**
Income is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met (generally by delivery of contracted services), it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from grants includes grants where entitlement to funding is subject to specific performance conditions. Performance conditions may be stipulated explicitly by the funder, or may be implicit as per the Charity's funding proposal. Income is deferred when the funder has imposed conditions, which must be met before the Charity has unconditional entitlement or the funder has specified the funds can only be utilised in future accounting periods.

Donated goods and services are included at the lower of their value to Charity and their estimated market value. No amount is included for services donated by volunteers. The full value of the freehold peppercorn rent is not valued due to the prohibitive cost of doing so. Income from fundraising activities is included in donations.

Fees invoiced in advance of services provided are carried forward as deferred income until the service is delivered.

**Expenditure**
Expenditure is recognised when there is a constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income and those incurred in generating fundraising income

- Charitable expenditure includes all expenditure associated with activities directly attributable to the service delivery of the Charity's charitable objectives, in respect of residential, respite, outreach, educational, fostering and social work services

- Support costs are costs of those functions that assist the work of the Charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include central head office costs (for example finance, human resources and governance costs) and have been allocated to charitable activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

**Operating lease agreements**
Rentals applicable to operating leases, where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor, are charged against income on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

**Trustees**
The Trustees have elected that the Charity apply a policy of non-remuneration for Trustees, excluding out of pocket expenses.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**Tangible fixed assets**
Transitional arrangements of FRS 102 have been adopted to freeze the tangible fixed assets valuation of freehold and leasehold properties as its equivalent cost, and hence tangible fixed assets are stated at equivalent cost (being 2014 market value net of depreciation to the adoption of FRS 102) less depreciation and any provision for impairment. Costs of maintenance are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they are incurred. Assets below a value of £2,500 are not capitalised.

Depreciation is provided on each tangible fixed asset, other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less its estimated residual value, on a straight line basis over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Properties | - buildings | - 2% per annum |
| | - improvements | - 20% per annum |
| Leasehold property improvements | | - over the life of lease |
| Motor vehicles | | - 20% per annum |
| Ancillary equipment | | - 20% per annum |

**Investment assets**
Investments are included in the balance sheet at fair value as measured by middle market price values at the year end. The Trustees do not consider there to be any material difference in the valuation as measured by bid price. Movements in values during the year are included in the Statement of Financial Activities for any realised and unrealised gains and losses. Realised gains or losses are transferred to reserves upon realisation.

**Employee benefits**
For defined benefit schemes, the amounts charged to the Statement of Financial Activities are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. The interest cost and the expected return on assets are shown as a net amount of other finance gains or losses. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The resulting defined benefit asset or liability is presented separately after other net assets on the face of the balance sheet.

For defined contribution schemes, the amount charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of pension costs is the contributions payable in the year. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments in the balance sheet as appropriate.

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme. The Charity is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme and therefore has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

**Group financial statements**
The Charity is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial statements by virtue that all subsidiary undertakings may be excluded from consolidation as they are not material and have not operated in the financial year. These financial statements therefore present information about the Charity as an individual undertaking rather than as a group.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**Financial instruments**
Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Trust becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. All financial assets and liabilities are initially measured at transaction price.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value. Debt instruments which meet relevant conditions are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

The Charity uses derivative financial instruments to reduce exposure to interest rate movements. The Charity does not hold or issue derivative financial instruments for speculative purposes. Derivatives are initially recognised at fair value at the date a derivative contract is entered into and are subsequently remeasured to their fair value at each reporting date. The resulting gain or loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities immediately.

**2. Company, charitable and legal status of the Trust**
The Together Trust, a public benefit entity, is incorporated in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member. The company is a registered charity and has no liability to corporation tax on its charitable activities. The registered office is given on page 1.

**3. Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty**
In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, which are described in note 1, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated 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 ongoing 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 both current and future periods.

In respect of the defined benefit pension scheme, the Charity has an obligation to pay pension benefits to certain employees. The cost of these benefits and the present value of the obligation depend on a number of factors including life expectancy, salary increases, asset valuations and the discount rate on corporate bonds. The Trustees estimate these factors in determining the net pension obligation in the balance sheet. The assumptions reflect historical experience and current trends as set out in note 22.

