BLANK CANVAS

ANNUAL REPORT

2025/2026







PREPARED BY

Blank Canvas Trustees

Charity Number: 1182185

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



MARK TATE

Chair of Trustees

This last year has continued the wonderful growth of Blank Canvas. As a Board of Trustees, we know that our vision and mission continues, in order that young people across Redcar are seen, listened to and supported to reach a place where they thrive and flourish. We celebrate the weekly consistency and excellence of volunteers and staff who love Redcar, the local church and the young people they meet. We look back on this year and are thankful to God for all He has done, with new projects, more young people supported and financial provision.

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS



ABI & JONNY HEDGES

Founder and Directors

2025/2026 was a year of continued joy and celebration, from our annual residential 'Shindig', to the launch of **Compass** and another Drop-In, we share this joy that more young people are finding safety in Blank Canvas spaces. We also take deep delight in seeing **young people explore and find faith,** this year has **seen a number of baptisms too!**

This year we are thankful for the **new partnerships** of churches locally and internationally, alongside the launch of the Growing Younger programme.

We continue to be humbled and thankful for the **generosity of our supporters and funders.** Every investment in the vision of Blank Canvas is an investment in our town, young people and local churches. As we **expand our provision** and reach, we **remain thankful** of the journey we have travelled.

We celebrate every young person that has walked through the doors of a project, every McDonald's meal shared, every prayer prayed and life changed.

We pray and look ahead with anticipation for the next year!

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Objects of the charity

The charity is governed by a constitution as a charitable incorporated organisation. The charity's principal objects, as set out in its governing document, are:

The objects of Blank Canvas are:
1. The advancement of the Christian Faith. This will be achieved in particular but not exclusively by: working in partnership with local churches to provide youth and community provision. Working in partnership with local schools to provide education on the Christian faith. Creating a space for young people to explore issues of life and faith.

2. The prevention or relief of poverty for young people through their advancement in life and helping of young people by developing their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals.

3. The advancement of education by providing personal development programmes and courses for young people and by providing training and advice to those working with them.

In planning the activities the Trustees have applied the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission.

Financial Review

Total income received of £174,918 is a 47% increase on the previous year. This is a combination of a significant increase in one-off gifts, regular giving and new partnerships with grant funders and churches. There is further detail on funders and partners later in this report. We continue to rely on grant funding as a main source of income with a continued effort to reduce reliance in this area and move towards further partnerships.

Payments in relation to charitable activities undertaken directly have also increased to £156,544 for the year. This increase reflects growth in the team to 5 staff members over the year and new projects and activities established.

The charity has increased cash funds at year end to £118,402 of which £48,060 is unrestricted.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have determined that the charity should aim to hold unrestricted cash of no less than £27,500 (which equates to about 3 months' of running costs) so that the charity could continue to operate should income and / or expenditure vary adversely.

At the year end, the charity held unrestricted cash of £48,060 and the charity is complying with its reserves policy.

Governance

Responsibility for setting policy and for making operating decisions rest with the trustees who meet regularly to monitor the activities of the charity. Responsibility for the day to day operation of the charity has been delegated to a senior management team led by the Director of Programmes and Director of Operations. New trustees are recruited and appointed by the existing trustees, by a majority vote.

Responsibilities of Trustees

Charity law requires us as Trustees to prepare financial statements for each accounting year which record the receipts and payments of the charity for the year.

We are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable us to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011.

We also have a responsibility to safeguard the assets of the charity and to take reasonable steps to prevent fraud or any other irregularities.

Approval

This report was approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Mark Tate: Chair of Trustees

Date: Sep 16, 2026



OUR VISION

VISION

Blank Canvas' vision is to **create new stories of hope** by giving every young person in Redcar the opportunity to know the **hope of Jesus** and to journey alongside young people in order to **respond to the barriers** which prevent them from flourishing.

OUTWORKING THE VISION

Safe Spaces: To provide safe spaces for young people to be known & belong.

Advocacy: To advocate for young people and their families, believing in their potential and equipping them to reach their goals.

Local Church: Over 40% of young people said they see the church as a safe space! We want to equip the local church community to be a welcoming and safe place.

Innovate: We do not sit still, we listen to our young people and families, discern the barriers and galvanise the local church and funders to support us to overcome them.

OUR TEAM

Over 2025-2026 the Blank Canvas team has grown to 5 staff members. They have been supported across all our spaces by a fantastic team of 20 volunteers serving at Youth Clubs, Drop-In's, Sunday Night Live, Shindig, Compass , YAFA and holiday activities.

