

Company registration number: 02668971

Charity registration number: 1008190

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

KM
Chartered Accountants
1st Floor, Block C
The Wharf
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Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

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Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	A Abbas S C Ledbetter N McGrath M T Sidat
Secretary	J G Hodgkinson
Chief Executive Officer	J G Hodgkinson
Charity Registration Number	1008190
Company Registration Number	02668971
Registered Office	The charity is incorporated in England and Wales. Boulevard Centre Cathedral Quarter Blackburn BB1 1EZ
Auditor	KM Chartered Accountants 1st Floor, Block C The Wharf Manchester Road Burnley Lancashire BB11 1JG
Bankers	Barclays Bank plc 72/78 St James Street Burnley Lancashire BB11 1NH

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Trustees

A Abbas

S C Ledbetter

N McGrath

M T Sidat

H L Allen-Robson (resigned 24th January 2025)

S Shah (resigned 31st October 2025)

C Robinson (appointed 15th July 2024, resigned 27th January 2025)

Objectives and activities

Policies and objectives

The principal object of the charity is to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community, in the local government districts of Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire and its environs, and in particular the advancement of education, the protection of health and the relief of poverty, distress and sickness. To build capacity of third sector organisations and provide them with the necessary information, support and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose within the area of benefit. To promote, organise and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purposes within the area of benefit.

Activities for achieving the objectives

The trustees receive a quarterly update on actions derived from the strategic plan and review progress towards implementing the strategy every year and review the strategy itself. The content of the plan is discussed at the annual planning days for staff and trustees and the strategic plan will be formally reviewed by the trustees at its first Executive Committee of the financial year each year.

Grant making policies

All small grant programmes managed by Community CVS are managed in accordance with guidance and rules set down by our external partners. They are for activities which conform to the objects of our charity and are distributed to eligible voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to undertake charitable activities.

Fundraising disclosures

Community CVS continues to seek grant funding, contracts and service level agreements from national, regional and local partners to deliver services that are in keeping with our objectives and meet identified needs of the local community within Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire.

Public benefit

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

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Trustees' Report

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The charity is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 6 December 1991, as amended by Special Resolution on 12 February 1998, and on 16 December 2014. The charitable company is a registered charity number 1008190.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The management of the charity is the responsibility of the Trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Articles of Association.

Induction and training of trustees

A Trustee handbook, including roles and responsibilities, has been prepared for all new Trustees. All new trustees meet with the Chair and Chief Executive as part of the induction process and go through the Trustee handbook. Resources are available to support Trustees to meet their individual training needs to help them perform their duties as Trustees. Planning days are held with Trustees and staff on an annual basis.

Organisational structure

During the year, the charity employed on average 42 staff to deliver our activities and projects. All staff are responsible to the Chief Executive and ultimately, the trustees/directors. The trustees set the strategic framework within which the Chief Executive and management team operate. The trustees meet as a minimum six times per year as a Board of Trustees and more when required. The trustees receive regular reports on all aspects of the organisation, including finance, human resources, marketing & communications, health & safety, service activities, quality & performance, etc.

Major risks and management of those risks

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity, and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate our exposure to the major risks. These major risks are the impact of short term funding, changes in funding streams, changes to key personnel and changes in local and central government policy.

TRUSTEES REPORT ON OUR STRATEGY, REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Our strategic framework guides everything we do. The process for developing our strategy started in September 2022 and was completed in September 2024. We used appreciative enquiry as a methodology to discover our core values and strengths, dream about our aspirations for the future, design the building blocks to get there and establish a clear road map to achieve our destiny and deliver our future. External consultants interviewed staff and volunteers, facilitated a two day CVS team 'away day' and supported trustees at an away day.

We held a Together Everyone Achieves More Conference in May 2023 attended by over 300 people from the civil society across Blackburn with Darwen. This was followed up by a 2nd conference in June 2024 with a more detailed conversation that led to the creation of a 6P VCFSE Strategy for Blackburn with Darwen. VCFSE stands for 'Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise'. Within our report we also talk about Civil Society which is another term that is used for describing any organisation or group that is not part of the state (i.e. the public sector) and is not set up for the purpose of generating profits that are distributed to its owners or shareholders (i.e. the private sector). The VCFSE Sector or Civil Society is about being owned by and run for community benefit with any surpluses going back into the organisation or group to help more people.

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At the Lancashire level, our strategy has been informed by the co-creation of the VCFSE Manifesto for Lancashire. Working closely with VSNW and LACVS colleagues we engaged VCFSE Sector organisations across Lancashire to co-create the manifesto and in August 2024, LACVS secured Lottery funding for LOCAL Lancashire to implement the manifesto. LOCAL stands for Locally Organised Communities Across Lancashire as we are rooted in the approach to organise and connect communities from the grassroots upwards with networks in each of the 14 local places across Lancashire.

During 2025-2026 we will be looking to provide a refresh of the VCFSE Manifesto for Lancashire to bring it up to date with what is happening across civil society and our public and private sector partners.

The outcome of both the above processes and continuous engagement has created a framework for the next 10 years – which will develop, evolve and transform as our communities, the VCFSE sector and all the stakeholders change over the same period. We will be responsive to the needs of the communities we serve, their aspirations, hopes and fears, the opportunities that present themselves – but always focused on achieving positive impact – socially, economically and environmentally.

OUR STRATEGY:

CONNECTING PEOPLE, GROWING COMMUNITIES

Our Mission:

“To support individuals, organisations and communities to achieve their full potential”

Our Vision:

For CVS to lead positive social, economic and environmental change transforming how the VCFSE Sector works collaboratively with the public and private sectors.

For CVS to be a valued community partner, recognized as the lead local infrastructure support organisation for communities within Blackburn with Darwen and elsewhere.

Our Values

Community Stewardship: valuing service to the community over self-interest and believing everyone has a responsibility to support positive social change for our community now and in the future. To advocate on behalf of our communities, especially the most vulnerable.

Co-operation and Solidarity: valuing mutual support with everyone helping each other to deliver positive social change.

Equity and Fairness: valuing the well-being of everyone and striving to achieve social, economic and environmental justice for all.

Non-Judgemental: valuing everyone for who they are without prejudice or judgement.

Voluntary Action: valuing people and organisations giving their time freely to help other people within our communities.

Willingness to Listen, Learn & Innovate: valuing trying new ideas and new approaches to tackling some of the deep seated socio-economic and environmental challenges that our communities face.

Our Strategic Objectives

Pillar One: Leadership and Advocacy - enabling change for the things that matter to our communities

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Pillar Two: Collaborations and Partnerships - creating opportunities to collaborate to tackle the challenges we face.

Pillar Three: Capacity Building, Development and Training - building the capabilities of individuals, organisations and communities to lead change.

Pillar Four: Volunteering - creating an effective volunteer eco-system to support our communities.

Our Outcomes

Socially: To build fairer, more active, more connected and resilient communities.

Economically: To build an inclusive and mixed economy with higher levels of entrepreneurial activity and a more creative, skilled and productive workforce.

Environmentally: To mobilise our communities to take greater care of our natural world and our climate.

Equity: There is a strong equity thread to everything we do that will run across all our strategic objectives and outcomes.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Highlights In Numbers of our Activities

Leadership and Advocacy

- 220 delegates attended the 6P Conference and helped to co-create the 6P VCFSE Strategy for Blackburn with Darwen.
During the autumn, the national government began a consultation process on developing a civil society covenant to establish principles for joint working between the public sector and civil society.
- December 2024, Community CVS and LACVS formally responded to the consultation on behalf of the Blackburn with Darwen Community Network for the civil society locally within Blackburn with Darwen and on behalf of LOCAL Lancashire for civil society at the Lancashire level.
Towards the end of the year, Community CVS was asked by the Lancashire and South Cumbria VCFSE Alliance to take the lead in undertaking a state of the sector research to start building an evidence base for the sector. It is the first research of its kind within Lancashire and Cumbria and will help to discover the size, shape and various contributions that civil society makes to the social, economic and environmental well-being of our communities.

Collaborations and Partnerships

- Weekly E-bulletin subscription list rising from 377 subscribers to 558 subscribers by the end of the year with 30-60% regularly opening the bulletin.
- Convened over 50 network meetings and events attended by at least 1034 people from 509 organisations providing the space and opportunity to develop deeper collaborations and partnerships.
- Delivered 206 Call for a Kit Clinics in GP practices across Lancashire engaging with 4568 people, who had not returned a bowel cancer kit for analysis.

