



Cirencester Opportunity Group

CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP LIMITED

(A Company limited by guarantee and not having share capital)

REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31/8/2024

CHARITY NO. 1160184

COMPANY NO. 9210771

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

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Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Legal and Administrative Information

Year ended 31 August 2024

The Trustee Board presents their report, together with the financial statements, for the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

Reference and administrative details of the charity, its directors and advisors

Cirencester Opportunity Group is a registered charity, number 1160184 and is a charitable company limited by guarantee, number 9210771. The charity number, company number, present Trustees (being directors of the charitable company) and advisors are noted below:

Trustee Board

The members of the Trustee Board (who are also the directors of the charitable company) during the period were as follows:

Chair: Kevin Traish (appointed October 2022, Chair from April 2023)

Vice Chair: Shahedur Rohman (Vice Chair from April 2023)

Treasurer: Gaynor Hutton (Treasurer from April 2023)

Company Secretary: Sylwia Duzniak (Co. Sec. from April 2023)

Trustees: Peter Stone (stepped down as Chair April 2023)

Jane Burr (Nominated Individual, Safeguarding)

Matt Hooper

Andrew Cheesman (appointed April 2023)

Sophie Langer (appointed April 2023)

Advisors: Russell Jones-Walker

Robert Bickerdike (stepped down as Treasurer April 2023)

Company registered number: 9210771

Charity number: 1160184

Bankers: HSBC, King Street, Stroud, GL5 3DS

Registered Office: Beeches Road, Cirencester, GL7 1BW

Independent Examiner: Wenn Townsend, Gosditch House ; 5 Gosditch Street Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2AG

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Year ended 31 August 2024

Structure, governance and management

Cirencester Opportunity Group (COG), operating as a specialist early years and family support centre, is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

It is governed by Articles of Association, which were approved and adopted on 17 October 1974 (upon registration as a charitable company). COG became a limited company on 9 September 2014, when a new Charities Commission registration was issued. The articles of association were amended to reflect this change and were amended again on 20 June 2019.

We seek volunteers with new skills and experience and, inevitably, we must replace volunteers who can no longer work with us for various reasons. As such, the charity has to "induct" new Trustee Directors on a reasonably regular basis. To provide a consistency and thoroughness of introduction that will maximise the new Trustee Director contribution as quickly as possible, we follow an induction process which is both simple and yet sufficiently flexible to take account of individual's needs and availability. The process is outlined in the Information for New Trustees document updated annually, and includes:

- Attending at least one Board Meeting as an observer
- Completing an application form, outlining the contribution that the potential Trustee feels they will make to Cirencester Opportunity Group, and completing a skills and experience audit.
- Providing two written references
- Agreeing a written Trustee Role Specification specific to their role on the Board
- Signing the Trustee Code of Conduct detailing their commitment to the organisation, including completion, within 3 months of appointment, of a Safeguarding Children Level 1 course (usually on-line) and the same for the Prevent Duty.

Upon appointment as a Trustee Director, the Chairperson will inform the Company Secretary and Centre Administrator, who will inform Companies House and The Charity Commission of that appointment, and the new Trustee Director will complete the Ofsted EY2 on-line registration process. When appointing key management, and when reviewing their remuneration packages, external benchmarking is undertaken against directly compatible roles, wherever possible. The Trustee Board is responsible for setting and agreeing the remuneration package of the CEO. The CEO reviews and recommends changes to the remuneration packages of their team (see below), which must be agreed by the Trustee Board. We adhere to the Charity Governance Code and believe our main principles and processes by which we govern adhere closely to the seven principles of good governance contained within the code. As we develop our Trustee Board and ways of working, we will check our progress against these principles and their underlying directional guidance.

Organisational structure and decision making process

The Trustee Board delegates day-to-day management of the operations of the charity to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ Centre Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Catharine Fowler, who was appointed in September 2017. Following a re-organisation of roles in 2018, the CEO has a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprising of Sharon Pitts; Pre-School Manager and DSL and Victoria Chase; Outreach Team Lead and DSL.

The wider team comprises of two Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCos), Jane Pilgrim and Ben Jayne, both of whom are also part of the early intervention team alongside Rachel Malins, Evie Downes-Hall, who works as an Apprentice Early Years Practitioner, Claire Ellis and Sophie Pitman; all of whom support the Family Outreach Team to deliver family services through COG's early intervention programme. Hannah Luffingham works within the Outreach Family Support early intervention team, led by Victoria Chase.

