Hastings Thrives 2025

Annual Report







Hastings Thrives
EMPOWERING OUR CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE

Chair's Report

Emma Shuttleworth



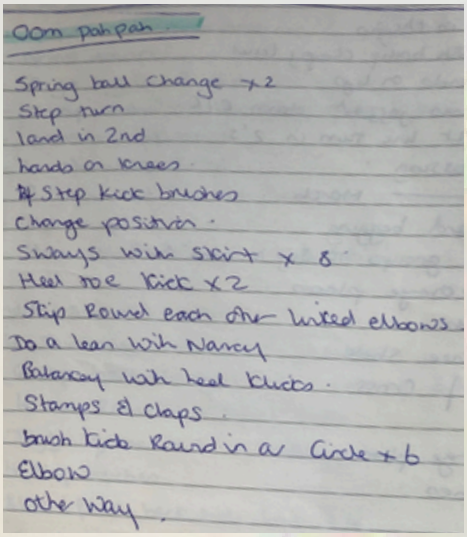
Science is my passion and why I became a science teacher, so it was with great pleasure we supported Science Week this year. I ran sessions in schools on the regeneration of kelp forests along our sea shore and we co-ordinated a successful science day at The Stade on Hastings beachfront. It was tremendous to work together with so many local organisations. including Sussex Wildlife Trust who gave a talk and beach walk to families, as well as having a very engaging stall. And Energise East Sussex who provided hands on activities and advice on home energy savings and solar panels. There were so many people of all ages continually coming through the door and actively engaging in a very positive way. A great success.

We continued throughout the year with our successful musical theatre course and songwriting support, for which we are very grateful to our wonderful teachers Suzie Dunster, Becky Knight and Andy Mersh.

We benefitted from Post Code Lottery funding which enable us to enrich our provision and develop freeplay music, where small groups of young neurodiverse people can explore playing musical instruments with the beautifully calm Yair Katz. It has been sad to see the loss of music in our schools and opportunities for young people to explore and engage. We also explored food creatively with engaging Isabelle Endreo from The Rainbow Kitchen Magic and amazing local artist Lorna Crabbe.

And finally, a big thank you to all our wonderful volunteers and support staff who make it all happen.

Musical Theatre Courses



We ran four musical theatre courses over 2025 for the Holiday Activities and Food Initiative, a government initiative managed by East Sussex County Council, and also The PostCode Lottery. Aimed at young people on income-related school benefits, as well as those with other criteria like SEND, fostered, adopted, child carers etc. The courses are tremendously popular and unusual because they engage secondary school aged young people.

The classes focus on fun starting and finishing with games which build trusting bonds and learning. Dance provides physical activity and co-ordination skills, which some neurodiverse young people need to grow. As they develop confidence they work as groups and individuals to act out scenes from musicals. Singing provides a great feel good factor with better breathing and group bonding.

At the end we do a mini performance to parents, carers, friends, and relatives, to celebrate learning and achievement. Each person receives a personalised certificate celebrating their strengths.



Part of the funding includes providing food. As young people arrive they have access to nutritious breakfast, snacks and then lunch. We find each group has different fruit preferences, but strawberries never fail :)

All workshops culminate in a mini performance on the final day to a selection of parents and carers, followed by a short presentation of certificates for their individual achievements.

Easter

We gave the young people a WOW experience, taking them to see the Wizard of Oz at the De La Warr Pavillion. The addition of the theatre trip at the start of the week was a fantastic way to inspire the children and get them excited about performing arts. The show was performed by local young people of similar age which made it accessible and helped them to visualise themselves on stage. It also allowed them access to culture and challenged their ability to focus. They were able to discuss the show and use critical thinking skills.

During the 3 day workshop learning dances and scenes from 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Oliver', 'Matilda' and 'Willy Wonka and The Chocolate Factory'.



