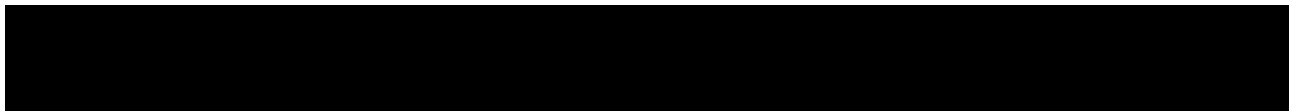


The Community Bureau SCIO

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2025



Trustees Annual Report

For the year ended 31st March 2025

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their report together with financial information for the year ended 31st March 2025

Reference and Administrative Information

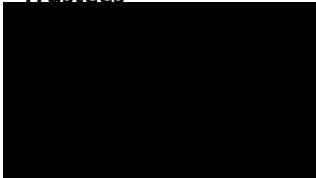
Charity Name

The Community Bureau SCIO

Bankers

Unity Trust Bank, Four Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HB

Trustees



Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The Charity is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (a SCIO). It was registered in its current legal form on 3rd August 2015. The assets of the Company, The Community Bureau, were transferred to the SCIO when it was wound up. The Community Bureau has a two-tier structure with a Board of Trustees and a membership drawn from those who support the aims and objectives of the organisation. The Community Bureau operates across more than one local authority area in Scotland.

Appointment of Trustees

The Board of Trustees meet quarterly and liaise by email or phone between board meetings. During a busy year most meetings have continued to take place virtually.. Quarterly meetings take account of the geographical area and wide travel distances involved. The minimum number of Trustees is three and the maximum number is seven. Membership of the Board of Trustees is open to any member who can also be co-opted to fill spaces in the Board and can be elected by members at the Annual General Meeting. The Annual General Meeting is held each year when we are also able to present and discuss plans for the coming year. We actively encourage diversity on our Board.

Management

The Management of the SCIO is carried out by the Trustees with the support of one Co-ordinator and Trustees are closely involved in all aspects of operation. Our plans going forward will include seeking to achieve a staffing structure which will support, and be supported by, the Board of Trustees. We have a staff member supporting our wider

community space – Hygge Hutte which was established last year following a review and decision to enable a greater level of community activities. A Development Officer together with a part time project worker supporting our work with vulnerable adults across the area. The premises now has firm focus on wider community activities which we are developing and seeking funding to ensure our community are able to decide the shape of services delivery we provide. Hygge Hutte name was chosen by our members and reflects a cosy space for wellbeing, spending time with friends and feeling safe. This will allow us to host meetings, services and activities. The space is open to all with local groups taking the opportunity to use it for activities or meetings. Meanwhile we continue to challenge poverty in a different way which is appropriate and preserves dignity for those in need. Each of our Trustees takes a particular interest in a specific development area bringing their skills to the overall work of The Community Bureau.

Objectives and Activities

Charitable Purposes

Our Charitable Purposes are:

- 1) 1)The advancement of education
- 2) 2)The relief of those in need by reason of age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage
- 3) 3)The advancement of citizenship and of community development, the promotion of civic responsibility, volunteering, the voluntary sector and the effectiveness and efficiency of third sector organisations including social enterprises.
- 4) The advancement of animal welfare
- 5) 4)The advancement of the arts, heritage, the environment, culture or sciences

Activities

We aim to support all adults who are vulnerable, isolated and lonely or suffer with emotional, mental or physical disabilities. The organisation takes the mental and emotional welfare seriously, and over the past few years has developed further its support services to improve mental wellbeing and emotional health. We recognize the particular issues facing populations of our rural communities, exacerbated by the continuing higher costs of living in a rural remote area which causes great anxiety. Added to the lack of outward transport services we can easily feel 'cut off' on our segmented peninsula from the mass of the mainland. We provide community development, group or one to one support for emotional and mental health, as well as social and wellbeing activities and respond to demand and needs bringing people together to form natural social connections and encouraging friendships to form. We provide and encourage activities, development and training, arranging events and workshops, leisure trips relative to the above objectives. We act to protect and support those most vulnerable in our communities where residents are often living in scattered and remote, rural locations.

