The Bircham Centre

At the Heart of Reepham
Open for All



Annual Report 2025

Introduction

In 1919 Samuel Bircham (1841-1923), a local resident and landowner in Reepham, gave the building to the town to be held in trust for the people of the town and surrounding area for use as a reading room and community meeting place. Now known as The Bircham Centre, it has become the hub of community life here. It currently houses a wide variety of social activities and voluntary services, including the town's library, charity and pre-loved book shops, the Fixery and Reepham Archive. The centre also provides counselling and well-being services and space for numerous local community groups, clubs, societies and a weekly Country Market. The property is Grade II listed and fronts onto Reepham's historic marketplace, with parts of it dating back to the Jacobean period.

The centre is managed by the Trustee Board comprised of a maximum of twelve trustees. Their responsibility is to ensure that Samuel Bircham's purpose for the building, to be maintained and used as a community centre, are carried out. To achieve this, the trustees are responsible for generating sufficient funds to both preserve the historic, Grade II listed building and facilitate community activities.

The trustees meet monthly for Board Meetings and also provide ongoing advice and support to employees and volunteers. During 2025 the Trustee Board met on twelve occasions, which included the Annual General Meeting in June 2025.

Legal Status and Constitution

The name of the charity is 'The Bircham Centre'. It is a charity founded by Trust Deed dated 15 August 1919. It is registered by the Charity Commission of England with the registration number 242536. The Registered Office is The Market Place, Reepham, Norfolk NR10 4JJ.

The charity's main professional contacts and staff

Audit and Accountancy – Boldero & Co
Bankers – HSBC & COIF (Charities Investment Fund)
Insurance – Grout Insurance Brokers

The trustees employ the following part-time staff:

- **Centre Manager** - (16 hours per week)
- **Community Engagement Worker** - (16 hours per week)
- **Caretaker** - (8 hours per week)
- **Cleaning Staff** - (3 staff sharing a total of 15 hours per week)

Trustee and volunteer support

The charity is also dependent on groups of volunteers, supporters and helpers to assist with the operation of the centre. The trustees are responsible for their direction, recruitment and training, plus the financial management of the centre. It is recognised that such assistance and volunteering is absolutely key to the operation and future of the charity.

Trustees

Christina Pashley	Chairperson (June 2025)	2024 - present
Ian Kenvyn	Vice Chairperson	2022 - present
Clare Kenvyn		2022 - present
Chris Lakeland		2025 - present
Paul Brock (representing Reepham Bowls Club)		2024 - present
Carl Lamb		2020 - 2026
Ian McGilvray		2020 - 2026

AGM Chairman's Report

Welcome to the 2026 annual meeting which reports on the activities of the Bircham Centre for 2025 and looks ahead to our plans for 2026.

In June 2025, I took over as Chairperson and would like to take a moment to express my sincere thanks and best wishes to Les West, who has completed his tenure as a trustee after six years, the last four as Chair. The strong position we are in today is largely thanks to Les' rigorous approach to financial governance and planning and we are all delighted that he is continuing to support the Bircham Centre by helping with fundraising.

I would also like to extend my thanks and best wishes to Carl Lamb and Ian McGilvray, as they step down after six years as trustees. Carl's oversight of our governance and policies and Ian's dedication to the maintenance and future preservation of our wonderful building have been enormous assets. Like Ian, they both continue to support the Bircham Centre.

During 2025 we have welcomed new trustees and volunteers and spent time strengthening our role as a community hub at the heart of Reepham. The number of people who visit the Centre continues to grow as we increase the events and services provided to the community.