Easter - the stats

22 children - 14 questionnaires completed

What have you enjoyed this week?
Making friends x 13
Playing games x 14
Learning dances x 14
Working in a group x 11
Rehearsing scenes x 12
Other - Having fun, snacks, acting

What skills do you think you have developed this week?
Confidence x 14
Dancing x 13
Acting x 14
Working in a group x 10
Creativity and having ideas x 13
Other - Willingness to come out of my comfort zone

If we were to run another course, would you come again?
14 x Yes

Parent feedback

"Both have been so well supported allowing their confidence to grow! Developed interpersonal skills as well as singing, dancing and acting. Thank you so much."

*"Yes, both S***** and K***** absolutely love everything and their confidence grows each time."*

*"Yes, A*** has really overcome her fears this week and integrated with other children her age. A massive achievement - thank you."*

A hasn't stopped singing the songs since it ended and is still talking about it. I really thought it was a waste of time signing up as I didn't think she would stay at all, I am so pleased for her that she managed it and enjoyed it, that was very much down to Suzy. I am very grateful after 18 months of doing nothing. See you next holidays :)"***

*"Yes, it helps P***** to work in a group. He doesn't get bullied here (as opposed to at school.) It has really helped to grow M******'s confidence."*

*"Yes it was such a treat! This is the only club they talk about re-attending. They need to develop
their self-esteem and confidence with people they don't know - this really helps!"*

Teacher Feedback

One attendee was highly anxious and had not been in school for 18 months. Her mother requested to stay with her daughter while she was supported to join in slowly and initially helping to run the games rather than be immediately involved. She was given a lot of time to chat with staff and praised for all efforts, no matter how small. She happily attended all 3 days and had a solo moment in the final show, which was a huge achievement for her and very rewarding to see. She was given a special award for bravery and challenge!

Summer 1

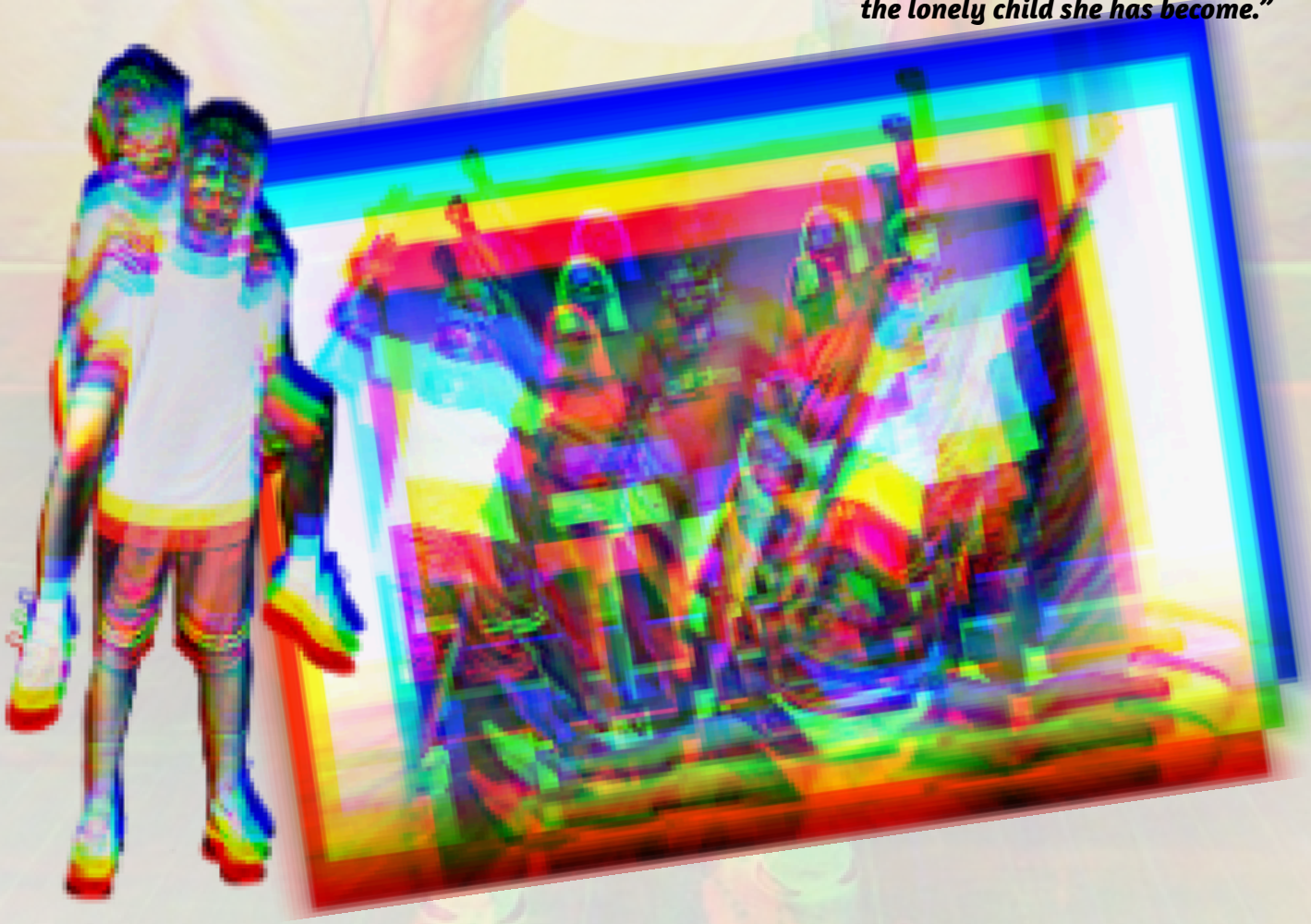
The workshop consisted of learning numbers, songs and scenes from 'Newsies', 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'The Adams Family' with the addition of songs and dances created independently by a few children.



