2025-26

Annual Report

Association of Carers: Supporting Unpaid Carers across East Sussex











Our Year in Review →

Welcome

Message from the Acting Chair



As Acting Chair of the charity, having been involved as a Trustee since June 2013, it is great to see the hard work and dedication of the staff and volunteers, which enables the charity to continue providing a first-rate service to the local community during another challenging year for the charity sector.

As increasing pressure is placed on support services, many individuals are stepping in to fill the gaps created by a lack of professional resources. Our service continues to provide valuable support to carers by enabling them to take a break from their caring responsibilities. We know that this time is extremely important. It gives carers an opportunity to focus on themselves, reduce stress, and enjoy some much-needed "me time". It also provides opportunities to meet others in similar situations, helping to reduce feelings of isolation.

During these breaks, volunteers have the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with the cared-for person. This helps to reduce anxiety for both the cared-for person and the carer, providing reassurance and peace of mind. Over time, these trusted relationships become stronger and enhance the support provided to the whole family.

Developing positive relationships between the cared-for person, the carer, and the volunteer is an important part of the service. Strong relationships help create a more positive and rewarding experience for everyone involved.

The Volunteers continue to be a major asset of the charity and as the acting chair and on behalf of the board of Trustees and the staff I would like to thank you all for the time you give in support of the charity. The charity could not survive without you giving up you free time to support the carers whose down time is very important to them.

The demand for the charity's services continues to grow, with more families being left to manage the care of a loved one. As a result, we are always looking to recruit new volunteers, enabling us to provide support to even more carers within the community.

I would also like to thank my fellow Trustees for their support, expertise and commitment. Their guidance helps ensure that the charity continues to meet its objectives while providing valuable support to both staff and volunteers. I would also like to formally welcome our new Trustees to the Board and look forward to working with you all over the coming year.

The charity could not continue to operate without the support of East Sussex County Council and our many funders, both longstanding and new. The funding we receive enables us to deliver a wide range of services, and we are extremely grateful for their continued support and confidence in our work.

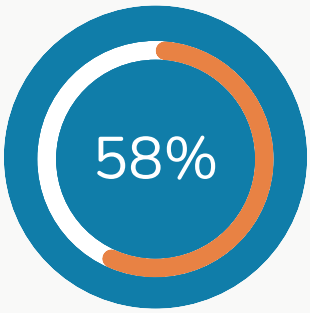
Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all our staff for their ongoing dedication, hard work and commitment. Their efforts have helped the charity not only meet but exceed its goals, while successfully responding to the challenges and opportunities that have emerged over the past 12 months.

The Association of Carers could not survive without the support of all of the above, and I look forward to working with each and everyone of you.

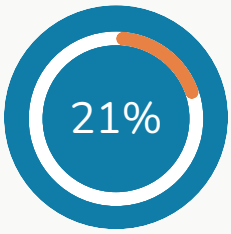
Thank you all !!!!!!

Clive Whitehead, Acting Chair

Our Impact



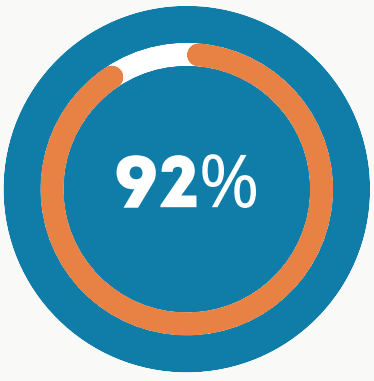
of support given to Carers was through our Respite and Befriending Service.



of Carers we support receive more than one of our services.

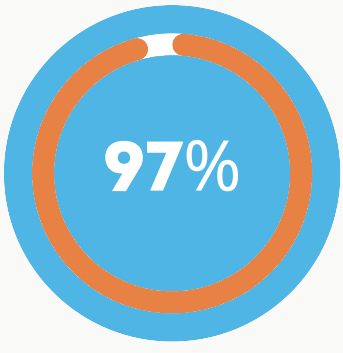
"Without having Association of Carers giving me time to myself I know that I could not cope.We have a wonderful caregiver who my husband feels it's a friend staying with him. I am grateful for all the help I receive.

Carol, Carer



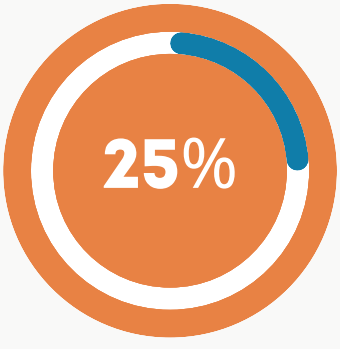
OF CARERS

report our services helped them manage their caring role



OF CARERS

were happy with their Volunteer match



OF CARERS

were less reliant on health and social care

Testimonials

"I want to thank everyone who put so much effort into giving us carers time to ourselves."

"Her weekly phone calls were a great source of comfort and she guided me genlty through my darkest days."

"It has given me strength to deal with complex care and made me feel supported."

"Thank you so very much for an amazing experience and giving us carers the opportunity to come together."

"Volunteering makes me feel ten foot tall to realise that I am making a change to two peoples life ie the person who I sit with and his wife who can have a few hours to herself."

"For everything that you do to support us carers. It's huge 🙏🙏🙏"





Our Services

We are proud to deliver meaningful and practical support to unpaid Carers through a variety of thoughtfully crafted services. These services are tailored based on the feedback we've received from Carers, addressing their most pressing needs be it personal time, emotional support, or assistance in managing their caregiving responsibilities.