Capacity Building, Development and Training

- Provided business advice to 113 clients to help them develop their business ideas or make tangible improvements to their business.
- 603 people accessing training, including 65 people on the Aspiring Leaders programme from 56 SMEs (who are co-financing the places), the vast majority being from the VCFSE Sector with 9 Independent Learners.

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- Managed 4 grant programmes that awarded 70 grants during the year worth £76,744 and supported the development and delivery of other grant programmes for the benefit of local communities.

Volunteering

- Supported 1204 volunteers & +300 volunteer involving organisations and groups.

More detail on the review of activities over the past year is presented around our four strategic objectives or pillars.

Pillar One: Leadership and Advocacy - enabling change on the things that matter to our communities

BwD Community Network Board

Early in the year, the BwD Community Network Board formally met for the first time on 23rd April 2024 where the constitution was agreed and we began in earnest to take forward what had been agreed a year earlier in May 2023 when at the Together Everyone Achieves More Conference, the civil society or VCFSE sector had overwhelmingly voted to create the Community Network as a way of improving collaborative working within Blackburn with Darwen for civil society and its working relationships with the public sector and the commercial sector.

The 6P VCFSE Conference

On the 4th June 2024, CVS with the Community Network as a partner held our 2nd Conference 'the 6P VCFSE Conference', in Blackburn Central Library. 220 delegates attended the conference and 101 civil society participants ran stalls in King William Street at the 1st Volunteers Week Street Fair to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Volunteers Week. Delegates and stall holders attended the conference, listened to speakers and attended eight workshops on topics linked to the 6Ps helping to co-produce what eventually became the 6P VCFSE Strategy for Blackburn with Darwen.

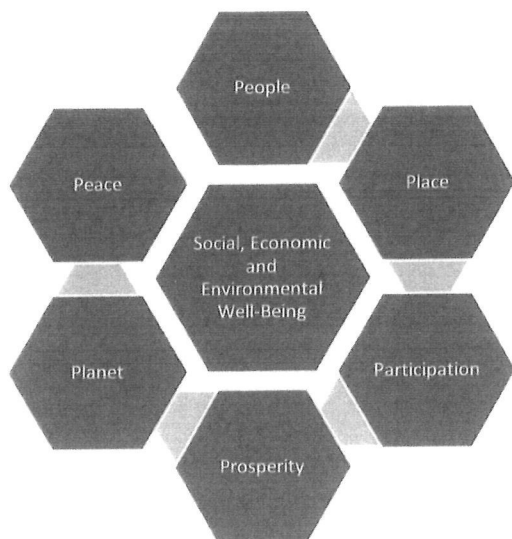


The 6P VCFSE Strategy for Blackburn with Darwen.

From the initial discussions and ideas from the 2023 and 2024 Conferences, other engagement processes, and complementary work being undertaken by networks and partnerships across BwD, the 6P VCFSE Strategy was developed to take forward community led work across all the themes.

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The priorities within each theme were formally signed off by the BwD Community Network Board on the 22nd October 2024 and networks and groups started to be set up to take forward the work and lead to collaborative action against the priorities.

PEOPLE

The 9 agreed priority population groups are:

- Asylum seekers, refugees and ethnic minorities
- Carers
- Disabled people and people with long term physical or mental health conditions
- Faith communities
- People with learning disabilities or autism
- People experiencing one or more causes of multiple disadvantage (homelessness; alcohol, substance misuse, gambling or other addictions; mental health; experience of the criminal justice system; survivor or perpetrator of domestic abuse)
- Older people especially the frail elderly or older people experiencing social isolation.
- Young People – especially Care leavers, children living in poverty or children and families with SEND
- Women – especially those experiencing other disadvantages mentioned above.

In terms of progress, we have set up a connected communities network, a men's network, a women's network and a disability network. The BwD Research Group are exploring the potential of undertaking some community research with our young people to better understand their aspirations for the future.

The BwD Community Network Board members have strong links with many of the above population groups and are well placed to address the needs of the identified priority population groups.

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PLACE

Agreed priorities are:

- To focus on helping our **deprived neighbourhoods** (11 of the 17 wards in Blackburn with Darwen are amongst the most deprived 20% within England).
- **Housing and homelessness:** to develop closer working across the sector and with our public and commercial sectors with the aspiration of ensuring everyone can access accommodation that meets their needs.
- **Heritage:** to better understand and appreciate our heritage in all its forms, our physical and natural environments and ensure as many people as possible from all backgrounds can appreciate and celebration each other's heritage.
- Improve our **Town Centres:** to explore how civil society can complement and add value to the significant public and commercial investment that goes into our town centres to make them a thriving place to be or to go to for a wide range of activities and purposes.

Deprived Neighbourhoods

Towards the end of the year, the Community Network received a Work Well grant (to be managed by CVS) to undertake community insight work into our most deprived neighbourhoods to discover and share what community assets already exist within those neighbourhoods that can be built upon to help residents improve their health, employment and skills. The work will be done in collaboration with VCFSE groups that best know these neighbourhoods and is planned for the next financial year.

Housing & Homelessness

We have also set up a Housing & Homelessness Network that has met and has started discussions with relevant Council officers and one of the Council's Executive Members with responsibility for housing to put forward the VCFSE's contributions to the emerging housing strategy and the homelessness strategy for Blackburn with Darwen and ensure the needs of the above priority population groups are met.

Heritage and Town Centres

In terms of our heritage and our town centres, we have not started this work yet – but plans are in place for the next conference in June 2025 to focus on Darwen, including its town centre with the view of building closer collaborations with the new Darwen Neighbourhood Board that will oversee the development of Darwen Town Centre and initiatives such as Discover Darwen – which seeks to understand the heritage of Darwen and the links between town and country with the amazing West Pennine Moors surrounding the town. Within Blackburn Town Centre we will support the work to bring back to life our heritage assets. For example, we will support the renovation work to bring The Exchange back to life for the benefit of all our communities.

PARTICIPATION

Agreed priorities are:

- Co-Production with the targeted population groups and the VCFSE Sector
- Digital Inclusion
- Participation in Arts & Culture; Heritage & the Natural World; Physical Activity, Recreation & Sport; combating social isolation, participating in social activities & mutual support.
- Volunteering and Social Action

Significant progress is being made against all the agreed priorities.

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Co-Production

In February 2025, CVS was invited to join a BwD a co-production stakeholder group with adult social care, a number of charities and people with lived experience to explore developing a policy and toolkit around co-production – CVS alongside Age UK BwD, BwD Carers Service, Care Network, the Deaf Village, the Blind Society and many others is involved in supporting this important piece of work. The aim is to produce a policy framework that will develop a shared understanding of what co-production means for BwD and guide our work going forward. This piece of work is focused on adults, but there may be scope to make it all age at a future date.

Digital Inclusion

The Digital Inclusion Network, led by Age UK BwD, has worked closely with the local authority to develop a shared approach to offering support around digital inclusion and is exploring ways to resource some of our ideas to take the network forward. CVS is supporting Age UK BwD, the local authority and the network to achieve its aspirations to make BwD a more digital inclusive place with more people supported to digitally participate in a way that suites them. We will develop plans to create digital champions and create a shared vision of what digital inclusion means to our communities.

Participation in Arts, Culture, Heritage & Environment, Sport and Social Life

In December 2024, the Council with the support of the creative and civil society sectors, secured a £760,000 Arts Council Place Partnership Grant that will support the implementation of the Cultural Investment Plan from 2025 to 2027. The programme will build on the work of the Creative Alliance and look to develop a Creative Network that will look to widen and deepen participation in arts and culture. Community CVS is involved through our co-ordinating role for the BwD Chip in Partnership, employing the core team who will work with partners across the civil society and creative sectors to offer and fill 250 cultural volunteer positions over the next two years. We will look to find resources to do the same with heritage & the environment, sports and social life. The Together an Active Future continues to widen opportunities for people to participate in physical activity and sport and there are other initiatives that are being developed that will help with widening participation.

Volunteering and Social Action

Finally, securing the Volunteering for Health funding in July 2024 will help to develop a collaborative BwD approach to volunteering and social action. This year has involved a development phase that led to the development and agreement of a Volunteering for Health Development Plan in March 2025. In 2025-2026 and next two years, CVS will employ a strategic volunteering lead, who will work across the public sector and civil society to develop a Vision and Strategy for Volunteering. The strategy will be overseen by a Volunteering Partnership that involves the local authority, NHS partners, CVS and the Community Network. We will survey, listen to and engage volunteers and volunteer managers in the development of the vision and the strategy. This will start at our 2025 Conference where there will be a workshop on volunteering.

