social link
where being you counts

Annual Report & Financial Statements

2025/26

For the year ending 31st March 2026

Turning disabilities into abilities

Charitable incorporated organisation 1158743



Constitution

Social Link was formed on 14th August 2014 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 1st October 2014 with the Charity Commission. Its purpose is to provide support, practical advice, and social and recreational facilities for adults with learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire.

A revised Constitution, featuring provisions for proxy voting and virtual meetings, was approved by the Board and voting members in July 2021. No further changes have been made to the Constitution since that date.

An introduction by Wendy Dunn, CEO

I am pleased to present our 2025/2026 Annual Report, which highlights the Charity's many, many, many activities over the past year and provides a clear summary of our current financial position.

In this report:

- **Beneficiaries** refers to those who attend our day and evening projects.
- **Members** refers to you—our supporters—who attend the AGM.
- **The Team** refers to those who work in support of our Beneficiaries.

With a steadfast focus on progress, our team have further developed our services this year, ensuring our Beneficiaries continue to flourish in wellbeing, social inclusion, confidence, and healthy relationships online. We also invested in the Team's development by providing a new online training portal to complement the face-to-face training already undertaken. The portal provides a complete suite of training courses to equip the team for all potential challenges and emergencies.

I have been actively pursuing partnership working with Buckinghamshire Council, to further the effective development of their newly formed transitions service and to help bridge any gaps identified, ensuring a more seamless and responsive experience for those accessing support. Our experience has shown that a clear pathway from education into adulthood can make a real difference for our Beneficiaries.

I am also delighted to report that the year ended in a positive position financially and the Charity, Beneficiaries and Team continue to flourish.

A statement from Claire Wheeler, Chair of the Board

As insiders at Social Link, the Board and I see firsthand the amount of work that is needed in order for the charity to operate on daily basis but also the additional efforts needed to drive the charity forward. Following the team engagement survey which was carried out last year, we acted upon feedback received regarding Trustee visibility and engagement. Each board member has since spent time across

the numerous Social Link services and quite literally got 'stuck in'. While we knew this would help us make informed governance decisions for the charity, we ourselves also feel much more connected to the Beneficiaries and Team members.

Each person in this organisation has a role to play and together with the contributions and passion of our Beneficiaries we have a service to be proud of. I think you will see when reading this annual report that there is a lot of joy, fun and cooperation at Social Link across all services and locations. As a Board we are measured against the strategic goals, but we are determined to keep sight of the needs of our Beneficiaries and ensuring that they enjoy their time at Social Link and have the chance to reach their full potential.

Governance and Board membership

The Social Link Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance of the Charity. This includes ensuring compliance with the constitution and charity law, setting long-term strategy, and holding the CEO and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) accountable for the Charity's performance including; Beneficiary experience, safeguarding, health and safety, financial management, risk identification and legal compliance.

This year we have seen changes to the composition of the Board. In July, Carole Harvey stepped down from the role of Treasurer and handed the mantle to fellow Trustee Chris Thorn. Carole's career in accountancy meant that she was always able to provide advice, insight and a financial viewpoint in decision making, so we would like to sincerely thank her for her time, expertise and common-sense approach. Chris is undoubtedly a safe pair of hands as he brings a wealth of relevant finance experience and we look forward to his tenure as Treasurer.

We were delighted to welcome the return of Linda Laurance to the Board in January. Having previously served three years on the Board before stepping away, she made a real and measurable impact during that time and we were keen to have her back!

Current Board Members:

1. **Claire Wheeler** - Chair
2. **Sarah Fox** - Vice-Chair
3. **Chris Thorn** - Treasurer
4. **Craig Kaye**
5. **Linda Laurance** - *Coopted*
6. **Carole Harvey**
7. **Glynis Wiseman**
8. **Janet Shuttlewood**

New Board Members (*Coopted*):

- Linda Laurance – Expertise in governance, Board/staff relations, mediation and mentoring.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan to date

Continuing growth and development of OpportuniTEA Cafe

The café proudly celebrated its first birthday this year with a well-attended event, bringing together everyone who has played a part in its journey, alongside key individuals from Holmer Green Sports Association (HGSA). It was a wonderful opportunity to recognise the collective effort and ongoing support that have helped shape its success.







We are pleased to report that we now have a full complement of six trainees. Staggered start dates throughout the year have proven highly effective, with more experienced trainees naturally stepping into supportive roles, fostering a collaborative and encouraging learning environment.

A loyal customer base has been firmly established, with many returning regularly. Customers value not only the availability of freshly prepared, homemade food at a reasonable price, but also the chance to support the café's mission of providing meaningful, hands-on training opportunities.

In December, the café expanded its opening hours to include Wednesdays, increasing from two to three days per week. This development was a natural progression in line with our ambition to grow as a welcoming and accessible community hub.

We have also hosted a variety of community group meetings and gatherings. The spacious setting and warm, inclusive atmosphere have made the café a popular choice, with many groups returning again and again. These include Odyssey Pathological Demand Avoidance Support Group, who use the upper dining area to hold discussions without feeling overwhelmed. The Lantern Club meet each Monday to provide activities to elderly local residents, and the café is a popular venue due to its accessibility and home-cooked hot food.

The café's continued success is a testament to the strong, complementary partnership between paid staff, trainees, and our dedicated volunteers. Working side by side with patience, understanding, and kindness, they have created a truly supportive and vibrant environment.

> **"I love cooking the bacon and the chocolate brownies [at the café]."**
> *Heather, Beneficiary*

> **"I love working at the café and seeing all the regulars."**
> *Claire, Beneficiary*

Our trainees:

Heather has a strong interest in back-of-house tasks and particularly enjoys supporting the cooking. She regularly cooks the bacon and sausages with support - it's fair to say her bacon is among the best in the café! Heather also contributes to baking, with the gluten-free brownies being a particular favourite. She is well liked by both customers and the team, and her excellent sense of humour brings a positive energy to the café environment.

