

Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2022/2023



The Life Project (Bath)
Registered Charity: 1142459
Company number: 07573284

Annual Report and Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

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Trustees' Report

The trustees present their report for the year to 31 March 2023. Due to the trustees' status as directors under the Companies Act 2006 this report constitutes a directors' report as required by section 415 of the Companies Act 2006.

1. STATEMENT FROM CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

The last year has been another year of change challenge and development and I have been proud to see the us through that year looking forward to a positive future.

In June 2022 we said goodbye to Sarah Couchman, as one of the founding members of the Life Project Sarah has been central to the core of its being, culture and ethos, and though she will be greatly missed we are very excited for her new life and adventure going forward. Following some re-structuring of our teams and roles we have been extremely blessed to welcome Esmé Neale De Zárata as our new Day Services Co-ordinator. Esmé has a background in Occupational Therapy as well as setting up a Christian charity for children with a learning disability in Peru and has a real heart for the Life Project.

Another change has been with the parent carers group which both Fiona and Rachel stepped away from in the summer of 2022 (we are thrilled that Fiona has continued to work in our day services as an activity lead) and we have been delighted to appoint Sarah Moxham-Hendra to be the Family Support Co-ordinator to lead and develop the parent carers group.

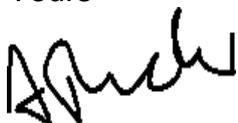
In the Autumn Ruth Taylor stepped down as a trustee after giving a huge commitment of time and energy which saw us safely through the pandemic.

With the staff changes it has been the ideal opportunity to review all the roles and responsibilities in the Life Project and develop new job descriptions and structures to equip us for the future. This has included developing a transport policy, a pay and reward structure and fee structure in order that The Life Project is more robust going forward.

The economic environment that we are now in is very challenging for all charities and services and I believe we have set the foundations in place to manage these challenges and continue to provide the caring and inclusive services which make being part of the Life Project a family.

I am finishing my term as a trustee with this final letter as Chair, my hopes and prayers are with you all to flourish and grow whilst being rooted in love for our community.

Yours



*Alison Tucker (Chair of Trustees)
(Until 31st March 2023)*

2. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

From the Memorandum and Articles of Association of The Life Project (Bath):

The Charity's objects ("Objects") are for the public benefit to promote and protect the health and well-being of persons with learning difficulties or other mental or physical disabilities in Bath and in such other parts of the United Kingdom as the Trustees may from time to time think fit according to Christian principles particularly but not exclusively by the provision of accommodation and other facilities to enable them to live within communities and to fulfil their individual potential.

During the reporting period the Trustees undertook an exercise to review the mission and vision of the Life Project (Bath). The outcome of the process led to the following:

Our Vision: An inclusive world in which people with learning disabilities know they belong.

Our Mission: To create and model supportive community for people with learning disabilities, their families, and carers.

Our Objectives:

- To provide purposeful activities which value the holistic needs and well-being of each individual and the community.
- To create an environment that promotes social development and nurtures healthy relationships.
- To offer platforms for people to express their uniqueness to the world around them and opportunities for those who want, to develop their faith.

The trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities we should undertake and confirm that all our activities are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

The key objectives to be initiated in 2022-2023 were as follows:

1. To review and reaffirm the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the charity in light of covid pandemic and current financial and political climate.
2. To become an increasingly robust organisation.
3. To develop a business plan that will result in becoming a financially sustainable charity delivering Day Services, Family Support and Discipleship.
4. To improve involvement of Members and Service Users in decision making processes.
5. To secure funding for Family Support – including ongoing delivery of existing Parent Carer Drop In and funding for new initiatives.
6. To have launched/ be close to launching at least one new session of Day Service.

The charity's performance against these objectives are reported in detail in Section 4 of this report.

