STRATFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL

A charitable incorporated organisation
no.1164662

TRUSTEES' REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2025

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Hawthornden Foundation

Stratford Literary Festival
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2025

The Trustees submit their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

The aims and objectives of the charity are:

- to advance education by promoting and providing opportunities for the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of literature and the arts, in particular through promoting and running a literary festival and educational outreach activities primarily in the Stratford-upon-Avon area.

- to provide relief to those at a social disadvantage because of age or ill health through literary related activities which are designed to relieve loneliness or isolation and encourage a sense of purpose and self-worth.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on Charities and Public Benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

Festival

The Festival marked 18 years in 2025 and delivered two festivals, in May and October. This was our most successful year to date in terms of ticket sales and this was a result of a strong programme and increased spend on marketing - especially digital marketing.

The year saw continued and increased support from the Hawthornden Foundation which has shown a commitment to literary festivals in the UK. Its core funding support has enabled us to engage fundraisers and marketing professionals whose remit is to put the festival on strong foundations for the future. We have also put our Friends and Benefactors Membership scheme on to an online platform which has enabled us to increase membership and have a better CRM.

The Festival is also committed to supporting emerging writers by offering workshops run by professional creative writing tutors, and writers' weekends at which they can learn their craft and share experience. We also offer free or discounted tickets at the festival so income is not a barrier and to encourage them to bring their children along to events.

Schools

We continued our support of schools in 2025. We take authors into schools to talk about their books and follow each visit with a resource pack to ensure each visit has a legacy.

We run bedtime story parties, inviting primary-aged children and their parents to write a story together and share it at a party after school.

We run a My Author project with children exploring the themes of an author's work through creative writing, art and drama. The author then returns to school to see what they have done. This project is especially aimed at reluctant readers.

We also subsidise events for schools with very tight budgets and a high pupil premium with the support of our funding partners.

Prisons

We deliver day-long story writing workshops in prisons across the country teaching prisoners to write a bedtime story for their children and in 2025 delivered 11 such workshops. These stories are then professionally designed and printed so that the prisoners can share them with their children. Our aim is to use stories to lessen the trauma of separation for families, build connections and discourage reoffending. Demand for these workshops is growing, with funding from our funding partners supporting contributions where possible from the prisons themselves.

Community

Our Books with Friends monthly book group thrived and celebrated 10 years of delivering valued sessions to older people, often those less socially connected.

TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2025

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The results for the year are set out in the annexed Statement of Financial Activities. There was a surplus of £23,920 on the year's activities. The balance sheet at the end of the year is satisfactory.

The unrestricted reserves in hand are £137,858. The trustees have reviewed the reserves policy and believe that, in normal circumstances, it is prudent to hold reserves of not less than 6 months expenses to provide a contingency against unexpected shortfalls in income, which is the primary risk faced by the charity.

The Trustees believe that the charity can continue as a going concern for at least the next twelve months and that, as a result, no changes need to be made to this Report and Financial Statements.

The charity's 2025 sources of funds are:

Ticket and book sales	189,756
Sponsorship	20,050
Grants	26,448
Donations	46,237
Other income	24,737
Total	307,228

Stratford Literary Festival
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Constitution
Stratford Literary Festival is a charitable incorporated organisation governed by its Constitution.

Trustees
Neil Davis (appointed April 2025)
David Fletcher (resigned November 2025)
Philip Heath (died 19th June 2025)
Diana Owen (Acting Chair)
Madeleine Parker
Emma Smith (Appointed July 2025)
Fiona Stark (Appointed August 2025)
Julia Wheeler

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity. The charity trustees will make available to each new charity trustee, on or before his or her first appointment, a copy of the charity's latest Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements, the Charity Commission booklet about their legal obligations under charity law, and a copy of the Constitution.

Remuneration to Julia Wheeler is given for her services as an interviewer, not for her duties as a trustee. No expenses are paid to trustees for the fulfilment of their duties as trustees.

Chief Executive
Annie Ashworth is Festival Director and Chief Executive.

Independent Examiners
Cooper Adams Chartered Accountants, Registered in England & Wales, Company number 03861448.

Bankers
Lloyds Bank plc, 25 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HN. Registered in England and Wales no. 2065.

Charity's principal address
33 Sanctus Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9AE.