PROSPERITY

The agreed priorities:

- **Employment:** helping more people who are unemployed or economically inactive and want to work to move closer to and into the labour market to fulfil their economic potential.
- **Enterprise:** helping more people from any background, who want to become an entrepreneur and run their own commercial business or social business to do so.
- **Eradicating Poverty, improving Household Income and promoting the Real Living Wage:** helping to increase income levels and tackling the economic inequalities that exist within our communities.

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- **Workforce Development and Skills:** developing the skills of residents, communities and the workforce to improve social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- **Valuing the social, economic and environmental contribution of civil society to our shared prosperity:** developing and sustaining Civil Society organisations and the VCFSE Sector as part of the foundational economy for BwD.

Progress undertaken this year:

Employment

As mentioned earlier, the Work Well Partnership has commissioned BwD Community Network with CVS support to undertake some community insight work that will improve our understanding of what community assets exist within our most deprived neighbourhoods to help local communities to improve their health, employment and skills. The work will be done in 2025-2026 and will help to inform future employment support interventions.

Enterprise

Community CVS has delivered the Flying start contract within Blackburn with Darwen (which is reported separately in the trustees report). During the year, CVS also submitted a bid to run a Bootcamp Skills programme aimed Business Fundamentals: Skills for Business Growth, which was successful and will start in 2025-2026. Community CVS is keen to be a catalyst to fostering the entrepreneurial spirit within all our communities. If you aspire to run your own business we will help to give you the skills to do so.

Eradicating Poverty, improving Household Income and promoting the Real Living Wage

At the local level, Community CVS is a partner to the public sector and VCFSE sector joint efforts tackle the cost of living crisis and helping local residents, who are experiencing poverty. Our joint approach started during the COVID Pandemic through the Help Hub, but has developed as a collaboration to help those in crisis and poverty in supporting the Council to provide support to local residents through the Household Support Fund. The collaboration is helping to build community resilience and our collaborative work is setting the foundations for the creation of a local Resilience Network.

Community CVS is a Real Living Wage Employer and actively encourages others to join the movement to commit to paying its employees the real living wage. The main way to eradicate poverty is to create sustainable meaningful jobs that pay the real living wage.

At the Lancashire level, Community CVS is supporting LACVS and Resolve Poverty to create a Lancashire wide Anti-Poverty Network.

Workforce Development & Skills

In 2000, Community CVS set up the Business Training Centre – which can deliver qualifications on behalf of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) and the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH). The purpose of the Business Training Centre is to develop and deliver training that meets the needs of the VCFSE Sector Workforce and the many industrial sectors within which the VCFSE Sector operates.

During this year, the team delivered the Aspiring Leaders in Health and Social Care Bootcamp skills programme on behalf of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub. This programme is there to upskill aspiring managers within the VCFSE Sector, who make significant contributions to the health economy. The programme is also open to any small to medium sized enterprises within the public and private sectors for aspiring management roles within the health economy.

Valuing the Social, Economic and Environmental contribution of civil society to our shared prosperity.

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Towards the end of the year, Lancashire County Combined Authority consulted on developing a Growth Plan for Lancashire. Community CVS and LACVS responded to the consultation advocating for a greater reference and recognition of the valuable contribution of civil society towards building our shared prosperity. We are a key part of the foundational economy. During the next financial year, the state of the sector research will start to build our evidence base on the exact nature of our contribution and we develop and grow our understanding of the many ways our sector contributes to creating the social, economic and environmental foundations on which a strong economy is based.

PLANET

The agreed priorities are:

- **Mobilising and skilling people** (especially focused on the 9 priority population groups)
- **Protecting and enhancing Parks, open spaces and the natural world**
- **Reducing waste and promoting recycling, reuse and the circular economy**
- Developing BwD as a **Sustainable Food Place**
- Developing a **sustainable VCFSE Sector**.

During the year, we have set up a Climate Community Network, which focuses on the contribution of civil society to saving the planet and involves relevant local stakeholders with an interest in the above priorities. The network will take forward the ideas from our conferences and the work of the People's Jury on Climate Change, which reported in January 2023. The People's Jury on Climate Change had education as its number one priority to raise awareness and mobilise communities to be more active around climate change and the natural world.

The Climate Community Network has links with the Council's Climate Community that brings together partners from across the public, commercial and civil society sectors to provide integrated approaches to tackling the climate emergency.

We will work across the Climate Community to develop volunteer programmes to upskill people, groups and organisations in carbon literacy and the skills needed to take a more active role in climate change by helping everyone to promote more sustainable ways to live.

PEACE

Working with local authorities, the criminal justice system and the VCFSE Sector, to develop collaborative and partnership approaches to meet the following priorities:

- Community safety, community resilience and security
- Domestic abuse
- Eradicating violence against women and girls
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- Celebrating diversity and bridging and connecting communities

During the year, we helped to set up the connected communities network and the women's network. We also helped to facilitate safeguarding training for the VCFSE Sector. There is much more to do on the above priorities over the next ten years.

Pillar Two: Collaborations and Partnerships - creating opportunities to collaborate to tackle the challenges we face.

Convening Spaces for networking, collaborating and partnership working

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As part of BwD Community Network, we have set up networks and groups for the following:

- People (for VCFSE groups working with the following):
 - Men's Network
 - Women's Network
 - Disabled People's Network
- Planet:
 - a Climate Action Network to take forward the suggestions from the People's Jury on Climate Change and the two conferences.
- Peace:
 - Connecting Communities Network (mentioned below) as well as building connections and links across communities of place, also builds cohesion and ensure we all get along with each other and ensure
- Place:
 - Connecting Communities Network for people and groups from different neighbourhoods and cultural backgrounds to come together to share communalities and differences
 - Housing and Homelessness Network to link into the Councils Homelessness Forum and to influence the forthcoming housing strategy

During 2024-2025, CVS has convened open Community Network meetings, sub group network meetings and the annual conference that has involved 355 attendances from 210 organisations. This does not include the board meetings.

In addition to the above, there are

- **CVS Peer Support Network** for anyone volunteering or working within the VCFSE Network, During the year, 224 people attended from 198 different organisations with 94 organisations joining the network for the 1st time during 2024-2025.
- **CVS Business Network** for anyone who has recently established a business whether as a sole trader, a small business or a social business (charity/social enterprise) to come together and network with the view of supporting each other.
- **CVS Community Volunteer Awards** – which brought together 465 attendees from 101 organisations to celebrate volunteering across Blackburn with Darwen.

In total, during the year, we have convened networks and events that have involved at least 1034 people from 509 organisations.

Community CVS is also actively involved in the following networks and partnerships:

People

- Care Network – being a founding member and supporting the charity to help vulnerable people lead independent lives

Prosperity

- Blackburn with Darwen Household Support / Anti-Poverty Network – which consists of the local authority and 12 VCFSE partners.
- Boost Lancashire: helping to promote entrepreneurship across Lancashire.
- Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub: helping to skills the labour market and support workforce development.

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- Through LACVS, and working with Resolve Poverty, we are supporting the creation of a Lancashire Anti-Poverty Network.

Planet

- CVS participates in the Climate Community Partnership.
- CVS is a keen supporter of the BwD Food Alliance with its vision to make BwD a Sustainable Food Place.

Participation

- BwD Digital Inclusion Network, led by Age UK BwD and involving over 20 participants from across the public and VCFSE Sectors.
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Volunteering for Health Partnership involving six VCFSE partners, working together alongside the local authorities, the ICB and local NHS trusts.

Bowel Cancer Screening Programme

Working alongside Blackpool NHS Foundation Trust, GPs across Lancashire and South Cumbria and charities and community groups supporting the most vulnerable in our community, our health promotion team has delivered the following during 2024-2025:

- Delivered 206 Call for Kit Clinics within GP practices located in deprived areas where there are a high number of non-responders (patients who have not returned a kit sample when requested).
- engaged with 4568 individual non-responders with 1402 in Blackburn with Darwen, 1313 in Greater Preston and 992 in Blackpool.
- Persuaded 1899 patients to attend a face to face session with a CVS Health Promotion Officer at a Call for a Kit Clinic at a low uptake GP surgery (731 in BwD; 436 in Blackpool; and 408 in Greater Preston). 1701 request a kit (90% of attendees).
- Persuaded 1026 people to agree to a telephone consultation with 839 requesting a kit by the end of the consultation (82% of consultees).
- Delivered 9 training sessions to 112 people (staff and volunteers) to raise awareness of bowel cancer.
- Spoke to 1194 people at health promotion events across Lancashire to raise awareness of bowel cancer and the call for a kit clinics.