Supporting these roles are Stephanie Smyth, Charity Fundraiser (SLT member); Paul Robertson, as Centre Administrator and Sharon Smith, Pre-school Cook.

During 2023/24, in order to facilitate as many Trustees as possible being able to attend full board meetings, the Board decided to continue the policy of hybrid meetings. With more members of the Board than previously being in full-time employment, it was felt this approach would support decision-making to continue with minimal impact. During this year, while trustees attend meetings in person where possible, having the option to attend via Teams has been notably helpful in supporting attendance and efficiency in decision-making.



Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

Objectives and activities

We have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing our objectives and activities and in planning for the future.

During this year, the Trustee Board consolidated personnel changes in key roles that were actioned at the AGM in April 2023. The Chair set priorities for work on the strategic direction of the Charity, which continues with the support of the Senior Leadership Team. The new Company Secretary worked closely with the Centre Administrator to ensure meetings, reporting and managing Board paperwork were completed effectively. Good progress was made in streamlining trustee roles so that everybody was able to contribute within their time constraints and working lives to the benefit of the Board and Charity as a whole, and one new trustee began the onboarding process.

Plans to review the aims and objectives of the charity are ongoing and will feed into the new strategic plan. This year's activities and service delivery reflected COG's vision and mission statements, carrying out the charity's ethos of responding to need in the community, through its support of young children and families living with significant challenges, SEND and other additional needs.

Vision Statement: *Creating Positive Beginnings for Young Children and Families*

Mission: *Cirencester Opportunity Group provides a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all families. We work in partnership with families and other agencies to promote inclusive care and early years education to all children, delivering both specialist learning through play and family support, by responding to the changing needs of our local community.*

Within this framework, our objectives are:

To meet the evolving needs of young children and families in our local community:

- Recognize, respect and support the rights and early childhood development of all children, particularly those with SEND and additional needs (whether through physiological condition or environment), and the aspirations of their families for them, through a varied and appropriate programme of early interventions, for children and their carers, depending on need and requirements.
- Strive for wider inclusion for children in their early years and share best practice and specialist knowledge within our community.
- Foster a sense of belonging where learning can thrive, helping every child to build confidence and resilience throughout their early years, with an understanding that support and care for, and empowering, children's immediate carers will also benefit children themselves.
- Support the wellbeing of our service users and staff team through training, continuous improvement and following our ethos of care.
- Ensure a best transition for every child to their next stage of life and education, through understanding their unique learning styles, stages of development and support required moving forward.

Our core values provide a focus for both operational and strategic planning:

- ☑ Inclusivity is at the heart of all we do; we respect, value and focus on the needs of the individual, celebrating unique qualities while providing the right support to enable children living with SEND/additional needs to thrive.
- ☑ We work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure positive beginnings for every child and their family.
- ☑ We encourage ongoing development of our team, children and families in a caring, enriching and stimulating environment.
- ☑ We create enabling environments to support children's learning and to empower families to make strong, safe and effective choices to help them succeed.

Our Centre at Beeches Road in Cirencester is owned by the charity following a donation of the land by Gloucestershire County Council in 1982.

Risk Management - The Board of Trustees' risk management process identifies key events or incidents that could affect the charity's ability to achieve its aims. This process results in a record of the most significant internal and external risks facing the charity, the possible impact or consequence of each risk and the required action to mitigate it. The Board of Trustees seeks reasonable assurance that these risks have been adequately managed, and that appropriate procedures and controls are in place to identify, manage and mitigate the key risks as far as possible.

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

Achievements and performance

COG's annual Summer playscheme ran in the August torrential downpours and then improved weather leading onto a heatwave. This was considered and responded to by staff, providing activities in the shaded area and continuous access to cold drinks. In wet weather the activities moved inside the playroom and families enjoyed using COG's soft play space for an allotted time. At the end of each session, every child could take home a picture/reading book, a new colouring book and crayons (all donated throughout the year to COG) along with their craft creation. Feedback collected revealed that the provision is a valuable resource to local families, particularly the outdoor space and activities provided, and chance for parents/carers to talk to other adults. A free packed lunch included in each session was overwhelmingly appreciated – tough financial positions cited, as well as value of social experience. When asked how important Playscheme was of all the summer activities provided in the town, 100% of respondents stated that it was important.

