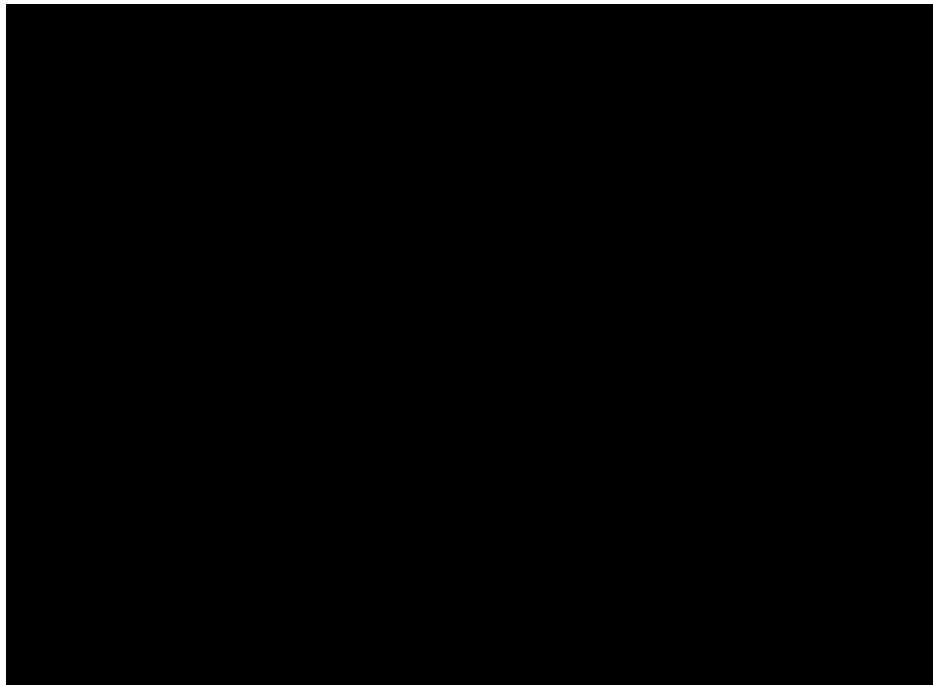




# Trustees' Annual Report

From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025



## Contact information

**Charity Name:** Building Bridges

**Scottish Charity Number:** SC049383

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Postcode:** [REDACTED]

**Telephone number:** 07813 038 756

**Email address:** [info@buildingbridges.scot](mailto:info@buildingbridges.scot)

**Website:** [www.buildingbridges.scot](http://www.buildingbridges.scot)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Building-Bridges-723782688000997>

## Charity Trustees

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Our Bank:

Bank of Scotland

The Direct Business

PO Box 1000

BV2 ILB

# Objectives and activities

## Purposes

The purposes of Building Bridges are:

- The promotion of racial and cultural harmony
- The promotion of equality and diversity
- The advancement of citizenship and community development

## What we do

Building Bridges nurtures dynamic and outward looking communities in which people are at ease with difference.

We do this by creating opportunities for openness, dialogue, interaction, exchange, and reciprocal understanding between people of diverse backgrounds and cultures, sharing a common objective of mutual learning, growing together, and overcoming institutional and relational barriers.

Our approach goes beyond equal opportunities and respect for existing cultural differences: we do not recognise cultural boundaries as fixed but in a state of flux and remaking.

Our belief, and commitment, is that the existence of a society which has diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and social groups is positively a good thing. We respect the maintenance of traditional cultures or special interests, where we accept each other's beliefs and cultures even when they do not match our own, but within a commitment by all to share, respect and learn from these within the 'umbrella' culture of our shared community.

We bring together communities from different ethnic backgrounds, working initially in Leith and Edinburgh, seeking to collaborate particularly with the emerging communities.

## Achievements and performance

The project is grassroots, relational and community based while continuing to address the need for integration between the New Scots and the established communities in Edinburgh. The key to the positive outcomes of this project was partnerships and dedicated volunteers who committed themselves to supporting the co-production of ideas and community events.

