ANNUAL REPORT 2025

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Legal and Administrative Information

UK Board of Trustees for Women in Leadership

Lorraine Newbold · Bethany Turner · Natalie Kawesa-Newell · Suhas Khanderia · Kavita Brahmbhatt

Informal Board contributor: Susan Gowans (supported the Board during 2025)

Chief Executive Officer: Cianne Jones

Registered Charity Number: 1185392

Registered Address:
Women in Leadership
124–128 City Road
London EC1V 2NX

Website: www.womeninleadership.org.uk

Email: enquiries@womeninleadership.org.uk

SECTION 1.01

Introduction

Women in Leadership (WIL) works to advance the rights, wellbeing and economic opportunities of women and girls in rural Uganda. Through our Ugandan partner, WIL Uganda, we combine accessible, community-based services with practical skills and local advocacy, recognising that safety, reproductive autonomy and financial independence are closely connected.

In 2025, WIL delivered three core programme areas:



Justice

GBV Response & Advocacy



Health

SRHR Education & Awareness



Economic Empowerment

Tailoring & Skills Development

Between February and November 2025, monthly progress reports documented 78 gender-based violence case records, 647 attendances across 19 SRHR education sessions, and sustained tailoring training — including the completion of one training cycle and the launch of a further intake.

Our approach remains grounded in the work of local advocates, trainers, healthcare providers and community partners, whose knowledge and relationships make these services accessible to women who may otherwise struggle to find support.

2.1 The Justice Project

Supported by The Circle

The Justice Project supported women facing physical, psychological, emotional and economic abuse in and around Busembatia, Majengo, Kakoge, Buyirima, Namuyumya and neighbouring communities. WIL Uganda's advocate provided a local point of contact where women could explain their experiences and seek help without a service charge.

Case Records

Across the ten monthly reports, February to November 2025:

78 cases of support were recorded through case management, counselling and advocacy by WIL Uganda.

Forms of violence and abuse documented included:

- Physical assaults and threats
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Controlling behaviour
- Withholding of identification documents
- Interference with livelihoods
- Property disputes
- Financial abuse
- Economic violence

Women were supported through WIL Uganda's dedicated efforts, including:

1. **Office-based counselling**
2. **Accompaniment to police**
3. **Community-level support**
4. **Family engagement**
   Where appropriate to the case
5. **Referrals and follow-up**
   With local authorities and partner organisations

Trust in the project continued to grow. Several women told the team that friends, relatives, local leaders or previous service users had directed them to WIL Uganda, reflecting the importance of visibility and trust in a rural setting.

Informal Referrals and Reach

While 78 cases were formally recorded, the Justice Project also reached community members more broadly through informal pathways and advocacy engagement.