Other than the above, the Trustees do not consider there are any other critical judgements or sources of estimation uncertainty requiring disclosure.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 4. Analysis of income from donations

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Donations | **194** | 239 |

Government grants of £29,000 (2020 £nil) are included within donations and relate to HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

## 5. Analysis of income from charitable activities

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Social care services | **12,964** | 12,982 |
| Educational services | **15,347** | 14,405 |
| Other services | **2,144** | 2,153 |
| | **30,455** | 29,540 |

Government grants of £179,000 (2020 £nil) are included within income from charitable activities and relate to HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

## 6. Analysis of income from investments

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Investment income | **8** | 9 |
| Bank interest | **13** | 16 |
| | **21** | 25 |

## 7. Analysis of other income

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Net gain on disposal of fixed assets | **25** | 14 |
| | **25** | 14 |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 8. Analysis of expenditure on raising funds

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | **148** | 157 |
| Service provision costs | **4** | 12 |
| Service administration costs | **3** | 1 |
| Other service costs | **43** | 41 |
| | **198** | 211 |

## 9. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activites

| Expenditure | Social Care Services 2021 £'000 | Education Services 2021 £'000 | Other Services 2021 £'000 | Total 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 9,671 | 9,469 | 1,617 | **20,757** |
| Premises costs | 554 | 700 | 21 | **1,275** |
| Service provision costs | 469 | 539 | 13 | **1,021** |
| Service administration costs | 177 | 358 | 85 | **620** |
| Other service costs | 858 | 789 | 59 | **1,706** |
| Head Office support costs | 1,582 | 1,873 | 267 | **3,722** |
| | **13,311** | **13,728** | **2,062** | **29,101** |

| Expenditure | Social Care Services 2020 £'000 | Education Services 2020 £'000 | Other Services 2020 £'000 | Total 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff and related costs | 9,471 | 9,280 | 1,710 | **20,461** |
| Premises costs | 535 | 680 | 23 | **1,238** |
| Service provision costs | 726 | 833 | 47 | **1,606** |
| Service administration costs | 178 | 203 | 113 | **494** |
| Other service costs | 483 | 655 | 60 | **1,198** |
| Head Office support costs | 1,521 | 1,707 | 254 | **3,482** |
| | **12,914** | **13,358** | **2,207** | **28,479** |

**Expenditure**
Total expenditure comprises direct costs incurred in the delivery of Trust services and head office support costs which are apportioned between services. Direct costs include all direct staff, premises and service provision in the day to day delivery of the service. It also includes other costs related to the provision of the service at each location in respect of insurance, depreciation and interest.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 10. Analysis of Head Office support costs

| | Social Care Services 2021 £'000 | Education Services 2021 £'000 | Other Services 2021 £'000 | Total 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 884 | 1,048 | 149 | **2,081** |
| Premises costs | 82 | 97 | 14 | **193** |
| Office administration costs | 267 | 316 | 45 | **628** |
| Governance costs | 111 | 130 | 19 | **260** |
| Other costs | 238 | 282 | 40 | **560** |
| | **1,582** | **1,873** | **267** | **3,722** |

Comparatives for the year ended 31 March 2020

| | Social Care Services 2020 £'000 | Education Services 2020 £'000 | Other Services 2020 £'000 | Total 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff & related costs | 751 | 844 | 125 | **1,720** |
| Premises costs | 97 | 108 | 16 | **221** |
| Office administration costs | 335 | 376 | 56 | **767** |
| Governance costs | 105 | 118 | 18 | **241** |
| Other costs | 233 | 261 | 39 | **533** |
| | **1,521** | **1,707** | **254** | **3,482** |

**Head Office support costs allocation**

There is a head office function, which provides all the support services of the Trust's activities. These services include Communications and Marketing, Business Development, Finance, Human Resources & Organisational Development, IT services and Facilities Management and the services of the Executive Directors. Cost recovery apportionment is based on the level of income for each of the services.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 11. Net income for the year

Net income for the year is stated after charging:

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Auditor's remuneration - audit | **26** | 25 |
| Auditor's remuneration – other audit services | **3** | 3 |
| Interest paid on bank loan | **23** | 51 |
| Interest paid on interest rate swap contracts | **41** | 37 |
| Depreciation of owned assets | **756** | 710 |
| Rental under operating leases | **99** | 115 |
| Insurance | **403** | 365 |
| PR and marketing | **142** | 266 |

These costs include central head office costs where applicable and have been allocated to activity costs on a basis consistent with income.

