REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

For the year ended 31st December 2025

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2025

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Registered Charity number : 1196377 (England and Wales)

Working Name: Hospital Radio Reading (HRR)

Original date of registration : 1964 (as charity no. 244974)
Converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 3rd November 2021

Principal Office:
Hospital Radio Reading
East Drive,
Royal Berkshire Hospital,
London Road,
READING
Berkshire
RG1 5AN

Main contact address
c/o Mr G Rocks (Chairman)
6 Maldon Close
READING
Berkshire
RG30 2DH

Elected Trustees:
Ann Beasley (Treasurer)
James M Burton Stewart (Secretary)
Fiona M McKechnie
* Thomas Z Meyer
Chloe Monahan (Station Manager)
Martin E O'Czaja (Vice Chairman and Senior Engineer)
John R Precious
Gerard B K Rocks (Chairman)
Philip M Wilson

* All the above Trustees were in place throughout the reporting year, with the exception of Thomas Z Meyer, whose unopposed nomination as Trustee was approved by the membership at the Annual General Meeting on May 19th 2025.

Bankers:
Lloyds Bank Ltd
24 Broad St,
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 2BT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE and MANAGEMENT :

Governing Document :

Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, governed by its constitution.

Governance and Organisational Structure:

The Charity is governed by a Board of Trustees, who are responsible for overseeing strategy, direction and ensuring that the charity's finances are spent in accordance with its charitable objects.

The Constitution allows for the Board of Trustees to consist of no fewer than three and no more than nine Elected Trustees, elected by full members of the organisation for a two-year term of office, and requires that half of the Elected Trustees should retire or seek re-election each year in order to ensure some degree of continuity. Since, during the previous twelve months, the activities of the charity had been overseen by a board of eight Elected Trustees. it followed that four were not eligible for reappointment and four others were reappointed unopposed at the Annual General Meeting on May 19th 2025 and, one additional new Trustee (Thomas Zachary Meyer) sought election and was also appointed unopposed, restoring the Board of Trustees to its full complement of nine for the remainder of the reporting year.

The Constitution also allows for up to three Appointed Trustees, appointed by the other Trustees on account of their skills, knowledge and experience, for a term of one year. However, no such Trustees were appointed during the reporting year.

The operational functions of the charity, namely the provision of a local broadcasting service for hospitals, residential homes and similar (essentially to the Royal Berkshire Hospital), are overseen by a Committee, composed of the same Trustees with responsibility for technical maintenance and scheduling & programme content being vested respectively in those holding the positions of Senior Engineer and Station Manager.

The Annual General Meeting, held on May 19th, was attended by 19 full members of the organisation and 1 Probationer. In addition, five Trustees' Meetings were held during the year (in January, March, June, September and October) and the Trustees maintained regular contact at other times through a dedicated WhatsApp group.

Membership:

Of the 44 volunteers registered with HRR at the end of 2024 as full members or probationers, 41 renewed their membership for the following year and were subsequently joined by 5 more on completion of their training and probation. Over 30 of these were active throughout the year, either on the wards and in the studio or behind the scenes. providing weekly live programmes for the patients or, on a more occasional basis, covering for absent colleagues or producing pre-recorded programming. A number took advantage of the newly-introduced reduced subscription for "resting" members, designed to enable them to stay in touch and

provide ongoing financial, but less active, support – in two cases having relocated to Wiltshire and Norfolk! Others provided occasional cover for regular volunteers who were unavailable.

With some teams losing ward visitors in the course of the year, as often and inevitably happens, or retaining members whose ability to ward visit became limited by work, health or family commitments, recruitment of additional volunteers remained a necessity priority and three more were at various stages of the Trust's process of CBS, reference and Occupational Health checks as the year ended.

Three active volunteers were awarded long-service certificates from the HBA (the Hospital Broadcasting Association) – two for 15 years and one for 30 years – which they received from the Chairman of the HBA, guest of honour at our organisation's 2025 Annual General Meeting. We were also gratified to learn during the course of the year that, seven of the ten longest-serving volunteers across all areas of the Royal Berkshire Trust were volunteers with Hospital Radio Reading.