We have worked effectively and shared understanding of the emerging New Scots with the established communities in Edinburgh and to build strong relations across communities in collaboration with Volunteering Matters/ Project Scotland, The Welcoming, Multicultural Family Base (MCFB), Refugee Friends Response Group, Edinburgh Refugee Integration Council, Santosa Wellbeing Centre, Theiya Arts, Edinburgh Gurdwara, Bethany Christian Trust, Leith Festival, Punjabi Junction, Leith Community Croft, Harbour Connections, Asian Concern, SABS and the Nepalese Association of Scotland.

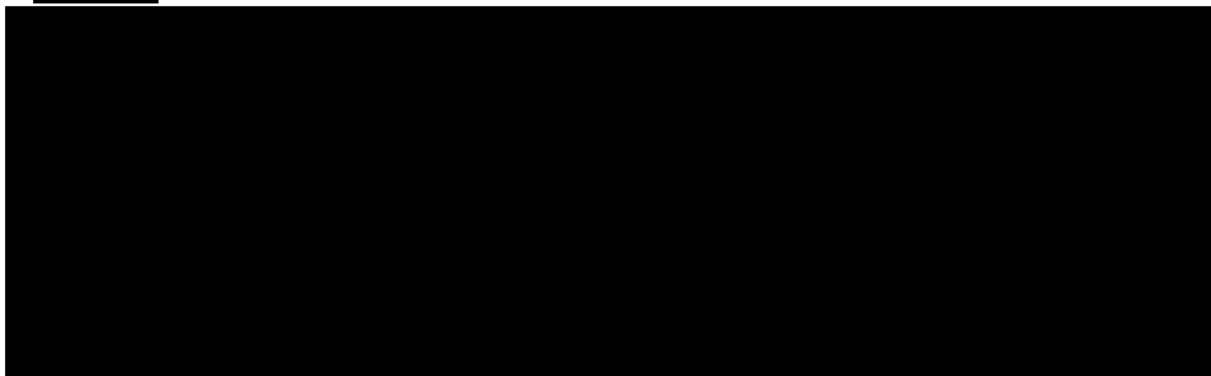
- Our monthly community lunches continue to attract up to 25 local people. These have grown into discussions and verbal feedback sessions about what they and we aim to achieve to bring different communities together.
- We formally evaluate these monthly lunches which provides written feedback on the question we ask: “Any other comments or suggestions how Building Bridges can improve the well-being of our community?”.
- We meet community professionals in face-to-face conversations/Zoom meetings are crucial to our understanding of local needs and are a part the ‘Belong Network’.
- We have developed new partnerships for the meals with the Hibs Community Foundation, SABS and the Nepalese Scottish Association.
- A meal in partnership with St James Church sought to bring an understanding of the difference between faith and culture - an important issue in understanding different ethnic groups and the Baha’I community.
- We have built partnerships with local restaurants who not only provide Halal food for our events but work actively in partnership with us to promote our aim of bringing communities together.
- We have partnered with Asian Concern, Sikh Sanjog and Community Connections to co-produce events for emerging communities.
- We have collaborated with Volunteering Matters & Project Scotland who work with Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the city.
- We partnered with Theiya Arts to provide a range of dance experiences across different culture to bring fun and enjoyment to the cultural meals.

## Building Bridges through community meals

Over the 12 months, the project has delivered the process of creating shared spaces, where people encounter and interact others who are different from themselves, to change attitudes: this has already Challenged stereotypes, undermined prejudice and actually ensured that people are more comfortable with diversity.

- **Baha'i Community Meal with St James**

This community meal funded by Building Bridges and hosted by St James Episcopal Church in Leith, the food was prepared by [REDACTED] from Shinwari. community. [REDACTED] from St James played the traditional Scottish bagpipes before the meal was served, followed by interviews, stories and music from Baha'i community members. This is the experience of [REDACTED] one of the guests from the neighbourhood who attended the meal:



Last night I learned about the Baha'i community.