Some of our highlights for 2025

Community (what we do)

- Secured funding for our Community Engagement Worker (CEW) for another two years. This is in no small part testament to Jess Bygrave, our current CEW, who has done a remarkable job identifying areas to add value through organised events and social activities, she has also driven our community initiatives to reduce isolation and loneliness.
- Held various events and workshops throughout the year, including a Traditional Crafts Open Day, Halloween Party, taken part in the Christmas in Reepham event, held Archive Talks, Nature Workshops, Willow-Weave Workshops, as well as regular Bridge, Craft, Board Games and Gardening clubs and Nature Workshops.
- Hired out our indoor and outdoor spaces for various local business initiatives, groups and classes.
- Increased footfall through the door, creating opportunities for more people of all ages to benefit from the centre and become advocates for us.
- Developed local relationships, to enable access to more services, including Norfolk Age UK, Legal Advice and Paediatric Dental Advice.

Place (how and where we do it)

- We have replaced or repaired most of the rotten windows.
- Our garden continues to flourish with the support of a team of volunteers, creating a safe, welcoming community space, also used to host events, or be hired out for private functions.
- We have developed a five-year, rolling schedule of maintenance work necessary to keep the Bircham Centre functioning in a safe and comfortable environment. This is reviewed regularly, and funding agreed and prioritised by the Trustee Board.

People (who we are)

We provide a safe, supportive, caring environment for staff, volunteers and members of the community

- Two new trustees were recruited in 2025.
- We have also created an ‘Associate Trustee’ role, for those who, for whatever reason, cannot commit to a full trustee role, but would like to offer their support and expertise.
- Five new volunteers came on board during 2025.

- At the end of the year, we held a party to thank all our wonderful volunteers and supporters.
- After the Reepham Music Festival, members of the community came together to purchase the GoGo Lion for us. Prince now has a permanent home at the Bircham Centre and provides much colourful joy to children, visitors and passers-by.

None of this would have be possible without our kind, dedicated and inspirational employees and volunteers – thank you to everyone who has made 2025 such a success!

Special thanks must go to our Centre Manager, Polly, for everything that she has done and continues to do to make the centre such a warm and welcoming place, able to deliver such a wide range of essential community services and activities. She also manages and supports all the staff and users of the centre and continues to go above and beyond in everything she does. Many people have a lot to thank Polly for, because of the way she cares and supports the different community groups and individuals.

Our new Community Worker, Jess, has also had an amazing impact on the number of activities we do and the range of age groups that now use the centre. Her creativity, warmth and charm have been a huge driver in the diversity of what we offer the community and our success in the past year. Our thanks also go to Monique, our caretaker, for her care of the building and to our cleaners, Tina, Glen and Julie who do a fantastic job.

We are blessed with a number of dedicated volunteers who work in the shop, book room, garden, archives and manage our finances. Our particular thanks to Brenda, the shop manager, and her deputy, Judy, for the large number of hours they put in every week in the shop. Also, to John and Jo in the book room, Joy who supports us with the finances, and Tom, who leads the dedicated team of voluntary gardeners. Without these dedicated helpers the centre would struggle to achieve all that it does.

I'd also like to thank everyone on the Board of Trustees for their professionalism and commitment to keeping the centre running efficiently, having a clear strategy for the future of the centre and ensuring the building is preserved for the community for future generations.

Aims and Objectives for 2026

In early 2026, the Trustees of the Bircham Centre undertook a review of our strategy and agreed a set of objectives for 2026 and beyond. Part of that review was to articulate our core purpose in a simple statement to answer, 'What does the Bircham Centre do?'

The following was agreed:

Our purpose is to gather the community together in a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and supported. We nurture connection, wellbeing, and opportunity, through a range of services, activities, and events, whilst preserving the historic integrity of the listed building we are proud to call home.

Underpinning our purpose we agreed the core values we and our volunteers uphold in all we do and which we encourage in the community:

- Kindness
- Inclusivity
- Sharing

High-level strategic objectives for 2026 – 3 themes

Community

- Further develop the Bircham garden with support from the Greening Our Community grant (£4,465 grant funding).
- Maintain and improve the garden as a beautiful place to rest and play.
- Continue our existing programme of regular community activities and services (e.g. Norfolk Age UK) and develop new ones based on identified community needs & funding.
- Continue to host the Fixery as a community service.
- Continue providing Age Concern drop ins, legal advice, paediatric dental care sessions and many more.
- Provide Wellbeing classes.
- Host Reepham Readers Book Group (in conjunction with Reepham Library).
- House the Reepham Hub – the new information portal to make it easy to find what's on in the local community.