## 12. Other gains/(losses)

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Gains/(loss) on interest rate swap contract | **57** | (25) |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 13. Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

The average number of staff employed during the financial year, excluding relief and supply staff, amounted to:

| | 2021 Headcount No. | 2020 Headcount No. |
|---|---|---|
| Social care services staff | 401 | 416 |
| Education services staff | 376 | 348 |
| Other services staff | 15 | 16 |
| Other support staff | 74 | 66 |
| | 866 | 846 |

The aggregate staff costs were:

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Wages and salaries | 17,881 | 16,508 |
| Social security costs | 1,559 | 1,340 |
| | 20,897 | 19,117 |

During the year the Trust incurred redundancy costs of £13,000 (2020 £1,000).

Although the Trust employs a pool of relief and supply staff to cover unforeseen absences, where this is insufficient to meet operational need, agency staff are employed in the short term. Agency costs for the year were £871,000 (2020 £1,812,000).

In addition to the above staff costs, foster carer fees amounted to £1,171,000 (2020 £1,203,000).

**Employee emoluments over £60,000**

The number of employees whose emoluments, excluding pension contributions and employer's national insurance contributions, but including benefits in kind, were in excess of £60,000 was:

| | 2021 No. | 2020 No. |
|---|---|---|
| £60,001 to £70,000 | 3 | - |
| £70,001 to £80,000 | - | 2 |
| £80,001 to £90,000 | 1 | - |
| £90,001 to £100,000 | 1 | 2 |
| £100,001 to £110,000 | 1 | - |
| £110,001 to £120,000 | 1 | 1 |

The key management personnel are detailed on page 3. The total remuneration (including pension contributions and employers' national insurance contributions) of the key management personnel of the Trust for the year totalled £485,000 (2020 £456,000).

**Trustees' remuneration**

None of the Trustees receive any remuneration for their services to the Trust. 1 (2020 1) Trustee received reimbursement of travel expenses incurred totalling £110 (2020 £370).

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 14. Tangible fixed assets

| | Land and Buildings | Property Improvement | Motor Vehicles | Ancillary Equipment | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COST** | **£'000** | **£'000** | **£'000** | **£'000** | **£'000** |
| At 1 April 2020 | 20,712 | 1,269 | 1,053 | 257 | **23,291** |
| Additions | 376 | _ | 110 | 51 | **537** |
| Disposals | _ | _ | (131) | _ | **(131)** |
| **At 31 March 2021** | **21,088** | **1,269** | **1,032** | **308** | **23,697** |
| **DEPRECIATION** | | | | | |
| At 1 April 2020 | 2,632 | 1,225 | 713 | 210 | **4,780** |
| Charge for the year | 582 | 34 | 124 | 16 | **756** |
| On disposals | _ | _ | (131) | _ | **(131)** |
| **At 31 March 2021** | 3,214 | 1,259 | 706 | 226 | **5,405** |
| **NET BOOK VALUE** | | | | | |
| **At 31 March 2021** | 17,874 | 10 | 326 | 82 | **18,292** |
| At 31 March 2020 | 18,080 | 44 | 340 | 47 | 18,511 |

The land and buildings were last professionally valued by Bentley Higgs on 31 March 2014. The Trustees consider there to be no material change in value since that date. Properties other than specialised properties were valued on an existing use basis using a market value basis (for properties occupied for operational purposes). Specialised properties were valued on an existing use basis using a depreciated replacement cost basis.

Included within land and buildings above is a long leasehold property with a net book value of £4,823,000 (2020 £4,950,000). The Charity pays a peppercorn rent for the related land. In addition, included within land and buildings above are the costs of assets under construction of £nil (2020 £364,000).

Certain property is pledged as security on the Charity's bank loan. The net book value of these properties is £4,823,000 (2020 £4,950,000).

The comparable amounts for fixed assets included above at a valuation determined according to the historical cost accounting rules are:

| | Land and Buildings |
|---|---|
| | **£'000** |
| Cost | 13,859 |
| Accumulated Depreciation | 3,043 |
| Net book value at 31 March 2021 | **10,816** |
| Net book value at 31 March 2020 | 10,916 |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