This wasn't through a learning course, training event or internet search. This was through a community event organised by Building Bridges in collaboration with several other local organisations.

Last night's event brought together members of St James Episcopal Church, the Baha'i Edinburgh community, and people like myself who live in the area, and went along to find out more. It brought people from different backgrounds together to share a meal, conversation and insight into different cultural experiences. Learning through the act of making human connections, and conversation.

I had a lovely evening sharing a delicious meal with a group of people I had only just met, found out about a culture I was unfamiliar with, learned a little more about my own cultural background (did you know that ministers have different stoles for different Christian holidays? despite being brought up in a Christian faith I didn't), saw some fabulous local dancers, and tried Bharatanatyam (a form of Indian classical dance) for the first – and probably only – time in my life.

And I left feeling far more refreshed, positive about the world, and good about humanity. Our social networks keep us mentally healthy – even something as simple as saying hello to the person serving you in a shop on a regular basis has been shown to be beneficial, and contribute to ageing healthily and living longer. Extending these connections to include other cultures can only increase cross cultural understanding and dismantle some of the barriers caused by perceived differences.

Community Organisations such as Building Bridges do just this. Bringing people together over commonalities and shared experiences. At a time when so much of what we see in the media focuses on difference with the aim of causing outrage and anger, it was refreshing to attend an event using difference as a means of community cohesion and understanding instead.

Too often we reject new experiences out of fear. On the basis that they are unfamiliar, that we don't know anyone, or that it just isn't 'my kind of thing'.

I challenge you to find a community event near you that you would not normally attend. Go along. Take a friend if you like, but talk to the people there, not just each other, and find out about them. I guarantee you will learn something from the experience, not just about others in your community, but also about yourself.

- **Lunch Job Club to Support Refugees and New Scots Parents**

Volunteering Matters partnered with Building Bridges to start the first employability-focused group to support parents from the emerging communities in Edinburgh. We were delighted to see so many smiling faces connecting with one another and the dedicated volunteers interacting with the guests. We are thankful to you [REDACTED] for hosting the Job Club at Shinwari restaurant which serves Halal meals. We're also very grateful to [REDACTED], Project Coordinator at volunteering Matters, for her ongoing support, and to [REDACTED] from Smart Works Scotland about the services they offer to women. It was great to welcome the New Scots and Ethnic Minority parents for the opportunities to connect and discover meaningful employment in Edinburgh at a monthly Lunchtime setting.



### **Feedback from the community connection meals and activities:**

*"I saw a room that was intercultural, multicultural, coming together in peace, joy and food. I loved that, it really touched my heart to see all these community connections"*

*"Enjoyed the family atmosphere at the community meal"*

*"Nice to get a flavour of a different cultures and meet new people"*

*"Community spirit of the people at the Sikh Gurdwara at Diwali"*

*"An informative informal cultural evening with great food music and people"*

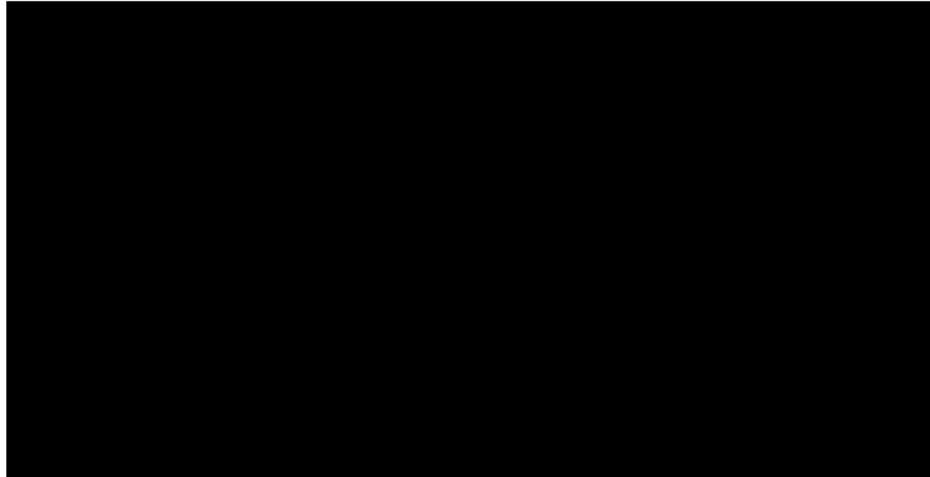
*"Delicious food, people we met and learning about another culture and customs"*