Building

- Continue to deliver rolling maintenance / buildings plan (including identifying and securing sources of funding):
    - Replace Garden Room window and complete painting all new windows installed in 2025.
    - Refresh Community Room (Rm 7) by painting and replacing carpet with appropriate flooring (requires funding - £1.5k-£2k).

    - Research options for replacement heaters on a room-by-room basis (identify and pursue sources of funding).
- Conduct review of how we use our building and garden space and maximise the contribution that our resources provide, to ensure that we optimise the use of those spaces.
- Redesign of our retail space, including a review of stock, pricing and donations to increase revenue, including more opportunities for online / offsite sales.
- Redesign our garden space, improving accessibility as a priority, and longer-term development of facilities to improve hiring opportunities and activities we can hold.

None of this is possible without funding to do these things – so securing the renewal of the Library contract with Norfolk County Council is a priority, as is the renegotiation of the Centre's telephony and WiFi / data provision, to maximise service and value for money.

People

Our number one priority for the people who work, volunteer and use the Bircham Centre is to provide a safe, supportive, caring environment for them to come together in.

Specific focuses for 2026

- Align current trustee roles to specific areas of charity deliverables and recruit more trustees to fill specific gaps.
- Recruit associate trustees, advisers and/or additional volunteers to support specific projects and initiatives when required.
- Develop our approach to volunteer recognition and advocacy.
- Policies:
    - Finalise Parental Leave policy
    - Finalise Working at Height policy
    - Communicate Safeguarding policy to all volunteers
    - Conduct an annual review of all other existing policies

Maintenance of the Building

The ongoing maintenance of our building remains very much at the core of our objectives. During 2025 the residual work identified in the quinquennial buildings inspection of 2021 was extracted into a rolling buildings plan and the nature and severity of each job reviewed by the trustees responsible for property upkeep. Tasks were categorised as

either ‘general management’, ‘rolling maintenance’ or more significant ‘maintenance projects’. Professional input was sought to help prioritise and estimate the cost to undertake the more significant maintenance projects.

As a result of this activity, the trustees now have a clear set of buildings priorities for coming years, with a rough order of magnitude costing to help with identify / attracting necessary funding to complete.

General maintenance activities will continue to require volunteer support to complete, and a need to bolster the team available for such activities is clear to the board looking ahead to 2026.

The priority work identified for 2025 was the replacement of four widows and the repair of a further three, with the appropriate Listed Building Consent being obtained in the latter part of 2024. Work was completed largely to plan and budget, with one exception being the repair of the ground floor window in the Garen Room. Closer inspection identified that the frame was beyond economical repair and a replacement would need to be pursued. Further consent and funding will be required to complete this work, which has been assigned appropriate priority for completion in the buildings plan.

Reserve Policy

The Trustees aim to obtain sufficient funds each year so that the maintenance of the building and the work of the charity can continue and develop.

The Trustees aim to keep a reserve of at least 50% of annual expenditure.

Safeguarding

During 2025 there were no safeguarding matters brought to the attention of the trustees.

The trustees reviewed and updated the safeguarding policy in October 2025, which is available on the website.

Health and Safety

During 2025 there were no reportable Health and Safety incidents reported to the trustees. The trustees monitor the Health and Safety of its employees, volunteers and users of the Centre on a continuous basis, which is a standing item on the trustees’ agenda. Health and Safety is led by the trustees in conjunction with the Centre Manager.
The trustees reviewed and updated the Health and Safety policy in August 2025, which is available on the website. Within this Policy Statement the trustees recognise their duties and obligations in ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of the employees of the centre along with volunteers and anyone else who may be affected by the centre’s activities including visitors and contractors.

