# Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia

(Registered charity, number 282938)

## Financial statements
## for the year ended 31 December 2025


| Page | Contents |
|---|---|
| 2 - 10 | Trustees' annual report |
| 11 | Independent examiner's report |
| 12 | Receipts & payments account |
| 13 | Statement of assets & liabilities |
| 14 - 15 | Notes to the accounts |


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# Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia
# Trustees' annual report
# for the year ended 31 December 2025

**Full name** Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia

**Other names by which the charity is known** OSME

**Registered charity number** 282938

**Principal address**
1 Charnwood Avenue, Sutton Bonington, Loughborough, LE12 5NA

**Trustees**

| | |
|---|---|
| Robert Sheldon | Simon Tull |
| Susan Delve | Simon Awad |
| Marko Halonen | Tomas Haraldsson |
| Ian Harrison | Murray Brown |
| Mike Blair | Chris Hughes |

**Independent examiner**
Eva Stevens, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

**Governance and management**
The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 17/07/1981 and most recently amended 10/07/2010.

A Council of trustees elected by the members manages the affairs of the Society. There are no restrictions on membership of the Society subject to payment of the appropriate subscription.

The elected Council members serve for a period of five years. New Council members are nominated by paid-up members and are elected to office at the Annual General Meeting which was held online this year on Saturday 23rd of November. Council has the power to co-opt additional members at any time where a specific need is identified and where the appropriate commitment cannot be found from amongst its numbers.

The elected Council is supported by two specialist sub-committees, the Editorial Board and the Conservation Fund Committee. The Editorial Board assists the Editor of Sandgrouse in compiling the content of each issue and the content of any supplementary publications according to a budget set by Council at the start of the year. The Conservation Fund Committee receives and reviews all grant applications made through a formal application procedure and makes recommendations to Council. All decisions on the allocation of funds to conservation projects are made by, and are the responsibility of, the elected Council.

## Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia

The Society has no employees and owns no property or fixed assets; all the functions of an active and fully-compliant charity are performed by Council members working voluntarily with their own resources and from their own premises. This voluntary and low administrative cost approach enables the Charity to maximise the amounts expended on charitable activities and the Society recognises this very significant contribution with gratitude. It should be noted that the Sandgrouse Editor receives a small bursary to cover a small proportion of the time that is spent producing the journal and any associated expenses. In addition, as the important collaboration with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology has expanded, the grant that OSME receives for this work is used to cover the time and expenses of OSME's Youth Development Officer (this is of no cost to OSME and is 100% grant funded).

To assist them in understanding their responsibilities, all trustees are directed towards regular reference to the Charity Commission website. Council met formally three times during the year. Before each meeting, officers' reports were circulated to all Council members for information on the subjects under discussion and for the benefit of those not attending.

The Minutes of each formal meeting were circulated to all trustees and co-opted Council members soon after the meeting. Interaction between Council members in between formal meetings was by email through an email group. Most of these exchanges were seen by all trustee Council members and all co-opted Council members regardless of their involvement with the matter in hand.

A Risk Register is maintained so that Council members can identify the risks in their designated area of responsibility. No reportable incidents occurred during the year. However, Council remains aware of the need for continuous vigilance and review of all risk management procedures in place.

This year, Council has continued to address issues of governance and the provision of replacement in the event of incapacity of key trustees or co-opted Council members. Council recognises the general need to spread the administrative workload of the Society more evenly, and the need to reduce the concentration of key functions in a single incumbent working without deputy or understudy. Whilst the current workload of the Society is manageable with the existing Trustees and Council, there is an urgent need to recruit a new generation of members to take the Society forward.

The Society acknowledges that it lacks the administrative and financial resources to embark on major projects and restricts itself to providing financial assistance to others, rather than organising and directing projects itself. It does not get involved with project details, except in an advisory role at the application stage, and is particularly careful to limit second-stage payments and commitments which carry forward to future years. In all its deliberations, the Society pays due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in deciding the activities it should undertake.

# Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia

## Objectives and activities

To promote the study of Middle Eastern, Caucasian and central Asian ornithology and the conservation of the region's birds.

## Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

The object of the Charity is to promote a greater public understanding of Middle Eastern, Caucasian and Central Asian ornithology and thereby to encourage and facilitate conservation of the region's birds. This is achieved by the twice-yearly publication of a scientific journal, Sandgrouse, the holding of meetings, presence at events, the maintenance of a website, an active presence on social media, and the funding of fieldwork and other projects. Grants are awarded to approved projects from the funds of the Society and applicants are encouraged to submit their findings for publication in Sandgrouse.