**14. Tangible Fixed assets (continued)**

**List of charitable properties:**

| Property | Description |
|---|---|
| **Corbar Road** | A 5 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Crosskeys** | A 2 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Haines House** | A 5 bedded residential service |
| **Schools Hill** | The main administrative centre for the Charity, which accommodates 60 employees. The campus also is home to the following Together Trust services:<br><br>**Inscape House School** – a school for young people aged 5 – 19 years with autism. The school can accommodate up to 105 young people<br><br>**Ashcroft School** – special education for young people with complex emotional difficulties aged 8 – 18 years. The school can accommodate up to 60 pupils |
| **Ashcroft College** | Specialist support and teaching in four vocational areas (including construction) to students aged 14 to 16 who may have been excluded or close to being excluded from mainstream education |
| **Bridge College** | Property held on long lease as a specialist further education college for students up to 25 years old with learning difficulties, disabilities and complex needs, communication disorders and autism |
| **Lerryn** | A 6 bedded residential service accommodating children and young people |
| **Meridian** | A 5 bedded short break service for young people with autism |
| **Newbridge** | A specialist day service provision |
| **Norvent** | A specialist therapeutic residential provision for two young people |
| **Pearce Lodge** | A 5 bedded unit for disabled young people aged 16 to adulthood |
| **Pendlebury House** | A shared care service for up to 6 young people with autism and behavioural needs |
| **Pocket Nook** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people with autism and other special requirements |
| **Swann Lane** | A 4 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Ventnor Road** | A 3 bedded service for children and young people |
| **Woodlands** | A 5 bedded short break service for disabled young people |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 15. Investments

### Listed investments

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| UK listed investments | **302** | 262 |

### Movement in market value

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| At start of year | **262** | 294 |
| Additions | **30** | 7 |
| Disposal proceeds | **(43)** | (7) |
| Net investment gains/(losses) | **43** | (29) |
| Movement in cash held by investment managers | **10** | (3) |
| At end of year | **302** | 262 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Market value is analysed between: | | |
| Investments | **290** | 260 |
| Cash held by investment managers | **12** | 2 |
| | **302** | 262 |

### Unlisted investments

The company's investments at the balance sheet date in the share capital of companies include the following:

**Subsidiary:**

1. Together (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 3 March 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

2. BGWS (Trading) Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of Incorporation: 1 September 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Number of ordinary shares** **1 (100% holding)**

3. Boys and Girls Welfare Society Limited
   Country of incorporation: England and Wales
   Date of incorporation: 6 May 2005
   Nature of business: Dormant

   **Limited by guarantee**

None of these companies has traded during the year (2020 same) and they are not consolidated in the financial statements of The Together Trust on the grounds of immateriality.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 16. Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Trade debtors | 6,290 | 7,186 |
| Prepayments and accrued income | 733 | 209 |
| Other debtors | 20 | 1 |
| | 7,043 | 7,396 |

## 17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bank loans | 76 | 93 |
| Trade creditors | 944 | 495 |
| Accruals | 327 | 372 |
| Deferred income | 2,681 | 2,984 |
| Taxation and social security | 366 | 339 |
| Other creditors | 357 | 353 |
| | 4,751 | 4,636 |

Deferred income movement

| | 2021 £'000 | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Balance at start of year | 2,984 | 432 |
| Amount released in the year | (2,984) | (432) |
| Amount deferred in the year | 2,681 | 2,984 |
| Balance at end of year | 2,681 | 2,984 |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 18. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

| | **2021** | 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| Bank loans | **803** | 907 |
| Financial derivatives (see note 23) | **234** | 291 |
| | **1,037** | 1,198 |

The bank loan is repayable as follows:

| | **2021** | 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| | **£'000** | £'000 |
| Payable within one year | **76** | 93 |
| Payable between 1 and 2 years | **68** | 71 |
| Payable between 2 to 5 years | **205** | 213 |
| Payable after 5 years | **530** | 623 |
| | **879** | 1,000 |

The bank loan matures on 31 March 2031 and is secured on certain property (see note 14).

Interest is payable at a variable rate of LIBOR plus 2.25% on the principal amount. Interest payable in the year was £23,000 (2020 £51,000).

The Trust is a party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. Under this swap contract, the Charity has agreed to exchange the difference between fixed and floating rate interest amounts. This allows the Charity to mitigate the risk of changing interest rates and cash flows on the variable rate debt held. See note 23 for further details.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 19. Comparative statement of financial activities