Other Policies

In addition to the above, the following policies are available and reviewed on a regular basis:

Governance	Whistle Blowing
Complaints	Wind Up
Equal Opportunities	ECO Journey
Legal and Administration Information	Staff Employment Matters
Risk Management	Volunteers

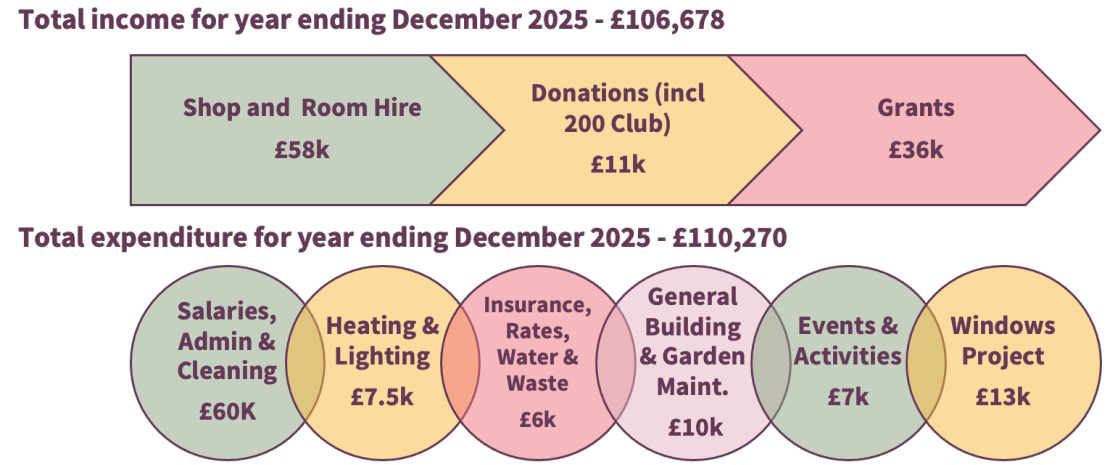
Financial Report

The charity and pre-loved bookshop sales, plus building hire charges continue to form the majority of our income. Income generated from these totalled £58k, and with donated funds total income was £69k (£62k in 2024).

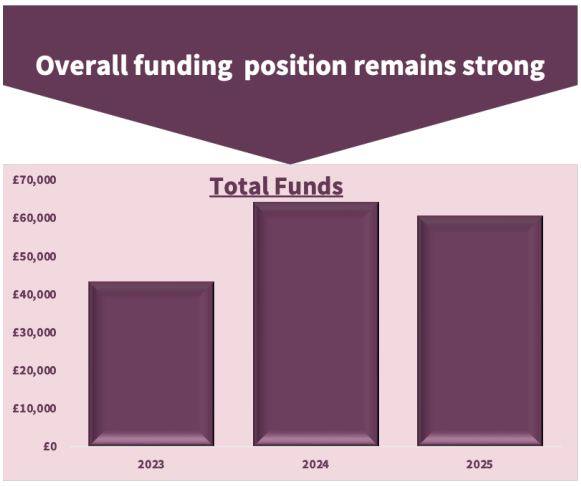
Grant income of £36k was secured for 2025, bringing the total income position to £107k.

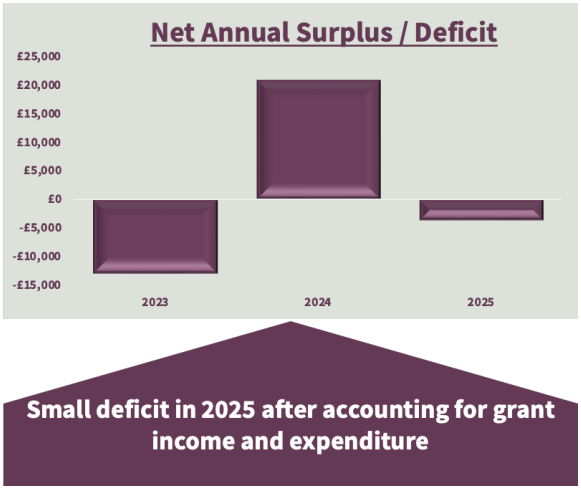
Total expenditure for 2025 was £110k, resulting in a small deficit of £3,592, versus a net surplus in 2024 of £20,856. The surplus in 2024 was exceptional and a result of the timing of receipt of grants spanning accounting year end – by way of comparison, a deficit of £13k was recorded in 2023.