Daryl is a friendly young man who clearly enjoys being part of the café team. While he requires support to complete some tasks, he is making steady and encouraging progress across a number of areas. The team are supporting him by breaking tasks down into manageable steps, helping him build confidence and independence. Daryl particularly enjoys customer service and excels in this area, consistently demonstrating a polite and welcoming manner.

Claire arrives each morning with a smile and a genuine enthusiasm to be part of the team. She is capable of completing many tasks with minimal guidance, and the team have been supporting her in developing greater confidence in her own abilities. Claire is an engaged and motivated learner who takes pride in her achievements, and she continues to grow as she gains experience and applies her skills in practice.

Dan has made significant progress in developing his customer service skills and in how he approaches interactions with customers. Through clear structure, consistent feedback and ongoing support, he has built a strong foundation and is well placed to continue progressing. Dan's natural enthusiasm for conversation is a real asset, and his ability to engage customers helps create a warm and enjoyable café experience.

Tracy is highly skilled in the use of technology and is fully confident using the iPad independently. Her broader confidence with digital tools means she is often able to support staff and volunteers in using technology effectively. Tracy has also developed strong skills in preparing hot drinks using the coffee machine. This growing skill set will provide her with a valuable advantage in future employment opportunities. Having initially been hesitant about involvement in kitchen-based food preparation, Tracy is now showing increasing interest and is even contributing ideas to the menu.

George has developed a strong and positive working relationship with volunteer Kate, demonstrating a natural ability to collaborate effectively as part of a team. His communication skills and awareness have enabled this partnership to flourish organically. George is popular with customers due to his enthusiasm and eagerness to serve, always striving to ensure they are attended to promptly—so much so that the team occasionally remind him to pace himself. His dedication contributes greatly to the welcoming atmosphere of the café.

The blossoming of the gardening service

During the past year our gardening service has gone from strength to strength, seeing new opportunities for our members and building new partnerships within the local community. In May last year Rob moved onto pastures new, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Rob for his instrumental part in getting our fabulous gardening service started.

Social Link was very lucky to be introduced to Carl, a member of the local community and a retired police officer, who at the time was supporting the community with voluntary gardening projects. Carl has demonstrated a real passion for the development of our members with his focus being on ensuring every member of the gardening crew gain real life transferrable skills from this service.

One of Carl's first priorities was to work alongside Karen and to jointly re-evaluate the type of gardening service we offer. As a result, the gardening crew have secured new paid contracts tailored to match and make the most of their skill sets, as well as a larger community presence.

In July, following a successful meeting between Carl and the Little Missenden Parish Council, we were offered our very own Social Link allotment free of charge. The allotment is situated right next to the Holmer Green Jubilee Sensory Garden, meaning our gardeners and team would have access to a toilet too.

> **"Had a lovely visit to the allotment today. The guys were very happy having their lunch in the sun! What an incredible job Carl has done on the shed, compost bins, flower and vegetable beds. It will be a lovely space for all of the members to visit! I was made to feel very welcome and Linford was very happy to tell me all the things he had been doing and how hard he had been working. What a great place. "**
>
> ***Claire, Trustee***

Over the last year our passionate and devoted gardening leaders, Carl and Karen, have supported our gardeners with making the allotment their space. Managing an allotment has enabled our gardeners to shift the dynamic from "recipient of care" to active decision makers, choosing what to plant, how to organise the plot to tracking the growth of their produce. Witnessing everything going from 'plot to plate'.

> **"I enjoy planting for the butterflies and moths. I water and look after those plants the most."**
>
> *Linford, Beneficiary*

> **"Watering is my favourite thing to do because I can help Ryan do it."**
>
> *Karla, Beneficiary*

> **"Digging is my favourite thing to do on the Gardening Crew**
>
> *Pete, Beneficiary*

The allotment has enabled us to bridge the gap between vulnerable and non-vulnerable community members. It has increased the opportunities for our members to join in with other projects like supporting the Holmer Green Village Society with weeding and planting their flower beds alongside hosting a stall at their village events.

Our allotment:





Over the past year the gardening service has grown in popularity, with a greater number of referrals for this pioneering service, so much so that we are currently looking at opening this service on an additional day. Furthermore, now that we have the allotment, gardening will feature on the main day project activity planner to enable all Beneficiaries to try their hand at gardening, develop their fine motor skills, build their confidence and give them a sense of accomplishment as well as just enjoying being part of this green community.

In November, the gardening team welcomed volunteer Giles to the team. Giles' belated brother-in-law Michael had learning disabilities, giving Giles boundless enthusiasm to support others with learning disabilities to reach their full potential. Giles has definitely become one of the crew. Thank you Giles, we couldn't manage without you!

In December the gardening team celebrated a milestone achievement; two of our gardeners passed their mower training. This was a day of hands-on training followed by an exam. Gardeners Peter and Kevin were supported throughout the training and the exam by Leader, Carl, who ensured the trainer and examiner tailored the delivery of the course appropriately to match the abilities of the gardeners. Well done guys, we are super proud!









We would also like to thank all those incredible clients who give our gardeners the chance to practice their skills learnt, whilst looking after their gardens. Thank you Carol, Michael, Lynn, Kim and Laura.

"...how proud of the team [*Beneficiaries*], who never complain, give 100% and fill the air with the sound of laughter."

Carl, Gardening Leader

Increasing the profile of Social Link

Community events have been a key but informal way to promote our Charity within the communities in which we operate, including the Holmer Green Music on the Common and the Holmer Green Village Society Community Showcase, both of which helped us to engage the community surrounding OpportuniTEA Cafe.

We attended the Stocklake Park School transitions fair in March in order to promote the services we offer with the primary aim of assisting families in making informed decisions regarding next steps for their sons and daughters after formal education.

This year 13 brand new beneficiaries joined one or more of our day-time services.