OBJECTIVES AND AIMS :

Reading Hospital Broadcasting Service is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose charitable objects are :-

> (1) The relief of sickness, poor health and old age amongst people living in Reading and the surrounding area by providing a local broadcasting service for hospitals, residential homes and similar institutions, and for patients receiving community care.
>
> (2) The advancement of health and prevention or relief of sickness for the public benefit, through the promotion of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle and the importance of maintaining good personal mental and physical health, by (mainly, but not exclusively) the means of broadcasting health education messages to people living in Reading and the surrounding area.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES :

Patient interaction and Request programmes

The cornerstone of our activities and fundamental to the achievement of our first charitable objective are always our live programmes featuring the possibility of patient interaction. In 2025 these accounted for between 32 – 35 hours in the average week, at least 24 hours of which were devoted in whole or in part to playing patients' music choices - "HRR Requests", broadcast (and repeated) daily, or "Good Afternoon Royal Berks," which on 28 occasions during the year was extended to Friday afternoons (sometimes becoming "Good Evening Royal Berks" in a later teatime slot depending on the availability of presenters !).

For the second successive year only 4 days saw no live programming at all generated by members of the organisation : indeed, it could be argued only 3 since one such day was devoted to joining around 20 other hospital stations in relaying a 14-hour patient-focused live show from Lancashire produced by "The Big Broadcast" team. Drawn from various hospital stations, the team included one current and one former Hospital Radio Reading volunteer.

And, to compensate for the lack of live shows on Christmas Day, four of our younger volunteers again spearheaded a three-hour "Boxing Day Bonanza", visiting 14 wards and collecting 40 requests from patients in the afternoon of December 26th.

The total number of requests played across the year increased markedly : **7,237 music requests were played,** mostly requested by patients when visited by our volunteers on the wards (or dedicated to them by visiting friends or family), occasionally by members of staff and also by a growing number of former patients and supporters, listening at home via our internet stream. This total represented an increase of almost 1,500 on the previous year and was encouragingly close to the 8,066 requests played in 2019, the last year before the pandemic struck. This total included **195 requests received by phone,** a significant drop in number from the previous year's total, due largely to intermittent but repeated telephone connectivity issues in the second half of the year : patients' bedside telephones were hit by a recurring fault, possibly related to a major power outage within the hospital in the summer, which Spark TSl engineers were unable or unwilling to address & resolve and which is ongoing at the time of writing. **47 requests were emailed and 102 received via social media** and a new proforma added to the organisation's website towards the end of the previous year proved especially popular, generating a further **414 website requests** as opposed to only 10 in its first weeks of operation the previous year.

It must be acknowledged that the sharp rise in usage of the website was largely down to a single patient who, beginning during a lengthy stay on Victoria Ward, not only continued to regularly send requests while listening from home once discharged but often followed them up by email interaction with his favourite presenters. And, though the number of patients relying on our service may have declined, the quality of such engagement with many was testimony to the strength of Hospital Radio as a means of relieving boredom and loneliness by regularly engaging with long-term or returning patients, some of whom as in previous years prepared and submitted long lists of favourites by phone or email – and in one case scribbled in the margins of an HRR Magazine while awaiting a visit from the request collector! Received vis social media, the words of one young(ish) man awaiting a transplant provided a fitting testimonial : after three volunteers had engaged with him and kept him company via their Requests shows on a long and difficult journey he wrote : "Can I say your radio show, requests and your kind gestures have made a 5 week stay that little bit more liveable and even fun for the wards, including the old timers and nurses. If I can work out how to listen via Internet whilst at home, hopefully recovering, I will be tuning in". In fact he did not wait that long but telephoned the following week from a Birmingham hospital to say he had found us and was tuning in via the TuneIn radio app (to HRR and not our Birmingham counterparts !) and - liver and doctors permitting - would be continuing to do so. A dozen requests from his "hospital radio list" were played across that week's shows and, with a new liver and a new lease of life, he remains in occasional contact.

Analysis of requests received enabled the organisation to produce, as usual, charts of most-requested artistes and titles, which saw little change in the Top 5 performers : headed by Queen, closely followed by Elvis Presley, Abba & The Beatles and the only newcomer being Bob Marley, who pushed Ed Sheeran into 6th place. Similar consistency led to only slight

reordering of titles as well : Comfortably Numb joined longstanding favourites Sweet Caroline and Islands in the Stream just behind 3 Little Birds & Dancing Queen and Bohemian Rhapsody regained the top spot. Perhaps the only surprise here was a decline in the popularity of Simply the Best (often used hitherto as an expression of thanks to the RBH nursing and medical staff).