The board focus is to balance operational income and expenditure close to breakeven. Operational income / expenditure is the position prior to grant income (and associated grant expenditure) and provides a robust perspective on the ongoing cost control and sustainability of the charity. In 2025 against a budgeted £2k deficit, an operational deficit of £7k was recorded. This position reflects a number of costs being incurred ahead of the year end with benefit into 2025, plus significant outlay on the window repair project. The Trustee Board remain comfortable with ongoing cost control, and an operational breakeven target is considered realistic for the 2026 accounting year.



The Bircham Centre continues to hold a strong reserve fund position which is comfortably aligned to the reserve policy (50% annual expenditure).





The Bircham Centre would like to thank Ian Boldero & Co for financial support and work in auditing our accounts and would like to hereby appoint them as the examiner for the next financial year.

Key Operational Risks for Trustees to Monitor

People

- **Reliance upon volunteers:** our team consists of 6 part-time staff members and over 60 volunteers – consequently much of the day to day running of the charity is undertaken by the volunteer team
- **Key personnel dependencies**: much understanding about the running of our centre is held by a number of our key team members.

Funding

- **Funding for core team:** there is a reliance upon grant income to pay for some of the team; staff costs are not fully met from earned income.
- **Increasing** core staff: there is a desire to extend the core staff, however funding for roles needs to be secured before doing so, ideally through recurring earned revenue.

Buildings

- The Grade II listed building requires ongoing renovation and maintenance activity – this continues to be achieved through volunteer support and with a reliance upon grant / external funding. There is always a risk that unexpected maintenance/repair is required.

Key Organisations Providing Grants in 2025

During 2025, the charity was pleased to receive grants from the following organisations and grant making bodies:

- **'Travel Chapter'** gave the second year tranche of funding to support the maintenance of the building.
- **Norfolk Community Foundation** - Countering Loneliness Innovation Fund, supporting the Community Engagement Worker position.
- **Broadland District Council via Norfolk Community Foundation** – Winter Pressures Grant, which supported the Monday warm space community coffee mornings.
- **Norfolk Community Foundation** – Greening our Communities, which facilitated the purchase of tools and the development of a pollinator bed.
- **Pilgrims Trust** - funding to support building maintenance and repairs
- Reepham Lions
- Reepham Rotary

Donations

In addition to the grants, the Bircham Centre received donations from individuals and bequests from the families of past users. The trustees offer their sincere thanks to all. Also, to the many members of the 200 Club who continue to support the Centre financially. If you are not a member of the 200 Club, you may wish to consider joining. It only costs £12 per year (£1 per month). 200 Club winners are drawn monthly, with prizes of £25, £15 and £10 awarded each month with additional prizes at Christmas.

Appendix

Memorandum of Understanding with the Reepham Archive

The Reepham Archive is housed at the Bircham Centre and contains a publicly available collection of documents, photographs, and artefacts relevant to the history and development of Reepham and the surrounding area. The purpose of the Reepham Archive is to nurture public and professional interest and an understanding of the heritage of Reepham and the local area.

The trustees of the Bircham Centre have overall financial and administrative responsibility for the management of the Reepham Archives. The trustees delegate the day-to-day management and operation of the archive to a group of volunteers, who are responsible for the storage, preservation, recording, acquisition and disposal of items and interface with archival organisations and the general public. A **Memorandum of Understanding** has been agreed between the Bircham Centre and the Archive group.

The Reepham Archive group has the right to appoint a representative to the Board of Trustees of the Bircham Centre. As no one wanted to take up this position, a link volunteer has been nominated to attend the Trustee Board every quarter to give a report on the activity of the archives. The current link is Charles Butcher.