Heart of Bucks (a registered charity that awards grants and loans to local grassroots charities, non-profits, and community groups) celebrated their 25th anniversary this year. Representatives from the charity travelled around the county to visit the charities they supported - we hosted a group in our café. In addition, we were invited to attend a prize giving ceremony to meet other charities and to also showcase what we do. Beneficiaries, Claire and Carlos, did an amazing job of telling guests about Social Link and the things they enjoy about our charity and the activities we provide. They were true Social Link ambassadors!





Jacci, our café manager, accompanied by Emily, a day project beneficiary, attended the Berkhamsted School Christmas fayre on a chilly December morning to host a children's game while also raising the profile of our charity. Emily may have actually spent more than she helped raise, but she thoroughly enjoyed the responsibility.

Extending our partnerships

Redkite Community Housing

Over the past three years we have forged and nurtured a strong and rewarding partnership with Red Kite Community Housing. In 2023 Red Kite approached Social Link with the gentle enquiry of whether their team could spend their annual 'Volunteering in the Community' morning with us, and their involvement with us has grown and grown so that now, they are part of the extended Social Link family. From garden maintenance support, to getting stuck in playing hockey, tennis, and football with our Beneficiaries, to rolling up sleeves and getting involved with baking in our kitchens, no challenge or request has damped their enthusiasm. They have walked with us when we were training for our Mount Snowdon climb, and painted our allotment shed. Each year they invite a group of our Beneficiaries to their offices, where they empower our Beneficiaries with important jobs to do, followed up with a fish and chip lunch. They have even given up their own time, their own private volunteering days to join us on several of Social Link's summer trips, even helping to save the day when the coach broke down at Woburn Safari Park by leaping into action and sourcing jump leads from one of the zookeepers. Thank you!

This year volunteers clocked up over 1500 hours helping across all Social Link services.

The NHS

We continue to have a great relationship with South Central Bucks Ambulance Service, with two of our Beneficiaries being ambassadors for NHS projects promoting the input of adults with learning disabilities to the improvement of their services. Crews from the ambulance service visit our venues ensuring that all our Beneficiaries have the opportunity to have their voices heard. We are so proud of and would like to thank Tony and Anthony for putting themselves forward and through an interview process to become ambassadors, where they selflessly give up their own time to try and make NHS services better in the future for all those with a learning disability. Thank you!

Browns Community Services

In October we welcomed into Social Link, two community trainers from Browns Community Services. The trainers ran an intense course for three Social Link Beneficiaries over a four-week period. The courses objectives were to support the individuals with online safety, appropriate use of social media, age appropriateness, bullying and cyberbullying and to raise the question of '*do you really know who you are talking to online?'*.

The Beneficiaries involved were also supported by one of the Social Link Team so that we were able to ensure the course content was appropriate to their level of understanding and content could be utilised across the charity as a preventative measure in providing our youngsters with the tools necessary to stay safe online.

The Beneficiaries who attended were really proud of their successful completion of the course and of the knowledge they had learned. They even shared their workbooks and tools to enable us to support their peers.

"The course has really helped me to stop and think about who I am speaking to online and to make better decisions about what I share online. I now understand what things shouldn't be shared online and who to report it to if someone sends me something they shouldn't. "

CW, Beneficiary

Signature Care Home - Farnham Common

In July, our Chief Operating Officer, Victoria, and Co-ordinator, Hannah, attended a meeting of the Buckinghamshire Older People's Action Group. This was with a view to raising the awareness of our OpportuniTEA Café and building the customer base. Whilst there they met Wendy Healy, Client Liaison Manager at the beautiful Signature Nursing Home in Farnham Common. Wendy, keen to support other groups, and upon hearing about what Social Link offers, and the Beneficiaries we support, generously offered us the use of the care homes purpose-built Art Deco in-house cinema once a month every month. This really is an absolute treat. The cinema is stunningly beautiful with super comfortable sofa's and once there the team at the care home spoil us with all the refreshments we could desire. This has become such a popular activity on our monthly planner for Beneficiaries and Team alike.



As a way of saying thank you to everyone at Signature Nursing Home, our very own gardening crew supported them for a morning with tidying their gardens and planting pots for a competition they had entered. Our day project members also surprised them with beautiful pots they had made as Christmas gifts for their residents.

This really has and continues to be a flourishing partnership. Thank you so much to everyone at the care home and especially to Wendy Healy for opening up this incredible opportunity to us.

Ensuring sustainability

Each new development and networking opportunity has brought value, insight and learning. All of which undoubtedly contribute to the future sustainability of Social Link in both the long and short term. This has had a positive impact on the number of referrals we are receiving and a change in the routes by which they find us. We are now receiving referrals from individuals and their families as well as Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care. This has been really encouraging and really secures the future of Social Link. In response to this, we have been innovative in working with our dynamic Team to look at the sessions we deliver and offer to ensure we move with the times and address new challenges our Beneficiaries may now face, ensuring they are given the right tools to navigate their adult lives safely and are not left behind as technology and society changes.

We continue to engage in conversations with Buckinghamshire Council about extending our lease at Green Street (YouthSpace Wycombe) and we constantly seek new opportunities to develop and grow our service in line with our strategic aims.

Engagement

Trustee visibility

As part of last year's engagement survey, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to the organisation for trustees to spend some time within the charity services engaging with the Beneficiaries therefore bridging the gap between board-level strategy and ground-level reality.

This has been really positive with Trustees getting a first-hand feel for the needs the charity services meet alongside giving them the chance to get to know Beneficiaries which will enable them to champion the charities causes more passionately to donors, stakeholders and regulators. Stepping out of the boardroom and engaging directly with the members stands to enhance decision making, accountability and strategic impact.

> **"A splendid way to start and end the week: on Sunday, with Wendy, watching our guys competing in the football league in Oxford, in which they performed with anticipated enthusiasm and considerable success. This morning being shown round the Social Link allotment by Carl and Karen, and watching the Friday garden team in action: it's truly awesome what has been achieved there and what is planned for the future, including the beehives. I'm still smiling four hours later!"**
>
> ***Linda, Trustee***

Beneficiaries across the whole service have really enjoyed spending time with the trustees, taking great delight in talking about their achievements, their goals for the future, and even suggesting new services. This of course was not all they shared; many Beneficiaries couldn't wait to reveal any team blunders that made them laugh. Testimony to how engaged the Beneficiaries feel in Social Link.

