cascading kindness

Baby Box Isle of Wight

Trustees' Annual Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2025

Charity Number: 1193830

1. Introduction

The Trustees present their Annual Report and independently examined accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity Commission's guidance for Charitable Incorporated Organisations.

Baby Box Isle of Wight was formally registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 16 March 2021. This report covers the work of the charity during the 2025 financial year.

2. Structure, Governance and Management

Baby Box Isle of Wight is governed by its Constitution as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The Trustees have responsibility for the strategic direction, ethos, and oversight of the charity. Trustees meet at least six times per year and remain closely involved in day-to-day operations.

New Trustees are recruited based on skills, experience, and commitment to the charity's aims. Induction includes governance training, safeguarding responsibilities, and an introduction to operational procedures.

During 2025, Trustees continued to strengthen governance systems, including risk management, a legal review, safeguarding, General Data Protection Regulation compliance, financial oversight and a complete policy review

3. Objectives and Activities

Charitable Objects

- The prevention or relief of poverty among families and children on the Isle of Wight by providing items and services to individuals in need.
- The prevention or relief of poverty through research into factors contributing to poverty and ways to mitigate them.

Ethos

Baby Box Isle of Wight operates under the ethos of *Cascading Kindness*, ensuring dignity, respect, and inclusion for all who seek support. The charity works to remove barriers that may unintentionally prevent households from accessing help.

Local Need and Deprivation: Ventnor and the Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight continues to experience significant and persistent deprivation, with several neighbourhoods ranked among the most deprived 20% nationally in the Government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Coastal towns—including Ventnor, Ryde and parts of Newport—show the highest levels of disadvantage, particularly in income, employment, health, and access to services. The Island also records above-average levels of income deprivation affecting both children and older people, reflecting long-term structural challenges that have deepened across successive IMD releases (2010, 2015, 2019 and 2025). Local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment findings further highlight elevated food insecurity, poor health outcomes and increased social isolation across multiple communities.

Within this wider context, Ventnor remains one of the most deprived areas on the Island, with longstanding and worsening indicators of poverty. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (March 2022) identifies both Central Ventnor and Upper Ventnor as areas of higher deprivation, higher food insecurity, and increased risk of social isolation. Historical Indices of Multiple Deprivation data shows a persistent decline: in 2010, Central Ventnor ranked within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally, while Upper Ventnor fell within the 20% most deprived. Subsequent Indices of Multiple Deprivation releases in 2015 and 2019 confirm that both areas have become more deprived over time, and updated national data available for 2025 continues to place several Ventnor neighbourhoods within the most deprived 20–30% nationally. Indicators affecting children and older people—particularly income deprivation and health-related disadvantage—remain significantly above national averages.

This sustained pattern of deprivation reinforces the importance of Baby Box IOW's work and directly supports our charitable purpose: to strive to prevent or relieve poverty through supporting research into factors that contribute to poverty and the most appropriate ways to mitigate these. Understanding the depth and persistence of need across Ventnor and the wider Island ensures our interventions remain targeted, evidence-based and responsive to the communities we serve.

Core Activities

The charity delivers three main projects:

- **Baby Box** – practical support for babies, children, young people, and families
- **Ventnor Community Foodbank** – crisis and emergency food support
- **Ventnor Community Pantry** – weekly low-cost food access

All services are non-referral, accessible, and confidential.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm they have complied with their duty under section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

4. Achievements and Performance in 2025

Overview

2025 was a year of consolidation following the significant expansion and pressures experienced in 2024. Overwhelming demand led to the decision to restrict Pantry membership to the PO38 catchment area from January 2025 allowing the charity to stabilise operations and focus support on the most deprived neighbourhoods in Ventnor.