**For the year ended 31 March 2020**

| | Note | Unrestricted Funds 2020 £'000 | Restricted Funds 2020 £'000 | Endowment Funds 2020 £'000 | **Total Funds 2020 £'000** | **Total Funds 2019 £'000** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME FROM:** | | | | | | |
| Donations | 4 | 132 | 107 | - | **239** | **352** |
| Charitable activities | 5 | 29,433 | 107 | - | **29,540** | **28,365** |
| Investments | 6 | 21 | - | 4 | **25** | **27** |
| Other | 7 | 14 | - | - | **14** | **11** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | | **29,600** | **214** | **4** | **29,818** | **28,755** |
| **EXPENDITURE ON:** | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 8 | 209 | - | 2 | **211** | **182** |
| Charitable activities | 9 | 28,251 | 228 | - | **28,479** | **26,821** |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** | | **28,460** | **228** | **2** | **28,690** | **27,003** |
| Net (losses)/gains on investments | 15 | (15) | - | (14) | **(29)** | **6** |
| **Net income/ (expenditure) for the year** | | **1,125** | **(14)** | **(12)** | **1,099** | **1,758** |
| Transfers between funds | | (57) | 61 | (4) | **-** | **-** |
| **Other recognised gains/(losses)** | | | | | | |
| Actuarial losses on defined benefit pension scheme | 22 | (307) | - | - | **(307)** | **(187)** |
| Other (losses)/gains | 12 | (25) | - | - | **(25)** | **18** |
| **NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS** | | 736 | 47 | (16) | **767** | **1,589** |
| **RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS** | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 24,103 | 568 | 137 | **24,808** | **23,219** |
| Net movement of funds in the year | | 736 | 47 | (16) | **767** | **1,589** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | 20 | **24,839** | **615** | **121** | **25,575** | **24,808** |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 20. Movement on funds

| | 1 April 2020 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | **17,461** | 30,297 | (28,722) | 102 | (3,843) | **15,295** |
| Revaluation reserve | **7,162** | - | - | - | (105) | **7,057** |
| Designated | **216** | - | (150) | - | 3,938 | **4,004** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **24,839** | **30,297** | **(28,872)** | **102** | **(10)** | **26,356** |
| **Restricted funds** | **615** | 394 | (422) | - | 10 | **597** |
| **Endowment funds** | **121** | 4 | (5) | 20 | - | **140** |
| | **25,575** | **30,695** | **(29,299)** | **122** | **-** | **27,093** |

**Year ended 31 March 2020 comparatives**

| | 1 April 2019 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unrestricted** | | | | | | |
| General | **16,550** | 29,600 | (28,048) | (347) | (294) | **17,461** |
| Revaluation reserve | **7,268** | - | - | - | (106) | **7,162** |
| Designated | **285** | - | (412) | - | 343 | **216** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | **24,103** | **29,600** | **(28,460)** | **(347)** | **(57)** | **24,839** |
| **Restricted funds** | **568** | 214 | (228) | - | 61 | **615** |
| **Endowment funds** | **137** | 4 | (2) | (14) | (4) | **121** |
| | **24,808** | **29,818** | **(28,690)** | **(361)** | **-** | **25,575** |

**Unrestricted Designated Funds**

These funds comprise:

- a development fund which was established to ring-fence funds for the maintenance of the Charity's homes and schools in compliance with standards set for the services by inspecting bodies.
- service re-development funds established to ring-fence funds for the delivery of the Trust's service innovation plans, property review and digital investment.
- a number of other voluntary income funds which have been agreed on the basis that 'unspent' donations which have been generated during the year will be spent specifically and directly on the children and young people. The Together Trust operates a 'wish list' process whereby the children and young people submit their 'wishes' and as far as the fund will allow these are considered and met during the year.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 20. Movements on funds (continued)

### Restricted Funds

| | | 1 April 2020 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inscape grants | **58** | - | - | - | **58** |
| 2. | Ashcroft | **63** | - | - | - | **63** |
| 3. | Young Roots | **5** | - | - | - | **5** |
| 4. | Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | - | - | - | **96** |
| 5. | Youth Music Fuse fund | **36** | 27 | (41) | - | **22** |
| 6. | 150th anniversary fund | **48** | - | (28) | - | **20** |
| 7. | Miscellaneous | **309** | 367 | (353) | 10 | **333** |
| | | **615** | 394 | (422) | 10 | **597** |

### 2020 comparatives

| | | 1 April 2019 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inscape grants | **58** | - | - | - | **58** |
| 2. | Ashcroft | **63** | - | - | - | **63** |
| 3. | Young Roots | **6** | - | (1) | - | **5** |
| 4. | Meridian Outdoor Equipment | **1** | - | - | - | **1** |
| 5. | Bridge Transitional fund | **96** | - | - | - | **96** |
| 6. | Youth Music Fuse fund | **67** | - | (31) | | **36** |
| 7. | 150th anniversary fund | **-** | 75 | (53) | 26 | **48** |
| 8. | Miscellaneous | **277** | 139 | (143) | 35 | **308** |
| | | **568** | 214 | (228) | 61 | **615** |