## Public benefit statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

## Summary of the main achievements during the period

It is pleasing to reflect on what has been another successful year for OSME despite ongoing and emerging challenges. Thanks to the amazing support of OSME members and donors we have continued with significant expenditure through our small grant’s programmes, supporting a wide range of projects across the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Whilst the amount of money spent in 2025 was lower than recent years, our small grants expenditure was well above average.

## Funding conservation

During 2025 we funded four projects through our Conservation Fund with a total expenditure of £16,755.

The four projects funded in 2025 were:
•Conservation of Little Bustards in Azerbaijan.
•Tagging Egyptian vultures at important congregation sites along the Central Asian Flyway (follow up grant).
•Across Kyrgyzstan and beyond: tracking breeding and migrating Little Bustards.
•The second birds and wildlife camp in Mangystau Oblast, Kazakhstan.

In 2025 the Trevor Poyser Species Conservation Fund (TPSCF) grant was awarded to the Uzbekistan Society for the Protection of Birds (UzSPB) for a project monitoring the Critically Endangered Sociable Lapwing at the crucial stop-over site of Tallimerzhan. The TPSCF was financed through a legacy received from the late Trevor Poyser’s estate. There are sufficient funds available to continue with the TPSCF in 2026, and OSME Council are looking at ways we can continue this fund in the future.

Applications to the Conservation Fund are thoroughly reviewed by an independent committee that makes recommendations to OSME Council. During 2025 the committee was chaired by Dr Maxim Koshkin with expert input from Dr Nabegh Ghazal Asswad, Hana Raza and Ibrahim Al Hasani. During 2025, Dr Alyona Koshkina stepped down from the Committee due to work commitments. On behalf of OSME Council, I thank the Committee for their hard work and expertise in reviewing applications and providing clear guidance on which projects should be supported.

**Supporting the conservationists of tomorrow**

Our Youth Development Fund continues to go from strength to strength under the watchful eye of Tomas Haraldsson, OSME's Youth Development Officer. A key strength of our youth development work is that we look to provide continuity for projects so that they can develop over time. This may involve financial support over several years but also helping with awareness raising and promotion of projects, as well as offering advice. See Sandgrouse 46 (2) for an overview of the first five years of OSME's Youth Development Fund.

We continued our support of the Eymir Ringing Camp in Türkiye for the 4th consecutive year. This project continues to provide high-quality training to emerging birdwatchers and conservationists in Türkiye. A two-part guest blog written by participants of the Eymir Ringing Camp demonstrates the impact of this long-term project:
https://osme.org/2026/02/journeys-with-turkiyes-eymir-ornithological-research-center-part-one/ & https://osme.org/2026/05/journeys-with-turkiyes-eymir-ornithological-research-center-part-two/

We continued supporting projects in Kyrgyzstan, with OSME Council initially agreeing to fund a new initiative developed by the Nature Foundation. A proposed, Young Naturalist Handbook was deemed such an interesting and ground-breaking idea that the Kyrgyz Government decided to fund the project instead! OSME's Tomas Haraldsson worked with the Nature Foundation to develop a different programme of youth development work aimed at engaging students in nature conservation through a series of bird ringing sessions. These commenced in late 2025 and will continue to run until summer 2026 with 12 participants engaged in a series of ringing training activities.

This year we funded our first youth development project in Tajikistan by supporting the development of a bilingual digital hub that will address common themes cross the Central Asian Flyway. Themes include youth and community engagement, education, bird migration and conservation of threatened species like the Sociable Lapwing, Saker Falcon, Egyptian Vulture, Steppe Eagle, and Great Bustard. This initiative included the development of the digital hub website, four webinars, and a newsletter. Attendance has been good with 100+ delegates on most of the webinars.

In 2024, with our long-term partners, the Batumi Raptor Count, the Flyways Monitoring Internship was launched. This project awards two young trainees from the

OSME region a four-week internship, with their costs covered by a bursary from the Youth Development Fund. The internship provides training in raptor identification, standardised monitoring protocols, data management and first-hand experience of working with like-minded conservationists and birdwatchers. This year three participants were selected to take part in the internship programme, Leyla Muslim from Azerbaijan, Yaren Özogul from Türkiye and Motahareh Hakiminejad from Iran (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The second tranche of recipients of the BRC/OSME Flyways Monitoring Internship, Leyla Muslim (left), Yaren Özogul (centre) and Motahareh Hakiminejad (right) © Mitra Daneshvar

The success of the internship programme in 2024 is clearly demonstrated by the first recipients, Alyona Kaptyonkina (Kazakhstan) and Mitra Daneshvar (Iran) returning in 2025 as Batumi Raptor Count co-ordinators and counters – youth development in action!!