Most Life Project staff, volunteers and families are members of Christian churches and congregations around Bath and NE Somerset and are committed to the Christian ethos of the organisation. They strive to reflect these Christian values in the way they contribute their efforts to the Life Project work and activities.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

As the Covid pandemic continued to have a global impact, during the year significant adjustments had to be made to our mode of delivery and expectations needed to be managed. However, in summary the following activities were successfully achieved:

- **Staff Changes:** We have experienced staff changes as some roles have changed, people have moved on and new faces have joined our team. Of particular note was saying farewell to Sarah Couchman who was part of the initial conversation in 2000 that led to the formation of Springs and subsequently Life Project (Bath). Sarah established Springs and our work at the Old Acorn Barn – becoming our first employee and shaping the organisation for many years.



- **Day Services:** We continue to run three days of positive and meaningful activities – including gardening, cooking, drama, dance, art, woodwork, and much more – at the Old Acorn Barn and our allotment site. Esmé Zárte joined the team as our Day Services Coordinator and has been building relationships with staff, Makers and volunteers and introducing new projects and ideas.
- **Spring:** In April 2022 we celebrated the 20th Anniversary of our fellowship group, Springs. Springs has always been volunteer led and we were delighted to have Elizabeth Riley and Kay Labate take on the coordination of the group from May and have seen the group grow from strength to strength. There is talk that we may be at capacity and how we take this forward in the next year.
- **Family Support:** The weekly Parent Carer Drop-In continues every Tuesday during term time – with a new Family Support Coordinator (Sarah Moxham-Hendra) taking over the organising and welcoming parents each week. A second Parent Carer Drop In was launched in Radstock in March as we are monitoring the progress as we run it as a pilot project whilst looking for extended funding. Parent carers have also benefitted from two retreat days and the ongoing peer support through our WhatsApp group.
- **Socials:** During the year we have enjoyed gathering a barn dance, curry night, quiz and visit to the Pantomime – a real highlight for all attended – oh yes it was!
- **Cream Tea:** In June we celebrated our annual cream tea. It was wonderful to open the doors to the Barn and welcome so many people to enjoy scones and cream in the most glorious sunshine.



- **Volunteer Thank You Tea:** In July we introduced a thank you for all our volunteers – coffee and cake at the Barn. A chance for our CEO to meet and thank all volunteers for everything they do from helping in the Barn, serving at Parent Carers, worshiping at Springs, fundraising, providing governance as trustees and much more. We think it will become an annual event.
- **Colour Life for Life Project:** During the summer we welcomed a group of students from the University of Bath as they completed a project as part of their studies for an MA – we enjoyed a day at the Barn – welcoming visitors to plant seeds and paint rocks.
- **Bath Half:** The Bath Half Marathon returned following the Covid Pandemic and we were delighted to have a number of runners supporting the Life Project – we are thankful for everyone who took part, for all your training and for all the money raised.
- **Markets:** During November had opportunities to sell produce made and/or designed by our Makers at the Bath Christmas Market & Bath Communities and Charities Market. There was a lot of work involved but it was good to engage with visitors to the markets, whether locals or tourists to the city.
- **Carol Service:** In early December we held our first Life Project Carol Service – it was a wonderful start to the Christmas season and a celebration of bringing together of all different sides of the Life Project with drama, music and Christmas talk led my Makers from the Barn and members of Springs.
- **Emergency Appeal:** In response to a lower than anticipated income from fundraising we launched an emergency appeal with the aim of raising £30,000 in 150 Days. Together with our Fundraising February initiative we saw an increase in giving from £1.4k between April and October 2022 to £9.7k between November 2022 and March 2023.
- **Trustee Changes:** Our team of trustees work hard to ensure we remain focussed on our core mission. We have welcomed Paul Bright to the board and Alison Tucker and Ruth Taylor have resigned during the year. We expect some further changes in the next year as we recruit to the board.