Our fundamental goal is straightforward yet crucial: to avert Carer burnout by ensuring they receive the necessary support and respite precisely when they need it most.

Breaks from caring:
Respite & Befriending – A weekly 3-hour break for Carers, while the person they care for spends time with a matched Volunteer.

Respite for Healthcare – Extra Volunteer support so Carers can attend health appointments or training.

Carers Community Worker (CCW) - Essential respite for Carers, free of charge from a paid staff member, especially when finding a Volunteer is challenging due to location, long waiting lists, or complex situations.

Peer Support:
Lunch Clubs – Monthly social meals for Carers and those they care for, in two locations.

Carers Cafés – Two monthly meet-ups with a programme of activities, refreshments, and a safe space to socialise. Our Carers Dance Cafe is a combination of all capability movement to music, followed by social time.



One-to-One Support and Advice:
Talk & Support – A 6-month telephone service offering confidential listening and reducing isolation.

SCIPRR – Guidance to help Carers arrange suitable residential respite care for their loved one.

Computer Help at Home – Up to six one-to-one sessions teaching Carers how to use digital devices to support their role.

Virtual Sessions – Monthly online activities such as Relaxation and yoga.

53
Carers Supported with Talk and support

4519
Respite Visits made by Volunteers

122.5 hours
for Healthcare respite

97
Carers received CCW support





Carer Wellness

New in 2025-26! Wellbeing Retreat Days – Dedicated days for Carers to relax, recharge and focus on their own wellbeing.

We were succesful in receiving funding from East Sussex County Council to deliver our initiative of a series of wellness events for Carers. Delivered monthly between January and April 2026 in Eastbourne and Hastings, we supported 32 Carers.

The sessions delivered a range of physical and mental health self-care workshops, including yoga, mindfulness and sound healing, combined with nourishing catering and conversation. Carers learnt many techniques that they can practice in their own lives to bring both immediate and longer term health benefits.

Further funding was successful in March 2026 for 4 further sessions.

“I thoroughly enjoyed it and came away feeling more relaxed and calm than I have felt for a long time.”



“I enjoyed getting out by myself and meeting others and particularly the calm of the breathing exercises.”

“I totally switched off and that something I don't do.”

Volunteering

The charity places strong emphasis on recognising, valuing and celebrating Volunteers. During the year, Volunteers were thanked through activities linked to Volunteers' Week, alongside ongoing informal recognition and appreciation. The organisation also recognises commitment and loyalty through the presentation of long service certificates, celebrating Volunteers who have given their time and skills over a number of years. These celebrations play an important role in strengthening relationships, improving retention and ensuring Volunteers feel valued for the vital contribution they make.

All Volunteers complete a comprehensive induction programme covering the organisation's values, safeguarding, boundaries and role expectations. A robust Volunteer training and development plan underpins safe, high quality service delivery and Volunteer confidence. Ongoing training is offered throughout the year and includes First Aid, Dementia Awareness, Bereavement Awareness, Active Listening and Stroke Awareness, alongside refresher sessions and opportunities for skills development. This structured approach to training ensures Volunteers are well prepared, supported and able to respond effectively and compassionately to the diverse and often complex needs of Carers and cared for individuals.

Thank you to everyone at Association of Carers for looking after volunteers so well.

VOLUNTEER



"You selected well when you matched the volunteer with my husband and me. They got on so well I was able to escape for a few hours with an easy mind. He was my lifeline, I cannot put into words how much I owe him."

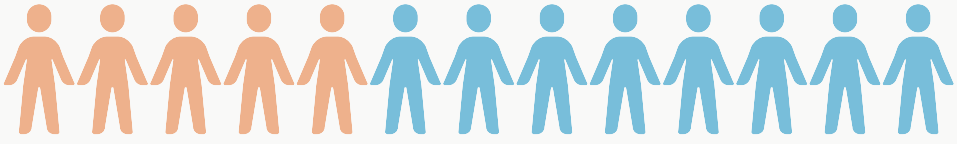
CARER

Volunteer enquiries **78**

9 induction sessions

12 core training sessions

122 matches were made between Volunteers and Carers



92% of Volunteers felt appreciated by Carers, and 100% felt appreciated by us

Fundraising

Fundraising and income generation continued to play a critical role in sustaining and developing services throughout 2025/26, particularly in the context of rising demand, increased costs, and uncertainty around statutory funding.

The charity delivered a diverse and well planned programme of community fundraising, partnerships, trusts and donations, generating both unrestricted and restricted income to support Carers across East Sussex.

The charity benefitted from generous support from local businesses, particularly through prize donations for the annual Christmas Raffle. The charity received unrestricted income through community lotteries, operating across four districts, with Lewes District added during 2025. In addition a steady base of monthly and one-off individual donations contributed to core costs and helped maintain organisational resilience.

The charity successfully secured funding from five sources to support the continuation of the Community Care Worker (CCW) respite service, raising a total of £36,182 towards CCW roles in 2025/26. This funding was essential in enabling the service to continue at a time when other funding had ended and demand remained high.

Other unrestricted income allowed us to fund Volunteer recruitment, to address waiting lists and improve capacity, and additional Carer activities, enhancing wellbeing and engagement.



The charity delivered an active calendar of community fundraising events, which strengthened local visibility, deepened relationships with supporters, and generated valuable unrestricted income.