We continue to work closely with University College London and UCLAN to evaluate the success of our interventions.

Play and Stay Teatime Activities (PASTA)

In autumn 2023, on behalf of public health, we brought together a partnership of IMO, two local primary schools, a community group and dieticians from East Lancashire NHS Hospitals Trust, to pilot a new approach to working with families with primary school age children living within our most deprived neighbourhoods to improve healthy eating and physical activity amongst these targeted populations in the hope of tackling both child poverty, poor health and obesity within these communities.

2024-2025, was the first full year of the pilot. We widened the partnership to include BwD Healthy Living, Accrington Road Community Centre and Youth Action and the pilot is due to end in July 2025 when a full evaluation will be completed.

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From the initial evidence completed during the early stages and evaluations of other programmes, in March 2025, the Public Health team decided that the pilot would not continue beyond this initial phase. They decided that it was best to take time to undertake a wider review of interventions. The learning from our pilot will feed into this wider review with the intention of improving provision within Blackburn with Darwen.

SEND and SENDIASS

During the year, we continue to work with families with children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, local schools and colleges, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the local integrated healthcare system, our team provides independent, impartial information, advice and support to parents and carers, and professionals across the public and VCFSE sectors.

The number of children and young people requiring help and the complexity of the support required continues to rise – which suggests there is a growing societal problem for the public sector and civil society, where we need to work together collaboratively to ensure our young population are not disadvantaged and can lead meaningful, fulfilling lives where they reach their full potential.

Pillar Three: Capacity Building, Development and Training - building the capabilities of individuals, organisations and communities to lead change.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BwD Communities Team

2024-2025, was the first full year of operation for our new communities team that was established to help grassroots community action across BwD. The team work closely to support community groups, community centres, community hubs and help residents to set up new groups especially within our most deprived neighbourhoods.

During the year we opened an office within Jubilee Tower Credit Union's building on Duckworth Street in Darwen Town Centre to improve our accessibility for Darwen based community groups, charities and social enterprises. The team helped groups to put everything in place to be able to bid for the BwD Community Fund, the Community Assets Fund and for other funding opportunities and ensure they were in a good place to manage those funds, govern their groups effectively and recruit and support volunteers. We will closely monitor progress and make changes where required.

BwD Community Fund

We continue to administer the **BwD Community Fund** on behalf of Brian Mercer Trust. During the year we held three rounds of the fund and approved grants as follows:

- R12 (June 24) – 16 grants approved worth £12,765.
- R13 (Sept 24) – 18 grants approved worth £16,699.
- R14 (Feb 25) – 11 grants approved worth £10,080
- Total Approved: 45 small grants worth £39,544.

The Community Fund supported the following 45 groups and organisations:

- Arise Restoration Centre
- Blackburn Allstars Majorettes
- Blackburn Foodbank
- Blackburn Goalball Club / Blackburn Blind Sports Association
- Blackburn Sea Cadets

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- BwD Diabetes Support Group
- BwD Youth Awareness Project
- Cherry Tree Cricket Club
- Childrens Literature Festivals
- Community Harmony CIC
- Community Enterprise Builds Lives Together
- Core Life
- DARE
- Darwen AFC
- Darwen Amateur Theatrical Society
- Darwen Community Helpers
- Darwen PRIDE
- Hungarian Welfare Association
- Immanuel Scouts
- I Pole
- Interpro Football Club
- Just Run for Today
- Kandaka
- Keep Fit with Kim
- Kiran Women's Group
- Lancashire Community Helpers CIC
- Neurodynamix CIC
- Newrad Fisheries Club
- No 1 Coffee Shop Community Hub CIC
- Offload North West
- Residents of Sunnyhurst Association
- Revidge Allotments Association
- Sabr and Shukr CIC
- Shama Group
- Sister 4 Sisters
- St Edwards Church Hall Play and Stay, Darwen
- St Georges Mill Hill Scouts
- St James Ashgrove Community Space, Darwen
- Talk Changes
- The Billy Project CIC
- The Contenders Boxing
- The Rooftop Bees, Cherry Tree Library

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- Their Stories
- Ukrainian Hub Brahma
- Women Well-Being Champions

Spark Recovery Collaborative - Community Assets Fund

Working with the Calico Group, Early Break, IMO, Red Rose Recovery, Roots Community, THOMAS and others, our BwD Communities Team manages the Community Assets Fund on behalf of the Spark Recovery Collaborative to help the recovery community to play a meaningful role within our communities. This is part of our Asset Based Community Development approach to involving communities in their own transformation.

During the year we distributed £31,040 via the Community Assets Fund on behalf of the Spark Recovery Collaborative to the following 16 groups and organisations:

- Arise Restoration Centre
- Community Kitchen
- Core Life
- Darwen Pride
- Just Run for Today
- Lancashire Community Helpers
- Offload North West
- Phoenix Hub
- Re Connection
- Red Rose Recovery
- Roots Sonic Fusion
- Secret Santa CIC
- Sons of Anxiety
- The Billy Project
- Willows Lodge Angling Club
- Word, Power, Collective



More generally we work across the Spark Recovery Collaborative and the wider community to help people in recovery from alcohol or substance misuse to become active in the wider community, volunteering, joining activities and community groups, etc.

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The Spark Recovery Collaborative and Community CVS takes an asset-based community development approach to help the individual's recovery journey and we work closely with the Roots Community to join and connect people in recovery to the wider community.

Infant Feeding Community Grants

Working with the Council's Family Hub teams, CVS held an infant feeding community grants pot to help local civil society groups to promote infant feeding to mothers within BwD. During the year we distributed 4 grants to the following organisations:

- Caritas Salford for their Maryvale project in Little Harwood
- Sabr and Shukr CIC
- Snowdrop Doula
- The Billy Project

Darwen Falls

Working with Age UK Blackburn and Care Network, Community CVS have been piloting activity in Darwen with the intention of reducing the number of older people having to visit the Accident and Emergency Department at East Lancashire NHS Hospitals Trust. Our role was to manage a small grants pot, which was distributed to the following Darwen groups:

- DARE
- Darwen Rotary Club
- URC Bowling Group
- Whitehall Bowling Club
- Whitehall Gardening Club



BUSINESS TRAINING CENTRE

Boost Lancashire: Flying Start Business Advice

From October 2023 to March 2025, our two qualified business advisors delivered business advice as part of Boost Lancashire's Flying Start Programme. During the contract – we provided business advice to 113 clients, who comprised individuals exploring new business ideas (58 pre start advice and support); and, to business start ups to businesses in their early years wanting to grow and expand their business (55 existing businesses provided with business advice and support). Businesses – included sole traders, private businesses and social enterprises and spanned several sectors – especially health, the creative industries and manufacturing. The majority of clients were based in Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn and Pendle. In terms of outcomes, we helped the businesses as follows:

- To create 14 new jobs and safeguard 1 existing job;
- 9 new businesses were supported to launch and start trading;

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- 11 existing early stage (start ups) reported increased revenues following support;
- Existing businesses were supported to:
- Improve their productivity: 2 businesses
- Introduce new improved products or services: 11 businesses
- adopt new to the firm technologies or processes: 8 businesses

Bootcamp Skills: Aspiring Leaders in Health and Social Care

During 2024-2025, we delivered our 10 week Bootcamp Skills training programme for Aspiring Leaders in Health and Social Care to 65 people, which comprised 56 co-funded places for employees of small to medium sized enterprises and 9 independent learners.

Safeguarding and Mental Health Training

We facilitated training sessions on safeguarding and mental health training for 104 learners from 82 organisations.

Training for Volunteers and Volunteer Managers

During the year, our dedicated trainer supporting volunteers and volunteer managers delivered 80 training sessions to 322 people from across the VCFSE Sector in Blackburn with Darwen and Preston.

Within Blackburn with Darwen (41 sessions to 124 people)

- Generic training for volunteers: 20 sessions to 55 people.
- training for recovery support volunteers: 5 sessions to 36 people.
- bespoke training for volunteers: no requests this year.
- Training for volunteer managers: 4 sessions to 16 people.
- Training linked to the Quality Mark: 12 sessions to 17 people.
- Trustee Training: no training this year.