1. **Inscape grants** – Funds from grants for specific purposes for Inscape.
2. **Ashcroft –** Funds from Corporate supporters allocated to specific projects for Ashcroft School
3. **Young Roots** – A Heritage Lottery funded project to enable disadvantaged young people to discover the origins of the Charity from 1870 to the modern day. A range of activities will take place including creating digital film, radio content, website material and exhibitions.
4. **Bridge Transitional fund** - this is a fund for Bridge College, being grant monies from Central Government to enable Colleges to develop alternative income streams.
5. **Youth Music Fuse fund –** this is a fund for a project to support young people to enjoy and learn music across all Together Trust education settings
6. **150th Anniversary fund –** a National Lottery funded project to celebrate the heritage and archive of the Trust's 150 years of providing aid, assistance and care to children and young people
7. **Miscellaneous –** This represents a number of individual service funds, generally established from donations restricted for use by a particular service.

Transfers from restricted to unrestricted funds represents, where permitted, the transfer of funds, which remainunspent following completion of the specific projects to which they related.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 20 Movements on funds (continued)

### Endowment Funds

| | 1 April 2020 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 70 | 2 | (4) | 11 | - | 79 |
| Other funds | 51 | 2 | (1) | 9 | - | 61 |
| | 121 | 4 | (5) | 20 | _ | 140 |

### 2020 comparatives

| | 1 April 2019 £'000 | Income £'000 | Expenditure £'000 | Gains & (losses) £'000 | Transfers £'000 | 31 March 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jubilee Trust Fund | 79 | 2 | (1) | (8) | (2) | 70 |
| Other funds | 58 | 2 | (1) | (6) | (2) | 51 |
| | 137 | 4 | (2) | (14) | (4) | 121 |

**Jubilee Trust Fund**
This fund forms part of the Charity's investment portfolio and, as a permanent endowment fund, the restrictions on capital and use of income must be followed and spent in accordance with the Jubilee Trust Fund objects. The Together Trust is the sole trustee of the Jubilee Trust Fund and the two charities are linked with The Together Trust being the reporting charity for both.

**Other Funds**
These are expendable endowment funds held by the Charity to be used in accordance with the individual fund objects. These funds are as follows:

- Hoyer Trust Fund
- Thomas Hunt Trust Fund
- William Melland Trust Fund
- Ragged & Industrial Trust Fund
- Ann Street Wardle Trust Fund
- Harold Grimshaw Trust Fund

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 21. Analysis of assets and liabilities between funds

| | Unrestricted 2021 £'000 | Restricted 2021 £'000 | Endowment 2021 £'000 | Total2021 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,454 | - | - | 18,454 |
| Investments | 162 | - | 140 | 302 |
| Debtors | 7,043 | - | - | 7,043 |
| Cash | 6,647 | 597 | - | 7,244 |
| Current liabilities | (4,764) | - | - | (4,764) |
| Long term liabilities | (1,037) | - | - | (1,037) |
| Total net assets | **26,356** | **597** | **140** | **27,093** |

2020 Comparatives

| | Unrestricted 2020 £'000 | Restricted 2020 £'000 | Endowment 2020 £'000 | Total 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tangible fixed assets | 18,511 | - | - | 18,511 |
| Investments | 141 | - | 121 | 262 |
| Debtors | 7,396 | - | - | 7,396 |
| Cash | 4,625 | 615 | - | 5,240 |
| Current liabilities | (4,636) | - | - | (4,636) |
| Long term liabilities | (1,198) | - | - | (1,198) |
| Total net assets | **24,839** | **615** | **121** | **25,575** |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 22. Pensions

The Charity has participated in three (2020: four) pension schemes for its staff and these are described below.

### (i) Together Trust Final Salary Scheme

The Charity operates a defined benefit scheme, the Together Trust final salary scheme. The provider is The Pensions Trust. The Scheme became 'paid up' with effect from 31 March 2000.

This scheme is a separate Trustee administered fund holding the pension scheme assets to meet long-term pension liabilities. An actuarial valuation was carried out at 30 September 2018 and was updated to 31 March 2020 by a qualified actuary, independent of the scheme's sponsoring employer. The major assumptions used by the actuary are shown below.

The most recent completed actuarial valuation showed a deficit of £277,000 as at 30 September 2018. The Together Trust has previously agreed with the scheme's Trustee that it would eliminate the deficit by the payment of contributions to de-risk the deficit and these payments have all been made.
The Trust has further agreed with the Trustee that it will continue to make payments to meet the expenses of the scheme and levies to the Pension Protection Fund.