4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Achievement Against Objectives

Our stated strategic objectives were reviewed at the Trustee Away Day in July 2022 and with the following objectives agreed to be initiated for the reporting year April 2022 to March 2023:

1. To review and reaffirm the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the charity in light of covid pandemic and current financial and political climate.
2. To become an increasingly robust organisation, including:
 - a. Policies, procedures and practices reviewed and where necessary standards improved to meet legal and organisational expectations;
 - b. Adequate staffing (paid and unpaid) to plan, deliver and evaluate the services provided;
 - c. Reporting and communication systems to become electronic (including data and file sharing) in line with GDPR.
 - d. Increasing the trusteeship, specifically seeking skills including fundraising and finance
3. To develop a business plan that will result in becoming a financially sustainable charity delivering Day Services, Family Support and Discipleship, including:
 - a. A transport solution for Day Services that does not rely on staff;
 - b. Expanding Day Services to 5 days per week throughout the year;
 - c. Reviewing premise requirements and scoping out alternatives;
 - d. A sustainable funding (grants and community fundraising) strategy.
4. To improve involvement of Members and Service Users in decision making processes.
5. To secure funding for Family Support – including ongoing delivery of existing Parent Carer Drop In and funding for new initiatives.
6. To have launched/ be close to launching at least one new session of Day Service.

Objective 1: To review and reaffirm the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the charity in light of covid pandemic and current financial and political climate.

Following the Trustee Away Day in July 2022, facilitated by Ernie Messer, the trustees met to review the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the charity. The purpose of the exercise was to refine the mission of the Life Project establish charity wide objectives from which to demonstrate our achievements, to make successful decision, and give service users, partners and funders improved clarity about the purposes of the charity. A draft proposal was presented to staff and parent carers at separate meetings and their input sought to ensure the charity is shaped by the Life Project community.

The outcome of the process resulted in concise statements about *Our Vision, Mission and Purpose, Our Ethos and Values*, and *Our Faith in Practice* with can be found in [Appendices 1-3](#).

Objective 2: To become an increasingly robust organisation.

a) Policies, procedures and practices reviewed and where necessary standards improved to meet legal and organisational expectations;

During the year we have begun a review of all policies and procedures, identifying where improvements are required and/or where new policies may need to be introduced.

During this reporting period the trustees have approved the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy (March 2023)
- Transportation of Service Users & Colleagues by Staff & Volunteers in Vehicles Policy (March 2023)

During the review and amendments of these two policies the following policies were recognised as requirements to review/produce and are the priority for the next reporting period:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Incident Procedure – Guide to Incident Reporting
- Lone working Policy
- Moving and Handling Policy
- Public Transport and Hired Vehicle Policy
- Reporting of Adverse Incident Reporting (AIR) Policy
- Safe Communications Policy
- The Safe Carriage of Equipment in Staff Member’s Own Vehicles Policy
- Travel and Subsistence Policy
- Refund Policy

b) Adequate staffing (paid and unpaid) to plan, deliver and evaluate the services provided;

A staffing and salary review was conducted during the reporting period. The trustees acknowledge the need for increased time for staff to plan, prepare, set up, evaluate, assess, and report on sessions. It was agreed that from April 2023 Activity Leaders would have an increase of 0.5 hours per session, this will be kept under review. Due to the provision of transport by staff to Makers it remains challenging for staff to prepare and meet immediately before and after sessions.

The trustees agreed to adopt a salary banding scale, reflecting the different responsibilities and skills that staff possess.

Band	Role	Salary (Full Time Equivalent)	Hourly Rate
Band F	CEO / Director	40,000 to 45,000	19.23 to 21.63
Band E	Managers (e.g. Operations / Finance / HR / Office / Volunteer)	34,000 to 38,000	16.35 to 18.27

Band D	Project Coordinators / Fundraiser / Events Coordinator / Chaplain	26,500 to 32,000	12.74 to 15.38
Band C	Session Leader	25,000 to 27,000	12.02 to 12.98
Band B	Activity Leader / Cook / Administrator / Bookkeeper	21,923 to 24,357	10.54 to 11.71
Band A	Session or Activity Assistant/ Carer/ Admin Assistant	19,760 to 21,674	9.50 to 10.42

*Figures based on 40 hrs/week, 52 weeks/year

Please note:

- Some of these roles do not currently exist but provide guidance as the charity seeks to grow and develop.
- Any annual increase based on our policy of following the national index of average earnings is not including in these figures.

c) Reporting and communication systems to become electronic (including data and file sharing) in line with GDPR.

