



## **The Benwell Christian Shop Project**

Trading as

## **Cornerstone Benwell**

### **Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025**

**Benwell Christian Shop Project**  
**Registered in England & Wales No. 02349218**  
**Registered Charity No. 701263**

### **Serving the Community of Benwell since 1987**

Trustees and Directors at 31st March 2025

David Kirkwood (Chair)  
Peter Michell (Secretary)  
Carol Davison  
Shirley Irving  
Tim Woolley  
Claire Lewis  
Rachel Turner

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Welcome to this Annual Report which summarises the achievements of Cornerstone during the financial year leading up to March 2025.

## **CORNERSTONE BENWELL**

**Building community, empowering lives in Newcastle's West End**

### **Who We Are**

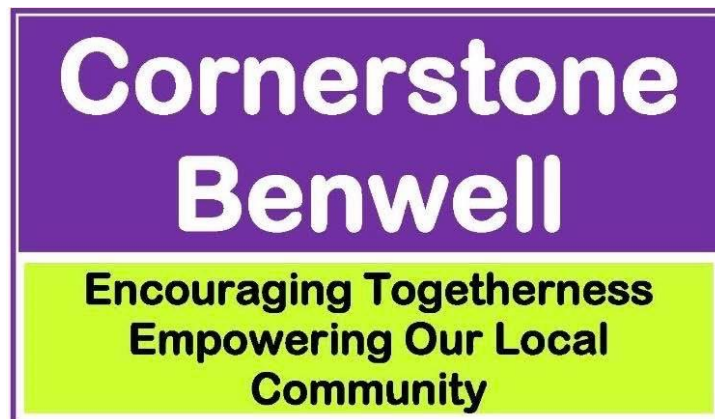
Cornerstone Benwell is a community charity based in the heart of Newcastle's West End, one of the most diverse yet disadvantaged areas in the UK.

Since 1987, we've worked hand-in-hand with local people to create a more connected, inclusive and resilient community.

Our work is grounded in three key values:

- **Togetherness** – We believe everyone deserves a place to belong.
- **Empowerment** – We create space for people to grow in confidence, skills and independence.
- **Inclusion** – We are open to all, with dignity and respect at the core of everything we do.

We run a range of free or low-cost services and grassroots projects designed to improve quality of life and tackle inequality at its roots.



### **Where We Work: Newcastle's West End**

The West End, particularly Benwell and Elswick, faces some of the most intense social and economic challenges in the UK.

- Benwell & Elswick rank in the top 1% of the most deprived wards nationally (Indices of Multiple Deprivation)
- 1 in 2 children grow up in poverty in this area
- Unemployment and food insecurity are significantly higher than the national average
- Life expectancy is 10 years lower than in more affluent parts of Newcastle
- The West End is also incredibly diverse: over 50 nationalities are represented, with a rich mix of cultures, languages, and faiths.

## Our Focus Areas

We support local people through a wide range of events, groups and activities, all built around three pillars:

- Education & Enrichment – Skill-building, creativity and confidence
- Mental Health & Well-being – Safe spaces, peer support and purpose
- Access to Healthy, Hearty Food – Because no one should go hungry.



## Core Community Services

### Free and low Cost Community Café and Wellbeing Hub

A warm, welcoming space where anyone can enjoy a hot, nutritious meal at no cost on a Monday and low cost on a Wednesday.

We served approx. 2500 meals this year, providing not just food, but companionship.



“Excellent food, wouldn’t keep coming back if the food wasn’t so good. Good company and helpful staff” – *Jane, regular visitor*

### 50p Clothes Shop

A dignified, low-cost shopping experience offering donated clothes, shoes and accessories, all just 50p each. Especially vital for families, refugees and low-income residents.

We have on average 50 people every Wednesday using the clothes shop.

“This shop has helped me clothe my whole family without shame.” – *Alana*

### **Food Pantry – 10 items for £3**

Empowering people to choose what they need, while stretching tight budgets. Members can select 10 staple items for just £3.