Assumptions
The key assumptions used in the actuarial valuation were:

| | Valuation at | |
|---|---|---|
| | **2021** | 2020 |
| | **% per annum** | % per annum |
| Discount rate | 2.05 | 2.30 |
| Inflation (RPI) | 3.35 | 2.75 |
| Inflation (CPI) | 2.90 | 1.75 |
| Allowance for revaluation of deferred pensions of RPI or 5% p.a. if less | 3.35 | 2.75 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 5% pa if less | 2.85 | 1.85 |
| Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 3% pa if less | 2.25 | 1.65 |
| Allowance for commutation of pension for cash at retirement | 75% of maximum allowance | 75% of maximum allowance |

The mortality assumptions adopted imply the following life expectancies on retirement:

| | Life expectancy at age 65 (years) | |
|---|---|---|
| | **2021** | **2020** |
| Retiring today: | | |
| Males | 21.5 | 22.0 |
| Females | 23.4 | 23.7 |
| Retiring in 20 years: | | |
| Males | 22.8 | 23.3 |
| Females | 25.0 | 25.0 |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 22. Pensions (continued)

The amount included in the balance sheet arising from the Trust's obligations in respect of the defined benefit scheme is as follows:

| | **2021 £'000** | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets | **9,390** | 9,559 |
| Present value of defined benefit obligations | **(9,311)** | (8,186) |
| Surplus in plan | **79** | 1,373 |
| Unrecognised surplus | **(79)** | (1,373) |
| Net asset recognised in the balance sheet | **-** | - |

Movements in the fair value of scheme assets were as follows:

| | **2021 £'000** | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Fair value of scheme assets at start of year | **9,559** | 9,220 |
| Interest income | **216** | 217 |
| Return on assets excluding interest income | **(80)** | 117 |
| Expenses | **(68)** | (67) |
| Contributions paid by the employer | **63** | 374 |
| Benefits paid and expenses | **(300)** | (302) |
| Fair value of scheme assets at end of year | **9,390** | 9,559 |

| | **2021 £'000** | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Bond type | **6,562** | 6,393 |
| Property | **848** | 649 |
| Other | **1,980** | 2,517 |
| Total assets | **9,390** | 9,559 |

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

**22. Pensions (continued)**

Movements in the present value of defined benefit obligations were as follows:

| | **2021 £'000** | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Defined benefit obligation at start of year | **8,186** | 8,637 |
| Interest expense | **185** | 199 |
| Past service cost – plan amendments | **17** | - |
| Experience gains on liabilities | **(45)** | (43) |
| Loss/(gain) on change of assumptions | **1,268** | (305) |
| Benefits paid | **(300)** | (302) |
| **Defined benefit obligation at end of year** | **9,311** | 8,186 |

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in respect of the defined benefit scheme are as follows:

| | **2021 £'000** | 2020 £'000 |
|---|---|---|
| Expenses | **(68)** | (67) |
| Benefit changes | **(17)** | - |
| Net cost recognised within net income/(expenditure) for the year | **(85)** | (67) |
| Return on scheme assets (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – (loss)/gain | **(80)** | 117 |
| Experience gains and losses arising on the scheme liabilities – gain | **45** | 43 |
| Effects of changes in the demographic and financial assumptions underlying the present value of the scheme liabilities – (loss)/gain | **(1,268)** | 305 |
| Effects of changes in the amount of surplus that is not recoverable (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – gain/(loss) | **1,325** | (772) |
| Total actuarial gain/(loss) | **22** | (307) |
| Total cost relating to defined benefit scheme recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities | **(63)** | (374) |

## 22. Pensions (continued)

### (ii) Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Trust participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS").

The TPS provides pensions to teachers who have worked in schools and other educational establishments in England and Wales. The Scheme is an unfunded statutory public service pension scheme with the benefits underwritten by the Government. The Scheme is financed by payments from the employer and from those current employees who are members of the Scheme, who pay contributions at different rates which depend on their salaries.

Every four years, the Government Actuary's Department carries out a valuation of all unfunded public service pension schemes, including the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2016 in accordance with The Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 (as amended).

The valuation report was published by the Government's Actuary's Department on 5 March 2019. The key results of the valuation and the subsequent consultation were that employer contribution rates were set at 23.68% (an increase from the previous rate of 16.48%).