Family support and engagement

Social Link prides itself on taking a holistic approach to the support it offers individuals. The Social Link Team maintain positive, supportive relationships with Beneficiaries' families and carers. We know that looking at the bigger picture and supporting families with challenges that face them, we are sustaining the long-term care of our Beneficiaries, preventing the families from burn out.

> **"I have to say without Social Link we would really struggle. When we as a family, have needed help, you have always helped us, you don't just care for the adults with learning disabilities you care for the whole family. You have never let us down. Your whole team believe in those with disabilities and see how important they are."**
>
> *DG, Brother of a Social Link Beneficiary*

During the last year we have supported families with navigating benefits, social care assessments, blue badge applications, bus pass applications and renewals, we often host and partake in social care annual reviews to support the families in advocating the needs of their sons and daughters. We have been guiding families through safeguarding concerns and taking the fear out of safeguarding as it is often seen as a negative process, we have reached out to and introduced families to other organisations with specific specialist expertise who are well placed to provide advice and support.

An overview of Social Link activities in 2025/2026

Day projects and evening clubs

Both the High Wycombe and Aylesbury day projects and evening clubs continue to flourish with a diverse programme of activities created by the Team to ensure all Beneficiaries are given every opportunity to grow and develop with their peers in a safe and supportive environment. Social Link prides itself on pushing against boundaries, creating opportunities, giving individuals the space to boost their self-esteem and confidence and to acquire knowledge and skills to support their personal development, including being safe and making informed choices throughout adulthood.






Self-learning and development opportunities have included:

- Understanding our emotions
- Understanding the effects of our behaviours on others
- Developing positive relationships
- Keeping mentally and physically active

- Keeping safe online
- Responding to difficult situations
- Learning to love oneself and supporting those around you
- Accepting compliments and recognising achievements
- Meditation – breathing exercises and calming techniques
- Body awareness
- Relaxation techniques and exercises
- Breathwork
- Showcasing and celebrating art
- Going backstage in the local theatre
- Wellbeing and mindfulness

Alongside these, Beneficiaries have been able to choose to participate in an array of other learning and development activities:

- Numeracy and literacy through cooking
- Understanding recycling
- Interactive music with Paul
- Fire Safety
- Poetry writing
- Understanding personal finances, including understanding bank statements
- Healthy and easy-to-repeat cooking sessions
- Independent travel training
- Communication through drama
- The world around us and its history
- Experimenting – learning through science
- Personal safety in the community
- Expression through art and dance
- Work based skills
- Keeping active – walking in nature
- Swimming
- Independence skills
- Literacy development in the newsletter sessions
- Sports competitions between different Social Link services
- Opportunities to showcase their talents
- Street dance
- Going to the pub!

On average this year, Social Link has offered 164.8 Beneficiary day project sessions per week.

Social Link has Talent

Christmas preparations at Social Link tend to start soon after the summer ends, and by the time most people put their tree up in early December, humming along to Wham and Band Aid, Social Link's army of elves have already been busily prepping for months. Festive energy is as plentiful as the glitter which

shrouds the tables and sticks to the bottom of shoes for weeks and weeks, and 2025 was no exception. Way back in early October, someone said the words "What about a Christmas talent show?" and that was that! Lights, camera, action; the spotlight was on all the Beneficiaries.

Over two months, those who wanted to perform showed complete commitment to producing a show to entertain family and friends. Every day was a rehearsal day, just ask the team. Supported intensively by our music leader, Paul, the streets of Desborough were treated to festive tunes and singing blasting out of Green Street daily and culminated in perfect performance on 11th December.







As the lights dimmed, out of the wings came our very own Phil Collins', Mariah Carey, Rick Astley, Dean Martin, Chapel Roan, Madonna, Ed Sheeran, The Spice Girls, to name a few. From bhangra dancing, which had the entire audience moving and bopping, to electric guitar playing that sent shivers down spines, to rapping, joke telling and expressive movement to dance that had the audience's jaws dropping to the floor, we were so impressed. Solo performances which showed not only skill, but commitment to learning and immense bravery. Group performances that demonstrated teamwork, friendship and courage. All observed by their peers, parents and carers who directed their attention, enthusiasm and support to each and every single person on that stage. It was a day of celebrating our individuality and each other.

"I was nervous, but I did it! I loved the talent show."
Charlotte, Beneficiary

"I love the talent shows, they are nice and funny."
Catherine G, Beneficiary

Talent shows this year have been showcased across all our services, with the team at Aylesbury once again joining the Jigsaw Theatre Company for an evening of outstanding singing and dancing performances on stage to a lively but supportive audience.

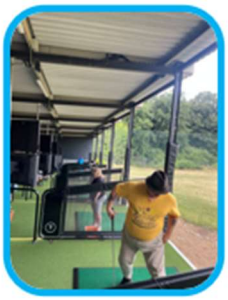
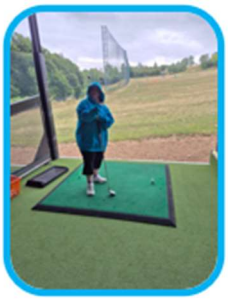
As you can see Social Link really does have serious talent!

Special mention

This year we witnessed not one, but two Social Link Beneficiary weddings. Both weddings were truly magical, shared with their family, friends and team members. Testimony to how Social Link creates safe, nurturing spaces where genuine human relationships form. We would like to congratulate Ellie and Carlos on their nuptials, as well as Andy and Claire for tying that knot! We look forward to celebrating many anniversaries to come.