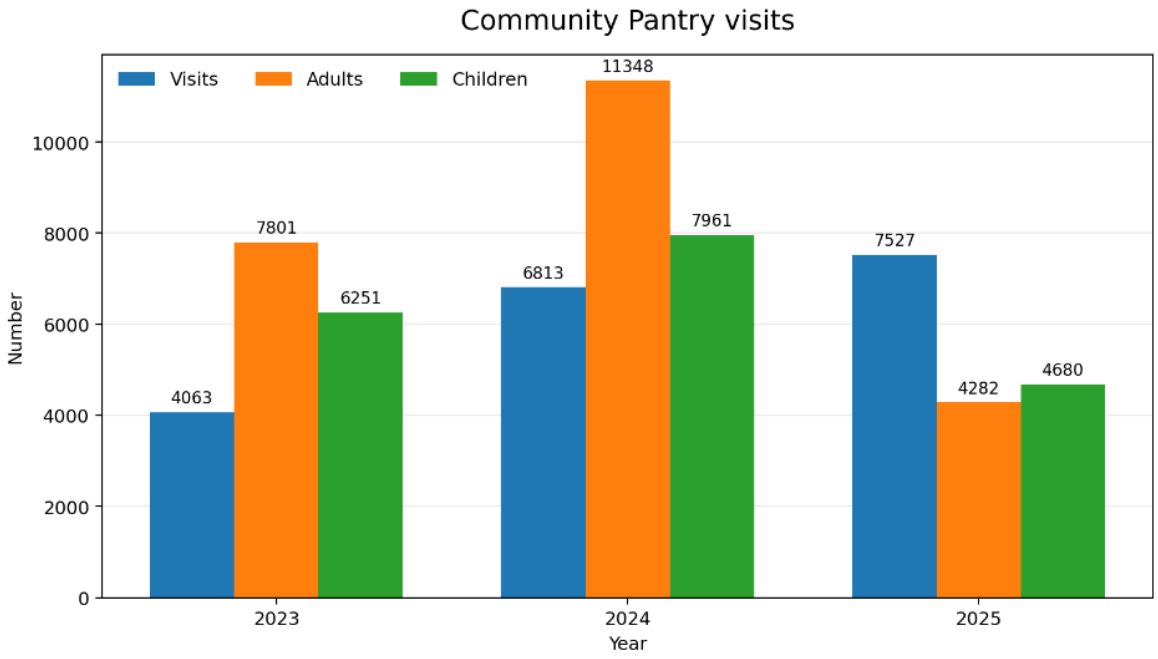
Ventnor Community Pantry

Community Pantry visits 2023-2025

Category	2023	2024	2025
Visits	4,063	6,813	7,527
Adults	7,801	11,348	4,284
Children	6,251	7,961	4,680

Despite a reduction in the number of adults and children eligible to access the Community Pantry following the tightening of the catchment area, overall demand for the service continued to grow. Total visits increased significantly from 4,063 in 2023 to 7,527 in 2025, demonstrating that while fewer individual members were able to register, those who remained relied on the Pantry more frequently. This shift reflects the charity's wider success in supporting households to move away from crisis-level foodbank reliance and into the more sustainable, choice-based Pantry model.

Together, these trends highlight both the ongoing pressure on household budgets and the essential role the Pantry continues to play for those within the revised service boundary. Those who were no longer eligible under the revised catchment area were signposted to one of the 10 community pantries elsewhere on the Island to ensure continued access to support.