Our varied activities included:
- A Sponsored Dog Walk
- A popular Elvis Night fundraiser
- Being the named charity at large community events such as Ninfield Carnival and Bexhill 100 Classic Car Show, and attending Bexhill Carnival
- A series of smaller but highly valued community fundraising events at pubs.

A key highlight was the creative collaboration with Pints With Purpose, who produced a bespoke beer in support of the charity, sold on tap and in cans in local pubs and additional fundraising with a pub quiz in Rye
.
The annual Winter Market at Cooden Beach Hotel once again proved to be a flagship fundraising event, attracting a strong seasonal turnout, supporting local stallholders, and providing an important opportunity to promote the charity's work while raising unrestricted funds.



Our Community Fundraising Team for 2025/2026 has raised an impressive £12,436.09!

Thank you to everyone who contributed—your support is making a real difference.

Our Year 2025-26











Our Year 2025-26











Drop-in event for caregivers at The Beacon in Eastbourne

Come and meet us

Find out about Volunteering with us, and how our services help local unpaid Carers

Drop in to meet the team and chat to existing Volunteers over coffee and cake.

10am-2pm, Tuesday 16th September

The Gather, Eastbourne Beacon

Our Finances

We continued to improve on last year, with the total balance seeing an increase in reserves of £50,468. This year the total is £578,783 compared to 2025 where the total was £528,295. This shows that over the last 2 years the charity has managed to increase its surpluses by £71,478 - a reassuring increase with pressures on our main income source and increases in ongoing costs.

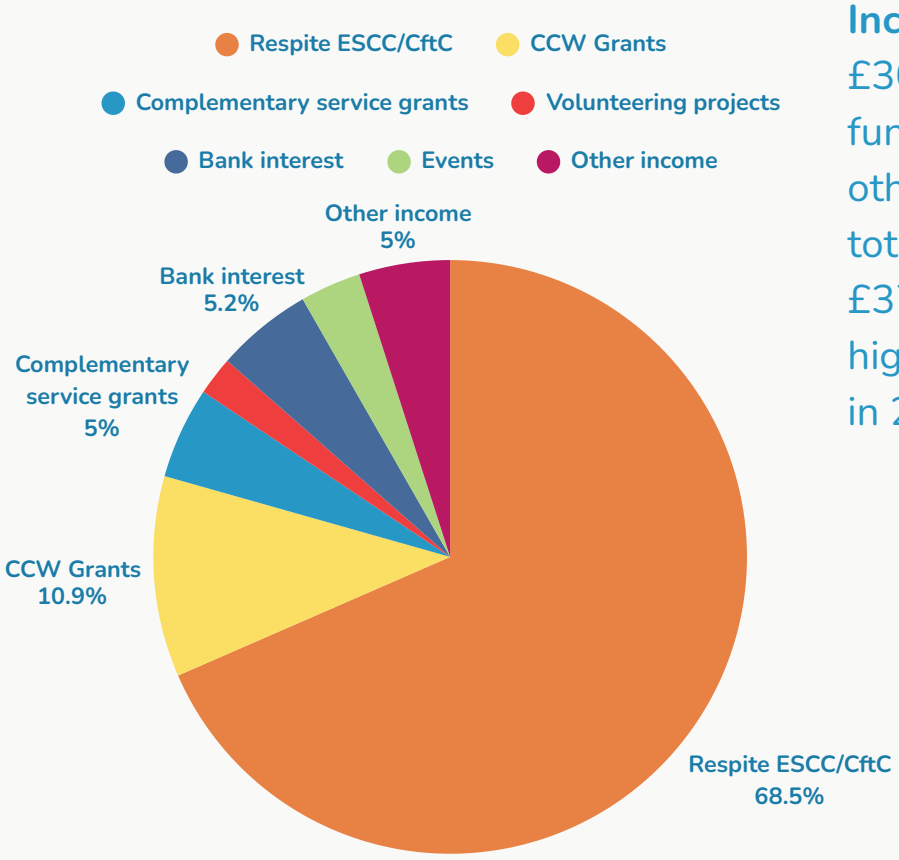
The majority of our income has been received from ESCC in support of our Respite and CCWs and other support services. In addition, the charity has raised funds from donations, other funding bids, events and activities, as well as bank interest received on investing the reserves.

In the past year, 68.5% of our funding was received from East Sussex Council through Care for the Carers. The CCW service, which supported an average of between 35-40% of our Carers at any time, has been invested in with the charity's reserves and externally fundraised income.

There remains a focus on diversifying income to reduce reliance on single sources and increase the sustainability of the charity's services for future years.