Special programming and relations with local organisations:

If a voluntary organisation is to provide a service to its patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week when the majority of its members are in full-time employment it cannot rely solely on live broadcasts and, as usual, an extensive archive of recorded programmes, both home-produced and syndicated, was utilised covering gospel, rock, jazz, blues, classical, comedy, musicals, old-time and film & TV soundtracks as well as our library of Bedtime Stories by local authors in the Thames Valley Writers' Circle. To these were added a new imported series focusing on great crooners and occasional specials celebrating St Patrick's Day and local brass bands. To the "specials" category in our playout system were added six specialist hours of rock & roll and country music, recorded by a guest presenter (an elderly former patient with a passion for both genres), effectively as a gesture of thanks for the radio service which he had discovered and appreciated – and, indeed, had sustained his morale - during an unexpected delay of several days awaiting discharge with little human company in an almost empty bay.

Many special events figured once again in our programming calendar, most notably at Christmas when, in addition to recording the Trust Carol Service in the hospital chapel for something like the 15th time and a third Christmas Concert at Reading Minster (in aid of the Royal Berks Charity) we recorded another high-quality Christmas Concert performed by the Pangbourne Choral Society. All were highlights of a special schedule for the festive season.

In addition the "Saturday Sport" team continued to work tirelessly through the year to not only expand our range of outside broadcasts and the variety of sports and leisure activities covered in reports and interviews but also raise the profile of Hospital Radio in the local community. In addition to chronicling the problems of Reading FC both on and off the field in home game commentaries, whenever gaps in the SCL Stadium fixture list permitted them to expand non-league coverage with more commentaries than ever before from Reading City, Wokingham Town and Maidenhead United. They also featured live commentary on rugby union, hockey and cricket in visits to local clubs and special events at Burghfield Sailing Club and Tilehurst Bowls Club. Both in live coverage and recorded interviews, opportunities were highlighted for patients needing or wishing to improve fitness after illness or surgery, or merely wishing to try something new and meet new people. On a less specifically sporting brief, they also provided music & announcements at Holybrook Parish Council's VE Day Community Picnic in May and radio coverage of Reading School's 900th anniversary reunion in June – the latter being promoted in advance by the school to former students & teachers unable to attend, enabling them to feel a part of the day wherever in the world they were.

Originally focusing on celebrities' experiences during the pandemic & lockdown (and at the same time highlighting and supporting the work of the NHS) and conducted over Zoom, "Isolation Interviews" continued and went from strength on Wednesday evenings, as did the "Take Five" series with mostly local personalities discussing their lives and musical tastes.

Guests in that ranged from mayors & council leaders (many of whom also recorded Christmas messages) and a local headteacher to HRR's very own Honorary President, Alan Dedicoat ("the voice of Strictly Come Dancing").

All of the above illustrates our efforts to fulfil the first objective of our charity, "the relief of sickness, poor health and old age by providing a local broadcasting service … to patients" - by implication, distracting them from pain and worry and entertaining them. Progress towards our second objective "the promotion of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle … by (mainly, but not exclusively) the means of broadcasting health education messages to people living in Reading and the surrounding area" was achieved in our Saturday Sport coverage, as outlined above, and by public service announcements, either obtained from government websites or created to order for local charities & organisations such as Epilepsy Berkshire, the University of the Third Age, Age Concern, Reading Macular Society and a nearby school & day nursery). On a national scale we also joined other hospital stations in sharing a live six-hour show from Scotland highlighting Muscular Dystrophy and members of Trust staff wishing to promote special initiatives such as National Carers' week were featured in editions of "Good Afternoon Royal Berks", as were the Trust Chaplaincy and the Royal Berks Charity.

Other departments within the Trust approached us on occasion during the year, as a result of which we provided music and commentary for a third staff multicultural event in the Oasis wellbeing centre, teenagers from the Berkshire Young Persons' Diabetes Council again used our studio facilities to record additional podcasts and at the start and the end of the year we hosted a total of five visits from local primary schoolchildren in the Trust's "Junior Carers" scheme. With the help of three of our volunteers who agreed to begin their afternoon shows two hours earlier than usual, to fit in with the children's schedule, we refined and perfected the previous year's experiment of inviting the children to appear on-air introducing their favourite music tracks for the patients. Both children and teachers considered their radio début to be a highlight of their morning and links to recordings of their shows were sent to the schools for parents who had been unable to listen live via the internet to enjoy. The organisation was once again invited to support the Trust's Youth Forum and the Chairman spoke about opportunities for involvement in the work of Hospital Radio in a video conference to around 20 teenagers interested in careers in medicine & healthcare. Following the successful integration at the start of the year of one such youngster into a regular role on a weekday evening patient requests team, a second A Level student was recruited to a weekend requests show at the end of the year.