OSME Council remains committed to the Youth Development Fund and is keen to see the work expand to new countries and initiatives. Whilst funding is always a major constraint another limiting factor is staff time. OSME's Youth Development Officer Tomas Haraldsson, works as a volunteer to develop, nurture and monitor projects, but if our work is to grow in the future, we need more people with the right

skills to get involved. If you think you can help with funding, time or skills then please get in touch (youthdevelopment@osme.org, chairman@osme.org).

When our small grants programmes are combined, during 2025 OSME funded projects across our region to the value of £32,966. Huge thanks to the March Conservation Fund for their ongoing financial support, which has enabled us to grow both our Conservation and Youth Development Funds in recent years. It will be a significant challenge to maintain this overall level of expenditure in the coming years, but OSME Council will continue to look for future funding opportunities.

**Sandgrouse – showcasing ornithology in the OSME region**

Volume 47 of our well-respected journal Sandgrouse included a special issue that featured a series of papers that outlined the status of the eastern population of Little Bustard Tetrax tetrax. Many thanks to Mimi Kessler, Louis-Philippe and Nigel Collar for collating and editing the impressive collection of papers from across the OSME Region. More members than ever are now opting to receive the journal in digital format which helps OSME make a significant savings on postage costs. This is greatly appreciated as the cost of postage is rising sharply. Members wishing to switch to digital format can email sandgrousedigital@osme.org.

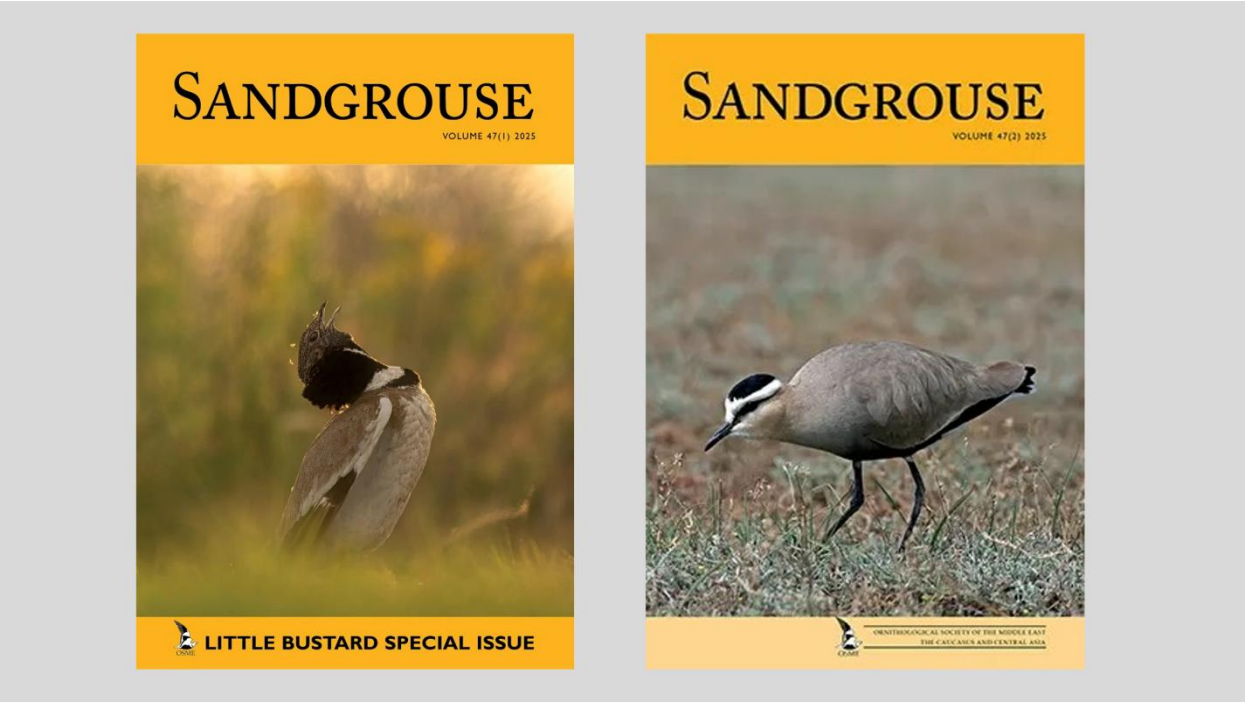



Figure 2. The front covers of Sandgrouse Volume 47. Little Bustard © Sergey Bystritsky & Sociable Lapwing © Paul F Donald