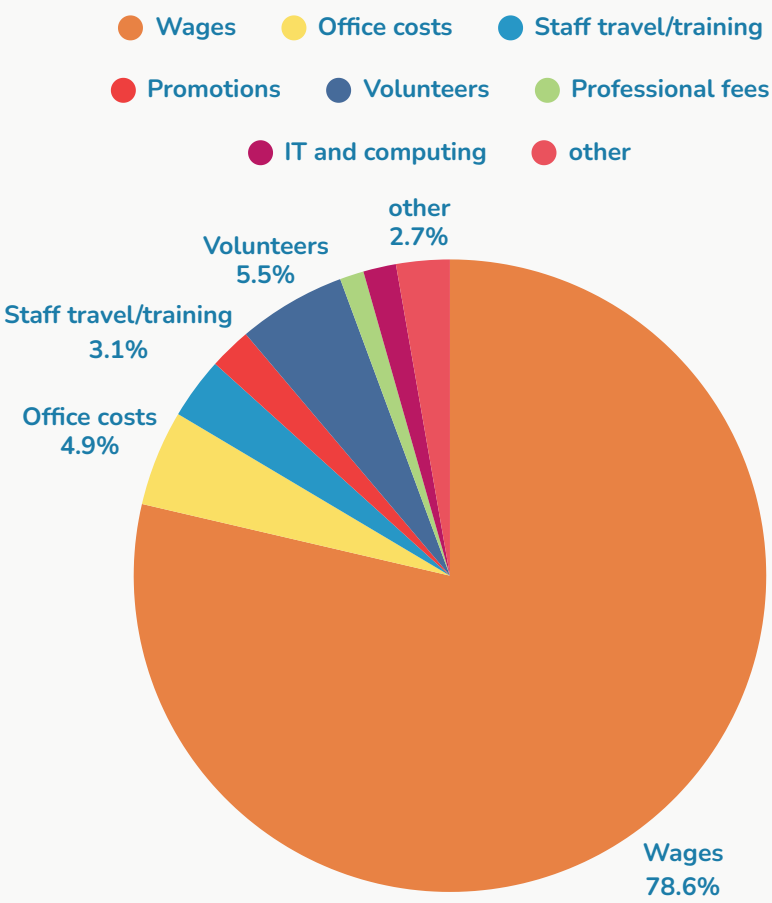
LOOKING AHEAD

We remain in a healthy financial position, but with no planned uplifts in ESCC grants and uncertainty for the future, our reserves will play a vital role in meeting any funding gaps. We are actively seeking new income streams and third-party funding to ensure the long-term sustainability of our services.



Income: We received £305,772 in restricted funding and £69,503 from other sources, making the total income for 2025/26 £375,275. This is £26,746 higher than income received in 2024/25.

Expenditure: The total costs incurred in the year were £324,807. This expenditure is slightly lower than in 2024/25, supported by cost savings made where possible.



Governance

We are so grateful to have a wonderful Board of Trustess who are actively involved in the governance and services of our charity. Many have their own caring experiences, also taking on Volunteering roles for Computer Help at Home, setting up fundraising events and networking regularly on our behalf.

"I've learned how much strength and compassion Carers show, and how vital it is that they receive the right support and understanding."

– Luke Apps, Association of Carers Trustee

"The Trustee role has also made me feel that I am playing a positive part in supporting my fellow Carers. "

– Claire Baldry, Association of Carers Trustee



With thanks to our funders

East Sussex County Council

care for the carers East Sussex

Sussex Community Foundation

Wealden District Council

Chalk Cliff Trust

The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

The Lawson Trust

Lewes Town Council

Hastings Winkle Club

the homity trust

Round Table Great Britain & Ireland

If you would like to join our valued supporters in contributing to the future of our services, find out how you can make a donation by scanning this QR code:









Thank You

To every Carer, Volunteer, and supporter: your dedication makes all the difference. Because of you, unpaid care is seen, valued, and supported. We couldn't do it without you.

01424 722309

104 Sedlescombe Road North, St Leonards On Sea, TN37 7EN

www.associationofcarers.org.uk

Registered charity 1159551

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1159551

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

FOR

ASSOCIATION OF CARERS

Acuity Professional Partnership LLP
Unit 2.02
High Weald House
Glovers End
Bexhill
East Sussex
TN39 5ES

ASSOCIATION OF CARERS

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

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ASSOCIATION OF CARERS

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

Registered Charity number	1159551
Principal address	104 Sedlescombe Road North St. Leonards-on-Sea East Sussex TN37 7EN
Trustees	C Whitehead - Treasurer and Acting Chair L Witten A Thomas J H T Piper - Secretary R Service (resigned 06/2025) L Apps G Scollay (resigned 08/2025) Susan Hammett (resigned 11/2025) Phylis Osborne (appointed 01/2026) Vicki Harrison (appointed 01/2026) Clare Baldry (appointed 11/2025) Joyce Goodhead (under probation) Peter Turnton (under probation)
Independent Examiners	Acuity Professional Partnership LLP Chartered Accountants & Tax Advisers Unit 2.02 High Weald House Glovers End Bexhill East Sussex TN39 5ES
Bankers	Barclays Bank PLC Queens Road Hastings East Sussex

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2026. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Charitable Objects

The charity exists to provide free, volunteer led services to support unpaid carers in East Sussex.
A carer is defined as a relative, partner or friend who provides unpaid care to someone who is disabled due to physical or mental ill health, learning disability or frailty.

Our Mission

To support unpaid carers in East Sussex to continue in their caring role by providing free, high quality, volunteer led services that reduce isolation, promote wellbeing and encourage independence.

Our Vision

A county where unpaid carers feel valued, supported and able to access timely and appropriate help.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance. Services delivered by the charity relieve need by:
- Improving carers' mental and physical wellbeing
- Reducing social isolation
- Preventing carer breakdown
- Reducing pressure on statutory health and care services

Strategic Priorities 2025/26

During the year, the charity worked to three overarching priorities:
1. Developing and sustaining high quality services that reflect carers' needs
2. Strengthening governance, workforce and systems
3. Increasing impact, profile and financial resilience

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Overview of Service Delivery

Association of Carers delivered a comprehensive programme of support throughout 2025/26, monitored through quarterly and annual KPI reporting, outcomes tools, case studies and qualitative feedback.
Demand for respite and emotional wellbeing support remained consistently high. Waiting lists continued to reflect system wide pressures on carers and statutory services.