More highlights

- We took delivery of a new set of wheels, namely a nine-seater minibus. Thank you Mr Ryan of LVCR for keeping us on the road.
- Thank you to the Martins family who treated our day project to a day on the range at Wycombe Heights Golf Centre, all in memory of Tom Martins who was always smiling at Social Link!
- We repeatedly celebrated the artistic talent of Josh B. He joined Social Link as a Beneficiary and his talent for drawing was quickly revealed in his first few weeks. We have been proud to promote his work at OpportuniTEA Café and at Social Link events throughout the year.

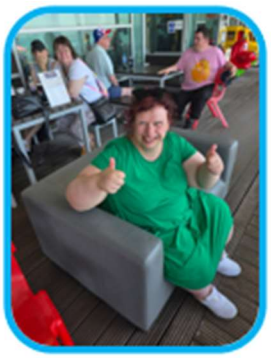




Day trips

Southend-on-Sea

Our Aylesbury day project managed to escape for the day on a seaside trip to Southend-on-Sea. Suncream, hats and sunglasses at the ready they headed off for a sensory-rich social day out. The sound of the gulls, sea breeze and bright sunshine set the stage for a fabulous day. The weather resembled that of the Algarve, promenade walks, beach time, dipping feet in the sea, fish and chips, ice cream (which nearly made us miss the coach home), ride on the pier train and of course, not to be missed, a visit to the amusement arcades! A hot but brilliant day for all those involved.






Woburn Safari Park

In 2024, we put it to the Wycombe-based Beneficiaries to vote on what they would like to do/where they would like to go for their annual summer day trip. The results were incredibly close, the first-place

choice of Southend took place in 2024 and in the interests of being fair the runner up option of Woburn Safari Park was arranged for 2025.



Once again, we boarded a couple of coaches and wow, do our members know how to turn travel into a party! Loud singing, seat dancing, and the commandeering of the coach microphone (our apologies to the Motts Coach driver) were in play all the way to Woburn. On arrival, we were joined on the animal enclosure coach tour by two excellent Safari guides, who educated us on all the animals and entertained us, pointing out one particular animal; a beautiful, male giraffe, called Kacper.
“MY NAME IS KACPER!” bellowed a booming voice from the back of the coach from our newest Social Link Beneficiary, and up until that point, one of the shyest - causing the entire coach to erupt laughing.

We packed suncream, we packed cold drinks, we packed hats, and... it rained. All day. But in typical Social Link style, that didn't matter a jot. As usual, our Beneficiaries and our Team turned everything into a joke, into fun, and we laughed our way around all day. Spirits were not even dampened when we were about to go home and one of the coaches broke down. In true Social Link manner, there was no mention or thought of the second coach going ahead back to Wycombe without the first - no, we are a team, we stick together through thick and thin, and this was said by our Beneficiaries. A zookeeper was heckled down, a giant set of jump leads sourced and away we went, full of stories ready to be shared.

Social Link Football Teams

This year the Social Link football teams played 66 competitive matches.

Social Link continues to have two incredible football teams, overseen by Andy, Tom, Steve and Leon. To give you an update, here are a few words from Tom (founder and manager) about one of their biggest trophy winning achievements this year.

Summary provided by Tom Gilligan, Social Link FC Founder, Manager and Player:
‘In May this year 10 players, including myself, took part in the Northampton Town FC Community pan disability football day. We got to play on the main Northampton Town FC pitch at Sixfields Stadium!!

It was such an incredible day. I am so proud to say we won all our games, with the 2 most memorable games being – We beat Northampton town 8-1, no mean feat as they had just beaten another team 13-0!

We went on to play against Aston Villa (twice) beating them 4-0 and then 3-0. In this final game we really thought our winning streak was over as our goalie, Jack, took out their attacker and we thought for certain he was going to get sent off, but miraculously the ref saw it as a fair tackle enabling us to go on and win the final, securing the trophy!

I would like to thank all the Social Link FC and Social Link rebel players, and my fellow coaches and managers for their passion, commitment to the game and their incredible support they display for each other. Onwards and upwards!'



The Social Link Team

Social Link really is unique; it has an incredible ability to attract and retain top-tier talent. Our team continues to consist of highly passionate, creative and innovative professionals. Every Team Member (volunteer and Trustees included), are deeply invested in the long-term growth and development of our Beneficiaries.

Social Link has an innovative programme delivery where Beneficiaries and Team Members build solutions together, ensuring activities are relevant and relatable to the current difficulties they face.

The Social Link Team from across all our services strive constantly to empower our Beneficiaries and they achieve this by getting to know individuals and their capabilities as well as providing reassurance and encouragement. The Team not only support our Beneficiaries with sessions, but they also enable them to take some responsibility for day-to-day activities. Beneficiaries take it in turns to run the afternoon meetings, take the daily register, carrying out office tasks, getting the opportunity to take ownership of some of the charities activities.

"The staff make Social Link feel like home."
Emily, Beneficiary

"The staff are very kind and make me welcome."
Umar, Beneficiary

Our latest addition to the team is no different, in December we welcomed into the team an incredibly creative professional artist with over two decades of experience of delivering creative sessions to both children and adults with learning disabilities, autism, ADHD and dementia within schools and community settings.

Lynne brings a deep passion for empowering young adults through art. Her work focuses on creating meaningful opportunities for adults with learning disabilities to engage with, develop and showcase their creative talent. Lynne has already manged to organise a public exhibition for later this year, where our Beneficiaries will be able to showcase and celebrate their artwork to the public and their friends and families from a community space in the centre of High Wycombe. Welcome Lynne.

A special mention goes to Laura who works remotely but who provides essential support to the charity including admin and finance, managing local relationships and seeking alternative sources of funding for our charity.

"Social Link gives our daughter the chance to socialise. She enjoys all the activities especially singing and cooking also going out. It has taught her to have confidence."

Julie Patey, Parent

Safeguarding our Beneficiaries

Over the past year we have witnessed an increase in Safeguarding situations affecting our Beneficiaries. The world around us is changing and starting to impact the lives of some of those who attend our services. A common theme in these situations has been a lack of knowledge around online safety, mobile phone use, stranger danger alongside a lack of understanding of age boundaries and the consequences that come from these interactions. The fore mentioned Browns training was a real first step for us, as a Team, in gaining the legal understanding and knowledge needed to educate and empower our Beneficiaries to make informed, wise decisions whilst considering the law and actions that could be taken as a result.