**Communicating with members and supporters**

OSME were again present at the Global Birdfair at the Rutland Showground, Leicestershire, UK, and it is now one of the few events where we can meet many of

our members and supporters face-to-face. The Birdfair is a significant investment in terms of both money and time, but Council remains committed to attend this annual event in the coming years. In September, OSME again participated in a joint event at the prestigious Natural History Museum (NHM) in South Kensington. The Avian Odyssey event organised by the NHM and the British Ornithologist's Club (BOC) consisted of a series of inspiring talks by the regional bird clubs, RSPB, BTO and BirdLife International. On behalf of OSME, Tohar Tal of the Batumi Raptor Count gave an outstanding talk on the raptor monitoring and wider conservation work undertaken at the Batumi bottleneck.

Our main social media channel continues to be Facebook page which remains popular with visitors from across the OSME region and now has 5,900 followers. More content than ever is being published in local languages, Turkish, Azeri, Georgian and Arabic, thanks to in-country OSME members volunteering as guest editors. Engagement in other social media channels has been minimal due to a lack of capacity within OSME Council. Can you help with OSME's social media channels? If so, please contact me at chairman@osme.org.

Membership recruitment remains a concern for OSME, as it does for most similar-sized charities and organisations. Overall, we saw a continued slight decline in membership again during 2025, which has a significant impact on our unrestricted funds. Whilst OSME currently remains in good financial health and we are seeing record levels of income and expenditure, a significant proportion of this is restricted to our small grants programmes. The day-to-day running of OSME, including the publication and distribution of Sandgrouse, requires unrestricted funds for which membership subscriptions have been the main source. This is an issue that OSME Council will be looking at in detail in the coming years.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all OSME Council members for their hard work and dedication over the course of the last 12 months. Finally, thanks to all OSME members, supporters and donors for their help during 2025, we wouldn't have been able to achieve so much without your continued support.

**Treasurer's Report**

**Income**

We were delighted to once again receive $25,000 from the March Conservation Fund, our activities clearly tying in with their aims and objectives.
We would like to acknowledge significant other donations this year from Chris Spooner, Colin Johnson, Gary Brown, Michael McGrady and Edward Stubbins. Many members also took the opportunity to make smaller donations with their subscription renewals.

We really appreciated the continued support of our Corporate Members: Birdfinders, Birdtour Asia, Greentours, Oriole Birding, Rockjumper, Bird Brain UK, Turnstone Ecology, Arabian Birds, Opticron, Bloomsbury/Helm and Skua Nature.

## Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia

We ended the year with our membership falling slightly over that in 2024 a reflection of a drop of memberships for organisations generally, a trend that seems to be accelerating.

The supported membership scheme, where a member pays an additional membership subscription on behalf of an OSME region national, saw a significant increase, with members backing this important opportunity for young birders and conservationists. We now have over 50 supported members and are looking to increase this number, especially with the availability of Sandgrouse digitally which has particular appeal to younger people.

Some 19 institutions (universities, libraries etc) subscribed to receive copies of Sandgrouse for which they paid an average of £40. A further 15 institutions, clubs and associates received complimentary copies. Our corporate members received copies as part of their membership and six copies were provided to the legal deposit libraries.

Our following on Facebook continues to rise with over 5,500 followers on this key Social Media site. Converting these to memberships is a priority for us going forward.

**Conservation Funds**
The cumulative growth in Conservation Fund spending since 2001 is now approaching £300,000 a significant milestone we will hope to reach in 2026. There was a temporary slowdown in spending in 2025 which we aim to reverse in the future.

Since the year 2000, OSME has made conservation and research grants £289,000 to projects across our region, and we are delighted that once again we have increased our year-on-year spend.

Grant distribution to date: Middle East 38%, Central Asia 38%, Caucasus 22%, Whole Region 2%.

**Youth Development Funds**
We spent over £10,000 in grants in 2025 in this one of our key areas of activity. Since 2016 we have awarded £118,700 to projects involving young birders in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Egypt, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Northern Cyprus,
Tajikistan and Turkey. We certainly wish to build on in coming years as we expand the ‘Youth’ projects into further countries across the OSME Region.
The total spend from our Conservation and Youth funds exceeded £33,000 an achievement for all members to be proud of.

## Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia

### Expenditure

Our increased investment in Sandgrouse continued to maintain its quality with significantly larger editions. This was somewhat compensated by the increasing take-up of the digital edition which has helped reduce spiralling postage costs. As ever, administration costs were well controlled and we will always strive to keep these to a minimum.