Community Mediation

Police Engagement

Local Authority Referrals

Word-of-Mouth Referrals

Local Leaders & Family Networks

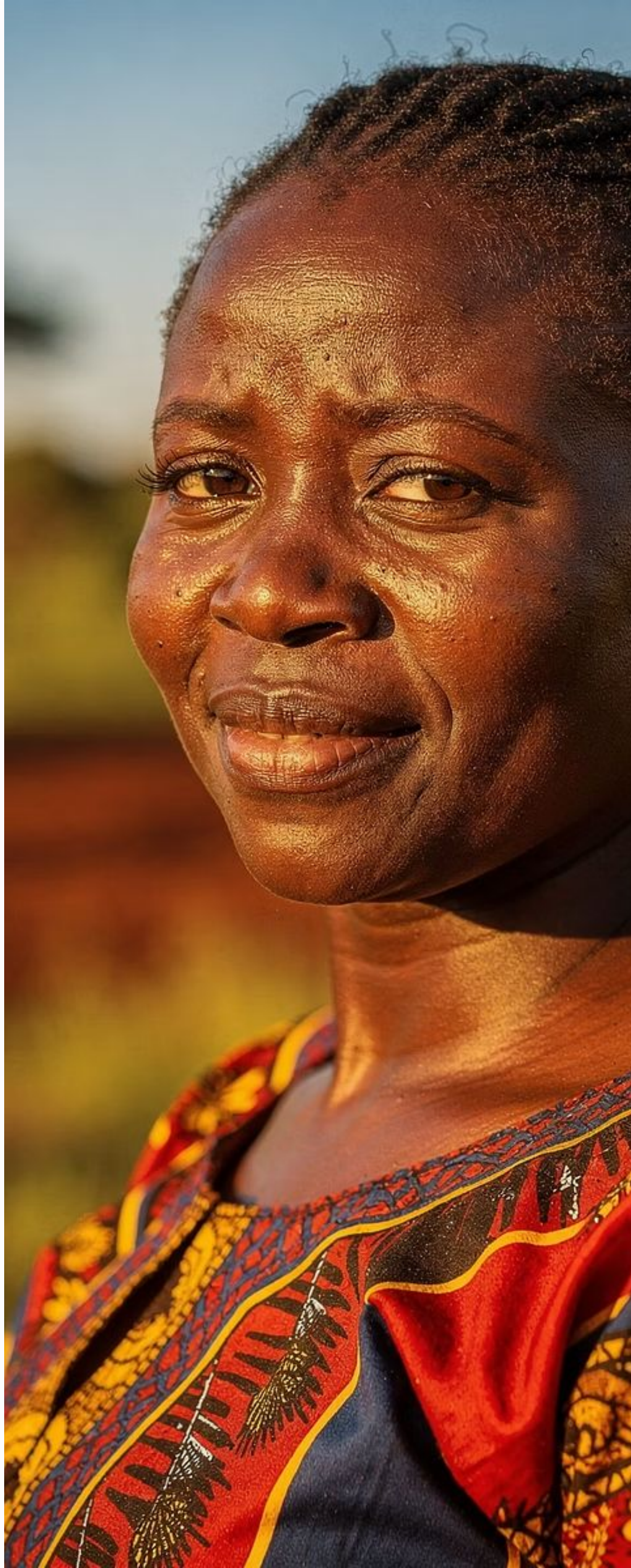
Justice Project Case Study — March 2025

In March, a woman reported that her husband had assaulted her and taken her identity and education documents. WIL Uganda's advocate accompanied her to police and followed up with officers. The monthly report records that the documents were recovered within three days.

This case illustrates how practical advocacy can remove immediate barriers to a woman's security and independence.

"I feel confident to direct other GBV clients because I'm sure WIL Uganda has the ability to support women with GBV issues."
— Justice Project participant, February 2025

**Identifying details have been withheld to protect the individual's privacy.*



SECTION 22

Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

WIL Uganda continued delivering SRHR education at Busembatia Health Centre and through community engagement, helping women and girls ask questions, discuss misconceptions, understand contraceptive options and learn where services could be accessed.

Total Participant Attendances Recorded

Between February and November 2025:

647

Participant Attendances

Across 19 education sessions (repeat attendances may be included)

19

Education Sessions

Delivered at Busembatia Health Centre and through community engagement

Topics covered included:

Contraception & Family Planning

- Short- and long-term family planning methods
- Copper IUD and emergency contraception
- Side effects of family planning
- Advantages of family planning

Access & Awareness

- Practical demonstrations with materials
- Challenges women encounter seeking services
- Barriers to accessing family planning
- Where and when services are available

In April and August, sessions coincided with visiting family planning services, allowing participants to seek services soon after receiving information — illustrating the importance of connecting information with access.

Persistent barriers identified included contraceptive shortages, distance to services, concerns about provider treatment, and fear or resistance within relationships.



SRHR — Voices and Change

Participants spoke about the effects of misinformation and limited access to trustworthy advice. Some described previous anxiety about contraceptives, while others reported gaining confidence to discuss options and make decisions about their own reproductive health.