SUPPORTERS

Stratford Literary Festival is very grateful to the following organisations for their support for our activities in 2024 and 2025:

Lead Sponsor

Pragnell

Major Supporters

Hawthornden Foundation

Event Sponsors and Advertisers in 2025

David Fickling Books; Stradfas; Royal Shakespeare Company; Dobson Grey, Warwick Arts Centre; The Healthy Back Bag Company; Tim Cox Associates; Cooper Adams Chartered Accountants; Jackson West Solicitors; Montpelier Gallery; Paragon Bank; Tim Cox Associates; Stratford Bed Company; Stratford Society

Partners and Sponsors-in-kind

The Week;
The Week magazine; Buildbase; Prontaprint Stratford upon Avon; The Arden Hotel;
Crown Plaza Hotel Stratford; Doubletree Hilton Hotel, Welcombe Hotel; The BookTaster, Heart of England Community Rail Partnership

Booksellers

Waterstones Stratford upon Avon and Kenilworth Books

Trusts

The Big Give; Heart of England; The Allen Lane Foundation; The 29th May 1961 Charity; The Seccombe Trust; Stratford Town Trust; Hedley Foundation; Victoria Wood Foundation; World of Books

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TRUSTEES' REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2025

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities in respect of the Financial Statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102)
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Board on 1st July 2026



Signed by Neil Davis on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Stratford Literary Festival
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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
for the year ended 31 December 2025

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Stratford Literary Festival ('the Charity')
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are set out on pages 8 to 15.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity's trustees of the Charity 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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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.

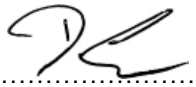
Independent examiner's statement
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity 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 accounting 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.



……

David C Cooper FCA
For and on behalf of Cooper Adams Ltd
Chartered Accountants
12 Payton Street
Stratford upon Avon
Warwickshire
CV37 6UA
Date: 1st July 2026

Stratford Literary Festival
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Note s	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds	Restricted income funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Incoming resources	*3*					
Donations and legacies		56,324	0	16,361	72,685	50,265
Charitable activities		219,948	0	14,595	234,543	230,903
Total		**276,272**	**0**	**30,956**	**307,228**	**281,168**
Resources expended	*5*					
Raising funds		(33,636)	0	0	(33,636)	(21,322)
Charitable activities		(218,716)	0	(30,956)	(249,672)	(213,043)
Total		**(252,352)**	**0**	**(30,956)**	**(283,308)**	**(234,365)**
Net income/(expenditure)		**23,920**	**0**	**0**	**23,920**	**46,803**
Transfers between funds		20,000	(20,000)	0	0	0
Net movement in funds		**43,920**	**(20,000)**	**0**	**23,920**	**46,803**
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		93,938	20,000	0	113,938	67,136
Total funds carried forward		**137,858**	**0**	**0**	**137,858**	**113,939**

The notes on pages 11 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

Stratford Literary Festival
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at 31 December 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted income funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
		£		£	£	£
Current Assets						
Debtors & Prepayments	*8*	6,347	0	0	6,347	9,263
Cash at bank	*10*	201,712	0	0	201,712	157,008
Total		**208,059**	**0**	**0**	**208,059**	**166,271**
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	*9*	(70,201)	0	0	(70,201)	(52,332)
Net current assets/(liabilities)		**137,858**	**0**	**0**	**137,858**	**113,939**
Total net assets		**137,858**	**0**	**0**	**137,858**	**113,939**
Funds of the Charity	*12*					
Restricted income funds		0	0	0	0	0
Designated Funds		0	0	0	0	20,000
Unrestricted funds		137,858	0	0	137,858	93,939
Total funds		**137,858**	**0**	**0**	**137,858**	**113,939**

The notes on pages 11 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

Approved by the Board on 1st July 2026



Signed by Neil Davis on behalf of the Board of Trustees

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the year ended 31 December 2025

NOTE 1 - BASIS OF PREPARATION

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements 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 Companies Act 2006.

The charity has taken advantage of the following disclosure exemption in preparing these financial statements as permitted by FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland': the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows.

NOTE 2 - ACCOUNTING POLICIES

2.1 Income

- Income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity becomes entitled to the resources, and when it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources, and when the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.
- There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by the FRS 102 or SORP.
- Grants and donations are only included in the SOFA when the general income recognition criteria are met.
- Contractual income and performance related grants are only included in the SOFA once the charity has provided the related goods or services or met the performance related conditions.
- Donated services and facilities that are consumed immediately are recognised as income with an equivalent amount recognised as an expense under the appropriate heading in the SOFA.
- The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the trustees' annual report.

2.2 Expenditure and 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 obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.
- The charity has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts.

2.3 Assets

- Debtors are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount after any trade discounts. Subsequently, they are measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be received.

2.4 Funds

- Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.
- Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

	Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Restricted income funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
NOTE 3 - ANALYSIS OF INCOME					
Donations and legacies					
Donations and gifts	43,683	0	2,553	46,236	25,274
General grants provided by government/other charities	12,641	0	13,808	26,449	24,991
Donated goods, facilities and services	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**56,324**	**0**	**16,361**	**72,685**	**50,265**
Charitable activities					
Ticket and book sales	189,756	0	0	189,756	151,532
Sponsorship	14,000	0	0	14,000	51,400
Advertising	6,050	0	0	6,050	5,000
Schools programme	0	0	9,355	9,355	5,225
Prisons programme	0	0	5,240	5,240	4,700
Other	10,142	0	0	10,142	13,046
Total	**219,948**	**0**	**14,595**	**234,543**	**230,903**

	Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Restricted income funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£		£	£	£
NOTE 4 - DONATED GOODS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES					
None	0	0	0	0	0
	0	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Donated goods, facilities and services are valued at market rates.