Some quotes from attendees:

- The staff are excellent and very friendly.
- The volunteers were all lovely.
- Just a big thank you to everyone, especially the effort that is put into getting to know the children ☺☺
- I feel so incredibly lucky to have such a wonderful, understanding place to bring my son.
- Over the last 18 months, it (COG) has been my safe space with W....., there's always a smiling face and an understanding ear to listen.
- We feel very lucky to be part of the COG family.

A member of the family support team completed their probationary period successfully during the early part of the year, as did two new staff members who work within the early intervention team, supporting children's development and also running early intervention toddler groups. We continue to work on being able to replace another member of staff who left us last year.

Points to highlight this year include:

COG's growing garden - COG children have done a wonderful job of growing their very own vegetables, such as runner beans! They really enjoy planting, looking after and picking the veg too and giving it to our Cook Sharon to cook for their lunch!

Men's Shed Magic - Local wood craft group Men's Shed made some very special fairy doors for COG's woodland area! The children at COG enjoyed exploring each one, with their beautiful colours and unique designs. Men's Shed also fixed up and painted several picnic benches for us too.

Pumpkins galore - Tesco Community Champion, Melanie Scrivens, took the time to visit us at COG to show COG families, staff and volunteers a beautiful collection of colourful pumpkins! COG families also made cheese muffins together, to go with the pumpkin soup that COG Cook Sharon made them for their lunch.

House of Lords visit - COG Centre Manager, Catharine Fowler, and Charity Fundraiser, Stephanie Smyth, were honoured to attend the Westminster launch of the Manifesto for Early Years Inclusion by Dingley's Promise at The House of Lords, in November 2023, to learn more about their recommendations to improve the sector. All attendees shared Dingley's vision and commitment to inclusion for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Thoughtful Lidl customers - COG was touched to be chosen as beneficiaries of Neighbourly and Lidl's 'Festive Toy Donation Scheme'. Kind and generous Lidl customers selected and donated toys for COG children to help make Christmas extra special!

Festival bunting - COG was delighted to be invited to be part of the fabulous Phoenix Festival. We were asked to decorate some bunting to be displayed at the festival and the children enjoyed taking part in this special craft activity. The bunting was on display all weekend in the Abbey Grounds, so families could visit and see their artwork.

National Early Years SEND Forum - COG Centre Manager, Catharine Fowler, now sits on the EY SEND Forum, along with other leaders of early years settings and charities. The Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (EYSEND) Forum is a national coalition of Early Years Specialist providers dedicated to supporting children aged 0-5 with SEND through lobbying for change and sharing best practice.

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

St James's Place heroes - Volunteers from St James's Place have supported us so much this year by helping us to transform areas of COG, both inside and outside! They have painted several indoor spaces for us, including our confidential meeting room and our soft playroom, making them brighter and lighter. They have also painted the children's undercover play area and all of their wooden play structures, to keep them protected from the elements all year round! Our large car park has also been transformed by SJP volunteers too!

Small charities week 2024 - We took part in Small Charities week 2024, to reach out and ask the local community to show their LOVE for small charities like COG by:

L = Listening to and learning about what small charities in their neighbourhood do.

O = Organising something and getting involved with local small charities.

V = Volunteering to support small charities with their time, voice, and money.

E = Engaging with and doing a bit more to make their community better.

Refreshed Ted - This year we introduced our new refreshed Teddy logo to our local community. The wonderful team at Hamilton-Brown Creative Agency <https://www.hamilton-brown.com/> kindly donated their expertise to help us give our Ted a little make over. The feedback we have received so far about our new Teddy logo has been very positive and we feel very fortunate to have been chosen by Hamilton-Brown Creative Agency to be beneficiaries of their expertise.



**Ted logo
1973**



**Ted logo - 50th
birthday version
2023**



**Ted logo refresh
2024**

Special visitor - A very special visitor attended the first week of COG's Summer Playscheme this year, we were delighted to welcome our new MP for South Cotswolds, Dr Roz Savage, who came to see the wonderful work and fun activities provided for young children and families in Cirencester by COG during the Summer holidays. Dr Savage was welcomed by Chair of Trustees, Kevin Traish, and Centre Manager, Catharine Fowler.