The way in which the Life Project has developed means that as different individuals have joined the team our systems for sharing have evolved, but not necessarily in unison.

Our systems for storing and sharing files, information and data are adequate but could be more efficient.

Our CEO has been learning how to use SharePoint and OneDrive to share files and bring together the files from different users into one place. With the appointment of our new Team Administrator we hope to speed up the process of integrating folders and removing duplication.

Our aim is for all staff and trustees to have Life Project email addresses/ login for Office 365 giving them access to a suite of tools for the work they do and access to files and data as required. To date all staff with Life Project laptops have been set up with email addresses and all address unified to the pattern <firstname><lastname>@lifeproject-bath.org.uk.

In the next reporting period all staff and trustees will have secure access to relevant shared folders and we will move away from using Dropbox (where this has been used for some file sharing in the past).

We have begun the process of reviewing the data we hold for Makers, Members, Staff, Volunteers and others. We aim to consolidate the information we have and ensure that it is up to date. We hope that by the end of the next reporting period to understand the data we hold, any additional data that would be necessary and helpful for different stakeholders and to identify a suitable Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System for the Life Project to adopt from 2024-25.

As we review the information we hold we are also reviewing the forms we use to collect data – ensuring we are asking the correct questions and looking to move to a more automated electronic collection and storage.

d) Increasing the trusteeship, specifically seeking skills including fundraising and finance.

Due to personal circumstances for a number of our trustees, changes have taken place in the reporting period and further changes in the first quarter of the next reporting period. Ruth Taylor (Safeguarding Trustee) stood down in October 2022 and Paul Bright joined the board in January 2023, picking up the role as the Safeguarding Trustee. Alison Tucker resigned from the board and as Chair of Trustees at the end of March 2023.

The role of Treasurer was reviewed and separated into Treasurer and Bookkeeper with Rob Trickey joining as a volunteer Bookkeeper from summer 2022. As Tony Russell steps down as Treasurer during the next reporting period we have been advertising for a new Treasurer.

A number of trustees have indicated their intention to step down in the next reporting period and we are actively recruiting new trustees with a recruitment process scheduled to introduce and integrate them to the board.

Specific skills relating, but not limited to, fundraising and finance have been identified.

Objective 3: To develop a business plan that will result in becoming a financially sustainable charity delivering Day Services, Family Support and Discipleship

a) A transport solution for Day Services that does not rely on staff;

In reviewing the provision of Transport for service users it became apparent that whilst staff are providing transport to and from the Day Services provided by staff there is not adequate time for planning/set up or evaluation and team time before and after sessions. The trustees would like to remove the provision of transport to ensure Day Service staff have the time they need to prepare, deliver and evaluate sessions. This was proposed but feedback from some staff and parents highlighted the withdrawal of the provision would remove the ability of some service users to attend the Barn.

Following further reflection and consultation the Trustees agreed that for paid services:

- Existing agreements for the provision of transport will be upheld for duration the service user attends sessions or as long as staff are available and willing to provide transport.
- No transport agreements will be entered into for new service users or new sessions.
- If a service user leaves, this does not open a new space for another service user to fill, it will be an end of the provision.

The full statement on the provision of transport is available in [Appendix 4](#).

This solution is not ideal as staff continue to have no time before or after sessions without Makers present to set up or to review and evaluate. The trustees wish to identify a solution to the provision of transport that does not rely on staff who deliver sessions – options could include recruiting paid or volunteer drivers, liaising with a local taxi company or other transport provider. With further consultation with parent carers and other stakeholders we hope to identify a sustainable solution in the next reporting period.

b) Expanding Day Services to 5 days per week throughout the year;

It was hoped that with the appointment of a new Day Services Coordinator for 3 days per week, increasing to 4 days per week after the first year that we would be in a position of maximising the number of sessions delivered at the Old Acorn Barn.