We welcomed seven new team members during the year, as volunteers continue to be the bedrock of our work with young people.

Alongside the volunteers, a team of trustees continue to govern Blank Canvas, ensuring Blank Canvas follows its charitable objectives and provides a public benefit.

STAFF TEAM

Jonny Hedges: Director of Operations and Co-Founder
Abi Hedges: Director of Programmes and Co-Founder
Alice Young: Senior Youth Worker
Steve Cassy: Youth Worker
Hannah Garner: Youth Worker

TRUSTEES

Mark Tate: Chair of Trustees
Tim Theobalds: Treasurer
Alice Lambert-Ellis: Safeguarding Trustee
Revd Bridget Woodall: Trustee
Kristian Shephard: Trustee
Daniela Reiter: Trustee (Resigned September 2025)

TEAM HIGHLIGHT || Sheila

As a volunteer for Blank Canvas it is extremely rewarding to help our young people build life skills, grow in confidence and self esteem.

Their energy and creativity make every session fun. Our conversations show they so much to offer given the opportunities to thrive.

It's a pleasure to work with a wonderful group of like minded people that are the Blank Canvas team.



OUR IMPACT

KNOWING THE HOPE OF JESUS

Following the launch in 2024 of the DOXA programme, this faith based programme has continued to provide a space for young people to explore and nurture their new found faith. Over Christmas there was a daily video devotional set up to help young people to journey through the story of advent. Shindig again was a success and moved to the new location of Bassenfell Manor near Keswick and was extended to 4 days away. It was a highlight of the year and we thank the Manor and Shoreline Church for their generosity in helping young people attend.

We continue to support local schools in creating spaces to explore faith and had the highlight of running two retreat days for whole year groups, alongside partner churches and hosting a weekly lunchtime space at Sacred Heart Secondary School.



A young person being baptised by a Blank Canvas team member in a local church.

Through the Growing Younger programme, we have established a new partnership in Marske by the Sea, with four churches, taking a lead in launching new youth work in the area. Alongside this, two Redcar churches continue to be mentored by our team in establishing their own youth outreach work for the first time.



Project Sessions Delivered

250+



DOXA Programme Hours

240+



Check-in's for sessions

2476

REMOVING BARRIERS

In 2025/2026 we have seen a significant increase in young people accessing safe spaces in the east of Redcar. With the introduction of Drop-In East, this gives Blank Canvas the best opportunity to support young people across both sides of Redcar.

This year sees us say goodbye to some of the young people we have worked with since Safe Spaces launched in 2021. These young people have become a core voice in our work and we cheer them on as they leave school and celebrate their time in Blank Canvas activities. We will be providing check-in points for them and looking for mentors beyond our work who will continue to journey and share life with these leavers.

Our YAFA team continues to model the very heart of Blank Canvas through faithful one-to-one support of young people most at risk, this opportunity to work with young people for at least 6 months, utilising the Outcome Star tool, provides a fantastic chance for turnaround, re-focus and opportunities beyond what might have been possible.



We continue to focus on releasing more YAFA mentors and also to utilise the mentoring style of YAFA in our Compass programme where we offer those who complete Compass a further 12 months mentoring.

Advocacy Sessions

175

Minutes of Youth Work

46,680

Meals given to young people

1000+



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: COMPASS

It has been encouraging to continue supporting Year 9 students who are most at risk of disengaging from education through the Compass programme, with three cohorts completed this year. Each student receives three one-to-one sessions to set goals, review their progress and reflect on their learning. They also participate in six full days of engaging, interactive sessions designed to build resilience and equip them with practical tools and coping skills.

By the end of the programme, young people have developed more effective ways to communicate and resolve issues positively. They are better equipped to take responsibility for their actions and have explored a range of strategies to help them navigate challenging circumstances.

Young people reflected on what Compass had taught them:

"Being labelled as trouble isn't nice. My behaviour isn't the best, but changing my behaviour is my main goal."

"I can achieve anything if I put my mind to it."

"Cause is an everyone thing, but for me it's important because it's about taking ownership and responsibility for yourself."

3

Sports Weeks of Mission

24

Young people took part in the Compass Programme

300+

Drinks shared together

OUR STORIES



IMOGEN*

From coming along to our Youth Clubs, having fun and getting to know the Blank Canvas Team, Imogen began to recognise there was something distinctive about the team being open about their faith. Imogen decided to come along to Shindig, and when an opportunity arose, asked for prayer, and then a bible.