The world of the Romans - We also welcomed special visitors from Chedworth Roman Villa to our Summer Playscheme this year, who came dressed in authentic Roman costumes and shared lots of exciting activities with COG families.

COG's response to the cost-of-living crisis: - We have continued to support families with surplus food and also in practical ways, using our additional funding from the Gloucestershire Community Foundation's Poverty Hurts Campaign.

- To look into ways to further support families, we also met with the project manager of Feeding Gloucestershire to discuss concerns that Early Years children miss out and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are also not catered for below the age of five, by the Government's HAF scheme. We also discussed the promotion of Healthy Start vouchers with eligible families and COG's commitment to working closely with families to encourage them to make good use of these vouchers.
- We also attended the Cotswold Food Network Strategic Event, to meet with and discuss where the gaps are in the area's food provision for families in need, with partner organisations in the Cotswolds.
- Our team have continued to volunteer their time twice a week on a collection rota, so that we can collect surplus food from Aldi (via Neighbourly) and from Tesco (via FareShare) twice a week, to keep our Sharing Shed well stocked with additional food items, including tins, packets, toiletries and fresh food items too.
- Our wonderful working relationship with the Thomas Frank's Foundation has also benefitted COG families this year, as we took delivery of a large quantity of fruit and veg direct from Worcester Produce. This donation enables us to bag up a wonderful selection of fresh and colourful fruit and veg for all of our families requiring additional support to access fresh food and it was extremely rewarding for our team, to be able to help the families in this practical way.



Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

- We have also co-ordinated the collection of good quality coats, clothing, waterproofs, wellies and shoes for COG children and we displayed them alongside our Sharing Shed, for COG families to access and make use of. This was especially important during extremely hot or cold times of the year when access to weather appropriate clothing is more important than ever.

Cooking on a budget sessions - This year we offered a series of cooking sessions to parents, and we asked them to let us know what they would like to cook. One of the early discussions we had with parents, helped us to identify that buying pizzas was a costly treat and something that they cannot do, so having a go at making our own pizzas together, became a winning idea! We costed out the ingredients with the parents and demonstrated the cooking, whilst they each created their own pizza. We also used this as an opportunity to talk about healthy topping choices and having side salads with the pizza, using inexpensive lettuce, cucumber, and tomatoes.

Training opportunities - This year all members of COG's Early Intervention team attended a 2 day Paediatric First Aid training course with observed and written examinations.

Members of the Early Intervention team also attended the Parents' Relationships Matter Gloucestershire Conference 2024 and gained a great deal from the 'How to engage dads in parental conflict work' session. This training was particularly useful, as we now have more dads engaging with our Early Intervention Outreach team, due to them being the main care giver to their child, accessing support from us through our Learning Together PEEP group and our Inspire group, specifically for parents.

Several members of staff have embarked on training this year, which not only adds value to their own continuing professional development. COG is currently supporting an Apprentice, who gained their Level 2 qualification with distinction, and also a staff member completing their Level 6 Early Years Initial Teacher Training. These qualifications are invaluable in our delivery of play-based learning techniques as well as understanding child development, particularly around responding to the needs of children who may have experienced trauma in their lives, or other additional needs, which lead to developmental delays in the three prime area of learning, and whose first 1001 days have been negatively impacted.

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

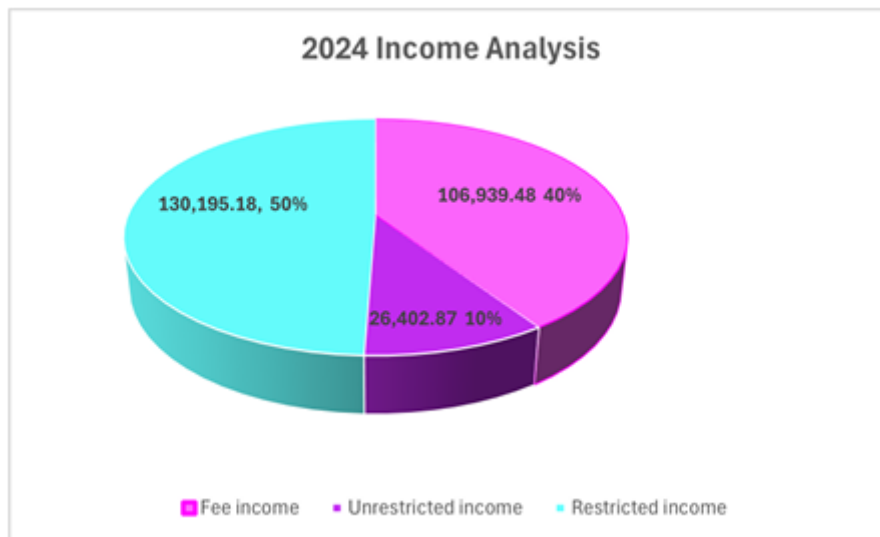
Financial Review

During the year, Cirencester Opportunity Group declared an overall deficit of £6,061.71 compared to last year's deficit of £20,444