Respite and Befriending Services

Volunteer Led Respite

Volunteer respite remained the charity's core service, enabling carers to take regular, planned breaks from caring.
During 2025/26:
- 239 individual carers benefited from volunteer respite
- 4,519 volunteer led respite visits were delivered
- An average of 142 carers per quarter received support
- 122 new volunteer matches were completed

Many carers supported were caring for people with dementia, long term health conditions or mental health needs. Carers supporting people at end of life were prioritised for rapid contact and support.
Outcome data and reviews demonstrated that regular respite:
- Improved carers' wellbeing
- Reduced stress and exhaustion
- Enabled carers to sustain their caring role for longer

Community Care Worker (CCW) Respite

CCW respite continued to support carers whose needs were not immediately suitable for volunteer led support.

During the year:
- 97 carers received CCW support
- 1,399 CCW respite visits were delivered

CCW support was particularly effective for carers managing trauma, night time distress, heightened risk or safeguarding concerns, or in areas of low volunteer numbers.
Following the cessation of direct statutory funding for CCWs, the Trustees made a strategic decision to commit reserves and secure trust funding to maintain the service while working towards long term sustainability.

Respite for Healthcare

The Respite for Healthcare offer enabled carers to prioritise their own health.
Across the year:
- 122.5 hours of additional respite were provided to facilitate healthcare, counselling and wellbeing attendance

Case studies showed this flexible support removed practical barriers that would otherwise have prevented carers from attending essential appointments.

Emotional Wellbeing Services

Talk and Support

The Talk and Support service provides weekly telephone based emotional support with trained volunteers over a six month period.
During 2025/26:
- 53 carers accessed the service
- 88% reported improved wellbeing
- 71% felt more able to cope with caring
- 94% reported reduced isolation

Carers described the service as vital during bereavement, hospital admissions, safeguarding situations and during periods of acute stress and loneliness.

Digital Inclusion - Computer Help at Home (CHAH)

The Computer Help at Home service continued to evolve in response to carers' changing needs.
During the year:
- 79 carers accessed CHAH support
- Many carers received multiple sessions
- Support included use of devices, online appointments, video calling, Teams, Zoom and smart technology

Outcome monitoring showed high levels of improved confidence, wellbeing and social connection. CHAH increasingly acted as a gateway into online groups and wellbeing activities.

Peer Support and Group Activities

Carers Cafés
- 24 Carers Cafés were delivered
- Cafés offered social connection, creative activities and informal support
- Volunteers and staff supported carers and cared for individuals together

Lunch Clubs
- 24 Lunch Clubs were delivered
- Feedback consistently highlighted friendship, routine and reduced isolation

Online Sessions
- 21 online sessions were delivered
- Activities included quizzes, bingo and gentle online yoga
- Online provision increased accessibility for carers unable to travel

Impact and Outcomes

Across all services, monitoring demonstrated that carers experienced:
- Improved emotional wellbeing
- Reduced isolation
- Increased confidence and resilience
- Reduced reliance on statutory services

Case studies consistently showed that support prevented crisis and enabled carers to continue caring safely.

Volunteering

The charity places strong emphasis on recognising, valuing and celebrating volunteers. During the year, volunteers were thanked through activities linked to Volunteers' Week, alongside ongoing informal recognition and appreciation. The organisation also recognises commitment and loyalty through the presentation of long service certificates, celebrating volunteers who have given their time and skills over a number of years. These celebrations play an important role in strengthening relationships, improving retention and ensuring volunteers feel valued for the vital contribution they make.

A robust volunteer training and development plan underpins safe, high quality service delivery and volunteer confidence. All volunteers complete a comprehensive induction programme covering the organisation's values, safeguarding, boundaries and role expectations. Ongoing training is offered throughout the year and includes First Aid, Dementia Awareness, Bereavement Awareness, Active Listening and Stroke Awareness, alongside refresher sessions and opportunities for skills development. This structured approach to training ensures volunteers are well prepared, supported and able to respond effectively and compassionately to the diverse and often complex needs of carers and cared for individuals.

During 2025/26:
- 78 volunteer enquiries were received
- 25 volunteers progressed to induction
- 9 inductions were delivered county wide
- 12 training sessions took place with 77 attendees

Volunteer Quality Assurance showed:
- 92% felt appreciated by carers
- 100% felt appreciated by Association of Carers

Investment in inclusive recruitment, training and recognition supported retention despite volunteers facing their own health and life challenges.

Fundraising and Income Generation

Fundraising and income generation continued to play a critical role in sustaining and developing services throughout 2025/26, particularly in the context of rising demand, increased costs, and uncertainty around statutory funding. The charity delivered a diverse and well planned programme of community fundraising, partnerships, trusts and donations, generating both unrestricted and restricted income to support carers across East Sussex.

Community Fundraising and Events

During the year, the charity delivered an active calendar of community fundraising events which strengthened local visibility, deepened relationships with supporters, and generated valuable unrestricted income. Events were hosted across the county and appealed to a broad demographic, helping to reach new audiences while retaining existing supporters.

Activities included:

- A Sponsored Dog Walk at Alexandra Park, Hastings, which successfully engaged families, dog owners and community supporters.
- A popular Elvis Night fundraiser, which attracted strong attendance and demonstrated the appetite for themed social events.
- Being the named charity at large community events such as Ninfield Carnival and Bexhill 100 Classic Car Show, providing significant exposure and fundraising opportunities.
- Attendance at Bexhill Carnival, strengthening awareness of services alongside income generation.
- A series of smaller but highly valued events including a Fundraising Tea Morning at The British Queen Pub in Willingdon, Rock and Roll Bingo nights in Bexhill, and a community pub quiz at Wetherspoons.