One participant explained that she had previously been frightened by rumours about family planning, but felt more able to consider her options after a WIL Uganda information session. Other women described sharing accurate information with their daughters, friends and neighbours.

"I'm now very confident to circulate the information about family planning to my fellow women."

— SRHR participant, February 2025

**Identifying details have been withheld to protect participants' privacy; consent for public use should be checked before publication.*

SECTION 2.3

Tailoring Project – Economic Empowerment

Supported by Tools With a Mission

The Tailoring Project continued to equip women and girls with practical, marketable skills. Training combined machine operation and maintenance with measuring, cutting, sewing and finishing garments, while creating a shared learning environment where women could build confidence and imagine new sources of income.

Two Phases of Training in 2025

01

Continuation — Early 2025

An existing cohort built on skills from 2024, practising dresses, shirts, skirts and trousers, before assessments and graduation in April. Up to 20 participants documented in assessment sessions.

02

New Intake — May 2025

A further intake began in May with introductory lessons on sewing equipment, threading, measurement and stitching. Recorded daily attendance reached 21 learners in July and August; 18 learners attended multiple sessions in November.

03

Garment Progression

School uniforms, skirts, shirts, buttonholes, pockets, dresses and, by November, women's coats and fashion design research.

04

Skills Independence

By September, women who began with little experience were completing dresses, skirts, shirts and trousers. Later sessions encouraged creativity, including constructing coats using design references.

Recurring challenges included sewing-machine breakdowns, limited equipment, rainfall-related disruptions and fluctuating attendance. A preventive maintenance plan and improved equipment access would allow more consistent training progression.

Tailoring — Stories of Change

All programmatic work was delivered through WIL Uganda, our partner organisation based in Uganda.

In June, the programme reported on a former participant who secured an order to make school uniforms and began selling garments to other customers. She described reinvesting earnings in fabric and hoping eventually to establish her own tailoring shop.

An August participant with a physical disability described learning to operate a sewing machine and make garments despite having initially doubted whether training would be accessible to her.

Income Generation

A graduate secured a school-uniform order and began selling to other customers, reinvesting earnings in materials towards her own shop.

Inclusive Access

A participant with a physical disability successfully completed the programme, demonstrating that training can be made accessible.

"This project has changed my life, I feel confident, happy and hopeful in my future."

— Tailoring participant, September 2025

**Identifying details have been withheld to protect participants' privacy.*



SECTION 3.0

2025 Impact Summary

In 2025, Women in Leadership, through its partner organisation WIL Uganda, documented the following results across its three principal programmes (February–November 2025):

78

GBV Case Records

Individual case reports supported during the ten reporting months

647

Participant Attendances

Recorded across 19 SRHR education sessions; repeat participants may be included

2

Training Phases

An existing cohort graduated in April; a new intake trained from May to November

Community Referrals

Women reached WIL Uganda through friends, local leaders and previous service users

Research Partnerships

University of Edinburgh research interns contributed additional programme learning in 2025

Qualitative Progress

Women seeking help earlier, asking more informed health questions and progressing towards earnings from tailoring skills

Beyond these figures, the reports show women taking practical steps towards greater independence — recovering documents, accessing health information and turning tailoring skills into opportunities to earn.

SECTION 4.0

Women's Voices and Stories of Change

The stories shared during 2025 demonstrate how support can affect different aspects of women's lives, and reinforce a common message: women need information, accessible services and economic opportunities at the same time.

Access to Justice and Practical Protection

Advocates helped women seek the return of identity and education documents, address economic abuse and pursue police assistance. These are examples from reported casework, not evidence that all abuse was permanently resolved.

Confidence to Make Health Decisions

Women described sharing accurate family planning information with daughters, friends and neighbours — extending the potential value of each discussion beyond the session itself.

Skills That Can Lead to Earnings

A tailoring graduate secured a school-uniform order and described reinvesting earnings in fabric. Other learners spoke of plans to start businesses or create cooperative opportunities with fellow trainees.