Within Preston (39 sessions to 198 people)

- Generic training for volunteers: 12 sessions to 26 people.
- bespoke training for volunteers: 3 sessions for 49 people.
- Step into Volunteering: 2 sessions to 9 people.
- Training for volunteer managers: 5 sessions to 45 people.
- Training linked to the Quality Mark: 15 sessions to 41 people.
- Trustee Training: 2 sessions to 28 people.

The total number of people being trained

Throughout the year, we delivered over 120 training sessions to 603 people, the vast majority of whom were staff or volunteers from civil society organisations.

Pillar Four: Volunteering - creating an effective volunteer eco-system to support our communities.

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STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERING

In July 2024, we were notified that we are 1 of 12 partnerships nationally to be successful in developing a Volunteering for Health programme for Lancashire and South Cumbria. Central Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust Charity is the lead body with the Volunteers Centres across Lancashire and Cumbria exploring ways to embed volunteering best practice within our systems to promote health and well-being at the local place level across the system. Spring North are playing a supportive role. From July 2024 to March 2025 we entered a development phase to set up the programme and our development plan was formally signed off in March 2025 ready for a 01st April 2025 start.

We plan to develop and roll out a consistent approach to promoting, recruiting, training and supporting volunteer health champions across the integrated health system and to provide quality volunteer infrastructure support to volunteer involving organisations that use volunteers within the integrated health system. This initiative aims to embed volunteering within our health and social care system and support VCFSE and public sector organisations more widely to use the power of volunteering to tackle the social determinants of health and well-being.

PROMOTION AND VOICE OF VOLUNTEERING

We firmly believe that volunteering should be a vital part of everyone's life, both enriching your own life and helping you achieve your full potential, but also ensuring that you realise that you are part of a community and need to contribute to its health and vitality so that the community can equally reach its potential.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2024

Our Community Volunteer Awards, which we put on in partnership with the local authority and 22 sponsors, continue to go from strength to strength. We received over one thousand nominations from residents and organisations across Blackburn with Darwen for the 20 awards.

The winners for 2024 are as follows:-

Health and Well Being Award

Individual - Sahil Usman
Group - Blackburn Foodbank

Environment Award

Individual - Wayne Dixon
Group - Little Potting Club

Grassroots Community Action Award

Individual - Samantha Nye
Group - The Roots Community

Prosperity, Learning and Employment Award

Individual - Sandy Woods
Group - Offload North West

Young People's Award

Individual - Emma Evans
Group - Blackburn with Darwen Youth Darts Academy

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Culture, Leisure and Sporting Life Award

Individual - Keith Brunt
Group - Mill Hill Events Committee

Lindsay Dunn Award (for supporting people with complex needs)

Individual - Muazz Nadat
Group - Phoenix Hub

Renee Black Award (for supporting community cohesion)

Neurodynamix CIC

Community Involvement Award Good Neighbour Award

Darwen Community Helpers Vicky Kelly

Volunteer of the Year Award Lifetime Achievement Award

Richard Croasdale Judith Houghton

CVS Special Award for Outstanding Service

Chris Seddon.

Thanks go to our 22 sponsors (below). Without their support we could not put on this important event.

- Active Lancashire
- Age UK Blackburn with Darwen
- BAM
- Blackburn College
- Blackburn Rovers Community Trust
- Blackburn Rovers FC
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackburn with Darwen Carers Service
- Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Forum
- Chubb
- Deaf Village North West CIC
- East Lancashire Hospice
- Lancashire Telegraph
- PM & M Accountants
- Newground Together
- Room to Reward
- Suez
- The Calico Group
- The Wish Centre

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- UCO – Uniting Communities Organisation
- Voice
- WEPA

GOOD PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

We are developing a portfolio of different training provision aimed at promoting good practice for volunteers or volunteer managers/volunteer involving organisations. Each session normally takes about 3 ½ hours.

During the year, this involved the following:

- **Bespoke Volunteer Training:** which is customized to the needs of the volunteers within a particular organisation or group of organisations who work closely together. We have delivered training for volunteers on equality, diversity and inclusion as one example.
- **Generic volunteer training:** which is training focused on helping to build the confidence and skills of volunteers, helping them to understand about volunteer roles, etc.
- **Recovery Support Volunteer Training:** which is training for volunteers who are supporting people who are recovering from alcohol or substance misuse.
- **Step into Volunteering:** an introductory basic session for potential volunteers to learn about volunteering and the benefits it can bring to help you achieve your goals.
- **Trustee Training:** newly created this year – it is aimed at both new trustees to prepare them for their new role or existing trustees – who might just want a refresher or want to share their learning and experiences with other trustees both new and old.
- **Quality Mark Training:** this involves 3 sessions and successful completion of the training and the work linked to the training will lead to the organization receiving quality mark certification.
- **Volunteer Managers Training:** this is the 2nd of the 3 Quality Mark Training, but is relevant to volunteer managers from across the public or VCFSE Sectors, who might not want to commit to the full 3 quality mark training sessions or might not want to pursue the quality mark.

PRESTON VOLUNTEERS

2024-2025 was the first full year of Preston Volunteers, the new Volunteer Centre based in Preston that Community CVS has set up. During the year we have delivered the following:

- **Voice of Volunteering:** engaging with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations at 135 events throughout the year, listening to the voice of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations as well as supporting them in whatever way we can.
- **Good Practice Development:** 61 people regularly attending Preston Volunteers Forum, which meets on a quarterly basis. Delivered 34 sessions to 144 people on volunteering good practice whether for individuals or organisations. 7 organisations achieve the Valuing Volunteers Quality Mark.
- **Promoting and Creating Volunteering Opportunities:** 476 volunteer opportunities promoted on Volunteer Plus on behalf of Volunteer Involving Organisations. Promoted Preston Community Fund and helped 43 VCFSE organisations to submit applications worth £288,000 that would boost and create volunteering opportunities for local residents.
- **Volunteer Brokerage:** 694 Preston residents registered on Volunteer Plus and accessing support to pursue volunteering opportunities. Delivering weekly volunteer 'drop ins' from Tuesday to Thursday at Glovers Court, Fedcap Preston and Preston Gateway Job Centre. 188 groups and services have been supported to find volunteers.

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Feedback on the Valuing Volunteers Quality Mark

"Thank you all so much for your incredible support. Without the training and the funding that helped us build our capacity and put the right processes in place, we wouldn't be where we are now with our volunteer programme."

Successful Organisation
Valuing Volunteers Quality Mark

CHIP IN PARTNERSHIP


Led by the Bureau Centre for the Arts, supported by the local authority, with Community CVS employing the core team and co-ordinating the work of the partnership, the BwD Chip In Partnership was one of 19 partnerships nationally piloting a Volunteering Futures programme. Our programme focuses on mentoring young adults aged 16 to 30 years old to volunteer within the arts & culture, heritage, sports & the environment. We delivered it with 19 partners across the creative and civil society sectors. We were the only partnership in the North West. The two-year pilot programme finished in September 2024 and was externally evaluated by **The Evaluator**.

A summary of their findings is included below:

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Chip in was a two-year volunteer partnership project for young people aged 16-30. Chip in is a partnership of the Bureau Centre of the Arts, Community CVS, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the creative sector across Blackburn with Darwen.




"I can help the young people by volunteering because I know how they feel, I know what position they're in and what it feels like. I'm on their level, I've been in their shoes at that point in their life, where they are going through education and they are struggling, so, I just help as much as I can." **Volunteer Quote**

330 Volunteers Recruited

There were 19 delivery partners - providing opportunities in sports, heritage, arts, community and more!


61% of volunteers were from the most deprived areas in the UK

Chip In improves wellbeing, on average people had a 4 point bump in wellbeing!




The project reached 50% male, and 47% female volunteers. 20% were disabled.

31% of volunteers had three or more intersectionality barriers



"I think I'm better at socialising. You know from when I left Uni in 2019 and then obviously COVID happened, so I didn't really socialise with anyone, so I just didn't really have that skill anymore. So yeah, I think being able to talk to people again". **Volunteer Quote**


40% of volunteers were White and 42% were from the Global Majority.



89% of volunteers learned new skills

100% improved their confidence

94% felt others would benefit from mentoring



"Volunteering gives you new skills to mention in CVs and cover letters so there's a higher chance of company's accepting your applications'." **Volunteer Quote**

In December 2024, Blackburn with Darwen Council secured a place partnership grant of £760,000 from the Arts Council to invest in the creative sector locally. Part of the grant, will be used to continue investing in the BwD Chip in Partnership and developing its approach to mentoring and volunteering over the next two years (2025-2027).