Imogen started coming along to our Sunday Night Live group regularly, and began the YAFA programme alongside Faith Mentoring with some of our team. Since then, Imogen said yes to an invitation to a local church, committed to going regularly, decided to say yes to Jesus and get baptised, and now, is inviting others along on her journey and sharing her faith with her friends!

ETHAN*

Ethan has attended various Blank Canvas over a number of years and has been supported through the Safe Space programme and YAFA programme in that time. This last year they began to attend a pupil referral unit and despite this, their educational engagement continued to struggle.

They were referred onto the Compass programme and following the completion of this, they have continued to have support from the Blank Canvas team. We are thrilled that Ethan's suspensions have dropped almost completely and they have found joy and focus again in their education.

*Real name changed



SAFEGUARDING



“Blank Canvas spaces feel safe, the team genuinely care about you and when they listen, they listen!” - Young person - 14 years old

Safeguarding is embedded throughout every aspect of Blank Canvas’s work and we take proactive steps to protect the young people who use our spaces. We aim to create environments where everyone feels secure, respected and able to participate confidently.

Any concerns identified by staff or volunteers are reviewed and managed by our Safeguarding Team. Where a young person may benefit from wider support, we communicate with families, schools and relevant external organisations. Our close relationships with safeguarding leads in local secondary schools allow us to contribute to a coordinated approach to care.

During the year, thirtyone:eight delivered our bi-annual safeguarding session for staff and volunteers. The session enabled the team to build upon its existing knowledge, receive up-to-date guidance and consider how our procedures work in practice. We have further invested in our safeguarding infrastructure by adopting MyConcern. The software provides a central and secure system for documenting concerns, tracking actions and maintaining clear records, strengthening our ability to identify patterns and respond appropriately.

SUPPORTERS & FUNDRAISING

Blank Canvas continues to pursue sustainability whilst also pushing ourselves to involve and respond to the needs of young people and local churches. **We have continued to grow our regular partners who give sacrificially to the work of Blank Canvas, increasing our regular giving by 20%, whilst our one-off donations have grown by over 70%.**

We continue to pursue different avenues of income through the sale of merchandise and supporting churches and ministries beyond Redcar, whilst our church partnerships, both national and international continue to be a place of financial blessing.

The trustees continue to be thankful for the grants given through trust funds, community funds and businesses that allow Blank Canvas to take significant steps forward and to sustain our existing ministries. We are grateful that during this year we received a number of grants from new partners alongside ongoing existing partnerships. **A number of grants were received during the financial year that were to be utilised both in 2025/2026 and the 2026/2027 financial year and therefore show on these accounts.**

GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIP RECEIVED

- The Joseph Rank Trust
- The Lauderdale Trust
- Shoreline Church
- Magnify Foundation
- Westhill Endowment
- Baptist Insurance Company
- Deo Gloria Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- UK-USA Ministries
- The Jack Brunton Charitable Trust
- Tees Million
- Awards for All - The National Lottery
- RWE - Compass
- Maidenhead Malachi Trust
- The Teesside Charity
- Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland
- Acts 4:35

PARTNER CHURCHES

- Kirkleatham Parish
- Parish of Coatham & Dormanstown
- St Paul's Ealing
- Shoreline Church

OUR FUTURE

2026 AND BEYOND

We approach 2026 with excitement and anticipation for all that we will see in the year. With significant new partnerships in Marske launching projects, alongside our existing work, our aim is not to grow for the sake of growth but to respond to needs and continue to ask and listen to young people, their feedback and thoughts.

There are now established rhythms and rites of passage in Blank Canvas with next year's Shindig already widely anticipated.

We continue to pray that God would bless our work and that young people would discover a life to the full through faith.



A PLACE TO CALL HOME

As Blank Canvas continues to grow both through our programmes but also with our infrastructure. This therefore requires further space, and whilst we have acquired 'The Snug' at our existing building space for one to one work and mentoring, we continue to explore acquiring our own building space.

Opportunities to create a daily space, larger events areas and to cater for a growing staff and volunteer team will enable Blank Canvas to serve Redcar, local churches and young people in a more focused way.

PARTNERSHIPS

Blank Canvas exists to support the local church and we have begun conversations with denominations regarding how that support can be given on a larger scale.

Through regional youth charities, Blank Canvas has become a founding member of the Redcar and Cleveland Local Youth Partnership and we are excited for the future as we partner with other charities across Redcar to see young people across the town thrive.