The archives are maintained by a small group of volunteers and are open to the public on the first Wednesday and Saturday morning of each month or by appointment.

Archive talk - following the success of previous events, in November 2025, the Bircham Centre hosted a community event during which the Archive Group gave a presentation on the Market Square, sharing the history of the buildings and businesses, along with the people and families who lived there in past years. This was once again a sellout success, and we will continue to hold similar events in the future.

Memorandum of Understanding Reepham Town Bowling Club

Until 2020, The Reepham Town Bowling Green was the responsibility of the Reepham Society. When the society was disbanded, ownership and responsibility was transferred to the Bircham Centre charity. A **Memorandum of Understanding** has been agreed between the Bircham Centre and the Bowling Club.

The Bircham Centre owns the freehold of the bowling green along with the associated buildings, the title of which was transferred to the trustees of the Bircham Centre, under title number NK428204 by the Land Registry Office.

The trustees of the Bircham Centre have agreed a twenty-five-year lease to the Reepham Town Bowling Club for the green and associated buildings, including the club house, at an agreed annual rent as outlined in the lease, currently £150 per annum.

The Reepham Town Bowling Club is managed by a committee of members which reports to the trustees of the Bircham Centre. The committee is responsible for keeping the

ground and buildings in a good state of housekeeping and repair, and for the security of the site.

The committee has the right to appoint one member of the committee to the Board of Trustees of the Bircham Centre, who reports to the Board at each meeting. Paul Brock currently fulfills this role.

The Bowls Club keep their own finances and provide a copy of the inspected accounts to the Board on an annual basis. The Bowling Green was added as an asset to the Bircham Centre insurance documentation in 2020. The trustees of the Bircham Centre do not accept any financial liability for the Reepham Town Bowling Club.

Currently the bowls club have around 25 members and play in 4 leagues. Club members keep the green and premises clean and tidy all through the year.

The Bircham Centre

Income & Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December 2025

		2025		2024
Receipts				
Hirings	20,367		17,550	
Library rent	3,106		3,106	
Library cleaning	2,080		2,080	
200 Club	1,680		1,729	
Shop including book sales	31,451		31,834	
Donations received	4,346		2,966	
Bowls Club	150		150	
Sundry including off site events	856		345	
Interest on deposits	1,400		1,594	
		65,436		61,354
Payments				
Cleaning	12,222		9,492	
Insurance	4,430		5,231	
Water	614		496	
Electricity and telephone	11,029		6,820	
Accountant's report and payroll	420		420	
Rates	222		92	
Administration	26,151		23,827	
Repairs & maintenance	5,986		3,569	
Health & safety	2,513		907	
Garden maintenance	7,653		6,366	
200 Club	690		595	
Bowling club	150		150	
Sundries including marketing / event	658		675	
		72,738		58,640
Deficit (2024-Surplus)		(7,302)		2,714
Grant income		41,242		36,479
		33,940		39,193
Grant expenditure		(37,532)		(18,337)
Deficit (2024-Surplus)		(3,592)		20,856

The Bircham Centre

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2025

		2025		2024
HSBC Current Account	23,016		8,334	
COIF Deposit Account	37,713		53,451	
		60,729		61,785
		-		2,536
		60,729		64,321
Trust funds B/fwd		64,321		43,465
Less Deficit (2024 surplus) for the year		(3,592)		20,856
Trust funds C/fwd		60,729		64,321
Unrestricted funds		41,874		46,756
Restricted funds		18,855		17,565
		60,729		64,321

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees (Charity Name) THE BIRCHAM CENTRE

On accounts for the year ended 31.12.25 **Charity no (if any)** 242536

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 DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, 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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

[~~The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]~~]. *Delete* [ ] *if not applicable.*

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report 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: [signature] **Date:** 23.02.2026

Name: IAN G. M. BORDERO

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS IN ENGLAND & WALES.

(if any):	
Address:	

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material 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.

N/A