However, our Day Services Coordinator started on 2 days per week in order to complete their re-registration as an Occupational Therapist and there has been significant staff sickness during the reporting period. This has meant that our goal of beginning new sessions has not yet been realised but plans and developments are underway.

With the plans progressing to develop the allotment we hope that as well as the Old Acorn Barn this will become a site that can be used much more frequently and for longer each year.

A consultation with Parent Carers of our Makers indicated that there is interest in expanding our services for more weeks each year. Our aim is to become a year-round provider, with all new staff appointed to 52-week contracts rather than term-time only.

Our main break currently takes place each summer as we work within the school terms. Our aim is to build up the number of weeks and sessions offered each summer so that in due course (2-3 years' time) our offer will increase from 37 weeks per year to closer to 48 weeks per year.

c) Reviewing premises requirements and scoping out alternatives;

The Old Acorn Barn is not an accessible building – it cannot be reached by public transport and an expensive journey by taxi for individuals. The building is not large, with stairs to the first floor, angled ceilings on the first floor, a galley kitchen and without an accessible toilet. In addition the grounds are uneven. As a team we recognise these challenges and the limitations the building and location hold.

The Old Acorn Barn also has limited capacity – we can accommodate a maximum of 8 Makers for sessions, and this can alter depending on support needs and Personal Assistants also attending.

We have always known these are the challenges with our location and facilities yet we also know, and Makers, Parents, Staff, Volunteers and visitors recognise that there is something very special about the Old Acorn Barn. It has been described a therapeutic

or retreat-like environment which offers so many benefits to all our Makers. We have strong, positive, and valuable relationships with many residents in the village of Englishcombe which add to our own sense of community and being part of the community.

A different venue may be more accessible and offer increased capacity but we are not yet maximizing how we use the Barn and the Allotment so we continue to review our service requirements.

d) A sustainable funding (grants and community fundraising) strategy.

It is rarely said that fundraising and grant applications are easy, we are pleased to have made it through the covid pandemic but as the cost-of-living crisis emerged we have not escaped the impact.

Unfortunately some of our fund-raising goals and ambitions were not realised during the reporting year, adding considerable stress to those involved in income generation for the charity.

In the previous year we were delighted by the response from individuals taking up our challenge to swim, run, walk or cycle a distance of their choice to raise a minimum of £100. We hoped to build on this success, launching Challenge 100 in the summer of 2022, unfortunately this did not result in any participants.

In the Autumn we cheered on a number of runners in the Bath Half Marathon. It is always encouraging when people choose to put themselves through something gruelling like this in order to raise money and awareness of our work. Although we had some runners we ended up with unused places, in part due to the date changing twice but also as many of those who might run have already done so in the past for the Life Project.

As a consequence of the lower than planned fundraising income we launched an Emergency Appeal at the AGM with a view to raise £30,000 in the 150 days between 1st November and 31st March. The target was ambitious, double our basic need, with the hope we could start the next financial year with something of a boost and ease the fundraising pressures. During the Emergency Appeal we also launched Fundraising February – encouraging individuals and groups to do something to fund raise for the Life Project. It was encouraging to see those challenges and events which did take place (both during February and planned for the subsequent month) which led to an increase in overall donations from £1.5k between April and Oct 2022 to £9.7k between November 2022 and March 2023.

We recognise that this is not sustainable and alternative models for income generation are required, making better use of staff and volunteer time and the resources we have available.

Objective 4: To improve involvement of Members and Service Users in decision making processes.

Following a review of Life Project Membership in 2022 we have moved towards a model of members meeting together at least three times per year.