We have 60 active families who use the Benwell Bridge Food Pantry  
“It’s affordable, and I feel like I still have some control.” – Adam

### **Benwell Bubble – Free Laundry Service**

Free access to washing machines and detergent for those unable to afford regular laundry. A small but vital service helping people stay clean and confident.

“It’s been a huge help because I struggle to get things washed by myself.” – Robert

---

## **The Cornerstone Projects**

All our projects are community-driven, designed to reach people often left behind by traditional services.

### **The Welcome Project**

For Adults with Learning Disabilities

A safe, joyful space for adults with learning disabilities to explore their creativity and build life skills. Sessions alternate weekly between:

- Crafts – From pottery and textiles to painting and mosaics
- Cookery – Making simple, healthy meals together

Every session includes time to socialise, build friendships, and grow confidence in a supported environment.

We currently have 28 regular attendees who absolutely love the sessions.

“I love coming here and I’ve made some very good friends.” – Glyn, participant



---

---

## The Kindful Project

### Mindful Cookery & Well-being Workshops

This project uses cooking as a tool for healing and self-care. We bring people together around the table to learn, share, and improve their mental health through good food.

These relaxed, welcoming sessions break isolation and help people rebuild confidence in their daily lives.

“This space helped me through a hard time and gave me the best soup recipe!” – *Lorraine*



---

---

## Sturdy Foundations

Building skills and resilience, one project at a time

A series of joinery and construction-based workshops, tailored to different groups. All sessions are hands-on, creative and designed to build confidence through making.



### Sturdy Foundations – Children (Ages 11–18)



Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds learn real joinery skills by working on tangible community projects like benches, planter boxes or spice racks. They use real tools, design their own ideas and build a sense of pride.

“I built something with my own hands I never thought I could do that.” – *Liam, 13*

### Sturdy Foundations – Memory

Gentle woodworking sessions for adults living with dementia or memory loss. Participants design and build small wooden items like birdhouses or keepsake boxes at their own pace, supported by Cornerstone friendly team.

The sessions encourage:

- Reminiscence and storytelling
- Motor skills and coordination
- Connection with others

“This place is my sanctuary” – *Trevor, participant*



### **Sturdy Foundations – Women**

A DIY and joinery course exclusively for women providing a safe, empowering space to learn skills often reserved for men. Participants learn to:

- Use tools safely
- Fix things at home
- Build furniture or home items

The focus is on confidence, independence and supporting one another.

“I never thought I could do this but now I’ve got my own toolbox.” – *Kate*

### **Repair Café**

Our Repair Café is a community event where people bring broken items like small appliances, clothes, or furniture and we help repair them for free. It’s a friendly space that promotes sustainability, skill-sharing and reducing waste by fixing rather than throwing away.



---

---

## **Our Impact**

Across all our services and projects, we welcome over 1,000 unique visitors a year, many of whom return week after week. Whether someone needs food, warmth, friendship or skills for the future, we are here with open doors and open hearts.

Our most significant impact this year was supporting the 70 families displaced by the tragic explosion on Violet Close in Benwell, which not only caused devastating loss and destruction in the local community but also rendered many households homeless and in urgent need of assistance. The incident, which claimed 2 lives and affected dozens of residents, drew a remarkable outpouring of support from local people, organisations and businesses across Newcastle.

Our team helped coordinate the sorting and distribution of emergency donations at the heart of the community response. Cornerstone became a central hub where affected families could come to collect essential items such as clothing, bedding, toiletries, children’s items, and other necessities.

Our dedicated volunteers and staff processed approximately 1,000 bags of donated goods, working tirelessly to sort through large volumes of contributions so that critical items could be identified and distributed with speed and care.

This effort ensured that households could quickly access what they needed as they were rehoused in alternative accommodation or began to rebuild their lives.