Amazing. My daughter usually spends so much time alone in her own world but you have supported her so well and she can't wait to come back next time."

"Yes she gained lots of confidence to the point she was centre stage for one piece!

Some of the other kids made a big effort to involve her which made her feel part of a team, instead of the lonely child she has become."



Summer 1 - the stats

27 Children. 23 exit questionnaires

What have you enjoyed this week?
Making friends x 22
Playing games x 23
Learning dances x 22
Singing Songs x 12
Working in a group x 16
Rehearsing scenes x 20
Other - "everything" and "I loved all of it!"

What skills do you think you have developed this week?
Confidence x 21
Singing x 10
Dancing x 18
Acting x 17
Working in a group x 18
Creativity and having ideas x 15
Other - "Resilience"

If we were to run another course, would you come again?
23 x Yes

Parent feedback

*"R**** has really loved attending this week. Her confidence and skills have definitely increased!"*

*"M** was initially anxious about joining the course as he didn't have his friends there. He felt immediately welcomed and has made new friends. He definitely enjoyed himself and seemed to grow in confidence. Thank you very much."*

"Enjoyed the team work, the choreography and helping others."

*"N*** has had an amazing time and her confidence has grown massively. She was worried on day 1, but by day 4 she didn't want it to end. Thank you."*

*E***** has thoroughly enjoyed this week and has come every day buzzing and talking about all the things he has been doing."*

Teacher Feedback

The overall atmosphere of the week was one of kindness, support, inclusion and creativity. And the biggest success this week was working with returning children and seeing how much they have developed since starting with Hastings Thrives.

Two brothers are now taking part with much less support and are confident in using strategies to self-regulate when required. Another girl with severe anxiety who has spent the last two years out of education, was able to take lead roles in numbers, and on the last day she managed to take part in a few hours of the workshop without her mother in the room, which was a first for her.

The amount of input from Becky and I is gradually decreasing and we are finding that the children are much more eager to create, teach and lead independently from us. They are confident when expressing their views and ideas, and we are allowing much more of the content to be driven by them and their interests. There is a real sense of collaboration rather than teacher led learning which is fantastic to watch and makes us very proud!