### Financial review

The Society's year ended once again well-funded, a reflection of the real and positive impact we are having across the region with our supporters, partners and members. Income was at a lower level of £38,831. Conservation expenditure at nearly £33,000. We carried forward funds of over £165,000 into 2025, meaning we will have no problem in continuing and even enhancing our activity at the current pace.

### The charity's policy on reserves

The trustees have a reserves policy which is to conduct the business of the Society to complete the year with unrestricted funds on the balance sheet of more than £12,000. The trustees consider this would enable an orderly closure of the Charity if, due to unforeseen circumstances, that unfortunately became necessary. At the end of 2025, with funds on the balance sheet of £165,155, the reserves policy was considered fulfilled.

### Future Financial Policy

The Society proposes to continue producing two new issues of Sandgrouse per year and maintain and enhance the digital edition and produce a quarterly newsletter to all members.

We will continue to enhance our presence at the UK Birdfair and other events and further develop our Corporate Sponsorships. We will aim to maintain our Conservation Fund grants at the 2020 level of at least £20,000 a year. We will also continue the development of the Youth Development Fund and the Trevor Poyser Species Conservation Fund. The reserve fund target will remain at £12,000.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed _____ Date 8/10/2026

Chris Hughes, Trustee

# Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia for the year ended 31 December 2025

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2025.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

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

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

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Signed _____ Date 12/10/2026

Eva Stevens BSc, CPFA

Employee of Community Accounting Plus

# Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia
## Receipts & payments account
## for the year ended 31 December 2025

| *2024* Total Funds £ | | Note | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | ***2025*** **Total Funds £** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Receipts** | | | | |
| 7242 | Bank interest (net/gross) | | 5495 | - | 5495 |
| 45776 | Grants & donations | 2 | 4097 | 18659 | 22756 |
| 11345 | Membership | | 10580 | - | 10580 |
| 64363 | **Total receipts** | | **20172** | **18659** | **38831** |
| | **Payments** | | | | |
| 16377 | Production and distribution of Sandgrouse | | 15227 | - | 15227 |
| 32811 | Conservation Fund grants | | 5087 | 11405 | 16492 |
| 22550 | Youth and Community Fund grants | | - | 11475 | 11475 |
| - | Trevor Poyser Fund grant | | 5000 | - | 5000 |
| 4295 | Administration | | 3378 | - | 3378 |
| 1690 | Events and publicity | | 3671 | - | 3671 |
| 77723 | **Total payments** | | **32363** | **22880** | **55243** |
| (13360) | **Net receipts/(payments)** | | (12191) | (4221) | (16412) |
| 194927 | Cash funds at start of this period | | 162582 | 18985 | 181567 |
| 181567 | **Cash funds at end of this period** | | **150391** | **14764** | **165155** |

## Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia
## Statement of assets and liabilities
## at 31 December 2025

| 2024 | | 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| £ | **Cash assets** | £ |
| 181567 | Bank accounts | 165155 |
| 181567 | | **165155** |
| | **Other monetary assets** | |
| 229 | Prepayment- Insurance | 37 |
| 229 | | **37** |
| | **Assets retained for the charity's own use** | |
| | General equipment. | |
| | **Liabilities** | |
| (1140) | Creditors- Independent examination fee | (1212) |
| (1140) | | **(1212)** |

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed _____ Date 8/10/26
Chris Hughes, Trustee

# Ornithological Society of the Middle East, The Caucasus and Central Asia
# Notes to the accounts
# for the year ended 31 December 2025

## 1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

## 2. Grants & donations

| | Unrestricted | Restricted | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| March Conservation | - | 18284 | 18284 |
| General donations | 4097 | 375 | 4472 |
| | **4097** | **18659** | **22756** |

## 3. Funds analysis

| | Opening balance | Receipts | (Payments) | Closing balance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| **Restricted funds** | | | | |
| Conservation Fund | 11985 | 11284 | (11405) | 11864 |
| Youth and Community Funds | 7000 | 7375 | (11475) | 2900 |
| | **18985** | **18659** | **(22880)** | **14764** |
| **Unrestricted funds** | | | | |
| General Fund | 19001 | 20172 | (27363) | 11810 |
| Birds of the Middle East Fund | 2971 | - | - | 2971 |
| Trevor Poyser Fund | 11034 | - | (5000) | 6034 |
| Harry James Goodhart Legacy Fund | 129576 | - | - | 129576 |
| | **162582** | **20172** | **(32363)** | **150391** |

4. **Trustees' remuneration**
   Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

5. **Related party transactions**
   There were no related party transactions in this period.

6. **Glossary of terms**

   **Creditors:** These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.

   **Prepayments:** These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.

   **Restricted funds:** These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.