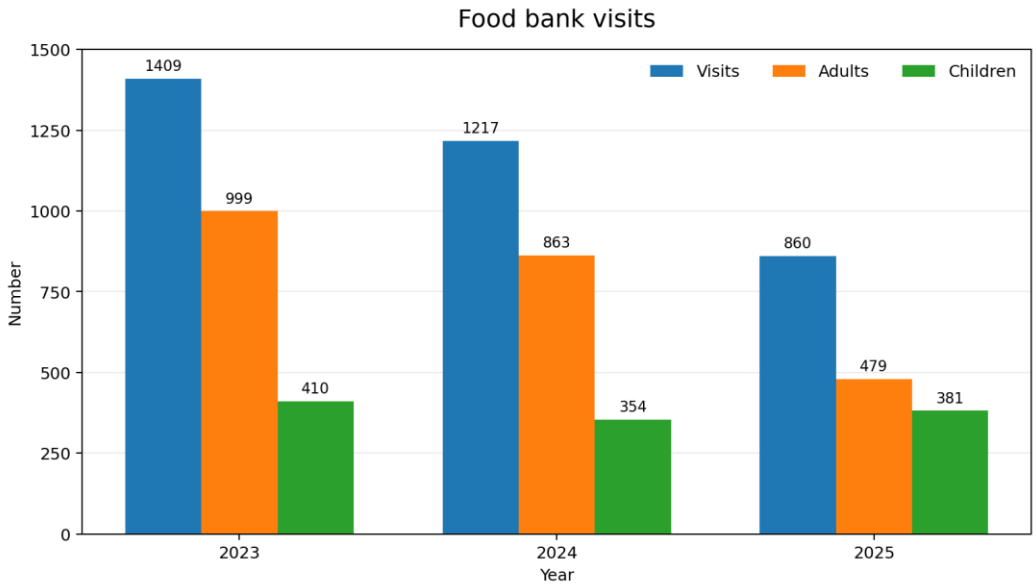
Ventnor Community Foodbank

Foodbank visits 2023 - 2025

Category	2023	2024	2025
Individuals	1,409	1,217	860
Adults	999	863	479
Children	410	354	381

The continued reduction in foodbank use over the past three years reflects the positive impact of Baby Box IOW's strategic shift from crisis intervention to sustainable community support. As more households transition into the Community Pantry, fewer individuals require emergency parcels, larders can be built up to mitigate against emergencies demonstrating improved financial stability and greater access to choice-based, dignified assistance. This trend highlights the effectiveness of early intervention, partnership working, and wrap-around support that helps families build resilience rather than relying on short-term crisis provision.

However, the slight increase in children supported through the foodbank is likely linked to the ongoing impact of the two-child benefit cap, which continues to place additional financial pressure on larger families and increase referrals for child-focused assistance. The data therefore indicates that while overall need is falling, targeted support for families affected by benefit restrictions remains essential to prevent child poverty and sustain long-term wellbeing.

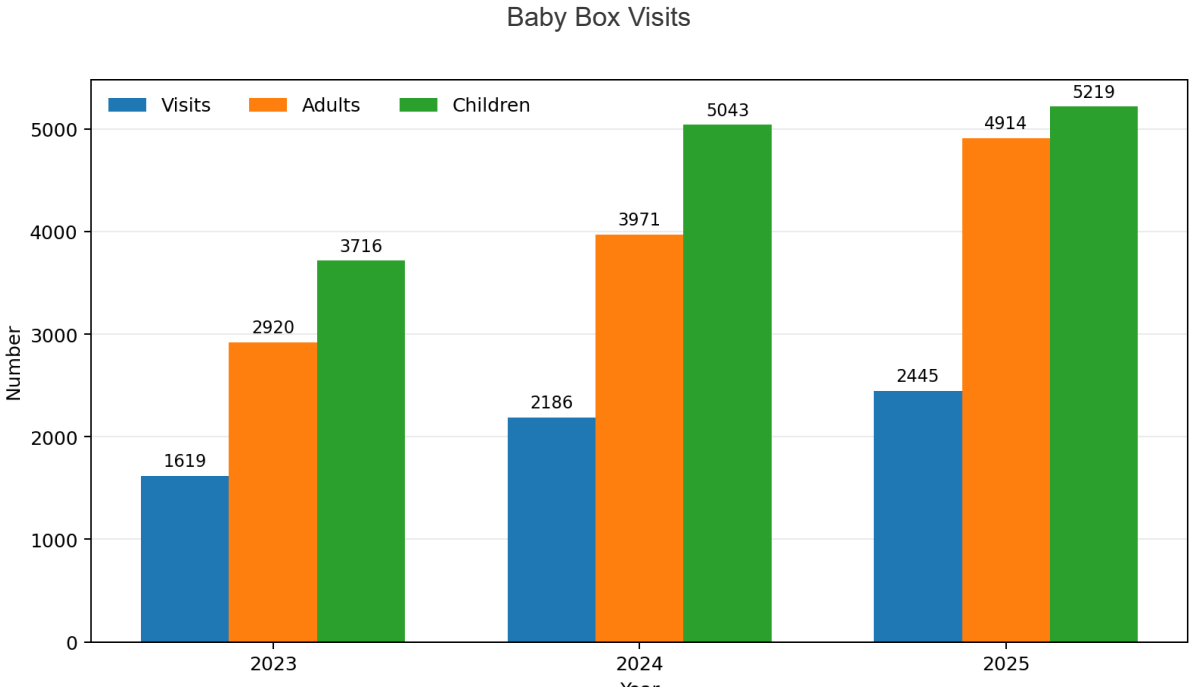


Baby Box

Baby Box visits 2023 - 2025

Category	2023	2024	2025
Visits	1,619	2,186	2,445
Adults	2,920	3,971	4,914
Children	3,716	5,043	5,219