We have a particular interest in encouraging and facilitating community participation and connections ensuring individuals and communities have a voice and can influence the

services they receive and the design and planning of these services. Bringing people together for social events, interests and a range of activities demonstrates improvements in wellbeing and is key to many services. Our own supports and services are accessible to all, practical and encompass the range of interests which align with our objectives.

We have seen rising poverty due to the cost of living increases and have developed our response with local people to best serve their needs. All our services are informed by, and based upon, the needs and expressed views of those with whom we engage and who are, or will become, beneficiaries of support. Our commitment is to the principles of co-production and engaging our service users every step of the way.

We deliver services and support ourselves and actively seek to work in partnership with other organisations from across the third sector spectrum as well as local agencies. Services and project work undertaken is based on evidenced need and we deliver across Argyll with a majority of work centred in western Argyll and into the mid Argyll areas. Our partnership working helps to bring people from groups across Argyll together, to share knowledge, social time and to forge new friendships.

Achievements and Performance

At the close of 2023-2024 we could see life returning to normal, post Covid, albeit a new normal as Covid settled as just another virus which is circulating at times within our communities. There remain numbers who are suffering longer term consequence. Also, the harms to mental health remain for many, with poorer resilience than may have been without two years of isolation. This aside, isolation and loneliness are prevalent and our scattered communities and ageing population are at risk; loneliness is often unseen and rural living can exacerbate these risks.

We strive to bring people together and to strengthen and build connections across communities often with other groups, some from across Argyll, working in similar ways. Our aim is around connections and making changes to peoples' lives which meet their needs and desires, create happiness and sense of belonging, and keep people connected to community life.

Rises in costs of living from energy to food have affected everyone, including the organisation. Whilst inflation may be slowing, prices locally are not decreasing meaning many still face the 'heat or eat' dilemma as a constant background to daily living. As one person summed it up 'as fast as one worry melts away, something else arrives to make things even worse'. Amongst volunteers, staff and those we support this is clearly evident, disruptive to ordinary life and causes further concern and stress.

Our local research demonstrates the impacts on mental health, physical health and the numbers simply struggling with high rural pricing evident in our limited shopping choices. We are thus grateful to funders supporting our initiatives against poverty which operate adjacent to our support services.

Our community space, the Hygge Hutte was named by members – Hygge, a Danish word (pronounced hoogah) reflects a cosy, safe place of wellbeing, company amongst friends and a caring supportive environment.

Numbers of people supported remain high, again increasing slightly from the previous year. We constantly seek to increase our capacity, and to co-develop initiatives and offers which respond to people's needs. For this will we seek the views of all stakeholders with decisions taken with and for those using our services. Funder support is not only valuable but critical to the lives of vulnerable people living in our remote rural area often in dispersed settlements with limited access to transport and other services. Our brilliant volunteers help make our work possible, and many are those with disadvantages whom we support to enable their inclusion in this growing group. They in turn help others and bring their own unique talents to our operations.

Volunteers undertake diverse roles across the organisation with the majority based at our Hygge Hutte or working from there within the community, or assisting with travel arrangements and journeys using a local minibus hire. Support to volunteers is essential to extending our equalities ethos and increase the range of roles and numbers of volunteers engaged.

Support from funders has again enabled us to demonstrate the positive impact of our hybrid 'pet friends' generally referred to as Happiness Hounds. The therapeutic value of dogs (and other animals) to those who are isolated, lonely, stressed or suffering other emotional and mental health issues is well documented and our evidence demonstrated the local need. Our own resident Hygge Hutte pair are an example of the welcome extended to all from our quadrupeds and, of course, not forgetting our bipeds.