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Pillar One: Leadership and Advocacy - enabling change for the things that matter to our communities

Working with the VCFSE Sector and public sector partners to establish **Blackburn with Darwen Community Network** as the voice of VCFSE Sector to lead and advocate for change on the things that

1. matter to our communities and establish **action groups, forums and networks** to build the collaborations and partnerships that will lead change around the economy, health, climate change, and much more. For example, by

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- Advocating for and Championing the creation of a civil society covenant within Blackburn with Darwen
 - Leading the state of the sector research across BwD and leading the community insight work into our most deprived neighbourhoods.
 - leading collaborations to attract investment and resources to implement the priorities identified within the 6P VCFSE Strategy for Blackburn with Darwen
- Working through **LACVS to engage stakeholders at the Lancashire level** to develop, refresh and deliver the **VCFSE Manifesto for Lancashire** leading change at the sub-regional level. Providing support to introduced new programmes at the sub regional level and creating new structures to interface with the Lancashire County Combined Authority/Strategic Authority, the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner and other Lancashire wide bodies such as the University of Lancashire, etc. During 2025-2026, we plan to:
2.
 - Explore the potential creation of a Lancashire Civil Society Board and the potential for creating a Lancashire wide Civil Society Covenant.
 - Bid to be a pilot area for the You Decide Grant programme across Lancashire
 - collaborate with HE and research institutions to improve our understanding of the things that matter to our communities.
 3. Working to support the work of the **Lancashire and South Cumbria VCFSE Alliance** to provide the interface between the VCFSE Sector and the integrated health system, which operates across Lancashire and South Cumbria. During 2025-2026, we plan to:
 - Lead state of the sector research to better understand the needs of the sector across Lancashire and Cumbria
 - Work with Volunteering for Health partners to establish visions and strategies for volunteering across the health system
 - Work with LACVS partners to advocate for more resources to support VCFSE groups to improve the health and wellbeing of residents across Lancashire.
 4. Working with **Voluntary Sector North West** (regionally) and **NAVCA** (nationally) to advocate for change at the regional and national levels. Community CVS is a part of a regional and national movement pushing for positive change for our communities and for civil society. The Community CVS sits on the boards for VSNW and NAVCA. During 2025-2026, we plan to:
 - Working with VSNW and collaborating with local infrastructure partners across the North West and the North of England to pilot new approaches that work for our places and sub regions.
 - Work with NAVCA, its members and New Philanthropy Capital to develop and pilot a new impact framework for infrastructure bodies.
 - Work with partners at the regional and national levels to improve the quality of data and evidence we have available on the sector and its contributions.

Pillar Two: Collaborations and Partnerships - creating opportunities to collaborate to tackle the challenges we face.

Network Development and Growth

Linked to **Blackburn with Darwen Community Network** and/or supported by **CVS** during 2025-2026, we plan to further develop the action groups and networks taking forward collaborative work around the 6Ps. The networks in various stages of development are:

People

- Disabilities Network

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- Men's Network
- Women's Network

Prosperity

- CVS Business Network
- Resilience Network

Planet

- Climate Action Network

Peace

- Connected Communities Network
- Interfaith Forum

Participation

- Digital Inclusion Network
- Volunteering Partnership

Place

- Darwen: set up the Darwen Community Forum and explore how to roll out the development to Blackburn East, Blackburn West and Blackburn North
- Housing and Homelessness Network
- Neighbourhood Community Action

Partnership Development

VCFSE Partnership Structures: to develop and deepen our collaborations and partnerships working with BwD Community Network, LACVS, Lancashire and South Cumbria VCFSE Alliance, VSNW and NAVCA and many more.

Climate Change Community and the Climate Action Network: working with the climate change community across the public, commercial and VCFSE Sectors and creating a climate action network to take forward recommendations from the People's Jury on Climate Change. We will look to widen awareness, education and participation by developing new volunteer programmes to mobilise our communities and developing carbon literacy across our communities.

Partnerships with GPs, the NHS, education and social care

Bowel Cancer Screening Programme Health Promotion Collaboration: working with Blackpool NHS Teaching Foundation Trust, local GPs, universities and others to deliver call for a kit clinics and volunteer health promotion activity across Lancashire to increase awareness and kit completions amongst targeted populations. During the forthcoming year, we will pilot new approaches for engaging with the 50-60 year cohort to raise awareness of the bowel cancer screening programme and increase response rates for kit completions.

Health Conditions: we will explore opportunities to develop community solutions to support residents with a wide variety of health conditions. For example, working with Spring North on Cancer Ambassador Hubs or working with partners on conditions such as COPD, dental hygiene, frailty, food & healthy eating, men's health, physical activity, bereavement & suicide prevention, etc.

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Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities, we will work with children, young people and families, the local authority, local schools and colleges, the health system and the VCFSE Sector to improve the lives of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. We will build upon our long history of delivering SENDIASS and its predecessor programmes and look to co-ordinate partnership approaches to meet other identified needs locally.

Spark Recovery Collaborative: working with people in recovery from alcohol or substance misuse, the local authority, Spark Recovery Collaborative partners, and wider partners within the VCFSE Sector, public sector and commercial sectors to build community assets to make the recovery community and wider community more resilient in supporting people to recover from addictions and play a meaningful active role within their communities.

Pillar Three: Capacity Building, Development and Training - building the capabilities of individuals, organisations and communities to lead change.

Capacity Building and Community Development

Whether it is communities of place or communities of identity, interest and/or circumstances we need to help local communities to develop their responses to what matters to them. We need to co-produce with them the pathways and solutions that meet their needs and aspirations. We will work with partners, to develop new approaches to **developing, mobilising and organising communities** whether these are geographically based communities located within deprived areas or communities of circumstance where people come together to share their lived experience and support each other such as the recovery community from alcohol or substance misuse, mental health recovery community, people with experience of the criminal justice system, the homeless, victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse, veterans, the asylum seeker and refugee community, people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, long term health conditions, etc.

Community Grants

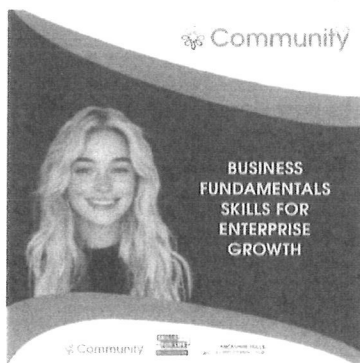
Continue to develop our relationships with local authorities, charitable trusts, the NHS and other commissioners and funders to widen the range of grants we can help them distribute to the VCFSE Sector.

Economic Development

Developing our thinking around new economic models that develop the role of civil society / the social economy as part of the foundational economy and creating new charities and social enterprises to meet gaps in provision against the 6P priorities.

Organisational Development and Practical Support

Developing the ways we can provide practical support to **support organisational development and growth** through business advice, coaching and mentoring, offering support through community accountancy, or help with staff and volunteer recruitment, etc.



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Training and Workforce Development

The **CVS Business Training Centre** is now 5 years old. We aspire to be the 'go to' partner for leadership and management training for the VCFSE Sector and small businesses across the sectors we support. We will

- Continue to develop our growing reputation in leadership and management training – especially focused on skilling population groups which are under-represented in leadership positions.
- Focus on industrial sectors where the VCFSE Sector is strongly represented – health economy; business fundamentals; creative industries; climate change and the environment; etc...
- Focus on flexible delivery in bitesize chunks delivering customise bespoke training and accredited units from the range of qualifications we deliver on behalf of CMI, NCFE and RSPH.
- developing our commercial training offer and our training provision to support the delivery of the 6Ps (for example Carbon Literacy training to support the Planet priority).

Pillar Four: Volunteering - creating an effective volunteer eco-system to support our communities.

Strategic Development of Volunteering

Building strong volunteering infrastructure across Lancashire and ensuring there is a vibrant volunteer eco-system at the place level within Blackburn with Darwen and other communities we serve. A key part of this is to develop visions and strategies for volunteering at the place level. We will lead on developing a shared platform for volunteering and support to the VCFSE Sector across Lancashire and South Cumbria. Within those visions and strategies to continue to advocate for the use volunteering as a stepping-stone towards employment and better health and wellbeing and as a way of supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage or other forms of disadvantage to develop their confidence, skills and experience to improve their life opportunities.

Promotion of and Voice of Volunteering

During the forthcoming year, we will be engaging widely with volunteers, volunteer managers and volunteer involving organisations to develop the vision and strategies for volunteering with Community CVS being the co-ordinating voice to champion and celebrate volunteering.