Throughout the response, the team were coordinated and turning an overwhelming volume of donations into meaningful, targeted support for those most affected by this traumatic event.

---

---

## Awards and Accolades

This year, our work received widespread media attention for the support we provided following the Violet Close explosion. Our efforts were featured across major news platforms, including ITV News, BBC News, The Evening Chronicle, BBC Radio, and Hits Radio, highlighting the dedication of our team and the strength of our community response. The coverage recognised the critical role we played in organising donations, supporting displaced families, and working in partnership with local organisations to meet urgent needs.



In Account year 2024-25 we were also incredibly proud to celebrate Talia Proud, one of our outstanding volunteers, who received the Act of Kindness Award for her compassionate and sustained support for individuals experiencing loneliness and food insecurity.

Her work was recognised by Greggs and honoured by the Northern Leaders Trust, reflecting not only her personal commitment but also the core values that guide our organisation. Talia's dedication continues to inspire our team and strengthen our impact across the community.



## Thank you from Operations Manager Amy Sturdy

A huge thank you to our top chef Lesley for her dedication to the Cornerstone Kitchen. She is truly a marvel and we love her quirky themed dishes for each season and special event.

Thank you to our longest serving team member Michael who has kept Cornerstone looking so pristine and welcoming.

Thank you to Maureen for supporting Lesley in the kitchen, serving teas and refreshments to the Welcome Project and running our Benwell Bubble Laundry service.

Thank you for your kindness to those who come to Cornerstone in distress.

Angela's first year at Cornerstone has been running the Welcome Project and taking responsibility for the clothes shop and administration. The participants at The Welcome Project absolutely adore Angela and she has brought so many new activities and cookery sessions which they have all loved.

A big thank you to Christopher for establishing the Sturdy Foundations Project and Repair Café during this year. The Sturdy Foundations Project has truly helped young people serve their community and learn new skills, and has been a true blessing to the gentlemen with dementia, who have built strong friendships and gained confidence and self-esteem.

A special mention to Lewis, Talia, Linda, Kate and Carol for putting in so many hours and thanks as always to Chris and Richard for completing our accounts.

### Major Contributors in the Last Year

Newcastle Council  
Grocers Charity  
Ballinger  
Skipton Building  
Society  
Tynexe  
COOP  
Arnold Clark  
LGA  
Lottery Community Fund  
Badur Foundation



Barbour  
Community Foundation  
Inspire Youth  
Nathans Wastesavers  
Westerhope Church  
Ponteland Party in the  
Park  
Ponteland Methodist  
Church  
Milbourne Church  
All Saints Church

St James at Riding Mill  
Churches of Benwell and  
Scotswood  
ASDA  
TESCO  
Fareshare  
COOP Funeral Care  
Feeding Families  
Inkind Direct  
SEARCH Newcastle

In addition, we have received a number of significant individual donations. To all of these we send our **huge** thanks.



The following pages show the financial report for year ending 31st March 2025.

The accounts were prepared in accordance with the Charity Commission Statement of Recommended Practice (Revised 2000) with reference to the exemptions provided for small charities in paragraphs 344-358, paragraphs 353 & 354.

Chris Carr  
Cornerstone Treasurer  
December 2025

I agree that this is a true and fair reflection of the Cornerstone accounts  
Richard McAllister  
December 2025

Reserves Policy  
The policy is to have between 6 and 12 months running costs in reserve.