Baby Box continued to provide tailored support including nappies, clothing, equipment, toiletries, school supplies, and emergency essentials. Baby Box usage has continued to rise year-on-year, reflecting both growing community need and the organisation's expanding reach. This consistent upward trend demonstrates how essential the Baby Bank has become for families on the Isle of Wight, with demand increasing not only in volume but in the diversity of households seeking support.



Partnerships and Community Support

The charity continued to benefit from strong local partnerships, including:

- Ventnor Town Council and Isle of Wight Council
- Local supermarkets (Co-op, Morrisons Lake, ASDA, Aldi, Lidl)
- Local businesses such as the Mermaid Distillery and the Ventnor Yacht Club
- Fareshare Southampton
- Local churches and faith groups including Holy Trinity Church and St Catherine's Church and St Boniface Church
- Local schools including Niton Primary, Wroxall Primary, St Francis and the Island Free School
- Community organisations such as Better Days Caffé, Well-Being Café, Sandown and Shanklin Swimathon, Unison, Friends of Baby Box Ventnor Darlings Library Fundraiser
- Southern Housing Group
- Working in partnership with RSPCA, Cat Protection League and Friends of Animals to distribute pet food to households in need
- Professional agencies including social workers, health visitors, Family Centres, Citizens Advice, Footprint Trust, and midwives.
- Signposting service users to further wraparound support such as Living Well, the Footprint Trust and the Citizen's Advice Bureau

The trustees also acknowledge the invaluable legal advice received from Michelle Price of Gunnercooke LLP who assisted us to carry out a review of our Constitution and structure.

Christmas Toy Appeal

We once again helped to facilitate the Toy Appeal organised by Vectis Radio supporting local families during the festive period, helping to ensure that children experiencing financial difficulties were able to receive a gift. The appeal provided support to 94 families, benefiting a total of 228 children. The appeal demonstrated the continued need for support within our community and the positive impact that collective donations and community involvement can have on families.

Environmental Sustainability

The charity maintained its commitment to reducing waste through redistribution of surplus food, recycling of clothing and equipment, and participation in Island-wide food waste reduction networks.

Fundraising strategy

In 2025, the charity strengthened its fundraising approach by developing a clearer strategy that includes digital fundraising, Gift Aid, targeted campaigns and new partnerships with local organisations. A Fundraising working group was established including staff and volunteers to identify new funding and grant opportunities reporting regularly to trustees. Early work on a new website and improved online presence has laid the foundations for more sustainable income generation in future years.

Volunteering

Volunteers remain at the heart of Baby Box IOW's operations with 30 active volunteers in 2025 contributing across every aspect of service delivery. They collected and sorted food donations, managed day-to-day distribution, and ensured that families received support with dignity and care.

Many have undertaken accredited training in General Data Protection Regulations, Safeguarding and food hygiene, strengthening both safety standards and personal development. Through these opportunities, volunteers gain valuable skills, confidence, and a sense of wellbeing, while their commitment continues to sustain the charity's reach and impact within the community.

We are fortunate to have a great team of volunteers from our community, many of which who have been with us from the formation of Baby Box. We are inspired by their commitment and loyalty and incredibly grateful for their support.

5. Financial Review

Financial Position Summary (2025)

Baby Box IOW – Consolidated Projects

Fiancial Category	Baby Box	Foodbank	Pantry	Total
Opening Balance	£17,211.51	£28,908.96	£27,837.54	£73,958.01
Closing Balance	£27,318.42	£19,459.87	£13,851.27	£60,629.56
Surplus (Deficit)	£10,106.91	(£9,449.09)	(£13,986.27)	(£13,328.45)

The charity delivered three core programmes during 2025: Baby Box, Foodbank, and Pantry. Each project operates its own income and expenditure streams, with central oversight ensuring compliance, financial control, and responsible stewardship of funds.