Our Beneficiaries often have difficulties with decoding intentions of those they interact with online, the need for friendship often overrides common sense or the ability to stop and think about the who the person is at the other end. Adults with learning disabilities are at high risk of cyberbullying, financial fraud, and romantic scams. A new online threat to us and to our Beneficiaries is one based around age boundaries. Without clear guidance on age boundaries, adults with learning disabilities may inadvertently interact with minors online or end up on sites or download illegal materials without understanding the way these actions will be interpreted negatively by the law and the general public.

Although the above sounds scary, it is a reality, but in true Social Link style, our dynamic Team have promptly responded by running activities over multiple weeks, educating our Beneficiaries on how to stay safe online, stranger danger, even inviting in the local Police Community Support Officer. We are currently utilising easy read tools created by MENCAP for 18 – 25 year olds, but with the current input of a local SEN teacher we hope to create our own programme of activities to address these challenges across our whole service. A really exciting addition to our future activity provision.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm they have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when meeting the organisation's charitable objectives. The Charity provides valuable advice and support alongside social, recreational, educational, and work-based experiences for adults with learning disabilities in the local area. The activities of the Charity are made available to all who are in need and are affordable to all who qualify. The Trustees regularly review the circumstances of the Charity's Beneficiaries and provide the financial support that is needed with appropriately lower charges in cases of financial hardship.

This year we have supported individuals in exceptional circumstances who have been unable to meet the local authority adult social care funding criteria but who we genuinely believe are at risk of social isolation without the provision of a free service.

Finance overview

Finance report and reserves

Total Funds and Turnover
As of the end of the financial year, the charity's total funds stand at £251,407 against an annual turnover of £596,756. The trustees have reviewed the charity's financial position and established a reserves policy to ensure ongoing sustainability and effective delivery of charitable activities.

Grant Funds (£118,000)
Of the total funds, £118,000 is held as restricted or committed grant funding. These funds are subject to specific conditions and are exclusively reserved to fulfil our ongoing restricted or committed grant funding in upcoming periods. Consequently, these monies are not available for the charity's general core operating purposes.

Unrestricted Reserves (£133,000)
The remaining £133,000 is held as unrestricted reserves and are freely expendable to further our general objectives.

Target Levels and Rationale
The trustees have determined that maintaining a free reserve target of £133,000 is appropriate. This amount allows us to:

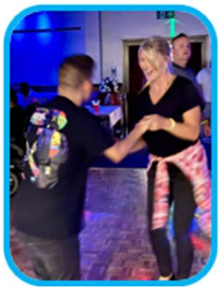
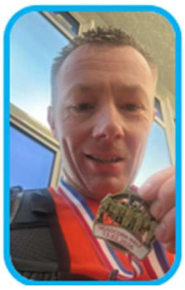
- **Manage Cash Flow:** Bridge timing gaps between expenditures and the receipt of anticipated funding.
- **Mitigate Risks:** Cover unexpected drops in incoming resources or sudden unbudgeted demands.
- **Ensure Continuity:** Safeguard our operations and Beneficiary services in line with Charity Commission best practices.

Monitoring and Review
The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the level of reserves throughout the year as part of standard corporate financial reporting to ensure they remain adequate for our continuing obligations.

Fundraising

The first fundraising event of the year was the jumble sale in Beaconsfield. After lots of haggling with bargain-hunters, we managed to raise a staggering £ 954.40. We also hosted our very first Social Link quiz night at Holmer Green Sports Association. This was a complete sell out, the energy in the room was electric. The night ended with the Berkhamsted Bandits (team of our retired trustees – James and Steve) winning first prize. A great evening was had by all! A huge thank you to our Quiz Master, our very own Harriet, and to everyone who joined us. We successfully raised £1181.

Our Aylesbury team hosted their second Sparkle Disco, following on from the success of the first in 2024. The team and DJ Paul provided a fun filled night for local adults with learning disabilities to let their hair down. Beneficiaries brought along their friends from other services to party the night away.


Not only raising funds for our own charity, but this year our woodwork group led by Chris and Lyn, decided to make hand crafted wooden toys to sell at a coffee afternoon to raise funds for Children in Need. This innovative idea managed to raise a whopping £180. Well done to everyone involved.

In February, we celebrated the success of John Ripley's half marathon, his first ever run and a big change from his main hobby, Karate. John, Laura's husband, signed himself up to the Headcorn half marathon in Kent, in order to raise important funds to enable Social Link Beneficiaries to enjoy another much valued and enjoyed day trip. We are thrilled to announce that John did himself proud finishing in 2 hours 10! And more importantly he successfully raised £1,525. Thank you so much John, same time next year!!??

Donations

The ongoing generosity of our donors continues to play a crucial role in everything we do, enabling Social Link to provide enhanced support to Beneficiaries and their families. It is through these contributions that we are able to offer such a wide range of programmes and opportunities for growth. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who supports us.

Specific thanks to Bernie Till, Chris Davies, Jo Bennett and the customers at Josephine's Health and Beauty Salon in Hazlemere, Caron Roberts and the Friends of Berkhamsted School, Colin Mackenzie, Steve Birch and the employees at Suez.

We have also had some fabulous non-monetary donations including a whole host of board games, as well as supplies from Alison and Julie Patey, Jim Boone and Jo Bennett via our Amazon Wishlist. Thank you everybody!