A key part of celebrating and raising the profile of volunteering is the annual Community Volunteer Awards that Community CVS co-ordinate on behalf of the local authority, VCFSE Sector and our sponsors. During the year, we will be moving the awards away from its home at King George's Hall (whilst restoration work is completed) and will be moving to Ewood Park. We are also moving our awards to embrace the 6P framework – which we are using to highlight everything that the VCFSE Sector does.

Good Practice Development

Continue the development of local **volunteer quality standards, good practice guides, volunteer manager training programmes, training programmes for trustees and various champion roles** and other resources to improve the quality of volunteer experiences and rolling them out to more areas across Lancashire.

Creation and Promotion of Volunteering Opportunities

To work with partners, to create new volunteer opportunities that meet local needs. For example, past and current examples, we are working with BwD Chip in Partnership to create volunteering opportunities for young people and all ages within the arts, culture and creative industries or working with the Spark Recovery Collaborative to create volunteering opportunities for people in recovery from alcohol or substance misuse.

Going forward we are developing new volunteering opportunities for Bowel Cancer Champions, Cancer Ambassadors – but equally it could be to support any long-term physical or mental health condition. Equally it can apply to any of the 6Ps and can apply to digital inclusion, climate change, working with families, etc. We will be looking at ways to embed the development of new volunteering opportunities into everything we do.

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Part of the CVS is to work with partners across the system to create new volunteering opportunities that help to address local needs but also create worthwhile meaningful opportunities that benefit the volunteer.

Brokerage

In terms of brokering relationships between residents and the multitude of volunteering opportunities that exist within the local community, we are looking to developing more on-line resources to make it easier for residents to find the opportunities they want to pursue.

THANK YOU

A BIG Thank you to everyone who supports us

We would like to thank our commissioners, grant funders, sponsors, public sector, VCFSE Sector and Private Sector partners.

Commissioners, Grant Funders and Partners

- Arts Council
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackburn with Darwen Community Network
- Boost Lancashire
- Brian Mercer Trust
- Eric Wright Charitable Trust
- Lancashire Association of Councils for Voluntary Service – LACVS
- Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale CVS
- Hyndburn & Ribble Valley CVS
- Inclusive North (formerly Lancashire BME Network)
- Lancaster District CVS
- Preston Community Network
- Volunteer Centre Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde
- West Lancashire CVS
- Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub
- National Lottery Community Fund
- NAVCA
- NHS
- Blackpool NHS Teaching Hospitals Trust
- Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Integrated Care Board and Lancashire and South Cumbria VCFSE Alliance
- Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust Charity
- NHS England
- Preston City Council
- Spark Recovery Collaborative
- Calico Group,

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- Early Break,
- IMO,
- Red Rose Recovery Lancashire,
- Roots Community
- Spring North
- Voluntary Sector North West

Financial review

The total income for the year was £1,090,404 (2024: £1,709,651) and expenditure £1,313,258 (2024: £1,515,374), leaving a net deficit of £222,854 (2024: £194,277).

Unrestricted income for the year totalled £1,047,916 (2024: £892,066) and expenditure amounted to £1,206,747 (2024: £576,025), resulting in a net deficit on unrestricted funds of £158,831 (2024: Net surplus of £316,041). A transfer was made from the restricted funds to the unrestricted funds, increasing the overall net deficit on the unrestricted funds to £165,780 (2024: Surplus of £263,007), and reducing the carried forward balance to £1,090,988 (2024: £1,256,768).

Restricted income of £42,488 (2024: £817,585) was received in the year. Expenditure incurred and charged against restricted income funds amounted to £106,511 (2024: £939,349), leaving a net surplus on the restricted funds of £64,023 (2024: £121,764). After the transfer noted above, there was a net deficit on the restricted funds of £57,074 (2024: £68,730), resulting in a carried forward balance of £314,072 (2024: £374,146).

Policy on reserves

Community CVS aims to hold free reserves of between 3 and 6 months of the resources expended on the core costs of the charity excluding funding which is primarily passed directly on in grants and specific service level agreements. This will enable current activities and liabilities to be met in the event of a significant drop in funding. The free reserves amount to £474k at the year end.

The CVS Board of Trustees recognise the good progress that is being made in building our reserves and will look to strengthen them during the forthcoming year.

At the year end the following designated funds are held:

Strategic Investment Fund - £250,000 - set aside for future recruitment of senior staff

Business Continuity - £150,000 - set aside to cover potential redundancy costs for changes in operations

Buildings Fund - £100,000 - for future capital works on the Boulevard Centre and the Community Hub

Restricted funds at the year end:

Buildings- £317,072 - Boulevard Centre acquisition and works undertaken and funded in previous years less impairment less secured mortgage.

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Principal funding sources

During the period, the principal funding was received from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, the NHS and European Social Fund to undertake charitable activities, which are described in the Review of Activities. The European Social Fund grants are due to end on the 31st December 2023. As part of the Strategic Review process, the Senior Management Team are devising strategies, in consultation with staff, and to put before the CVS Board of Trustees for approval to replace these funding sources at the appropriate level to undertake future charitable activities that are linked to our strategy going forward.

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each trustee has taken steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information. The trustees confirm that there is no relevant information that they know of and of which they know the auditor is unaware.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 15 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



.....
M T Sidat *MBE*
Trustee

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' 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. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they 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 its 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 apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can 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. They 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.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

**Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025
(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)**

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Income from:							
Charitable activities	4	1,047,890	42,488	1,090,378	892,018	817,585	1,709,603
Investment income	5	26	-	26	48	-	48
Total income		<u>1,047,916</u>	<u>42,488</u>	<u>1,090,404</u>	<u>892,066</u>	<u>817,585</u>	<u>1,709,651</u>
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	(1,206,747)	(106,511)	(1,313,258)	(576,025)	(939,349)	(1,515,374)
Total expenditure		<u>(1,206,747)</u>	<u>(106,511)</u>	<u>(1,313,258)</u>	<u>(576,025)</u>	<u>(939,349)</u>	<u>(1,515,374)</u>
Net (expenditure)/income		(158,831)	(64,023)	(222,854)	316,041	(121,764)	194,277
Transfers between funds		(6,949)	6,949	-	(53,034)	53,034	-
Net movement in funds		(165,780)	(57,074)	(222,854)	263,007	(68,730)	194,277
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		1,256,768	374,146	1,630,914	993,761	442,876	1,436,637
Total funds carried forward	17	<u>1,090,988</u>	<u>317,072</u>	<u>1,408,060</u>	<u>1,256,768</u>	<u>374,146</u>	<u>1,630,914</u>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.
The funds breakdown for 2024 is shown in note 17.

The notes on pages 38 to 48 form an integral part of these financial statements.
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Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

**(Registration number: 02668971)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025**

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	13	960,000	980,000
Current assets			
Debtors	14	314,672	138,516
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>687,974</u>	<u>1,062,590</u>
		1,002,646	1,201,106
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(111,638)</u>	<u>(85,516)</u>
Net current assets		<u>891,008</u>	<u>1,115,590</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		1,851,008	2,095,590
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	16	<u>(442,948)</u>	<u>(464,676)</u>
Net assets		<u>1,408,060</u>	<u>1,630,914</u>
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds		317,072	374,146
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>1,090,988</u>	<u>1,256,768</u>
Total funds	17	<u>1,408,060</u>	<u>1,630,914</u>

The financial statements on pages 35 to 48 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 15 December 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



 M T Sidat MBE
 Trustee

The notes on pages 38 to 48 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service
Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (expenditure)/income		(222,854)	194,277
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation		20,000	20,000
Investment income	5	<u>(26)</u>	<u>(48)</u>
		(202,880)	214,229
Working capital adjustments			
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	14	(176,156)	403,439
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	15	<u>26,122</u>	<u>(135,997)</u>
Net cash flows from operating activities		(352,914)	481,671
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	26	48
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of loans and borrowings	15	<u>(21,728)</u>	<u>(15,504)</u>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		(374,616)	466,215
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		<u>1,062,590</u>	<u>596,375</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		<u><u>687,974</u></u>	<u><u>1,062,590</u></u>

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is:

Boulevard Centre
Cathedral Quarter
Blackburn
BB1 1EZ

These financial statements were authorised for issue by the trustees on 15 December 2025.

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern nor any significant areas of uncertainty that affect the carrying value of assets held by the charity.