Summer 2

The workshop consisted of learning numbers, songs and scenes from 'Little Shop of Horrors',
'Oliver' and 'Alice in Wonderland' with the addition of songs and dances created independently by a few children.



Summer 2 - the stats

21 Children. 17 exit questionnaires

What have you enjoyed this week?

Making friends x 12
Playing games x 17
Learning dances x 16
Singing Songs x 4
Working in a group x 16
Rehearsing scenes x 16
Other - "Doing the show"
Other - "showing my solo dance and being able to make it up myself"

What skills do you think you have developed this week?

Confidence x 17
Singing x 10
Dancing x 17
Acting x 17
Working in a group x 14

If we were to run another course, would you come again?

17 x Yes

Parent feedback

*"J**** in particular absolutely loved this week. Watching him dance properly choreographed pieces in the parent viewing was joyful - he was so happy, grinning from ear to ear! The group was exceptionally inclusive for R***** who dabbled in and out at his leisure very happily! THANK YOU!"*

*"I am really happy with the course, I think G*** had a great experience which has helped build her confidence and kept her positively busy."*

*"A*** has done well to cope with the changes this week. She loves to attend this HAF course and loves the staff. She made a friend which really made her happy this week and has been excellent for her socialisation. Thank you so much!"*

"I have noticed her confidence growing and I was so proud of her for doing a solo! Amazing!"

"The staff have been so kind to my daughter and she has felt very safe and happy this week."

Teacher Feedback

The biggest success of this week was the overwhelming sense of ownership from the children. They were so eager to create independently and take the lead whenever there was an opportunity to do so. They worked enthusiastically and efficiently towards their common goal, with staff being called upon for guidance and support when needed.

One young girl who had a high level of need was eager to perform a solo dance but was struggling to rehearse, so two older children took her to a separate area and choreographed a dance with her. She was so happy to be supported in this way and she performed with confidence.

Autumn half term & winter

We ran 2 x 2 day courses over the autumn and winter holidays. The young people learned dances and scenes from 'Shrek,' 'Bugsy Malone,' and 'Newsies' which they performed in a short showcase at the end of the second day. The Autumn course at St Richards had 32 attendees and the Winter one in Ore had 14 attendees. Questionnaires were not taken for these. It was much more difficult to reach young people in Ore, which is an area of deprivation, than in a school environment where people are used to going. In addition the Christmas course followed at long term and children were really tired from this.





Science week





Theme: Change and Adapt

5 April Science Day

We joined with several organisations to run a Science Day at The Stade. Leading up to the day, our Chair, Emma Shuttleworth, ran sessions in primary schools about the rejuvenation of kelp forests along the south coast, mixing art and science for learning. Participants included The Wildlife Trust, who gave guided beach tours to families; Silverdale Primary and Energise East Sussex.

There were some fantastic active engagement activities from making volcanoes to renewable energy. We had a wide variety of fruit available as we promoted 25 plant foods a week for health and wellbeing.

Over 250 people attended with a diverse range of ages. Feedback was very consistent with people saying they loved it and wanted more. Young children loved the volcano in the sand, but other than this there were some very diverse favourites listed.

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The Wildlife Trusts

Food art

Local artist Lorna Crabbe joined us for some food art. This was so much fun and everyone enjoyed her creativity. Neurodiverse young people can have difficulty with food - which has a complexity of texture, taste, colour. Having fun with food invites creativity and expanding horizons to make the everyday extraordinary.





Freeplay Music

Music is disappearing from our schools and where they do have access it is highly organised with little chance for young people explore freely. This is compounded by Hastings being an impoverished area, so many people have little or no access to instruments and playing music outside of the school environment.

Lifesize created a space with musical instruments in the Clifton Centre for music therapy. We took the opportunity to share the space and work with music therapist Yair Katz. We provided a space after school and in the holidays for neurodiverse young people to explore sound and instruments freely in small groups of up to six. Thanks to the postcode Lottery we could offer this free at with an option to donate for those who could afford it.