## **Building Bridges on Burns Night**

The project hosted an intercultural Burns community night, a fusion of Burns and Haggis Pakora in the form of music, poetry, food and stories at Santosa Cafe in Leith. Musicians include Sylvain from Senegal and Robert Rife on pipes from the Scottish tradition. An inspiring mouth-watering tasty menu was prepared by the chef Shahana Anwar and Poppy Evans at Santosa.

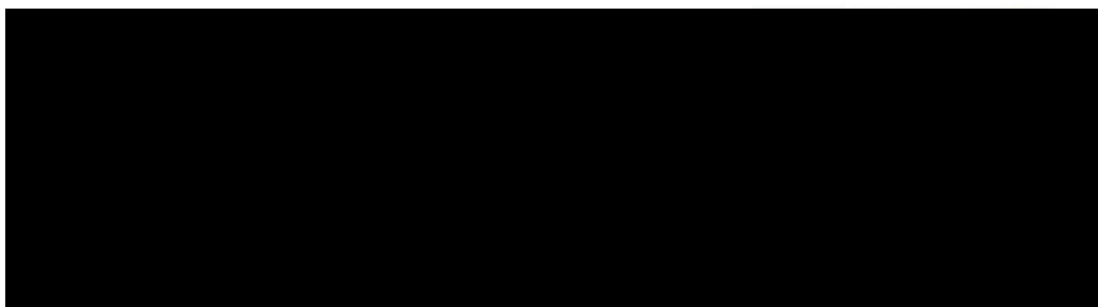
The aim of the event was to celebrate Robert Burns night and acknowledge the bonds between Burns and other cultures while bringing people together to find out about our intercultural heritage in Scotland. The evening made sure to get the right balance and respectfully addressed the Pakora Haggis. We are sure Burns would have approved.



## **Building Bridges with Community Groups**

Our intercultural community meals have built positive understanding between different groups and fostered mutual trust and respect by breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions about the 'other'. There has been many clear and measurable benefits of our community events, generally based upon attitudinal and behavioural changes towards other communities and faith groups.

During this period, we have formed new partnerships with the Nepalese and SABS communities at the Hibs Community Foundation. These monthly meals offer more than just a warm, homemade meal - it's a space where compassion, community, and a deep sense of belonging are fostered, especially for New Scots and vulnerable families facing hardship. In addition, there has been our monthly lunchtime community on the first Friday of the month at Santosa wellbeing centre.