---

Registered Office:  
62 Armstrong Road  
Benwell  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE4 7TU  
T: 0191 226 0941 E:  
cornerstonebenwell@gmail.com  
www.cornerstonebenwell.com  
NE4 9QA

[www.facebook.com/cornerstonebenwell](http://www.facebook.com/cornerstonebenwell)

Bankers  
TSB PLC  
Northumberland Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne

# **Benwell Christian Shop Project**

(A company Limited By Guarantee and not having share capital)

## **Annual Accounts**

For the Year Ending 31 March 2025

Company Number 2349218  
Registered Charity Number 701263

# Benwell Christian Shop Project

## Management Council

David Kirkwood (Chairman)

Peter Michell (Secretary)

Carol Davison

Tim Woolley

Shirley Irving

Claire Lewis

Rachel Turner

## Treasurer

Mr C M Carr

## Secretary

Peter Michell

## Registered Office

Cornerstone

Armstrong Road

Benwell

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE4 7TU

## Bankers

TSB

104 West Road

Milvain

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE4 9QA

Independent Examiners Report:

TO THE TRUSTEES OF BENWELL CHRISTIAN SHOP PROJECT

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

### RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities act 1993 (the act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)(b) of the act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### BASIS OF THE EXAMINERS REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and any comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS STATEMENT


In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:-
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act, and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act. These are also in line with standards set by FRS102.

Have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name:

  
Mr Richard McAllister

Relevant Professional body:

Chartered Institute Accountants  
England & Wales

Address:

40 Moycraig Road  
Bushmills

## Benwell Christian Shop Project

### STATEMENT BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

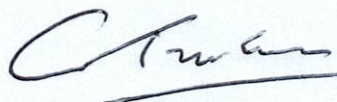
The company was entitled to exemption under the Companies Act 2006 from the requirement to have its accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 audited. No notice has been deposited under that Act requiring an audit in relation to the company's accounts for that financial year. The members of the council acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with the Companies Act 2006, and
- preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its surplus or deficit for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of that Act, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of that Act relating to the accounts, as far as applicable to the company.

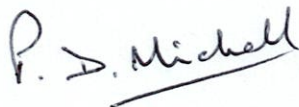
These accounts were approved by the Management Council on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



David Kirkwood (Chairman)



Mr C M Carr (Treasurer)



Peter Michell (Secretary)

## **Benwell Christian Shop Project**

### **Notes to the Accounts for year ended 31 March 2025.**

#### **1. Accounting Policies:**

The following accounting policies have been used consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the company's annual accounts:-

- **Accounting convention**

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention. We have applied the new principals set out in FRS102.

- **Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation**

Fixed Assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation

Depreciation is provided at 25% annually

- **Revenue Grants**

Income by way of charitable grants is accounted for on a cash receipts basis.

- **Capital Grants**

Material Capital Grants received are shown as income in advance and taken to income and expenditure over the expected life of the asset.

- **Gifts & Donations**

Gifts & donations are included in the income & expenditure account in the year which they are received.

#### **2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS (see Asset Depreciation page)**

#### **3. DEBTORS & CREDITORS**

- **Debtors:**

We expect to receive £2000 from Inland Revenue relating to Gift Aid donation for 2023/24 & 2024/25

#### **4. NET GAIN FOR THE YEAR**

Primarily relates to timing in receipt of grant funding versus the continued controlled approach to managing centre and group running costs.

#### **5. CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

See attached cash flow document.

#### **6. EMPLOYEES**

The average number of persons employed during the year:

<b>2024/2025</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2023/2024</b>	<b>4.5</b>
------------------	------------	------------------	------------

The members of the management council received no remuneration in the year (2023/24– nil)

#### **7. BALANCE SHEET**

The accounts are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small/medium companies.

#### **Audit Exemption Statement**

For the year ending 31/03/2025

the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- the members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476,
- the directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts
- these accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

#### **8. RESERVES POLICY**

The policy is to have between 6 and 12 months running costs in reserve.