Our reserves at 31/8/2024 were:

- Restricted reserves £52,786
- Designated reserves £40,000
- Unrestricted reserves £83,335
- Value of fixed assets (buildings) £108,303

Income analysis:



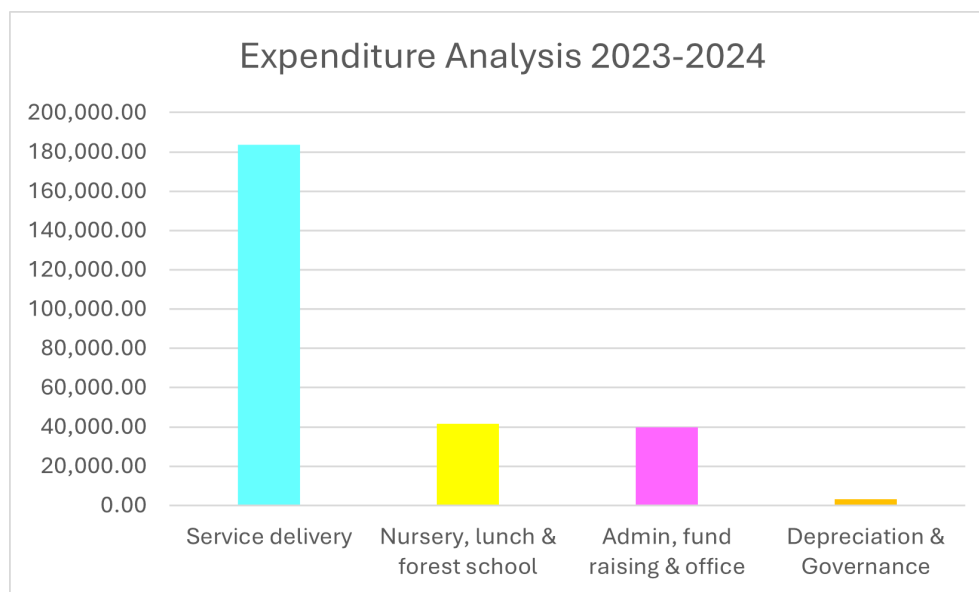
Income totalled £263,537 which reflected an increase of 14% from the previous year.

- Fee income at £106,939 showed an increase of £17,340 (19%) from the previous year.
- Restricted grants and donations totalled £130,195 which was up also 15% from last year's figure of £113,182 and accounted for almost exactly half of the total income, in line with the 49% it made up last year.
- Unrestricted income amounted to £26,403, similar to last year's £28,294

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

Expenditure analysis:



Total expenditure across the year of £269,599 showed an increase of only 7% which, given in particular the increase in electricity and minimum wage costs, is a credit to the management team.

- Delivering services (staffing costs; outsourced Music Therapy; other play activities, lunchtime meals) at £183,612 or 68% of total expenditure is spent directly on delivering activities and in line with the 2023 figure of 70% of total expenditure
- Nursery materials and equipment; hot lunch time meals; running the building and our Forest School reflect a further £41,478 or 15% of the total spend (compared to 14% of total spend last year)
- The total administration; fundraising and office costs of £39,757 represents 15% of total expenditure. This includes completion of the website re-design and regular accounting and HR procedure costs
- Depreciation and Governance costs (including Inspection fee) make up the remaining £4,752 or 2% of the charity's total costs. No Trustee received any expenses.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have set a reserves policy which requires that the reserves be maintained at a level which ensures that COG's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty and that these reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form. The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of COG's planning, budgeting and forecasting cycle. It takes into account the risks associated with unexpected variations in the stream of income and expenditure, given planned activity levels and COG's future commitments.