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documents can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website at the following location:

https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/news/employers/2019/04/teachers-pensions-valuation-report.aspx

The TPS is a multi-employer pension scheme. The Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme. Accordingly, the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Trust has set out above the information available on the scheme and the implications for the Trust in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The pension costs paid to the TPS in the year amounted to £662,000 (2020: £539,000) and have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as an expense with £54,000 (2020: £53,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date. The liability and expense have been allocated in full to unrestricted funds. The allocation of the expense to activities is explained in note 9.

### (iii) Group Personal Pension Scheme

The Charity also operates a Group Personal Pension Scheme, which is a defined contribution scheme. It is made available to all staff excluding those eligible for the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Provision of the scheme is made through Standard Life.

In the year ended 31 March 2021 the pensions contribution payable for staff in the Group Personal Pension scheme was £785,000 (2020: £729,000) with £65,000 (2020: £62,000) outstanding at the balance sheet date.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 22. Pensions (continued)

### (iv) National Health Services Superannuation Scheme

In the prior year, the Charity was an admitted body for the purposes of the National Health Service Superannuation Scheme and members of staff who were former NHS employees were able to continue membership of the Scheme during their employment at The Together Trust. The Charity no longer has any members of staff who were former NHS employees and therefore has not participated in this scheme in the year ended 31 March 2021.

In respect of the prior year, the assets of the scheme are held separately by the National Health Service Superannuation Scheme. Contributions to the scheme have been charged to the prior year Statement of Financial Activities so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees working lives with the Trust.

There are no separate assets and liabilities which can be identified as relating to The Together Trust therefore the scheme has been accounted for as a defined contribution scheme.

The pension cost charge for the year amounted to £nil (2020: £1,000). An amount of £nil (2020: £nil) is included in creditors, being the outstanding contributions to the scheme at the balance sheet date.

## 23. Derivative financial instruments

The following table details the notional principal amounts and remaining terms of interest rate swap contracts outstanding as at the reporting date:

**Outstanding contracts - receive floating pay fixed contracts**

| | Average contract fixed interest rate | | Notional principal value | | Fair value | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2021** | 2020 | **2021** | 2020 | **2021** | 2020 |
| | **%** | % | **£'000** | £'000 | **£'000** | £'000 |
| 5 years + | **4.21%** | 4.21% | **1,005** | 1,054 | **234** | 291 |

The Trust is party to an interest rate swap contract in relation to a financial derivative to manage its exposure to the risk of interest rate variation. The interest rate swap contract expires on 31 March 2031.

The fair value of the derivative is calculated by discounting the future cash flows to the maturity date of 31 March 2031. The product gives the Trust increased certainty over future costs and cash flows, and the liability should be considered within the context of the length of the loan period and interest rates existing when the loan agreement was made in December 2010.

The interest rate swap settles on a quarterly basis. The floating rate on the interest rate swap is three months' LIBOR. The Trust settles the difference between the fixed and floating interest rate on a net basis.

Gains/(losses) of £57,000 (2020: losses £25,000) in respect of the interest rate swap contract have been recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

**Notes to the financial statements year ended 31 March 2021**

## 24. Related party transactions

No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the Charity during the year (2020 £nil). There were no other related party transactions during the current or prior years that require disclosure.

## 25. Financial commitments

**Operating lease commitments**
The total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases:

| | Land & Buildings | | Other | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2021** | 2020 | **2021** | 2020 |
| | **£'000** | £'000 | **£'000** | £'000 |
| - due within one year | **33** | 37 | **12** | 12 |
| - due between one and five years | **9** | 88 | **17** | 30 |
| - due after five years | **-** | - | **-** | - |
| | **42** | 125 | **29** | 42 |

## 26. Contingent Liabilities

In the prior year, a contingent liability was noted in respect of a potential liability in relation to back pay on sleep-in shifts following a judgement made by the Court of Appeal, which was being appealed in the Supreme Court. In March 2021 the Supreme Court ruled that only time spent awake and working during a sleep-in shift counts as working time for National Minimum Wage purposes and, as a result, the Trust is no longer noting a contingent liability.

The Charity has been informed by The Pensions Trust that some decisions it made in regard to the final salary based pension scheme, which closed to new members in 2000, may not have been in accordance with the scheme rules. The Pensions Trust are seeking Court direction in relation to this, the outcome of which is not expected to be known until late 2023. If the Court directs that changes were made in a way not permitted by the scheme rules, then this decision would give rise to additional pension liabilities for the Trust in the future in the order of £2m - £3m.

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