We continue contact by phone in particular as this is preferred to Zoom or email. Many are not users of social media and prefer the more traditional and person methods of communications. For any who wish to learn and become more IT-savvy, we are available to help that and teach basic skills. One outcome being the new volunteer Whats App group, with a few false starts this is gradually being adopted by our volunteer members. It still is true that nothing substitutes for personal contact and we are tireless working to improve and maintain social connections, combatting loneliness and isolation in as many ways as possible.

In addition, one to one support is provided, and can range from the simple to extended support over periods of time. Our mission is to respond to needs, not to design services and then seek to coalesce around that service.

Our commitment remains to continue to build our responses and widen the impact we make, supporting those in greatest need and most vulnerable in our communities. We acknowledge this will be a real challenge, and work to meet this over the coming year.

Financial Review

Total income for the year remains somewhat lower than in pre-Covid years and reflects the funding challenges to the organisation. However, it has recovered compared to 2023-24 and the blend of restricted and unrestricted funding has also changed with several funders recognising the need to remove funding restrictions in these challenging times. With all funds directed to service delivery, we continue to maintain lowered overheads as far as possible. We have reversed the shortfalls of previous years and now have a balanced budget, but cannot sit still. This coming year will require an enormous effort to meet and raise the funds needed to meet service and community needs and demands.

We have contained venue and premises rents but are still facing very high utilities costs, particularly in energy. Unrestricted funds achieved this year have helped meet this need, and we will continue to seek the funding to preserve the Hygge Hutte going forward. Above all we will work to avoid any impact on those who use our services.

We remain paying above the Living Wage, we are seeking to implementing a very small rise this coming year, taking a cautious approach. We recognise that the funding environment is a challenging one and are taking every step to ensure we continue the necessary support.

The grant funding climate is unlikely to become any less competitive so we anticipate that the challenges of raising funds will continue into the foreseeable future. Where possible we work in partnership as a means to cost effectiveness, sharing of resources and to demonstrate good governance and networking.

In terms of outcomes our track record and the feedback we receive demonstrates the differences we make. Overall, despite challenges we have confidence in the future and in our organisational sustainability.

Reserves Policy

Constitutionally we are not bound to hold reserves. However, our Trustees, and the organisation, retain the policy commitment of achieving a reserve level at least equivalent to three months operating costs. Additionally, we have a policy of designating specific sums where this would assist in future plans and development.

Whilst unrestricted and grant funded income have improved rising costs still work against any increase in income. We have maintained a small reserves fund although unable to meet our reserves target. Some designated funds are not available as general reserves.

We will continue to plan on the basis of six month review, barring any completely unexpected events, as being appropriate. We continue to work toward retaining a small reserve level to safeguard against unforeseen circumstances or in the case of necessary redundancy arising. Future reserves and designated funds may well depend on what measures and costs are imposed by external events in the coming year. Our Trustees commitment is to continue the present reserves policy.

Plans for future period.

Last year we felt that we were in the process of establishing the community space as the Hygge Hutte, and the change of system to combat poverty. These are now embedded and although the physical building and contents have room for improvement we offer a comfortable environment for those we support, and for community groups using our spaces. Support, services, community and needs never stand still and we see an evolving process as we act on suggestions, trial different initiatives and respond to newly identified and articulated needs.

As always services and supports will be planned with those who are or will use these and that involvement remains key to our commitment to our communities. It is likely that we will again see an increase in participants and in services which can respond to rising needs. This however, will require funds to be available and funding planning is thus essential.

We continue to commit to supporting those most vulnerable, to combat isolation, loneliness and poor mental health all of which are ever present across our often remote and rural communities. We support for our communities in ways which they desire, and where they are involved in the decision making and planning. In the coming year some greater partnership events or initiatives are planned commencing with a 'knowledge sharing and friendship building' event with our colleagues from Grey Matters. This will bring two groups of older people together, for an afternoon of sharing, learning and building new relationships.

Inevitably we will be alive to funding challenges particularly where funders recognise the barriers which impact health and wellbeing in fragile and remote communities. We maintain our overall strategy of equitable support to adults who are the most vulnerable; and to support people regardless of circumstance whether suffering mental, emotional or physical ill health, disability or the impacts of older age, loneliness, isolation or poverty.