What we found and surprised us most was that although the drum kit was very popular, most young people organised themselves to make sure it was shared. ❤️

They were also able to cope with multiple sounds and still concentrate, holding their own playing and learning in what could be quite a cacophonous environment. It was also a chance for siblings to come together and share space and learning.

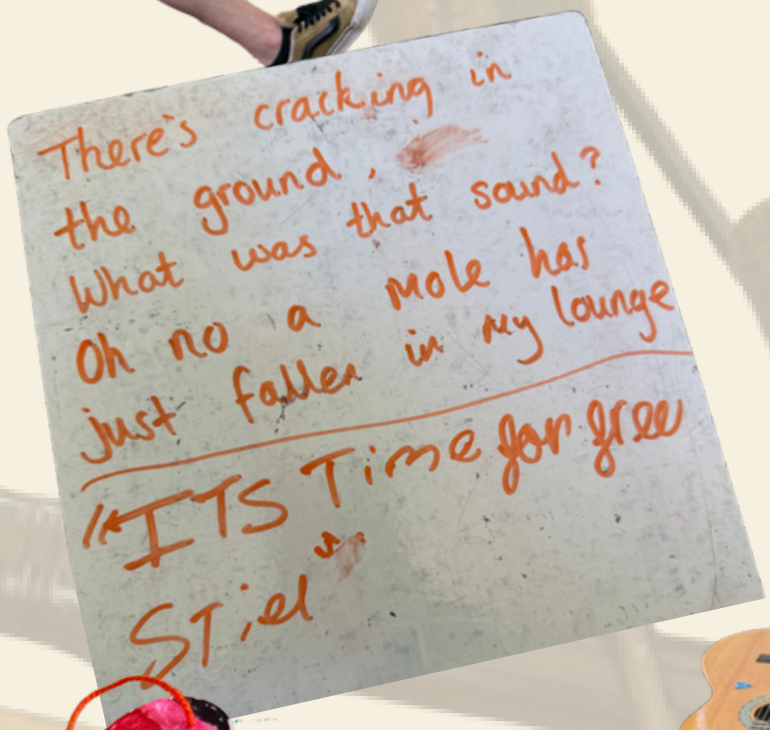
The most common instrument young people decided was their instrument was the drum - banging a very loud rhythmical and changing pattern, while feeling its vibration throughout the body.

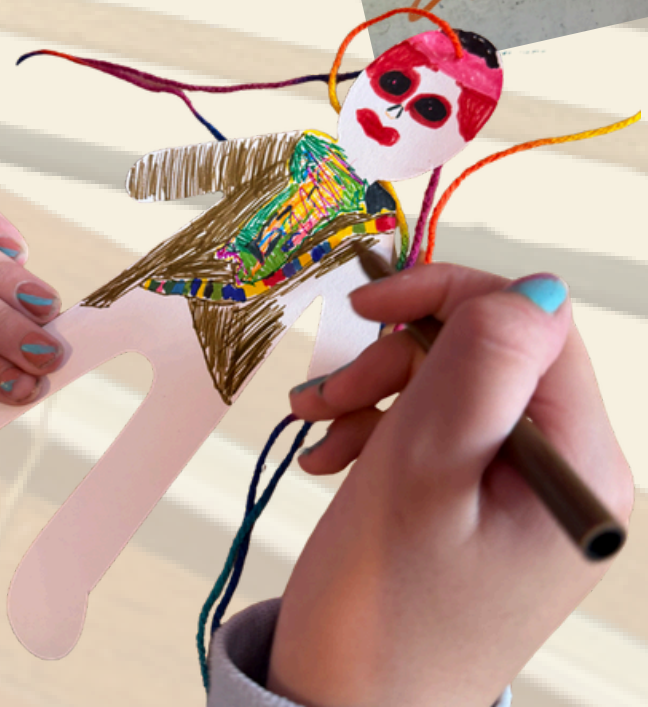
Songwriting

Andy Mersh continued to deliver song writing throughout 2025, including developing individual and group skills. Young neurodiverse people were able to access 4 free sessions. A few young people whose parents were unable to afford sessions and who desperately wanted to continue were offered 10 free places.