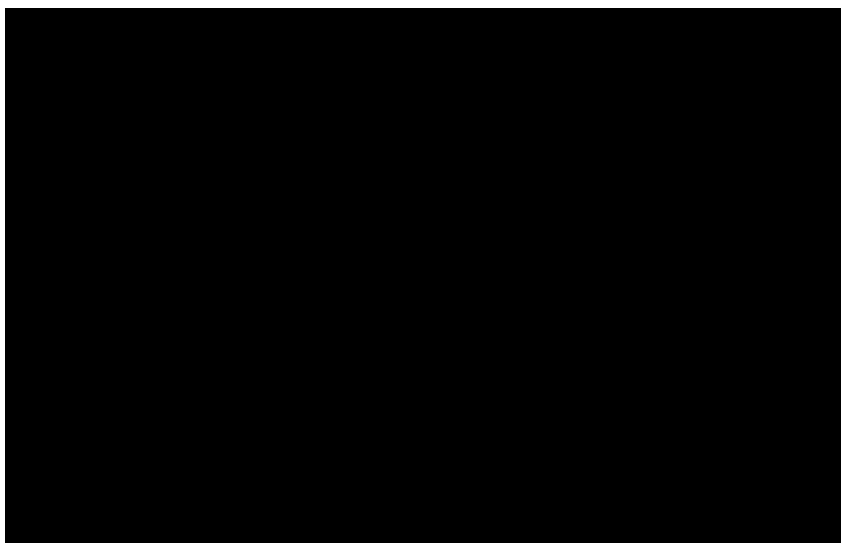


## Building Bridges of cultural understanding

We held a lunchtime Asian cultural awareness session on festivals for staff members of the homeless charity Bethany Christian Trust to support the organisation and their service-users. Another session was held for staff members to participate in some South Asian Bollywood dancing. The workshop was led by Theiya Arts who have talented dancers and teachers.

- **Cultural Awareness of Diwali**

We were able to organise a Diwali cultural awareness evening at the Sikh Gurdwara in November 2024. While explaining the meaning the festival of lights; people from the local community were able to enter into the celebrations of night by sitting in the main service hall, lighting a candle and enjoying vegetarian food cooked at the temple for this special occasion. Most of the people were from Leith and it was their first visit to a Gurdwara (Sikh Temple) to attended a Diwali celebration and were full of praise for the hospitality shown by the Punjabi community.



## Building Bridges of partnership and co-production

Building Bridges is aware of the valuable approach that partnership and co-production can have when building active relationships between the project and members of the community. We have involved our partner organisations and those from the Ethnic minority communities to be a part of the decision-making process. We started a monthly lunchtime meeting to discuss the possibility of having an intercultural festival and seeking funding from Leith Chooses.

We recognise people as assets, because people themselves are the real wealth within their communities. We value working differently, to recognise that diversity adds to maintaining healthy communities and promoting reciprocity, giving and receiving – because it builds trust between people and fosters mutual respect.



## Building Bridges - Reflections and Horizons – Chair's Report

As you will have read so far, we are celebrating a number of achievements this year. High on the list is the ongoing development of project partnerships and co-creation. The “fruit” of this work often lies in the slow building of trust and credibility, a track record we are grateful for given limited resources.

We continue to strengthen the trustee team and ensure it is representative of the work and communities we serve and are delighted to welcome Sanath Kumar who has a wealth of experience in the creative arts as well as community engagement.

We have plans for a Building Bridges festival in 2025 as we build on the work to date.

I remain grateful for the hard work, vision and dedication of our Project Director Pall Singh, whose experience and network building skills continue to give us a level of credibility and visibility in the space we occupy, and for my fellow Trustees, who bring balance, wisdom and local knowledge into our decision making and strategic direction.

## Structure, governance, and management

### Our Constitution:

Building Bridges is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

### Trustee recruitment and appointment

The structure of Building Bridges consists of:

**The MEMBERS** - who have the right to attend members' meetings (including any annual general meeting) and have important powers under the constitution; in particular, the members appoint people to serve on the board and take decisions on changes to the constitution itself.

**The BOARD** - who hold regular meetings and control the activities of the organisation; for example, the board is responsible for monitoring and controlling the financial position of the organisation. The people serving on the board are referred to as Charity Trustees.

The Board shall consist of no less than 3 and no more than eight members. At the Annual General Meeting, members may elect any individual to the Board, and they will then be deemed to be a member of Building Bridges. <Members elected to the Board can serve a period of 3 years and shall then not be eligible for re-election until a further year has elapsed.

The Board may at any time appoint a non-member of Building Bridges to be a charity trustee on the basis that they have specialist experience or skills which could assist the purposes of Building Bridges.