We continue to work with our diverse communities and to encourage participation in local community life, services and planning wherever possible. Enabling people to have a voice and be heard can only benefit community decisions. The need to continue to build communities, connections and social opportunities does not change. These and any new supports will be led by the principles of co-production and underpinned by evidence of need and demand. We plan to further expand and at times adapt the scope and use of the Hygge Hutte and to build on responses which aim to achieve positive outcomes and change for those who are vulnerable across our dispersed communities. To do this we seek to achieve a mix of grant and local fundraising income to provide valued services.

Exemptions from Disclosure

There are no exemptions from disclosure. This report was approved by the Trustees on 04.06.25

Trustee -

The Community Bureau SCIO
Financial Statements 1 April 2024-
31 March 2025
SCIO Charity no SC045866

Independent Examiners report to the directors on the unaudited accounts of The Community Bureau SCIO.

I report on the accounts of The Community Bureau SCIO for the period ending 31st March 2025 as set out on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of directors and Independent Examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charitable Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity's Trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1)(a) to (c) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes the review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items in disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as directors concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations have not been met,

or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Date 25th May 2025



The Community Bureau SCIO Charity Number SC045866

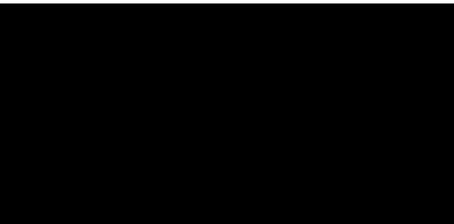
	Year to 2025 unrestricted	Year to 2025 restricted	Year to 2025 total	Year to 2024 total
Receipts				
Grants	21400	45186	66586	51,430
Donations	570	-	570	-
Bank Interest received	-		-	-
Fundraising				
Local Fundraising income	7274	-	7274	8,918
Total Receipts	29244	45186	74430	60,348
Payments				
Salaries	13176	27286		33,091
Volunteer expenses	2000	2556		1,980
Office Supplies, materials, resources	320	224		1,314
Travel Expenses & Transport	918	450		2,815
Catering	124	850		1,934
Sessional Staffing	1529	6500		8,850
Rent and Venues	3600	305		5,150
IT, Software, Computer Equipment	350	-		791
Utilities	4500	586		6,203
Memberships/Subscriptions	260	-		176
Insurances	590	-		412
Governance Costs				-
Independent Examination	450	-	450	340
Total Payments	27667	38757	66424	64,441
Surplus/ Deficit for year before transfers	1577	6429	8006	(4,093)
Transfers between funds				
Surplus / Deficit for year	1577	6429	8006	(4,093)

Signed**Date 1st June 2025**

Statement of Balances as at 31st March 2025

	Year to 2025 unrestricted	Year to 2025 restricted	Year to 2025 total	Year to 2024 total
Opening cash at bank and in hand	17831	12836	30667	34,760
Add Income	29244	45186	74430	60,348
Total	47075	58022	105097	95,108
Less expenditure	27667	38757	66424	64,441
Transfers				-
Closing cash at bank and in hand				
Business Current Account	19408	19265	38673	30,667
Outstanding Lodgements	-	-		-
Outstanding Charges	-	-		-
Petty Cash	-	-		-
	19408	19265	38673	30,667

Signed on behalf of all Trustees



Date: 1st June 2025

Basis of Accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with the Charity and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Nature and Purpose of Funds

Unrestricted Funds are those that may be used at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted Funds may only be used for the specific purposes as detailed in the notes to the accounts.

Related Party Transactions

No remuneration was paid to the Trustees of any connected person during the year (2023-2024).

Transfers between funds

No transfers were made between funds in year 2024-25.

Governance Costs

Accounting Services	340	340
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Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds Balances at 31st March 2025

Dementia Support	5132
Living Well	740
Hygge Hutte (designated)	557
	6429