Across the year, the organisation managed a combined opening balance of £73,958.01, closing the year with £60,629.56. This movement reflects both targeted investment in service delivery and the financial pressures associated with rising demand and increased operational costs.

Baby Box generated a positive surplus, while Foodbank and Pantry operated at an anticipated deficit. The deficit recorded in the Foodbank and Pantry accounts reflects a temporary shortfall caused by the delayed receipt of pre-agreed funding from the Household Support Fund.

Overall, the charity remained financially stable, with year-end reserves of £60,629.56, ensuring continued delivery of essential community services. The Trustees have reviewed the financial risks facing Baby Box Isle of Wight and consider it essential to maintain reserves sufficient to ensure continuity of our core services in the event of fluctuations in income or unexpected expenditure.

Given the charity's reliance on unrestricted donations, the high and unpredictable demand for crisis food support, and the essential nature of our weekly provision, the Trustees have set a target reserves level equivalent to three to six months of core operating costs.

For Baby Box Isle of Wight, this represents a target range of £68,000 which the Trustees consider proportionate to the charity's size, risk profile, and public benefit obligations.

Reserves will be reviewed quarterly and adjusted as necessary to reflect changes in demand, operating costs, and financial risk. The Trustees continued to monitor financial commitments closely and explored opportunities for future grant funding.

6. Risk Management

The Trustees reviewed the charity's risk register regularly throughout 2025. Major risks identified included:

- Rising demand for food support
- Volunteer capacity
- Financial sustainability
- Safeguarding
- Data protection and GDPR
- Premises limitations

Mitigations included strengthened policies, improved volunteer training, enhanced financial controls, and continued collaboration with local partners.

7. Plans for Future Periods

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, Trustees will aspire to:

- Continue targeted support for households in Ventnor and surrounding areas
- Strengthen coproduction with Isle of Wight Council, our service users and the Independent Food Aid Network
- Seek to recruit additional Trustees to provide additional skills in legal matters and social inclusion
- Improve digital systems for reporting, data collection, and governance
- Explore opportunities for premises improvement or expansion
- Enhance volunteer training and wellbeing support
- Maintain the charity's commitment to sustainability and food waste reduction

FAIR-food Project

The FAIR-food project**,** led by the University of Southampton**,** is a multi-year research programme examining how community food pantries operate, how people use them, and what factors shape food access and household resilience. The study involves regular participant surveys, pantry management questionnaires, annual full inventories, quarterly pantry photos, and the training of community researchers with lived experience of food insecurity.

Baby Box IOW will support this work by helping recruit participants, providing space for surveys, assisting community researchers, and contributing operational insight. Our involvement ensures that the experiences of Isle of Wight families are represented within national research on food access and poverty.

Participation in FAIR-food directly advances Baby Box IOW's charitable purpose: to prevent or relieve poverty through undertaking and supporting research into factors that contribute to poverty and the most appropriate ways to mitigate these**.** By contributing to this structured research programme, Baby Box IOW helps generate evidence on the drivers of food insecurity, the effectiveness of pantry models, and the lived experiences of families facing financial hardship.

This partnership strengthens our ability to design effective interventions, advocate for change, and contribute to wider understanding of poverty mitigation strategies. FAIR-food is therefore a practical expression of Baby Box IOW's mission to reduce poverty through evidence, insight, and community-driven learning.

8. Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name: Baby Box Isle of Wight **CIO Registration Number:** 1193830

Principal Address: Ventnor Family Centre, 50 – 54 Albert Street, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1EZ

Office Address: 1 Salisbury Gardens, Dudley Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1EJ

Trustees in 2025:

- Joyce Milford
- Stephen Milford FCPFA
- Tony McCarthy – resigned June 2025
- Mark Chiverton
- Sarah Riley

During 2025, Trustee Tony McCarthy stepped down from the Board following his relocation, and Trustees were pleased to welcome Sarah Riley, who brings valuable experience in funding, inclusion and community engagement.