The Trustees assess the reserves policy on an annual basis. They monitor and discuss levels of readily realisable reserves and COG's future commitments. The main risks to both income and expenditure plus the requirements for working capital and adequate cash flow are assessed.

The trustees use this information to ensure an adequate level of readily realisable reserves is maintained. In October 2024 the reserves policy was reviewed and based on this risk analysis, a Free Cash Reserve target of between 2 to 3 months of future annual expenditure (£44,643 and £66,964) was confirmed. At 31/8/24, the Free cash reserves were £67,818 including the designated reserves as detailed -

The Trustees have set aside £40,000 as Designated reserves, this is made up of:

- £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision should the charity be forced to close during the upcoming year.
- £5,000 to undertake a comprehensive review of premises security - to facilitate an enhanced working environment for staff by updating access controls and lighting.

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

Plans for future periods

We will continue to build on our strategic vision, which we plan to review and formalise in a written strategic plan.

- ◇ Evaluate and work to maximise our current assets to optimise and expand, where possible, the direction of the charity to meet the needs of current and new service users including the launch of a new website, which has been delayed but hoping to launch late 2024.
- ◇ Continually review and evaluate our early intervention provision of play-based learning to ensure sustainability and viability in the face of continued and growing concerns around recruitment, retention and funding in the early years sector; particularly ensuring we continue to meet the needs of children with SEND and other additional needs, including children experiencing disadvantage which affects their development.
- ◇ Recruit an additional member of staff, to join our specialist team, to enable us to offer support to more local families. To also consider further expanding our team by providing additional Apprenticeship opportunities, thereby sharing the expertise of our experienced staff with the next generation of Early Years professionals.
- ◇ Continually review and evaluate early intervention family support provision to ensure we understand and respond to the changing needs of our local community, particularly during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the national economic and political picture; the known and unforeseen impacts they bring. Focus on the needs of parents/carers who are hard to reach/engage with, to support their confidence in attending groups with their children and their following transition to early intervention sessions.
- ◇ Continue to focus on, review and extend staff wellbeing protocols to ensure physical safety and emotional support for staff members is in place, and we will continue to try to attract funding to support this outcome.
- ◇ Continue to identify and evaluate funding opportunities to improve office space, facilities and infrastructure for staff to accommodate a team that has grown in number over the past decade, and outgrown space available—this is very difficult to achieve through fundraising alone but could be part of a new capital project.
- ◇ Better examine and plan for upcoming maintenance/premises improvement needs, analysing when a need might arise and budgeting to mitigate financial risks to the charity.
- ◇ Consider a capital project to increase space available to meet needs of service users, through expanding current projects and/or launching new projects to meet community need.
- ◇ Actively seek out and say 'yes' to opportunities to get involved in national research and training to extend and enhance our specialist knowledge in order to reach our goals, as well as take up opportunities to be involved in community projects throughout our town, to enhance cultural and creative experiences for service users who may not otherwise have such chances. This will also enable COG to create more partnership working opportunities with other community groups and organisations, to benefit staff, volunteers and beneficiaries.
- ◇ Continue to build a robust and effective Board of Trustees through a programme of recruitment, including an analysis of skills needed to provide beneficial areas of expertise.
- ◇ Continue to enhance the capabilities of the Board of Trustees through opportunities to meet key staff members for focussed discussions; understanding challenges and ways they can be met; offer training opportunities for trustees whenever possible and work to improve and continually enhance our trustee induction package.
- ◇ Work towards building a group of patrons and ambassadors to support the charity, with the view to them supporting the work of COG through social media, publicity and advocacy of our work, as well as building a strong team of Advisors to the Board.

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The Charity Trustees (who are also the Directors of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice)

Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the Charitable Company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the directors should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and the group and hence, taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Charitable Company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Print name: Gaynor Hutton

Signed:



Date: 15 May 2025

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Independent Examiner's Report

Year ended 31 August 2024

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2024 which are set out on pages 14 to 21.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity Trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Miss Ruth Herbert FCCA

Signed:

Ruth Herbert

Date:

22 May 2025

Wenn Townsend Accountants Limited
Gosditch House
Gosditch Street
Cirencester
GL7 2AG

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)
Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account
Year ended 31 August 2024

Statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2023
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Income and endowments</u>					
Donations	14625		130195	144820	132350
Earned from charitable activities	106939		0	106939	89600
Earned from other activities	5856		0	5856	5913
Investment and other income	5922		0	5922	3213
Total	133342		130195	263537	231076
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Cost of raising funds	11807		1632	13439	12915
Expenditure on charitable activities	119127		137033	254420	238605
Other expenditure	0		0	0	0
Total	130934		138665		251520
Net Income/Expenditure	2408		-8470	-6062	-20444
Transfer between funds	0		0	0	0
Net movement in funds	2408		-8470	-6062	-20444
Total funds brought forward	80927	40000	61256	182183	202627
Total funds carried forward	83335		52786	176121	182183

The statement of financial activities include all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 15 to 21 form part of these financial statements

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Balance Sheet Year ended 31 August 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	8	108303	0	108303	110856
Current Assets					
Debtors		0	0		
Cash at bank and in hand		18089	137643	155732	150773
Total Current Assets		126392	137643	264035	261629
Creditors (falling within one year)	10	3057	84857	87914	79446
Total Assets less current liabilities		123335	52786	176121	182183
Financed by:					
Unrestricted funds		83335		83335	80927
Designated funds		40000	0	40000	40000
Restricted funds		0	52876	52786	61256
Net Assets		123335	52786	176121	182183
Funds		123335	52786	176121	182183

In approving these financial statements as directors of the Company we hereby confirm:

- The Company is entitled to the exemption from audit under Section 477(c) of the Companies Act 2006 from the year ended 31/8/2024. The Trustees have not required the Charitable Company to obtain an audit of its financial statement for the year ended 31/8/2024 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
- That we acknowledge our responsibilities for:
 - ensuring that the Company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
 - preparing financial statements 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 profit or loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of section 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements so far as applicable to the Charitable Company.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

G. Hutton

Dated: 15 May 2025

Signed:

Company number 09210771

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2024

1) Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice. Cotswold Counselling meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The Charity has applied Update Bulletin 2 as published on 5th October 2018 and does not include a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is applying FRS 102 Section 1A.

Fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at rates calculate to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

- ◇ Land and Buildings 2% reducing balance
- ◇ Fixtures and Equipment 20% reducing balance

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objectives. Restricted funds are funds which have been given for particular purposes and projects.

Income

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories income:

Fee income is included in full in the statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

- ◇ The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.
- ◇ Investment income is included when receivable.
- ◇ Incoming resources for generating funds are accounted for when earned.

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account activity.

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The trust only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as a basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised as a transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1) Pensions

Since September 2017, employees are automatically enrolled into a defined contribution pension scheme operated by The People's Pension. Employees can subsequently opt out. Employees joining the scheme, contract directly with the pension company.

The charity made a matching contribution of 3% of qualifying earnings to this pension scheme and acts as an agent in collecting and paying over employee contributions. The contributions made for the accounting period treated as an expense and were £4964 (2023 = £5126)

2) Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the charity. The charity is registered and incorporated in England and Wales and it's registered address is : Beeches Road; Cirencester; Glos; GL7 1BW

3) Financial performance of the charity

The statement of Financial Activities states the financial performance of the charity.

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

4) Income:

A1 – Donations & Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Barnwood Trust		11520	11520	12200
Gloucestershire Funders– Julia and Hans Rausing Trust		20097	20097	21717
Children in Need				11207
St James Place CSR Volunteering	170		170	210
St James Place Foundation		10000	10000	
Global Make Some Noise				11263
Peter Lang Children's Trust		44932	44932	40000
Society Holy Child Jesus`	5000		5000	4167
Arnold Clark		1000	1000	
LIDL Local Community Fund		500	500	
Cirencester Town Council		3000	3000	
B&Q Neighbourly		500	500	
Soroptimists Dorothy Minnis		550	550	550
Active Impact OCWC		693	693	
Smiths Cirencester Charity		280	280	
Gloucestershire County Council		3875	3875	
KD Winstone Charitable Trust		5000	5000	
Glos Funders—One Glos		7900	7900	15800
NFU Mutual				537
Tesco Community Grant		925	925	1110
Kemble Church				600
Cotswold Primrose Trust		3065	3065	
E-Qualitas		7000	7000	
Active Impact OCWC		1984	1984	
Poverty Hurts—GCF		2484	2484	
Pied Piper Appeal		4890	4890	
Titch Tetley (Photographer)				525
Cirencester Ladies Skittles	312		312	
Ciren Vicars & Churchwardens	368		368	
Masonic Charitable Foundation	950		950	
Various donations & grants	7825		7825	12464
Total	14624	130195	144820	132350