The first meeting took place in January 2023 where it was agreed that:

- Members meeting will not be chaired by a trustee.
- Trustees will appoint a representative to be the liaison between members and trustees (giving ownership of the meetings to non-trustee members).
- Staff are permitted to become members if they would like to, they can apply in the same way as everyone else.
- There is no limit on the number of family members becoming members, but this would be reviewed if it appeared that a single family was taking over.
- It is the responsibility of the members to organise themselves for meetings, if there is anyone they wish to attend to give appropriate notice.

It is hoped that the Members will have a greater sense of involvement and engagement with the Life Project – understanding and engaging in decision making processes to support the trustees and staff team.

Objective 5: To secure funding for Family Support – including ongoing delivery of existing Parent Carer Drop In and funding for new initiatives.

We are grateful to Edward Gostlin for their generous donation of £5k towards our Parent Carers Drop-In which also enabled the pilot of a new group in Radstock.

Applications for grant funding have been made to support the continuation of the Parent Carer Drop-In's have continued throughout the year. As it stands the charity will begin to use reserves to fund the Drop-In from May 2023 onwards.

Objective 6: To have launched/ be close to launching at least one new session of Day Service.

There have been two main factors in not yet being ready to launch a new Day Services Session.

Firstly, staff shortages have meant that the team has been below capacity and not able to give adequate time to planning, developing and publicising new sessions. Our priority is to staff health and well-being and therefore the goal of launching a new session has been pushed back, giving more time for the team to prepare.

Secondly, the time it takes for Makers to review their activities and agree budgets is longer than anticipated. With any new or altered session most Makers will need to seek a review with social care before knowing whether or not they will be able to attend a session. This process can take months and therefore we need to give plenty of lead time before launching new sessions.

We would like to see an expansion of the sessions offered, which will involve increasing the staff team but we are looking to more realistic goals for the time frame to achieve this – perhaps launching between April and September 2024 rather than 2023.

5. DETAILED PROJECT ACTIVITY

The story of the Life Project 2022-2023 with details provided by Project Coordinators

5.1. Day Services

Maker's Involvement:

Our Summer term theme was 'Celebrating what we have,' this gave opportunities for appreciating each other, our abilities and the resources we have at the Life Project and around us.



Our Autumn theme was 'Making connections with our Surroundings,' this lent itself to explore further afield and tied in well with getting out into the Community with the Bath City Christmas Market and the Carol Service.

Our Spring theme was 'Spring & New Life,' which opened up lots of different opportunities and to try new things and consider what New Life means at this time of year.

Our Makers have continued to have opportunities to be involved in Art, Kitchen and Productivity Sessions which they were assigned to for three consecutive weeks. This proved to be successful on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Tuesdays Makers have had woodwork opportunities during the whole year. Additionally movement, music and drama have been offered within all day sessions. Maker choice was introduced to some afternoon sessions where they were able to choose between board games and music.

Sessions at the allotment ceased between October and March however during the Spring term we were able to plant seeds harvested from the allotment last year and nurture these before returning to the allotment after Easter. The Social and Therapeutic Horticultural Course that Esmé attended last year has been of great value in implementing new ideas and generating a vision for the potential expansion and development of the time and space we have at the Monksdale Road Allotment.

Highlights:

Despite many challenges arising prior to the Christmas Market and the Christmas Carol Service both of these events have been considered highlights for both staff and Makers. Making sellable items for the Bath Christmas Market; candles, bee houses and



Christmas Chutneys which all sold well was a highlight once the stress of producing them had passed.



Having more clarity in our timetable by making a few adjustments in order to improve our time management and Maker involvement in sessions has been reported term on term as a highlight to the past year and what we offer Makers.

Staff planning meetings introduced at the start of each term which have also included time to be encouraged by a bible passage and time for prayer for the Life Project have been well received and appreciated.

Challenges:

This past year has seen many significant changes which have presented challenges to Makers, staff, volunteers and parent/carers and resulted in many being unsettled and concerned for the future of the Life Project.

The issue of transport was the most upsetting to Makers, Parents and Carers.