Bankers: NatWest Newport Isle of Wight

Independent Examiner: Warren Fresle ACMA (CIMA)

Insurance Brokers: Norris & Fisher Insurance Brokers Ltd

9. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and the charity's Constitution. They must ensure that:

- Proper accounting records are kept
- Financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011
- The charity safeguards its assets
- Funds are used only for charitable purposes

The Trustees confirm that, as far as they are aware, there is no relevant information of which the Independent Examiner is unaware.

10. Approval

This report was approved by the Trustees on:

Signed:

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name	No (if any)
BABY BOX ISLE OF WIGHT	1193830

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01/01/2025		31/12/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Baby Box	39,422	14,250	-	53,672	69,235
Foodbank	3,342	11,000	-	14,342	28,732
Pantry	26,593	26,644	-	53,237	101,235
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total *(Gross income for AR)*	69,357	51,894	-	121,251	199,202
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	69,357	51,894	-	121,251	199,202
A3 Payments					
Baby Box	25,711	17,854	-	43,565	57,148
Foodbank	14,904	8,887	-	23,791	20,915
Pantry	42,838	24,385	-	67,223	98,477
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	83,453	51,126	-	134,579	176,540
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	83,453	51,126	-	134,579	176,540
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 14,096	768	-	- 13,328	22,662
A5 Transfers between funds	46,593	- 46,593	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	28,440	45,518	-	73,958	51,295
Cash funds this year end	60,937	- 307	-	60,630	73,957

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

B1 Cash funds

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Baby Box	27,319	-	-
	Foodbank	19,767	- 307	-
	Pantry	13,851	-	-
	Total cash funds	60,937	- 307	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

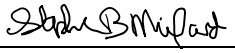
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Stephen B Milford FCPFA	29/10/2026

NOTES TO BABY BOX ACCOUNTS 2025

1) Prior Year Fund Classification Adjustment

During the preparation of the 2025 accounts, the Trustees reviewed the historic allocation of Funds between Restricted and Unrestricted Reserves.

Historical classification errors were identified and corrected by reclassifying £46,593 from Restricted to Unrestricted Funds. This comprises of £31,418 of identified misallocations and a residual correction of £15,175, the original transaction-level causes of which could not be fully established due to limitations in the historic accounting records and audit trail. Of the identified errors, £22,860 related to historic classification of Members fees as Restricted income.

The revised fund allocation has been determined using the best evidence available, including written confirmation from the principal fund provider, the Isle of Wight Council, that completed historical grants had been fully spent in accordance with grant conditions, with all reporting requirements satisfied and no balances remaining to be spent or repaid. The Trustees also reviewed evidence relating to the completion of the Lottery Grant and supporting records relating to HSF7, the only live restricted grant as at 31 December 2025.

Following this review, the corrected fund balances as at December 2025 are: Restricted funds : deficit £307 Unrestricted funds; Unrestricted funds £60,937. Total funds £60,630.

The Restricted fund deficit relates to HSF7 expenditure incurred prior to receipt of subsequent grant instalments in 2026. This adjustment affects only the classification of Reserves between Restricted and Unrestricted Funds and has no impact on total funds, total cash balances, in receipts and payments reported by the Charity.

2) Stock position

All 3 Organisations hold year-end stock, but this is estimated as £2,000 in total, less than 5% of income / expenditure, which would be a material level.

3) Pantry Grant spend against approved grant

The Pantry was offered £59,826 in HSF 7 grants in 2025 and incurred significant expenditure against the offer of these grants. However, following delays in signing agreements and paying over these monies, the physical receipt did not happen until well into the 2026 financial year. this explains why there is a mis-match in the payments and related receipts. The total expenditure incurred in expectation of this Grant being received in 2025 was £19,131, which has now been recorded as Unrestricted expenditure.

Signed
Treasurer

28-Oct-26

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name BABY BOX ISLE OF WIGHT		
On accounts for the year ended	31st DECEMBER 2025	**Charity no (if any)**	1193830
Set out on pages	1-2 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed 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 material matters have come to my attention ~~(other than that disclosed below *)~~ in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:	WFres	**Date:**	29/10/2026
Name:	Mr Warren Fresle		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	ACMA		
Address:	Corner Cottage, Hillis Gate Road, Newport Isle of Wight PO30 5UB		

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.