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We've Got to Fight

Chorus
We've got to fight,
Throughout the night. Take back our right,
To live our lives.

It's do or die,
To stay alive.
The hands of time,
Will be our guide.

Verse 1 (Earnie)
It's a terrible waste,
For them to eat their eggs.
It's a big disgrace,
To see that smile on their face.
I've got to take those smiles away!
Chorus

Verse 2 (Earnie)
It's a terrible waste,
For them to live their way.
It's a crying shame,
So I will make them pay.
I've got to take those smiles away. Take them ALL away!

Chorus

Accounts

Detailed Audited Accounts are available separately

Impact in numbers

People accessing science
440

Young people accessing songwriting
21

People accessing Musical Theatre
74

People accessing musical instruments
18

Schools involved
4

Thanks very much to Laura Dawson, Finance Manager at HVA.

Hastings Thrives had cash funds of £ at the end of 2025, with a total income of £16,898 and expenditure of £24,161. The vast majority of income was in the form of grants, from ESCC, Trusts and individuals.

We continued to rely on volunteers and Trustees to carry out most of the administrative and background work of the charity, with a freelance project manager, who provides most of her services as a volunteer. We pay professionals on a project-by-project basis to deliver quality activities, meaning our overheads are kept to a minimum, while maintaining quality provision to neurodiverse young people, their friends and young people on benefit-related free school meals.

Income

HAF programme £12,528
Donations £1,218
Youth Music outstanding £2,902
Roy Hudson £250

Expenditure

Post Code Lottery £19,291*
Magdalen & Lasher £2,385
HAF £10,452*

RESERVED INCOME
Restricted Income £10,353 Unrestricted Income £5,430

ASSETS
Hastings Thrives has no physical or financial assets.

NOTES.
The Youth Music Fund, includes matched funding from companies, less £1,000 admin not transferred to unrestricted. And £1,870 restricted by Trustees from 2023 for performance.

*PostCode Lottery expenditure of £580.84 from 2024 was not brought forward, so figures amended here.

Thank you

We have had a wonderful year.

We are very grateful for East Sussex County Council HAF programme for continuing to support our musical theatre provision. And to The Post Code Lottery Trust and Private Donations.

We are very grateful to all the people who supported our Science Day including Sussex Wildlife Trust, Silverdale Primary and Energise East Sussex.

To our teachers Andy Mersh, Suzie Dunster and Becky Knight. And artist Lorna Crabbe and Rainbow Kitchen Magic Isabelle Endreo.

We are also grateful to the many people, schools, organisations and companies who volunteer their time and help to make everything happen.



Hastings Thrives

Annual Accounts

for the period

1 January 2025 - 31 December 2025

Contents:

Organisational information
Receipts & Payments account
Statement of Assets & Liabilities
Notes to the Accounts
Independent Examiner's report

Hastings Voluntary Action
Jackson Hall
Portland Place
Hastings
East Sussex
TN34 1QN

Organisational information of the Committee for Hastings Thrives

The Committee of Hastings Thrives presents its organisational information for the year Ended 31st December 2025

Name of Organisation:	Hastings Thrives
Legal form:	CIO
Governing document:	Consititution adopted 23rd June 2016
Address:	242 Old Church Road, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex, TN38 9LR
Committee members:	Jennifer Lozano Emma Anderson-Shuttleworth Jonathon Morris Susanna Longley
Bankers:	Metro Bank
Independent Examiner:	Laura Dawson, Independent Examiner HVA, Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, TN34 1QN
Governance & Management	CIO - ASSOCIATION Registered 23 Nov 2016 as amended on 10 Jul 2019 as amended on 29 Aug 2019
Aims & Objectives	The advancement of education in Hastings and surrounding areas for the public benefit by (but not limited to) 1. Work with parents, schools and the wider community to encourage academic and personal achievement through providing inclusive enrichment activities 2. Provision of training to professionals working with our children in all schools and settings 3. Overcome barriers to learning.