	Year ending 31-Mar-25	Year ending 31-Mar-24
<b>INCOME</b>		
Cafe sales	7,564	5,110
Interest	1,999	1,901
Other income	358	437
Rent rooms	3,835	3,476
Friends of Cornerstone	2,395	2,332
Donations: unrestricted	836	1,810
Grants UNRESTRICTED	4,115	17,350
Grants RESTRICTED	56,810	36,680
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>77,912</b>	<b>69,096</b>
<b>STAFF COSTS</b>		
Salaries	44,714	52,006
<b>Total Staff costs</b>	<b>44,714</b>	<b>52,006</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT &amp; RUNNING COSTS</b>		
Cleaning & decorating	454	6,106
Heat and light	4,497	4,444
Security and losses	1,498	2,320
MANAGEMENT COSTS	749	94
Cafe supplies	902	997
Sundry expenses		530
Postage		30
Contents insurance	1,567	1,567
Office telephones	1,548	1,106
Stationery&office sundri	33	138
<b>Total Management &amp; running costs</b>	<b>11,248</b>	<b>17,332</b>
<b>GROSS SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>21,949</b>	<b>-242</b>
<b>USER COSTS</b>		
Group Activities	10,853	2,151
<b>Total User costs</b>	<b>10,853</b>	<b>2,151</b>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>		
Furniture, fittings, equipment	88	118
<b>Total Depreciation</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING COSTS</b>	<b><u>10,941</u></b>	<b><u>2,268</u></b>
<b>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b><u>11,008</u></b>	<b><u>-2,511</u></b>
I&E Account Bt Fwd	66,801	69,312
<b>I&amp;E ACCOUNT</b>	<b><u>77,809</u></b>	<b><u>66,801</u></b>

## BALANCE SHEET

	As At End of Mar-25	As At End of Mar-24
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Fixed Assets	265	354
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Stock		
Debtors	2,000	2,000
Bank/Cash	75,544	64,448
Current Assets	<u>77,544</u>	<u>66,448</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>77,809</u></b>	<b><u>66,801</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Funds</b>		
Reserves		
I&E ACCOUNT c/fwd	<u>77,809</u>	<u>66,801</u>
<b>FUNDS EMPLOYED</b>	<b><u>77,809</u></b>	<b><u>66,801</u></b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>77,809</u></b>	<b><u>66,801</u></b>

### Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31/03/2025

the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- the members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476,
- the directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts
- these accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

*P. D. Michell*

P. D. MICHELL

(COMPANY SECRETARY & TRUSTEE)  
Benwell Christian Shop Project

## CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	Year ending 31-Mar-25	Year ending 31-Mar-24
Surplus from P&L	11,008	-2,511
Adjust for the following non-cash items:		
Fixed Asset Depreciation	<u>88</u>	<u>118</u>
<b>Net cash from operations</b>	<b>11,096</b>	<b>-2,393</b>
<b>Increase in cash</b>	<b><u>11,096</u></b>	<b><u>-2,393</u></b>

## ASSET DEPRICIATION

	Furniture, fittings,	TOTAL
<b>Cost:</b>		
Balance Brought Forward	37,347	37,347
Balance at End of Period	<u>37,347</u>	<u>37,347</u>
<b>Depreciation:</b>		
Balance Brought Forward	<u>36,993</u>	<u>36,993</u>
Balance Brought Forward	36,993	36,993
Amount to Depreciate	354	354
Rate of Depreciation (%)	<u>25</u>	<u>—</u>
Charge for Period	88	88
Balance at End of Period	<u>37,082</u>	<u>37,082</u>
<b>Net Book Values:</b>		
At Start of Period	354	354
At End of Period	<u>265</u>	<u>265</u>



Independent Examiners Report:

TO THE TRUSTEES OF BENWELL CHRISTIAN SHOP PROJECT

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities act 1993 (the act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)(b) of the act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

BASIS OF THE EXAMINERS REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and any comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS STATEMENT

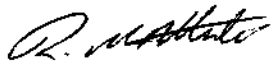
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:-
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act, and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act. These are also in line with standards set by FRS102.

Have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name:

  
Mr Richard McAllister

Relevant Professional body:

Chartered Institute Accountants  
England & Wales

Address:

40 Moycraig Road  
Bushmills