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

A2 Earned from charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
GCC Nursery fees	100207	0	100207	85589
Parent fees	6732	0	6732	4011
Total	106939	0	106939	89600

A3 Earned from other activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Fund raising activities	2106	0	2106	1813
Building hire	3750	0	3750	4100
Interest Income	4962	0	4962	2657
Miscellaneous	960	0	960	556
Total	11778	0	11778	9126

5) Expenditure:

Expenditure on charitable activities	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Delivery of services	51246	132366	183612	176365
Nursery equipment and hot meals	18303	2807	21110	8078
Forest school and garden	1970		1970	2438
Building operations	16538	1860	18398	23489
Office & administration	38125	1632	39757	36744
Depreciation	2552		2552	2690
Governance* & Independent examination	2200		2200	1716
Total	130934	138665	269599	251520

* Trustees received no remuneration and were not reimbursed for any of their expenses in the period.

6) Paid Employees:

Average number of 'full time equivalent' employees in the year:	2024	2023
Fundraising	1	1
Administration	1	1
Charitable Activities	8	8
Governance	0	0

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

7) Movements in Funds:

	<u>Opening</u>	<u>Incoming</u>	<u>Outgoing Re-</u>	<u>Transfer</u>	<u>At</u>
		<u>Resources</u>	<u>sources</u>	<u>Of Funds</u>	<u>31/8/2024</u>
	£	£	£		£
Unrestricted Funds	80927	133342	130934		83335
Designated Funds	40000	0	0		40000
Restricted Funds					
Active Impact OCWC		693	181		512
Arnold Clark		1000			1000
Soroptimist Dorothy Minnis	550	550	1100		
GCC Global DCMS	5493		5493		
Glos. Funders Julia and Hans	16748	20097	20097		16748
Rausing Trust					
St James Place Foundation	90	10000	3424		6666
Cirencester Town Council		3000	3000		
Barnwood Trust	11520	11520	12148		10892
Peter Lang Children's Trust	10500	44932	51932		3500
Glos Funders—One Glos	15800	7900	15800		7900
Cotswold Primrose Trust		3065	3065		
E-Qualitas		7000	2432		4568
Lidl Local Community Fund		500	500		
Tesco Community Grant	555	925	1480		
Smiths Cirencester Charity		280	280		
Active Impact OCWC		1984	1984		
Gloucestershire County Council		3875	2875		1000
Glos Community Foundation		2484	2484		
Poverty Hurts					
Pied Piper Appeal		4890	4890		
Neighbourly Spring fund		500	500		
KD Winstone Trust		5000	5000		
Total Restricted	61256	130195	138665		52786
Total Funds	182183	263537	269599		176121

Designated Reserves:

The Trustees have continued to review areas of the Charity's operations and aligned with it's strategic analysis; Centre Development Plan and Risk Register , have decided to identify the following areas of operations that should be defined as "Designated Reserves.

- ◇ £35,000 to be ring fenced as a Staff redundancy liability provision as at 31/8/2024 - should the charity be forced to close.
- ◇ £5,000 to undertake an IT infrastructure review and subsequently deliver a more secure; reliable and ergonomically effective working environment

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

8) Tangible Fixed Assets:

	<u>Land & Buildings</u>	<u>Fixtures & Fittings etc.</u>	<u>Total</u>
	£	£	£
<u>Cost</u>			
At 1st Sept 2023	129405	12110	141515
Additions in Year	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 st August 2024	129405	12110	141515
<u>Depreciation</u>			
Balance brought forward	20412	10247	30659
Charge for the Year	2180	373	2553
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 st August 2023	22592	10620	33313
<u>Net Book Value</u>			
At 31 st August 2024	106813	1490	108303
At 31st August 2023	108993	1863	110856

9) Taxation:

As a charity, Cirencester Opportunity Group Limited is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within the Section 478 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent these are applied to its charitable objections.

10) Creditors:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£
Income in advance	84857	75990
Accruals	3057	3456
Total	87914	79446

11) Capital Commitments

The company had no known capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

Cirencester Opportunity Group (Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended 31 August 2024

13) Government Grants:

The following income was received from government bodies during the year.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Gloucester County Council	3875	
Cirencester Town Council	3000	471