A key highlight of the year was the ongoing collaboration with Pints With Purpose, who produced a bespoke beer in support of the charity, sold on tap and in cans in local pubs. This creative partnership generated income, prompted additional fundraising activity including a pub quiz in Rye, and increased engagement with new audiences.

The annual Winter Market at Cooden Beach Hotel once again proved to be a flagship fundraising event, attracting a strong seasonal turnout, supporting local stallholders, and providing an important opportunity to promote the charity's work while raising unrestricted funds.

Business and Community Support

The charity continued to benefit from generous support from local businesses, particularly through prize donations for the annual Christmas Raffle. These contributions played a key role in the success of the raffle and highlighted the strength of local community goodwill towards unpaid carers and the organisation's work.

Regular Giving, Lotteries and Donations

Alongside events, the charity continued to receive unrestricted income through community lotteries, operating across four districts, with Lewes District added during 2025. In addition, a steady stream of monthly and one off individual donations contributed to core costs and helped maintain organisational resilience. This flexible income remains vital in supporting services that cannot easily be funded through restricted grants.

Trusts, Foundations and Restricted Funding

Trust and foundation funding played a particularly important role during the year. The charity successfully secured funding from five sources to support the continuation of the Community Care Worker (CCW) respite service, raising a total of £36,182 towards CCW roles in 2025/26. This funding was essential in enabling the service to continue at a time when statutory funding had ended and demand remained high.

Beyond CCW funding, restricted income was strategically focused on:

- Volunteer recruitment, to address waiting lists and improve capacity
- Additional carer activities, enhancing wellbeing and engagement

Successful awards included funding from Lewes Town Council to recruit volunteers in the local area, and from The Lawson Trust to recruit volunteers in Eastbourne. These awards directly supported the charity's ability to respond to increasing demand for volunteer led respite.

The charity also secured funding from Wealden District Council to deliver an eight month programme of Carers Dance Cafés in Polegate, beginning in March 2025. This activity proved extremely popular and highly valued by carers. Further funding was secured in November 2025 to continue the programme from April 2026.
Smaller but impactful grants enabled enhancements to carers' experiences, including £350 towards Carers Week celebrations and £750 towards festive meals for carers in Eastbourne and From 14 funding applications submitted, 8 resulted in successful awards, reflecting a strong success rate.

Looking Ahead: Fundraising Priorities for 2026/27
Fundraising priorities for the coming year include increasing engagement with local businesses through networking, professional groups and a strengthened LinkedIn presence, with a focus on sponsorship, event support, shared resources and corporate volunteering opportunities.
The charity also aims to grow regular unrestricted income through increased monthly donations and community support, providing greater financial stability and contributing towards the ongoing sustainability of the CCW service. Trust and foundation funding will continue to be pursued to complement this income.
Overall, the Trustees are confident that the breadth and diversity of fundraising activity during 2025/26 has strengthened the charity's financial resilience and positioned the organisation well to respond to future challenges while continuing to support unpaid carers across East Sussex.

Partnerships and Promotion
The charity worked closely with a wide range of partners throughout the year, including East Sussex County Council, Care for the Carers, health and social care partners, voluntary and community sector organisations, and Dementia Action Alliance groups. These partnerships supported effective referral pathways, joint working, information sharing and collaborative approaches to meeting the increasingly complex needs of unpaid carers across the county.
Promotion and communications activity continued to strengthen awareness of the charity and its services. Regular newsletters, social media engagement, attendance at networking events and wider community engagement activities helped to raise the profile of unpaid carers, increase understanding of available support, and contributed to increased referrals and volunteer enquiries. This activity played an important role in ensuring carers were able to access timely and appropriate support, and in sustaining the organisation's visibility within local communities and professional networks.

Safeguarding, Quality and Complaints
Safeguarding procedures operated effectively throughout the year, with clear policies and reporting processes in place to support staff and volunteers. Safeguarding concerns were identified and reported promptly, assessed in a proportionate and timely way, and managed appropriately in line with organisational procedures and safeguarding guidance. Early identification and responsive action often helped to prevent situations from escalating and ensured that carers and cared for individuals were supported safely and sensitively.
Compliments received throughout the year provided strong reassurance to Trustees and highlighted carers' confidence in the organisation, its safeguarding approach, and the professionalism, compassion and commitment of staff and volunteers. Positive feedback consistently reflected carers feeling listened to, supported and safe, and reinforced the importance of maintaining high standards of practice across all services.

Risk Management
Key risks monitored during the year included dependence on limited funding sources, increasing service demand, and volunteer capacity in some localities. Ongoing uncertainty around statutory and grant funding, alongside rising demand from carers with increasingly complex needs, continued to place pressure on services, while volunteer availability varied across geographical areas.
Mitigation measures included continued income diversification, investment in fundraising activity and volunteer recruitment, and proactive monitoring of service demand. Waiting lists and capacity were reviewed regularly, enabling the organisation to prioritise support appropriately, respond to emerging pressures, and plan strategically to maintain safe, sustainable service delivery.