Grants

We continue to apply for grants to support our income, to make it as affordable as possible for our Beneficiaries and to enable us to increase opportunities. This year we were successfully awarded £141,570 in grants for use across our services including the gardening and large proportion for the café and its training programme. We would like to say a special thank you to the following organisations for seeing the worth in what we do:

- Chesham, Amersham & District Mencap Society
- The Mulberry Trust (via Heart of Bucks)
- Kop Hill Climb (via Heart of Bucks)
- Postcode Lottery
- The Barchester Charitable Foundation

- The Douglas Arter Foundation
- The Julia Mary Wood Charitable Trust
- Baily Thomas Foundation
- Red Kite Housing - Springboard Fund
- John Lewis
- Coop - Doing Good Together
- Morrisons Foundation
- High Wycombe Town Council

Appreciation

The Social Link Team is renowned for its caring, passion and drive to provide the best service and exceptional experiences for our Beneficiaries. Our Team is always looking to go above and beyond, welcoming new challenges and always thinking creatively to ensure the growth and development of all those who attend our services – it is innate in all of us! Everyone, regardless of role, is essential to the delivery of Social Link services. The Board of Trustees and CEO would like to extend a huge thank you to **every member of the Social Link Team** for their contributions to the work of the Charity.

With regards OpportuniTEA Café, we would like to say a special thank you to Emma, Ellie, Kate, Doreen, Monique, Julia, Kim W and Jackie. Not to forget our incredible trainees Tracy, George, Dan, Claire, Heather and Daryl. Running the café is intense, from stock ordering, deliveries, the mountains of safety checks, washing aprons, cleaning and then having to cook from scratch. So we give a massive thank you to Jacci for managing the café on a day-to-day basis and for all the tasty treats she makes.

Under the incredible leadership of Carl and Karen, our gardening service has truly gone from strength to strength over the last year. Simply put, what they haven't achieved isn't worth writing about. The service is thriving like never before, driven by a significant surge in Beneficiary referrals, the development of a glorious allotment (for every Beneficiary to enjoy) and the securing of exciting new gardening contracts and new opportunities for the gardeners. With such passionate leadership and continuous growth, this service clearly has no ceiling to its potential. Thank you Carl and Karen.

Hannah (Co-Ordinator) continues to provide exceptional leadership at the helm of the day services. We extend our sincere gratitude to her for her diligent management and creative approach to problem solving, which consistently ensures that both our Beneficiaries and the Team feel fully supported. Her ability to navigate challenges with innovative solutions has maintained a high standard of care and collaboration across the Charity.

The CEO and COO, both extend our profound gratitude to all Trustees, past and present, for their unwavering dedication and voluntary service. Their strategic oversight ensures that the Charity remains rigorously managed, fully compliant with legal frameworks, and structurally aligned with our core mission and objectives. Most importantly, their governance guarantees that our Beneficiaries remain at the centre of every decision we make. We would also like to offer a special note of thanks to our incredible Chair, Claire; despite demanding professional commitments, her constant availability, guidance, and compassionate support have been invaluable to the entire organisation.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements

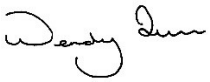
Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any departure disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.



Claire Wheeler
Chair of the Social Link Board of Trustees



Wendy Dunn,
Chief Executive Officer, Social Link

June 2026

Statement of Financial Activities for the 12 months ended 31st March 2026 with comparison to the period ended 31st March 2025.

	2026 12 months	2025 12 months
Income from:		
Donations (Note 2)	£5,827	£11,089
Charitable activities (Note 3)	£503,926	£463,978
Other trading activities (Note 4)	£5,871	£12,441
Income from Grants	£79,824	£47,704
Interest (Note 5)	£1,307	£915
Total income	**£596,755**	**£536,127**
Expenditure on:		
Raising funds (Note 6)	£120	£3,326
Charitable activities (Note 7)	£554,764	£506,893
Total expenditure	**£554,884**	**£510,219**
Net income and movement in funds		
Net income/deficit	£41,871	**£25,908**
Movement in grant funds	£61,748	£13,321
Total funds brought forward	£147,788	£108,559
Total funds carried forward	**£251,407**	**£147,788**

The notes on pages 27 to 31 form part of these financial statements.

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2026

	2026	2025
Intangible fixed assets	£790	£790
Tangible fixed assets	£15,132	£23,575
Fixed Assets (Note 8)	**£15,922**	**£24,365**
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 9)	£250,145	£93,291
Prepayments	£5,557	£4,079
Debtors (Note 10)	£23,609	£47,817
	£279,311	**£145,187**
Current liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 11)	£43,826	£21,764
Net current assets	**£235,485**	**£123,423**
Net assets	**£251,407**	**£147,788**
Unrestricted income fund	£133,113	£91,242
Grants - Restricted	£15,132	£56,546
Unrestricted	£103,162	
Total funds	**£251,407**	**£147,788**

The notes on pages 27 to 31 form part of these financial statements.

Statement of cash flows for the 12 months ended 31st March 2026 with comparison to the period ended 31st March 2025

	2026	2025
Net cash flow from operating activities		
Net income/deficit	£41,871	£25,908
Movement in debtors and prepayments	£22,730	-£35,324
Movement in liabilities	£22,062	-£424
Movement in grants	£61,748	-£13,343
Capital expenditure	-£337	-£2,658
Depreciation	£8,780	£10,573
Net cash movement from operating activities	**£156,854**	**-£15,268**
Cash at the beginning of the year	**£93,291**	**£108,559**
Cash at the end of the year	**£250,145**	**£93,291**

The notes on pages 27 to 31 form part of these financial statements.

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the 12 months ended 31st March 2026

1. Statement of accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies have been consistently applied. The financial statements also comply with the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities SORP (FRS 102) and with the Charities Act 2022, subject to the following amendment prepared by the Charities SORP-making body in its discussion document which would bring it in line with FRS102 for other organisations. The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

At its meeting it was noted that the SORP Committee had considered the accruals model for grant accounting as a good option. The ability to use the accrual model could help those more familiar with the concept of profit and loss in a commercial entity, including charity Trustees and funders, to better understand a charities financial performance. The recognition of income in advance of related expenditure being incurred can give the impression that the charity's financial position is better than it is and this may impact on funding applications. Conversely, the recognition of related expenditure in future years. creating a deficit position, may be interpreted as the charity being in a less favourable financial position than is the case.