CONTACT US



BLANK CANVAS

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF

BLANK CANVAS

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Blank Canvas ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2026 on pages 16 to 18 following.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement
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 accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

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

Sarah Crispin
Sarah Crispin (Sep 21, 2026 16:53:12 GMT+1)

Sarah Crispin ACA
Stewardship
1 Lamb's Passage
LONDON
EC1Y 8AB

Date: Sep 21, 2026

BLANK CANVAS

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds: General Funds £	Unrestricted Funds: Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2026 £	2025 £
Income receipts						
Donations		30,197	-	1,992	32,190	31,743
Gift aid receipts		2,315	-	-	2,315	517
Other grants		32,500	-	103,437	135,937	84,451
Event Income		1,115	-	1,360	2,475	1,355
Other		2,002	-	-	2,002	850
Total receipts		68,129	-	106,790	174,918	118,917
Payments						
Payments in relation to charitable activities undertaken directly	2	55,577	-	100,967	156,544	78,235
Total payments		55,577	-	100,967	156,544	78,235
Net of receipts / (payments) before		12,552	-	5,823	18,375	40,682
Transfers between funds	4	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		12,552	-	5,823	18,375	40,682
Cash funds as at last year end		35,508	-	64,520	100,027	59,345
Cash funds at this year end	A	48,060	-	70,343	118,402	100,027

The notes on page 18 form part of these accounts.

BLANK CANVAS

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds: General funds £	Unrestricted Funds: Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2026 £	2025 £
A Cash funds						
Cash at bank with immediate access		48,045	-	70,343	118,388	99,980
Petty cash		15	-	-	15	47
		48,060	-	70,343	118,402	100,027
B Other monetary assets						
Gift aid due to charity		978	-	-	978	1,668
Other debtors		718	-	-	718	941
		1,696	-	-	1,696	2,608
C Liabilities						
Falling due within one year						
Pension		588	-		588	197
Fee for Independent Examination		1,170	-	-	1,170	1,020
		1,758	-	-	1,758	1,217

D Assets retained for charity's own use

	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost £	Current value £
Computers and IT	General	7,089	5,235
Furniture	General	1,949	1,396
Sports Equipment	General	1,123	770
		10,161	7,400

The accounts were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

T.Theobalds
T.Theobalds (Sep 16, 2026 12:59:03 GMT+1)
Tim Theobalds

Date: Sep 16, 2026

Mark Tate
Mark Tate (Sep 16, 2026 12:52:36 GMT+1)
Mark Tate

Date: Sep 16, 2026

The notes on page 18 form part of these accounts.

BLANK CANVAS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

1 Accounting policies

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis and comprise a statement that shows the charity's receipts and payments, a statement that summarises the charity's assets and liabilities and related notes. The accountancy profession have determined that only accounts prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards present a 'true and fair' view and, as these receipts and payments accounts have not (and cannot) be prepared in accordance with accounting standards, these accounts do not present (and are not intended to present) a 'true and fair' view of the charity's financial activities and state of affairs.

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are donations which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors; they include donations received from appeals for specific activities or projects.

2 Payments in relation to charitable activities undertaken directly

	Unrestricted Funds				
	General funds	Designated funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2026	Total 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	24,459	-	71,149	95,608	46,480
Activities	3,203	-	29,657	32,861	16,733
Premises	10,273	-	-	10,273	5,721
Independent examination	672	-	-	672	326
Office costs	16,970	-	160	17,130	8,975
	55,577	-	100,967	156,544	78,235

3 Transactions with related parties

There were no transactions with related parties during the year.

4 Movement of funds

	Opening balance	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Closing balance
	£	£	£	£	£
General funds	35,508	68,129	(55,577)	-	48,060
Restricted funds					
DOXA Programme	18,563	39,758	(36,956)	-	21,365
YAFA	5,518	1,388	(3,524)	-	3,381
Compass	10,439	13,990	(7,691)	-	16,737
Growing Younger	30,000	21,385	(39,751)	-	11,633
Feast of Fun	-	2,362	(2,062)		300
Safe Spaces	-	27,908	(10,982)		16,926
	64,520	106,790	(100,967)	-	70,343
Total funds	100,027	174,918	(156,544)	-	118,402

The DOXA Programme is restricted funding towards faith based activities of Blank Canvas
YAFA is restricted funding towards running one to one support mentoring for young people
Compass is restricted funding towards running an intervention programme for young people at risk of exclusion from school.
Growing Younger is restricted funding towards supporting local churches establishing intergenerational worshipping communities.
Feast of Fun is restricted funding towards school holiday activities
Safe spaces are open access youth sessions for all young people across Redcar and the wider area