Trustees' priorities for the coming year include:

- **Increasing volunteer numbers to meet demand**, with a continued focus on targeted recruitment, inclusive engagement and strengthened induction and training pathways, ensuring capacity keeps pace with growing and increasingly complex carer needs across all localities.
- **Growing unrestricted income to improve** financial resilience and sustainability, particularly through community fundraising, regular giving, business engagement and diversification of income streams, enabling the charity to respond flexibly to emerging pressures.
- **Securing long term resilience for Community Care Worker (CCW) respite**, through a combination of trust and foundation funding, unrestricted income, and strategic planning to protect this vital service while exploring sustainable funding models.
- **Expanding digital inclusion and wellbeing provision,** building on the success of existing Computer Help at Home support and online wellbeing activities, to reduce isolation, improve access to services, and enable carers to engage in support and self care opportunities regardless of location or mobility.
- **Continuing strong partnership working** with local authorities, health and social care partners, and voluntary and community sector organisations, to strengthen referral pathways, coordinate support, share learning and collaborate to meet carers' needs effectively.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The Association of Carers holds unrestricted reserves to ensure the charity can continue operating during periods of financial uncertainty and, where necessary, to enable services to close in a planned and responsible way. The policy recognises the charity's reliance on statutory funding and the risks associated with changes in government policy or funding levels. Adequate reserves help to maintain continuity of services, meet staff, contractual and safeguarding obligations, and protect Carers and people who use the service from sudden or unplanned disruption. The Board of Trustees has agreed that unrestricted reserves should be sufficient to fund core operational costs for a minimum of nine months. This timeframe aligns with sector guidance and reflects the typical length of service provision, while allowing additional flexibility to support individuals whose needs extend beyond six months. Reserves are calculated to cover all essential costs during a nine month wind down period, including staffing, premises, utilities, redundancy payments and statutory employment costs. The use of reserves is overseen by the Trustees and senior staff through regular financial monitoring and clear authorization processes. The reserves policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains appropriate to the charity's circumstances. authority to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity. The charity's senior management team is comprised of the Charity Manager and a Deputy Manager.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

The organisation is a registered charity Charitable Incorporated Organisation, (CIO) (no. 1159551).

Charity History

- Established on the 1st December 2014 and came into effect from 1st April 2015. The core activities and objectives remained unaltered.
- Previous charity number 1004055, wound up on the 31st March 2015 at a Special General Meeting of the Association of Carers
- 26th March 2015 staff, assets and Trustees all transferred to the new CIO.

Governance

- Trustees are invited and encouraged to attend relevant training sessions on their roles and responsibilities of being a Trustee
- Strategic decisions are made at Trustee meetings by majority vote
- Trustees are advised by the Charity Manager, or other experts as appropriate
- Trustees met monthly throughout 2025 -2026, via virtual platforms and in person.
- All meetings were minuted

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 26/9/26 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr C A Whitehead - Trustee

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Association of Carers
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Association of Carers (the Trust) for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the Trust 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 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do 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.



Deborah A Hargreaves

Acuity Professional Partnership LLP
Unit 2.02
High Weald House
Glovers End
Bexhill
East Sussex
TN39 5ES

Date: 5/10/2026

ASSOCIATION OF CARERS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2026 Total funds £	2025 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		**16,272**	**4,382**	**20,654**	9,666
Charitable activities					
Support of carers		**33,547**	**301,390**	**334,937**	329,166
Investment income	2	**19,684**	**-**	**19,684**	9,697
Total		**69,503**	**305,772**	**375,275**	348,529
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities					
Support of carers		**2,441**	**320,445**	**322,886**	324,571
Other		**1,084**	**837**	**1,921**	2,948
Total		**3,525**	**321,282**	**324,807**	327,519
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**65,978**	**(15,510)**	**50,468**	21,010
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		**251,805**	**276,490**	**528,295**	507,285
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**317,783**	**260,980**	**578,763**	528,295

The notes form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2025 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Intangible assets	6	**1,904**	2,988
Tangible assets	7	**1,198**	2,035
		3,102	5,023
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	**21,406**	20,984
Cash at bank and in hand		**564,434**	524,722
		585,840	545,706
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	9	**(10,179)**	(22,434)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**575,661**	523,272
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**578,763**	528,295
NET ASSETS		**578,763**	528,295
FUNDS	11		
Unrestricted funds		**317,781**	251,805
Restricted funds		**260,982**	276,490
TOTAL FUNDS		**578,763**	528,295

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on ..... and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Mr C A Whitehead - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) '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) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

INCOME

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

EXPENDITURE

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Fixed assets are recorded at cost and depreciated so as to write the cost off over their useful lives.

TAXATION

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

FUND ACCOUNTING

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

VALUE ADDED TAX

Value Added Tax is not recoverable by the charity, and as such is included in the relevant costs in the Statement of Financial Activities.

continued...

2. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2026	2025
	£	£
Bank interest receivable	**19,684**	9,697

3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2026 nor for the year ended 31 March 2025.

TRUSTEES' EXPENSES

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2026 nor for the year ended 31 March 2025.

4. STAFF COSTS

	2026	2025
	£	£
Wages and salaries	**255,431**	264,564
	255,431	264,564

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2026	2025
Support of carers	**11**	11

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

5. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	5,689	3,977	9,666
Charitable activities			
Support of carers	76,515	252,651	329,166
Investment income	9,697	-	9,697
Total	91,901	256,628	348,529
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Support of carers	74,016	250,555	324,571
Other	1,758	1,190	2,948
Total	75,774	251,745	327,519

continued...

5. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
NET INCOME	16,127	4,883	21,010
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	235,678	271,607	507,285
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	251,805	276,490	528,295

6. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer software £
Cost	
At 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026	**7,653**
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2025	**4,665**
Charge for year	**1,084**
At 31 March 2026	**5,749**
Net book value	
At 31 March 2026	**1,904**
At 31 March 2025	2,988

7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
Cost			
At 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026	**12,123**	**3,054**	**15,177**
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2025	**11,430**	**1,713**	**13,143**
Charge for year	**173**	**663**	**836**
At 31 March 2026	**11,603**	**2,376**	**13,979**
Net book value			
At 31 March 2026	**520**	**678**	**1,198**
At 31 March 2025	693	1,341	2,034

continued...

8. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2026	2025
	£	£
Trade debtors	1	(1)
Prepayments and accrued income	21,405	20,985
	21,406	20,984

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2026	2025
	£	£
Social security and other taxes	4,616	5,461
Accruals and deferred income	5,563	16,973
	10,179	22,434

10. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2026 Total funds	2025 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	2,650	452	3,102	5,023
Current assets	325,672	260,168	585,840	545,706
Current liabilities	(10,541)	362	(10,179)	(22,434)
	317,781	260,982	578,763	528,295

11. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.25	Net movement in funds	At 31.3.26
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	247,917	67,061	314,978
Designated Fund - Lease	3,888	(1,085)	2,803
	251,805	65,976	317,781
Restricted funds			
Computer Help at Home	16,625	-	16,625
Talk and Support	33,341	-	33,341
Respite East Sussex/CftC	207,130	(4,265)	202,865
Carers Community Work	19,394	(11,945)	7,449
Volunteering/Projects Fund	-	702	702
	276,490	(15,508)	260,982
TOTAL FUNDS	528,295	50,468	578,763

continued...

11. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	69,503	(2,442)	67,061
Designated Fund - Lease	-	(1,085)	(1,085)
	69,503	(3,527)	65,976
Restricted funds			
Respite East Sussex/CftC	256,859	(261,124)	(4,265)
Carers Community Work	41,033	(52,978)	(11,945)
Volunteering/Projects Fund	7,880	(7,178)	702
	305,772	(321,280)	(15,508)
TOTAL FUNDS	375,275	(324,807)	50,468

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.25 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	229,832	18,085	247,917
Designated Fund - Lease	5,846	(1,958)	3,888
	235,678	16,127	251,805
Restricted funds			
Computer Help at Home	16,625	-	16,625
Talk and Support	33,341	-	33,341
Respite East Sussex/CftC	206,223	907	207,130
Carers Community Work	15,418	3,976	19,394
	271,607	4,883	276,490
TOTAL FUNDS	507,285	21,010	528,295

continued...

11. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	91,901	(73,816)	18,085
Designated Fund - Lease	-	(1,958)	(1,958)
	91,901	(75,774)	16,127
Restricted funds			
Respite East Sussex/CftC	252,651	(251,744)	907
Carers Community Work	3,977	(1)	3,976
	256,628	(251,745)	4,883
TOTAL FUNDS	348,529	(327,519)	21,010

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.26 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	229,832	85,146	314,978
Designated Fund - Lease	5,846	(3,043)	2,803
	235,678	82,103	317,781
Restricted funds			
Computer Help at Home	16,625	-	16,625
Talk and Support	33,341	-	33,341
Respite East Sussex/CftC	206,223	(3,358)	202,865
Carers Community Work	15,418	(7,969)	7,449
Volunteering/Projects Fund	-	702	702
	271,607	(10,625)	260,982
TOTAL FUNDS	507,285	71,478	578,763

continued...

11. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	161,404	(76,258)	85,146
Designated Fund - Lease	-	(3,043)	(3,043)
	161,404	(79,301)	82,103
Restricted funds			
Respite East Sussex/CftC	509,510	(512,868)	(3,358)
Carers Community Work	45,010	(52,979)	(7,969)
Volunteering/Projects Fund	7,880	(7,178)	702
	562,400	(573,025)	(10,625)
TOTAL FUNDS	723,804	(652,326)	71,478

12. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no reportable related party transactions during the year.

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	2026 £	2025 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations received (including Gift Aid Tax refunded)	**20,654**	9,666
Investment income		
Bank interest receivable	**19,684**	9,697
Charitable activities		
Fundraising events	**38,967**	17,398
Grants	**295,970**	311,768
	334,937	329,166
Total incoming resources	**375,275**	348,529
EXPENDITURE		
Charitable activities		
Wages	**255,431**	264,564
Light and heat	**1,788**	2,070
Staff travel and training	**10,225**	15,894
Publicity and promotions	**6,973**	3,217
Volunteer travel and training	**17,959**	9,899
Other professional fees	**3,984**	2,299
	296,360	297,943
Other		
Amortisation of intangible fixed assets	**1,084**	1,761
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	**837**	1,187
	1,921	2,948
Support costs		
Finance		
Bank charges	**104**	157
Other		
Insurance	**1,997**	2,006
Telephone	**2,860**	2,231
Carried forward	**4,857**	4,237

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	2026	2025
	£	£
Other		
Brought forward	**4,857**	4,237
Postage and stationery	**1,654**	1,760
Rent and rates	**11,259**	9,863
IT and computing	**5,444**	6,510
Repairs and renewals	**854**	1,654
	24,068	24,024
Governance costs		
Sundries	**584**	857
Independent examiner's fees	**1,770**	1,590
	2,354	2,447
Total resources expended	**324,807**	327,519
Net income	**50,468**	21,010