Income

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Governance costs

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees meetings and reimbursed expenses.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Buildings	2% per annum straight line basis

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Borrowings

Interest-bearing borrowings are initially recorded at fair value, net of transaction costs. Interest-bearing borrowings are subsequently carried at amortised cost, with the difference between the proceeds, net of transaction costs, and the amount due on redemption being recognised as a charge to the Statement of Financial Activities over the period of the relevant borrowing.

Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and similar charges.

Borrowings are classified as current liabilities unless the charity has an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting date.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds set aside for specific purposes at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

3 Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

Judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the directors are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount 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 where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both periods.

Key sources of estimation uncertainty

The estimates and assumptions which have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities are as follows.

Depreciation

The depreciation expense is the recognition of the decline in the value of the asset and allocation of the cost of the asset over the periods in which the asset will be used. Judgements are made as to the estimated useful life of the assets. These judgements are regularly reviewed to reflect the changing environment.

Impairment of fixed assets

The charity assesses the impairment of tangible fixed assets subject to depreciation whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value may not be recoverable. These judgments are regularly reviewed to reflect the changing environment.

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Contracts and grants	706,784	42,488	749,272	1,559,700
Rental income	80,377	-	80,377	90,575
Training and miscellaneous income	260,729	-	260,729	59,328
	<u>1,047,890</u>	<u>42,488</u>	<u>1,090,378</u>	<u>1,709,603</u>

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	<u>26</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>48</u>

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Operational costs, payments to partners		270,037	-	270,037	471,112
Depreciation		-	20,000	20,000	20,000
Grants paid		36,540	49,437	85,977	50,761
Staff costs		896,170	-	896,170	932,471
Governance costs	7	4,000	-	4,000	3,500
Bank loan interest		-	37,074	37,074	37,530
		<u>1,206,747</u>	<u>106,511</u>	<u>1,313,258</u>	<u>1,515,374</u>

Support costs including staff costs amounted to £100,000 in the year.

7 Analysis of governance and support costs

Governance costs

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Audit fees			
Audit of the financial statements	4,000	4,000	3,500
	<u>4,000</u>	<u>4,000</u>	<u>3,500</u>

8 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net (outgoing)/incoming resources for the year include:

	2025 £	2024 £
Audit fees	<u>4,000</u>	<u>3,500</u>

9 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

10 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	779,878	807,669
Social security costs	66,376	69,434
Pension costs	49,916	55,368
	<u>896,170</u>	<u>932,471</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2025 No	2024 No
Charitable activities	<u>30</u>	<u>35</u>

During the year, the charity made redundancy and/or termination payments which totalled £Nil (2024 - £11,078).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £185,496 (2024 - £210,173).

11 Auditors' remuneration

	2025 £	2024 £
Audit of the financial statements	<u>4,000</u>	<u>3,500</u>

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

12 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Land and buildings £	Furniture and equipment £	Total £
Cost/Valuation			
At 1 April 2024	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>1,195,741</u>	<u>2,195,741</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>1,195,741</u>	<u>2,195,741</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2024	20,000	1,195,741	1,215,741
Charge for the year	<u>20,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>20,000</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>40,000</u>	<u>1,195,741</u>	<u>1,235,741</u>
Net book value			
At 31 March 2025	<u>960,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>960,000</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>980,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>980,000</u>

Revaluation

The Land and buildings were revalued on 31 March 2023 by an independent valuer.

14 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	263,474	68,251
Prepayments	9,131	9,432
Accrued income	38,343	59,973
Other debtors	<u>3,724</u>	<u>860</u>
	<u>314,672</u>	<u>138,516</u>

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank loans	24,000	24,000
Trade creditors	8,061	18,288
VAT repayable	23,178	-
Other creditors	5,061	-
Accruals	<u>51,338</u>	<u>43,228</u>
	<u><u>111,638</u></u>	<u><u>85,516</u></u>

Creditors due within one year includes the following liabilities, on which security has been given by the charity:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank loan - Barclays Bank	<u>24,000</u>	<u>24,000</u>

The bank loan is secured on the properties owned by the charity.

16 Creditors: amounts falling due after one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank loans	<u>442,948</u>	<u>464,676</u>

Creditors amounts falling due after more than one year includes the following liabilities, on which security has been given by the charity:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank loan - Barclays Bank	<u>442,948</u>	<u>464,676</u>

The bank loan is secured on the properties owned by the charity.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

17 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
<i>General</i>					
General Funds	639,590	1,047,916	(1,206,747)	(6,949)	473,810
<i>Designated</i>					
Strategic Investment Fund	250,000	-	-	-	250,000
Business Continuity	150,000	-	-	-	150,000
Buildings fund	100,000	-	-	-	100,000
Revaluation reserve	117,178	-	-	-	117,178
	<u>617,178</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>617,178</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>1,256,768</u>	<u>1,047,916</u>	<u>(1,206,747)</u>	<u>(6,949)</u>	<u>1,090,988</u>
Restricted funds					
Buildings	374,146	-	(57,074)	-	317,072
Brian Mercer Charitable Trust	-	42,488	(49,437)	6,949	-
	<u>374,146</u>	<u>42,488</u>	<u>(106,511)</u>	<u>6,949</u>	<u>317,072</u>
Total funds	<u>1,630,914</u>	<u>1,090,404</u>	<u>(1,313,258)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,408,060</u>

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
<i>General</i>					
General Funds	594,977	892,066	(576,025)	(271,428)	639,590
<i>Designated</i>					
Strategic Investment Fund	101,436	-	-	148,564	250,000
Business Continuity	130,170	-	-	19,830	150,000
Buildings Fund	50,000	-	-	50,000	100,000
Revaluation reserve	117,178	-	-	-	117,178
	<u>398,784</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>218,394</u>	<u>617,178</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>993,761</u>	<u>892,066</u>	<u>(576,025)</u>	<u>(53,034)</u>	<u>1,256,768</u>
Restricted funds					
Buildings	378,642	-	(57,530)	53,034	374,146
ESF – Action for Jobs	-	240,600	(240,600)	-	-
ESF – Upskilling	64,234	539,552	(603,786)	-	-
Brian Mercer Charitable Trust	-	37,433	(37,433)	-	-
	<u>442,876</u>	<u>817,585</u>	<u>(939,349)</u>	<u>53,034</u>	<u>374,146</u>
Total funds	<u>1,436,637</u>	<u>1,709,651</u>	<u>(1,515,374)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,630,914</u>

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Total funds at
	General	Designated		31 March
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	117,178	842,822	960,000
Current assets	502,646	500,000	-	1,002,646
Current liabilities	(28,836)	-	(82,802)	(111,638)
Creditors over 1 year	-	-	(442,948)	(442,948)
Total net assets	473,810	617,178	317,072	1,408,060

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Total funds at
	General	Designated		31 March
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	117,178	862,822	980,000
Current assets	698,118	500,000	2,988	1,201,106
Current liabilities	(58,528)	-	(26,988)	(85,516)
Creditors over 1 year	-	-	(464,676)	(464,676)
Total net assets	639,590	617,178	374,146	1,630,914

19 Related party transactions

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service is a corporate trustee of three charitable incorporated organisations, Blackburn Community Foundation, Darwen Community Foundation and Neighbourhood Community Action. During the financial year, the following transactions were undertaken between the organisations: Blackburn Community Foundation - Nil (2024 £nil); Darwen Community Foundation received a donation of £100 (2024 - £100); Neighbourhood Community Action £nil (2024 - £Nil). During the year, Community CVS received a grant of £50,000 contribution towards working with community groups within our most deprived neighbourhoods from Neighbourhood Community Action. The three charitable incorporated organisations are managed at arms' length of Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service.

Garth Hodgkinson, CEO of Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service is also a trustee and/or a director of Blackburn Community Foundation, Darwen Community Foundation and Lancashire Association of Councils for Voluntary Service. received payments for support of Lancashire Association of Councils for Voluntary Service for their Lancashire LOCAL project worth £12,560 (2024 £5,420).

During the previous year 2023-2024, Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service received Kickstart payments for the young people we have supported from Lancashire Association of Councils for Voluntary Service totalling £3,961.

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising Charities SORP - FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 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 responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

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

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

Other information

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

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

Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Blackburn with Darwen Council for Voluntary Service

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matter 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 for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the 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 31), the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

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- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures on material balances for which robust, substantive analytical procedures have been undertaken to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: 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 trustees, 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 charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



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Mark R Heaton FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of KM, Statutory Auditor

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15 December 2025