"I have hope that the time is coming I will be able to buy a room, put tailoring machines, buy materials and be able to sell clothes from a shop."
— Tailoring graduate, June 2025

Identifying details have been withheld in this draft to protect participants' privacy; consent for public use should be checked before publication.

SECTION 5.0

Community Partnerships, Volunteers and Supporters

WIL Uganda's work depends on relationships with health-centre teams, Village Health Teams, community leaders, police personnel and other local stakeholders. These relationships support referrals, information-sharing and more timely responses to women's needs.

University of Edinburgh Research Interns

Faith Brennan explored the Tailoring Project and the experiences of women developing economic opportunities through sewing skills. **Hailey Wilson** examined the Justice Project and its work supporting survivors of gender-based violence. They conducted interviews with community members, healthcare staff and local officials from May to June 2025.

Funders and Donors

The Circle and **Tools With a Mission** were important supporters throughout 2025. The charity also benefited from individual donors, including through regular monthly donations, and from supporters who generated contributions through Easyfundraising.

Black Brighton Christmas Market — 6 December 2025

Cianne Jones, WIL's Founder and CEO, hosted a fundraising stall at the Black Brighton Christmas Market at The Actors pub, Brighton. The stall generated **£205 in gross sales**, raising funds and awareness of WIL's work and providing a valuable opportunity to engage directly with Brighton's local community.

We thank the Uganda team, research interns, volunteers, local partners, donors and everyone who shared time, expertise, resources or encouragement during the year.

SECTION 06

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The monthly reports were candid about delivery challenges. Across programmes, they point to four priorities for improving quality and sustainability.

1 Reliable Access to Services

Participants continued to face contraceptive and other health-supply shortages, practical barriers to visiting facilities and concerns about their treatment when seeking advice. WIL Uganda will need to maintain communication with local providers and help women understand where and when services are available.

2 Support Beyond an Immediate GBV Case

Survivors often needed both urgent help and longer-term stability. Economic insecurity can shape the options available to women. Better referral pathways and links between justice and economic empowerment could strengthen responses, alongside careful safeguarding and survivor-led decision-making.

3 Equipment and Continuity

Repeated sewing-machine breakdowns, insufficient machines and periods of reduced attendance limited hands-on training. A preventive maintenance plan and improved equipment access would allow learners more consistent practice and stronger progression towards independent production.

4 Measurement and Follow-Up

The monthly reports capture rich stories and activity counts, but do not consistently distinguish unique beneficiaries, repeat attendance, completed referrals, training graduates and longer-term outcomes. More consistent registers and follow-up measures would improve accountability without imposing unnecessary burdens on participants.

SECTION 7.0

Financial Review — UK Bank Account Summary

During 2025, WIL's NatWest UK business account recorded **£3,326.14 received** and **£853.89 paid out**, giving a net increase in cash of **£2,472.25**. The account opened the year with £392.04 and closed on 31 December 2025 with **£2,864.29**.

UK Bank Receipts and Payments	Amount
Donations and legacies, including university research volunteer donations	£3,105.70
Other trading income (provisionally classified SumUp and Etsy receipts)	£220.44
Total UK bank receipts	**£3,326.14**
Administration and support payments (including PA costs and annual insurance)	£833.89
Fundraising expenditure (Christmas stall reimbursement)	£20.00
Total UK bank payments	**£853.89**
Net increase in UK account cash	**£2,472.25**

Strategic Priorities for 2026

Building on the achievements and lessons of 2025, the following are proposed priorities for discussion and approval by the Board of Trustees:

Strengthen the Justice Project

Maintain accessible GBV advocacy, improve survivor-led referral and follow-up arrangements, and deepen collaboration with local protection and justice services.

Improve SRHR Access

Continue trusted education, respond to misinformation and barriers to care, and work with health providers on service availability and respectful access.

Develop Economic Pathways

Improve tailoring equipment and maintenance, support consistent training and explore practical progression into earning opportunities for graduates.