NOTE 5 - ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE

Raising funds					
Director's salary costs	12,716	0	0	12,716	12,150
Other staff costs	5,967	0	0	5,967	5,075
Fundraising costs	14,953	0	0	14,953	4,097
Total	**33,636**	**0**	**0**	**33,636**	**21,322**
Charitable activities					
Authors and performers	52,298	0	3,128	55,426	36,523
Venue Hire	45,790	0	0	45,790	36,773
Staff costs	9,451	0	0	9,451	11,702
Other Festival costs	27,201	0	0	27,201	18,302
Schools programme	0	0	6,162	6,162	7,145
Prisons programme	0	0	15,576	15,576	10,665
Books with friends	0	0	2,393	2,393	4,097
Other Projects	0	0	0	0	12,811
Director's salary costs	19,074	0	0	19,074	18,225
Other staff costs	7,030	0	1,920	8,950	7,613
Marketing and PR	40,791	0	0	40,791	33,039
Overheads	17,081	0	1,777	18,858	16,148
Total	**218,716**	**0**	**30,956**	**249,672**	**213,043**

NOTE 6 - DETAILS OF CERTAIN ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE

Accountancy fee	2,750	0	0	2,750	2,575
Total	**2,750**	**0**	**0**	**2,750**	**2,575**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the year ended 31 December 2025

NOTE 7 - PAID EMPLOYEES

	2025	2024
	£	£
Staff Costs		
Salaries and wages	48,098	44,346
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	275	0
Total staff costs	48,373	44,346

No employees received employee benefits for the reporting period of more than £60,000

Total amount paid to key management personnel for their services to the charity		
Salary	32,200	31,775
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	248	0
Total	32,448	31,775
Average head count in the year	3	2
The parts of the charity in which the employees work		
Fundraising	1	1
Charitable Activities	2	1
Total	3	2

NOTE 8 - DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS

Trade debtors	6,210	7,174
Prepayments and accrued income	137	2,089
Total	**6,347**	**9,263**

All amounts fall due within one year

NOTE 9 - CREDITORS AND ACCRUALS

Trade creditors	0	0
Payments received on account	42,886	38,510
Accruals and deferred income	17,552	9,167
Taxation and social security	9,763	4,655
Total	**70,201**	**52,332**

All amounts fall due within one year

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the year ended 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
NOTE 10 - CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND		
Short term deposits	188,032	142,817
Cash at bank and on hand	13,680	14,191
Total	**201,712**	**157,008**

Note 11 - FAIR VALUE OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Debtors are less than £7,000 and there are no financial instruments or investments so the charity carries no risk in these areas.

NOTE 12 - CHARITY FUNDS

Fund names	*Fund balances brought forward* £	*Income* £	*Expen-diture* £	*Transfers* £	*Fund balances carried forward* £
Restricted funds					
Books with Friends	0	4,313	(4,313)	0	0
Schools Project	0	9,355	(9,355)	0	0
Prisons Project	0	17,288	(17,288)	0	0
Sub Total	**0**	**30,956**	**(30,956)**	**0**	**0**
Designated Funds	20,000	0	0	(20,000)	0
Unrestricted funds	93,939	276,272	(252,352)	20,000	137,859
Total	**113,939**	**307,228**	**(283,308)**	**0**	**137,859**

Restricted funds:

Book with Friends is a monthly book group for older and socially isolated people in the community.

Schools Project take authors into schools and look to fund books for children where possible to encourage reading.

Prisons Project sends authors into prisons to help inmates write bedtime stories for their children.

Designated funds:

The grant from Stratford District Council has been utilised to support operations in 2025

NOTE 13 - TRANSACTIONS WITH TRUSTEES AND OTHER RELATED PARTIES

Trustee remuneration and benefits

Trustee name	*Legal authority*	*Remuneration*	*Pension*	*Other*	*TOTAL*
		£	£	£	£
Julia Wheeler	Interviewer Contract	4,056			4,056

Remuneration to Julia Wheeler is given for her services as an interviewer, not for her duties as a trustee. No expenses are paid to trustees for fulfilment of their duties as trustees.

Transactions with related parties

Name of the trustee or related party	*Relationship to charity*	*Description of transaction(s)*	*Amount*
None			

Occasionally donations are given by trustees. No benefits are given in return for these donations.