Specifically in the case of Social Link, we have deferred the grant income for our van and copier to be released to match and offset the depreciation of those assets, thereby not creating an income surplus this year and deficits during the following years.

b) Incoming resources

All incoming resources are recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income, the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy, and it is probable that the amount will be received. Donations under gift aid together with income tax recoverable are recognised when the donation is receivable.

c) Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs relating to that activity. The cost of small items of equipment is written off in the year it is incurred.

d) Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligations can be measured with reasonable certainty

2. Donations

Donations include subscriptions for membership of the charity, gift aid rebates for the football services and the gardening services. Donations were also received from our many kind supporters.

3. Charitable activities

	2026	2025
Evening club revenues	£29,597	£27,664
Gardening services	£17,660	£16,426
Football services	£936	£1,415
Day sessions revenues	£420,535	£407,350
Café revenue	£35,198	£11.123
	£503,926	£463,978

It should be noted that to ensure the financial integrity of both our core services and OpportuniTEA Café, accounts for the café are held in entirely separate bank accounts and financial systems.

4. Other trading activities

We have held some wonderful fundraising activities including those organised by our fabulous friends and volunteers.

5. Interest

This comprises income from the charity's bank deposit accounts.

6. Expenditure of raising funds

This represents direct expenditure on fundraising events.

7. Charitable expenditure

	2026			2025		
	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total	Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total
Evening Clubs	£14,224	£9,294	£23,518	£11,385	£9,311	£20,696
Gardening Services	£25,198	£5,546	£30,744	£27,493	£5,529	£33,022
Football	£3,976	£294	£4,270	£1,255	£476	£1,731
Day Sessions	£311,713	£132,060	£443,773	£283,933	£137,110	£421,043
Café Services	£41,405	£11,053	£52,459	£27,387	£3,014	£30,401
Total	£396,516	£158,248	£554,764	£351,453	£155,440	£506,893

Support costs, which are mainly the employment costs of the charity's employees, IT, office, insurance and other related costs, are allocated in proportion to the income of the evening clubs, the gardening services, football, day sessions and the café respectively.

8. Assets at cost

Intangible Assets

The trademarks are held at cost on the balance sheet	2026	2025
At the beginning of the year	£790	£250
Additions (OpportuniTEA Café trademark registration)	£0	£540
Disposals	£0	£0
At the end of the year	£790	£790

Tangible Assets	2026	2025
At the beginning of the year	£23,575	£32,020
Additions for the Cafe	£337	£2,125
Depreciation	-£8,780	-£10,570
Disposals	£0	£0
At the end of the year	£15,132	£23,575

9. Cash at bank and in hand

This comprises bank current and deposit accounts plus petty cash. These are all liquid funds available for immediate use by the charity.

10. Debtors

Debtors comprise outstanding invoices in respect of day session Beneficiaries.

11. Creditors amounts falling due within one year and grants

a) These provisions represent liabilities for services provided but not yet invoiced and accrued costs, all of which have been settled since the year end.

	2026	2025
Trade creditors and accruals	£31,993	£9,844
Consultants	£6,032	£7,044
HMRC	£5,801	£4,876
Pensions	£0	£0
	£43,826	£21,764

b) Grants

	2025	Grants received in the year	Grants released in the year	2026
Grants for Van (depreciated/grant released over 5 years)	£22,697	£0	-£7,565	£15,132
Grant for photocopier (depreciated/grant released over 3 years)	£878	£0	-£878	£0
Grants for Café	£25,971	£45,251	-£6,255	£64,967
Grants for Holidays, Christmas and special events	£2,000	£6,583	-£7,648	£935
Grants for Core Costs	£0	£62,500	-£39,418	£23,082
Grants for Gardening	£0	£12,500	-£4,100	£8,400
Grants for Activities	£5,000	£14,736	-£13,957	£5,779
	£56,546	£141,570	-£79,821	£118,295

12. Trustee and governance costs

No remuneration was paid to Trustees neither did they receive re-imbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, but they were reimbursed for purchases made from time to time on behalf of the Charity. There were no Governance costs.

13. Staff costs and volunteers

	12 months 2026	12 months 2025
Salaries and wages	£235,563	£225,341
Social security costs	£18,642	£16,272
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	£9,145	£8,713
Other employee benefits	£0	£0
Total staff costs	£263,350	£250,326

There are no staff working for the charity whose contracts are with, and are paid by, a related party.

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period of more than £60,000	TRUE

The total amount paid to key management personnel (includes Trustees and senior management) for their services to the Charity. Key management this year includes the full year of both the Chief Executive and the Chief Operating Officer.

12 months 2026	12 months 2025
£93,048	£91,983

13.2 Average head count in the year

Parts of the charity in which the employees work		2026	2025
		Number	Number
Fundraising		0	0
Charitable Activities		9	8
Governance		0	0
	Total	9	8

13.3 There were no ex-gratia payments to employees and others (including Trustees).

13.4 There were no redundancy payments

13.5 The Charity relies on the generous contribution of time from unpaid volunteers in carrying out its activities. Volunteers provide substantial support to the Beneficiaries at the evening clubs, day sessions, café, football club and trips away. The value of this contribution, which is difficult to measure, is not included as income.

14. Taxation

Social Link is registered as a charity with both the Charity Commission and HM Revenue & Customs and is thus exempt from corporation tax on its income which is applied for charitable purposes.

15. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

Approved by the Trustees on 26/06/26 and signed on their behalf by-

Claire Wheeler MSc, FHE, CPABP – Chair
Address: 3 Bridleways, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6DN

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the trustees	Social Link		
On accounts for the year ended	31st March 2026	**Charity no (if any)**	1158743
Set out on pages			

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/03/2026**.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of Chartered Institute of Accountants of England and Wales

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:	K.M. Bailey	**Date:**	19/06/2026
Name:	KATHERINE BAILEY		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	ICAEW		
Address:	9 WHEELER AVENUE, PENN		

MARK WYCOMBE HP11 1SZ

[redacted]

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.