Strengthen Monitoring and Safeguarding

Distinguish unique participants from attendances, record referrals and outcomes more consistently, and protect the confidentiality of women seeking support.

Build Organisational Sustainability

Diversify funding, maintain appropriate financial controls and reserves, and strengthen coordination between WIL's UK governance and Ugandan programme delivery.

SECTION 04

Structure, Governance and Management

Women in Leadership is a UK charitable incorporated organisation. Its Board of Trustees provides strategic oversight and is responsible for safeguarding charitable assets, risk management, financial stewardship and regulatory compliance. Day-to-day leadership is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, working with the locally based WIL Uganda team to coordinate delivery.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:



Strategic oversight



Risk management

Financial governance



Compliance with UK law



Safeguarding charitable assets

WIL's programme model relies on local leadership and community relationships. Regular progress reporting provides a basis for trustees and management to review reach, programme quality, risks and emerging needs.

Closing Reflections

Our work in 2025 demonstrates the importance of combining practical protection, trusted information and skills development. For some women, the most important outcome was being heard and helped when facing abuse. For others, it was the confidence to ask questions about reproductive health or the ability to make a garment they could sell.

Protection

Skilled local advocates responding to women in crisis, helping them access justice and recover what is theirs.

Information

Trusted, accurate health education that builds confidence and extends reach through communities.

Opportunity

Practical skills that open pathways to income, independence and hope for the future.

These changes do not happen through one intervention alone. They depend on skilled local staff, trusting relationships, responsive public services and continued investment in women's agency.

We look ahead with a clear commitment: to keep listening, to improve how we measure results and to build services that strengthen the rights, safety and opportunities of women and girls in rural Uganda.

11.1 Approval and Signatures

This report is a draft for the operational period January–December 2025.

The Trustees confirm that, to the best of their knowledge, the information contained in this report presents a true and fair reflection of the organisation's activities and impact during the reporting period.

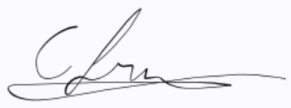
Approved at the Board Meeting held on:

Date of Board Approval: 26th October 2026

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Cianne Jones
Chief Executive Officer
Women in Leadership

Signature:



Date: 29th October 2026

Lorraine Newbold
Trustee
Women in Leadership

Signature: _



Date: 29th October 2026

Annual Financial Report

Women in Leadership | 1 January - 31 December 2025

Basis: Cash receipts and payments shown in the 12 NatWest business account statements. All figures GBP. Draft management report; not audited accounts.

TOTAL RECEIPTS	TOTAL PAYMENTS	NET CASH SURPLUS
£3,326.14	£853.89	£2,472.25

1 Income, by Charity Commission category

Category	2025 actual	Return: whole £
Donations and legacies	£3,105.70	3,106
Income from charitable activities	£0.00	0
Other trading activities	£220.44	220
Income from investments	£0.00	0
Other income	£0.00	0
TOTAL INCOME	**£3,326.14**	**3,326**

2 Expenditure, by management category

Category	2025 actual	Return: whole £
Administration and support costs	£833.89	834
Fundraising activity costs	£20.00	20
Direct charitable programme payments from this account	£0.00	0
TOTAL PAYMENTS	**£853.89**	**854**

The expenditure categories above are internal management classifications; they do not automatically map one-for-one to all Charity Commission return expenditure headings.

3 Reconciliation of the bank balance

Movement	Amount
Opening balance at 1 January 2025	£392.04
Add: cash receipts in 2025	£3,326.14
Less: cash payments in 2025	(£853.89)
CLOSING BALANCE AT 31 DECEMBER 2025	**£2,864.29**

Detailed income and expenditure

Categories reflect the information supplied about the transactions and the nature of payments shown on the bank statements.