Hastings Thrives

Receipts & Payment accounts

for the period

01 January 2025 to **31 December 2025**

		Current Year			Previous Year
		Restricted	UnRestricted	Total funds	Total
Receipts					
Donations		-	1,218	1,218	25,580
Youth Music		2,902	-	2,902	1,000
HAF Easter		2,962	-	2,962	-
HAF Summer		8,336	-	8,336	-
HAF Winter		1,230	-	1,230	-
Roy Hudson		250	-	250	-
Misc		-	-	-	-
Income		15,680	1,218	16,898	26,580
Expenditure					
Annual Report and Accounts		456	281	737	690
Insurance		144	-	144	629
Website		200	312	512	432
Admin		-	152	152	661
Fundraiseing		-	360	360	160
Trustee			-	-	
Misc			-	-	1,907
Postcode Lottery		10,000	-	10,000	-
Youth Music		-	-	-	-
HAF Easter		3,029	-	3,029	27,264
HAF Summer		5,641	-	5,641	-
HAF Xmas		1,202	-	1,202	-
M&L		2,385	-	2,385	-
Roy Hudson		-	-	-	-
Total Payments		23,056	1,105	24,161	31,742
Net surplus/-deficit		-7,376	113	-7,263	-5,162
Fund balances b/f	1/1/25	17,729	5,317	23,047	28,209
Fund balances c/f	31/12/25	10,353	5,430	15,784	23,047

Hastings Thrives

Statement of Assets & Liabilities

as at

31 December 2025

			2025			2024
Current assets						
			Restricted	UnRestricted	Total	
Current Account	@	31/12/25	10,353	5,430	15,783	23,047
Deposit Account	@	31/12/25	-	-	-	
			10,353	5,430	15,783	23,047
less Current liabilities						
			-	-	-	-
			10,353	5,430	15,783	23,047
Represented by:						
Accumulated Fund B/F			17,729	5,317	23,047	28,209
Surplus/deficit of receipts over payments			-7,376	113	-7,263	- 5,162
			10,353	5,430	15,783	23,047

Approved by the Committee on Wed 14 October 2026 and signed on their behalf by

Jennifer Lozano



Hastings Thrives
Notes to the accounts
For the year ended 31st December 2025

1 Profit and Loss Statement
The profit and loss statement, also known as the Income Statement, provides a summary of the organisation's revenues, costs and expenses over a specific financial period. It is used to determine the net profit or loss for that period.

2 Premises & staff
The organisation has no premises.
The organisation has no employees.

3 Trustees' remuneration
No Trustees received remmuneration this year

4 There were no related party transactions during the period.

5 Previous period comparison
The previous period's figures have been included for comparison.

6 Glossary of terms
Restricted funds: These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.

Summary of Restricted Funds in 2025

Project		Bal B/F	Income	Expenditure	Bal C/F
HAF	Multi		£12,528	£10,671	£1,857
Youth Music	Songwriting	£3,488	£2,902		£6,390
Roy Hudson	Drumming		£250		£250
Postcode Lottery	Multi	£10,000		£10,000	£0
Magdalen & Lasher	Multi	£4,241		£2,385	£1,856
		£17,729	£15,680	£23,056	£10,353

Independent Examiner's Report to the Committee of Hastings Thrives

I report on the accounts of HastingsThrives
for the twelve month period ended 31st December 2025 which are set out on the previous pages.

Respective responsibilities of committee & examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act), and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility:

- to examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the supporting documentation presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
   - to keep accounting records in accordance with section130 of the Charities Act
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act have not been met; or

2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

L Dawson.....

Laura Dawson
Finance Manager
Hastings Voluntary Action
Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, TN34 1QN

Dated: 15/10/26