The Trust's Communications department brought good news about a publicity opportunity in the early part of the year – a request from ITV News Meridian to film Hospital Radio Reading in action for a "good news" item to counterbalance recent negative coverage on NHS problems and crises. The result was a 5 minute report featuring two volunteers which, although only shown in its entirety on the streaming service ITV-X, was trailed and sampled at the end of the 6pm local news, when Sangeeta Bhabra (who herself had begun her broadcasting career as a HRR volunteer) spoke warmly about the station. And the item led to at least one subsequent membership enquiry from a prospective new volunteer.

Finally, a year which had begun with delight for the Trustees as we celebrated the organisation's nomination for one of the prestigious Kings Awards for Voluntary Service in late 2024 ended in disappointment. After a three-hour visit in February by two of the Deputy Lords Lieutenant for the Royal County of Berkshire who saw us in action and spoke to Trustees, patients and – on behalf of the Trust - the Voluntary Services Manager and the lead nurse with responsibility for Patient Experience, the three senior Trustees attended a ceremony in August with 14 other nominated charities from the county at which they were presented with a beautiful certificate of nomination and then anxiously awaited the announcement of results on His Majesty's Birthday on November 14th. Sadly, we were not among the 231 organisations nationwide (only 2 of them hospital radio stations) and only 4 of them in Berkshire to receive the Award.

Future Strategy :

During the reporting year the Trustees made some progress in addressing areas of concern for the future which had previously been identified :

- Broadening the range of options through which all members of the hospital community can hear and participate in our programmes. Whilst we were still unable to secure reception of our internet stream on speakers in public areas of the hospital - cafés, outpatient waiting areas etc. - without additional fund-raising or financial sponsorship to cover the cost of PPL and PRS licence fees, contact was established with the Trust's Digital, Data & Technology team with a view to enabling staff members to access hospital radio broadcasts via the staff wi-fi on their work stations. The initial response, however, was that bandwidth would be an issue but efforts continued to resolve the issue.
- With Government plans for construction of a new hospital on an out-of-town site deferred until the late 2030s and consequent plans for medium-term investment in the hospital's current site still uncertain, the Trustees were relieved to be informed that the demolition of the building adjacent to ours (and the likelihood of our own enforced relocation) were not currently being considered. But the Trustees are aware that NHS budgets and development priorities are constantly subject to change …
- During the reporting year no further steps were taken towards pursuing a move onto a digital platform for transmission of our service. Whilst not unanimous on the subject, the consensus among Trustees was that, taking into consideration the financial implications and risks of opting for DAB together with evidence that patients bringing their own entertainment onto the wards have generally opted for laptops, tablets & mobile phones rather than DAB radios, the way forward was most likely to be via internet radio.
- Spark TSL (formerly known as Hospedia) is the company that provides and maintains the bedside entertainment consoles in most UK hospitals. During the reporting year, their engineer with responsibility for the Royal Berkshire Hospital (as well as three others!) demonstrated to the Chairman a prototype of the new generation of tablets, still attached to arms that extend and pivot from the wall above patients' beds but using internet, rather than cable-based, technology. Shortly after the year ended, we learned that the Royal Berkshire Hospital would be in the next phase of their intended

upgrade, during the coming year. Given that the company has hoped to provide a wider range of entertainment options and services via those tablets free of charge to patients, the Trustees – in common with those of other member stations of the Hospital Broadcasting Association - are not convinced of the viability of expecting Trusts (or their fund-raising charitable arms) to take responsibility for financing services that are currently provided free of charge, subsidised by other sources of income or paid for by patients. At the time of writing the names of the officers of Spark TSL responsible for the changeover had been obtained but no information was forth-coming from them as to any progress made in contacting the appropriate authorities at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, let alone agreement on whether the upgrade would take place and how it might be financed.