## Financial review

We are grateful for the organisations that have supported our work in the past years: Awards for All, Faith in the Community, Harbour Homes, Leith Chooses, St James's Episcopal Church, Queen Margaret College, Manor Estates, Local Funding 2 Community, and the Soutar Trust

Obtaining funding continues to be a challenge for us and cash reserves increased a little from £7,181 at the start of the financial year to £9,638 at the end of the year. This consists of general reserves £2,079, and Restricted funds of £7,558. This bank balance represents the total reserves of Building Bridges. Trustees are conscious of the need to seek a major longer term funding grant to enable us to bring more stability to our work.

We have no employees, and our work is currently carried out on a voluntary basis other than payments made on a day rate to our Project Manager to enable him to lead this work and to cover his costs. All costs for work are identified by invoiced claims.

## Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Building Bridges currently has no significant reserves. Our current policy is to only undertake work for which funding has already been received. Since we have no employees, and work is only taken on when funding is received, we do not need reserves at the current time.

## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period  
from

1

April

2024

to

31

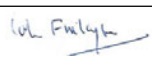
March

2025

## Section A Statement of receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Expendable endowment funds	Permanent endowment funds	Total funds current period	Total funds last period
	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>						
Donations	250				250	1,150
Legacies					-	
Grants		14,750			14,750	11,800
Receipts from fundraising activities					-	
Gross trading receipts					-	
Income from investments other than land and buildings					-	
Rents from land & buildings					-	
Gross receipts from other charitable activities		1,608			1,608	694
					-	
<b>A1 Sub total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>16,358</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,608</b>	<b>13,644</b>
<b>A2 Receipts from asset &amp; investment sales</b>						
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets					-	-
Proceeds from sale of investments					-	-
<b>A2 Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>16,358</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,608</b>	<b>13,644</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>						
Expenses for fundraising activities	-				-	-
Gross trading payments	-				-	-
Investment management costs	-				-	-
Payments relating directly to charitable activities:		13,219			13,219	17,467
Grants and donations - Food Vouchers		550			550	1,400
Governance costs: Conference					-	139
Audit / independent examination					-	-
Preparation of annual accounts					-	-
Legal costs					-	-
Other - Insurance	82	300			382	372
					-	-
<b>A3 Sub total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>14,069</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,151</b>	<b>19,378</b>
<b>A4 Payments relating to asset and investment movements</b>						
Purchases of fixed assets: Lap Top					-	-
Purchase of investments					-	-
<b>A4 Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>14,069</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,151</b>	<b>19,378</b>
<b>Net receipts / (payments)</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>2,289</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,457</b>	<b>(5,735)</b>
<b>A5 Transfers to / (from) funds</b>					-	
<b>Surplus / (deficit) for year</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>2,289</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,457</b>	<b>(5,735)</b>

## Section B Statement of balances

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Expendable endowment funds to nearest £	Permanent endowment funds to nearest £	Total current period to nearest £	Total last period to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash and bank balances at start of year	1,911	5,269			7,181	12,915
	Surplus / (deficit) shown on receipts and payments account	168	2,289			2,457	(5,734)
						-	-
						-	-
	Cash and bank balances at end of year	2,079	7,558	-	-	9,638	7,181
	(Agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Details			Fund to which asset belongs		Market valuation to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B2 Investments							
				Total		-	-
	Details			Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (if available) to nearest £	Current value (if) to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B3 Other assets	Laptop Computer		Restricted		887	227	499
				Total	887	227	499
	Details			Fund to which liability relates		Amount due to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B4 Liabilities							
				Total		-	-
	Details			Fund to which liability relates		Amount due (estimate) to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B5 Contingent liabilities							
				Total		-	-
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name					Date of approval
		Colin Finlayson					30/05/2a5

# **Independent examiner's report on the accounts**

## **Report to the trustees/members of Building Bridges**

Registered charity number SC 049383

On the accounts of the charity for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, set out on pages 11-12.

## **Respective responsibilities of trustees and 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) 2005 Act and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) 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 is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees 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 Declaration

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.

Address: Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

**9 December 2025**