4 Income source breakdown

Source	Classification	Amount
University research volunteer donations	Donations and legacies	£1,610.50
JustGiving receipts	Donations and legacies	£1,072.29
Rebekka Kesberg monthly donations	Donations and legacies	£300.00
Jodie Le Marrec donation	Donations and legacies	£25.00
Easyfundraising quarterly donations	Donations and legacies	£97.91
SumUp payment receipts	Other trading activities*	£207.47
Etsy payment receipts	Other trading activities*	£12.97
TOTAL INCOME		**£3,326.14**

* SumUp and Etsy are treated provisionally as fundraising sales. Reclassify to donations if they were donor gifts rather than sales of goods/services.

5 Expenditure source breakdown

Item	Management classification	Amount
Squarespace website fees	Administration / digital services	£345.60
Personal assistant expense reimbursements	Administration	£320.00
Heart Internet website / domain fees	Administration / digital services	£105.44
Public liability insurance reimbursement	Annual administration / insurance	£45.36
Google One subscriptions	Administration / digital services	£17.49
Christmas stall reimbursement	Fundraising activity	£20.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		**£853.89**

6 Classification decisions

- **University volunteers:** The two May transfers (£805.00 and £805.50) are donations, not payment for research services or programme delivery.
- **PA costs:** September and October reimbursements (£144.00 + £176.00) are administration costs.
- **Christmas stall:** The £20.00 reimbursement is an expense of fundraising activity.
- **Public liability:** The £45.36 reimbursement is an annual administration / insurance cost.
- **Easyfundraising:** Receipts are classified as donations because the platform pays the supported cause the designated amounts as donations.

Statement-level audit trail

Amounts below reproduce the bank statements as issued; these are statement periods, not calendar-month ledgers.

7 All twelve bank statement periods

Statement period (2025)	Received	Paid out	Closing balance
1 Jan - 31 Jan	£25.00	£30.39	£386.65
1 Feb - 28 Feb	£51.16	£28.80	£409.01
1 Mar - 1 Apr	£25.00	£31.98	£402.03
2 Apr - 1 May	£25.00	£30.39	£396.64
2 May - 30 May	£1,656.81	£30.39	£2,023.06
31 May - 1 Jul	£25.00	£30.39	£2,017.67
2 Jul - 1 Aug	£25.00	£30.39	£2,012.28
2 Aug - 1 Sep	£918.49	£30.39	£2,900.38
2 Sep - 1 Oct	£289.62	£30.39	£3,159.61
2 Oct - 31 Oct	£25.00	£102.25	£3,082.36
1 Nov - 1 Dec	£59.45	£418.94	£2,722.87
2 Dec - 31 Dec	£200.61	£59.19	£2,864.29
TOTAL	**£3,326.14**	**£853.89**	**£2,864.29**

8 Accounting basis and reporting limitations

- **Receipts-and-payments basis:** Transactions are recognised when money enters or leaves this bank account. No accruals, outstanding invoices or non-cash items have been calculated.
- **Scope:** This is a report for one UK NatWest account only. Include any other UK/Ugandan bank balances, cash holdings, payment processor balances and relevant liabilities before treating it as WIL's complete organisational accounts.
- **Fund restrictions:** Donations have not been split between restricted and unrestricted funds because donor conditions have not been supplied; review fundraising records and donor correspondence.
- **Expenditure reporting:** Administration / support costs require review and allocation to the applicable regulatory expenditure headings if entered into a Charity Commission annual return. This report does not assume that all support costs are direct charitable spending.
- **Assets and liabilities:** A complete receipts-and-payments accounts pack also needs a statement of assets and liabilities and the relevant trustees' approvals. Those items cannot be verified from these bank statements alone.

9 Reference guidance

Source records: 12 NatWest business current account statements covering 1 January - 31 December 2025 (all continuous; balances reconcile).

Charity Commission: Annual Return 2025/26 glossary (GOV.UK, charity reporting guidance).

Charity Commission: CC16 receipts and payments accounts template (GOV.UK).

Easyfundraising: Cause terms, Section E (easyfundraising.org.uk/terms/cause/).