Whatever finance model is eventually adopted, removal of one of our "unique selling points" (that radio is free) and the inevitable greater competition from a wider range of TV, radio and internet based entertainment on the new tablets would oblige all Hospital Radio Reading volunteers to constantly pay greater attention to the quality of our programming and our outreach on the wards in order to keep our audience. That in itself is no bad thing, but it is already apparent that even elderly patients are more likely nowadays to turn down our invitation to listen to hospital radio and make a request if they have Spotify or one of the other streaming platforms on a mobile phone, which many say is "all they need". The Trustees recognise that volunteers will need to make a far greater effort to engage with patients on the wards, spending time chatting to them and winning them over and playing the music we know our patients want, not what we think they might like to hear : i.e. putting the patient first.

FINANCIAL REVIEW :

The organisation has continued its long-established policy of holding a reserve of cash, equating to at least one year's running costs, in an interest-bearing National Savings account as a contingency fund, as well as operating a current account for its everyday activities.

From the statements below it can be seen that the organisation's total income was £4,139 and its expenditure £4,863, resulting in an end of year deficit of £731 compared to a year end surplus of £753.00 the previous year. This was, however, more than compensated for by the healthy current account balance which had been carried over at the beginning of the year.

Both income and expenditure returned to levels on a par with those in most previous years as significant investment on key computer equipment in 2024 (and sizeable donations received from grant-awarding charities to finance it) had been exceptional and unique to that year. Income from volunteers' membership subscriptions rose to £1,830 (the result of an increase in the subscription from £30 to £50 for those in full-time employment which came into effect at the start of the year) and was the organisation's largest source of income in the reporting year. Donations included £250 and £200 respectively from the Windsor & Maidenhead Lions and Holybrook Parish Council in return for the provision of a public address service at events they had organised and donations from members of the public increased (both acquaintances of members and also at least one grateful patient), most notably £583 when our organisation

was chosen as the recipients of one of a local women's group's monthly jumble sales. A number of members and supporters continued to nominate HRR as their sponsored charity in the Easy Fundraising scheme, thus enabling us to receive a small percentage of their spending on retail websites, and individual initiatives included a cake sale at a Studio Open Day, carol-singing with a collection in the hospital's main reception, and one member's collaboration with work contacts to obtain £270, a small percentage of income from a series of charity auctions, mostly in aid of the NSPCC.

Regular expenditure was kept to a minimum thanks to the ongoing support of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust which continued to provide free accommodation and power at our location on the main hospital site. The largest area of expenditure was the accumulation of various annual charges and subscriptions required for us to broadcast :- insurance, PPL & PRS fees (to performers & copyright holders), payments for Sky News, broadband & internet streaming, membership of the Hospital Broadcasting Association etc. £1,428 spent on studio maintenance, mostly additional items to complement the previous year's investment in new computers (circuit breakers etc.) and various repairs and sundry replacement items.

Expenditure listed below as "Members Meetings" refers to that which benefits only our volunteers and not the patients - usually Annual General Meeting catering. The organisation's policy remains that monies received from the public must never be used for such expenditure, which must never exceed the amount already paid by volunteers in their membership subscriptions. Furthermore, the increase in this reporting year compared to the previous one reflected the purchase of additional "HRR" branded fleeces and polo shirts, aimed at presenting a more united image when visiting patients and fund-raising in public. This also accounts for the £157 of income allocated to Members' Funds as those members who purchased one paid for it with their order.

READING HOSPITAL RADIO BROADCASTING SERVICE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DEC 2025

INCOME	2024	2025
FUNDRAISING	337	893
DONATIONS	790	1089
SUBSCRIPTIONS	1035	1830
REFUND - IRN/PLUS NET	127	0
PAYPAL	2	0
CROWDFUNDING	160	24
EASY FUNDRAISING	58	96
GRANTS	7487	0
TRANSFER from OLD ACCOUNT	1218	0
SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	60	28
GIFT AID	0	22
MEMBERS FUNDS	0	157
	11273	4139

EXPENDITURE		
STUDIO MAINTENANCE	6208	1428
BROADBAND/STREAMING	621	645
PPL/INS/RADIO AUTHORITY/HBA	3616	2465
MEMBERS MEETINGS	74	325
	10520	4863
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	753	-731

RESERVES Carried Forward	**2024**	**2025**
REPRESENTED BY		
INVESTMENT	8141	8223
CURRENT ACCOUNT	3440	2709
	11581	10932

Signature:

Date
October 9th 2026
Ann Beasley (Treasurer)

October 9th 2026
Gerard Rocks (Chair of Trustees)