There have been numerous amounts of time taken off sick throughout the year by staff and volunteers which has impacted on remaining staff needing to take on additional responsibilities and pressures which at the same time highlighted the limited people resources and time that the Life Project attempts to function on.

Minimal time being available for team planning and communication continues to be a challenge despite allocating one day at the beginning of each term for this purpose.

Staff would appreciate more contact and communication with the trustees and would love for trustees to come and visit and participate in sessions at the Barn and/or the allotment. We would love to improve our working relationship with you all as we seek to live out the Mission of the Life Project.



Volunteers:

This past year has seen a number of new volunteers join us which is really encouraging. We have however seen a reduction in involvement from existing volunteers, a couple of whom have indicated that they will sadly be finishing with volunteering.

Maker Changes:

At the end of the summer term we said goodbye to one Maker who moved on to other Day provisions and opportunities locally. This place was filled by a new Maker who had

just left school and started college in September. Following the fee increase we have lost another Maker who is unable to personally fund attending the Life Project. We have been working together with Bath College and Social Services for a new maker to start in the summer term.

It would be advantageous to move a couple of Makers to the Tuesday session which would allow additional spaces to be available at our sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays however there is some resistance to do this at present. Our Wednesday session is full to capacity with three Makers attending with PA's. We have been up to 17 people which is just about manageable this term with the gazebo offering extra space but it will not be possible to accommodate such numbers in the Autumn and Winter terms.

Staff Changes:

Sarah Couchman leaving was the biggest change to the Life Project Community which has obviously impacted on Makers and staff alike. Having stepped in as a new member of staff myself it has been obvious that she had many roles behind the scenes that made the Life Project work the way it did but is impossible to carry on with the current limited staffing and contracted hours.

Dinah Darby (Administrator) left in August and was not replaced until February. This was a huge loss and added extra pressure on staff and things did not run so effectively.

Susan Kyle (Kitchen Activity Leader) left with immediate effect due to illness in February Half term. Staff have covered but at the cost of more responsibility being given to volunteers and activities being reduced for Makers. To date the position has not been filled. Interviews for two candidates 27th June 2023.



Esmé Zarate: Appointed as Day Services Coordinator May 2022. Has been employed 16 hours per week (with additional overtime hours as required) whilst studying and working towards re-registering as an Occupational Therapist. HCPC registration gained April 2023.

Prayer points:

For staff morale, for renewed energies and enthusiasm for the precious work that we all value in the lives of the Makers.

For the Lord to bring along the people of His choice to the Life Project; Staff, Volunteers, Makers, supporters and Trustees who will be a blessing and who will be blessed.

For better communications within the Life Project and with local churches, individuals, and other organisations including Social Services

That all the glory for what God has provided for the Life Project be given to Him. That we will be good stewards and managers of what He has given to us so that we will be able to continue supporting Adults with Learning Disabilities in Bath.

Esmé Zárate (Day Services Coordinator)

5.2. Family Support

Parent Carers has continued for another year, but with lots of changes. Fiona and Rachel, moved on from the project last summer, so I (Sarah Moxham-Hendra) took over in September. My first session was a goodbye session for Rachel, when I was able to meet some of the group. Over the next three months, I got to grips with running the group with the support from Kay Skinner and our fabulous volunteers, and getting to know the different families that we are supporting.

In October we welcomed Lesley Bishop as a new volunteer, however in the new year we said goodbye to another volunteer – Josie. Fortunately, she has not left the Life Project but instead has moved over to the Springs team!

The numbers attending the group at the Weston Hub have been varied, between September and December we saw 16 carers attending. At the end of November we ran a Parent Carers Winter retreat. We ran the retreat at the Weston Hub, as there were a number of people who wanted to attend but would have been unable to if we had been outside of Bath. During the day we made clay Christmas decorations with Esther, and Kay ran a relaxing Pilates session. We then had lunch together. The feedback from the retreat was lovely



with everyone saying how much they enjoyed it and appreciated the opportunity to relax and be creative just before a busy Christmas period.

In December we said a temporary goodbye to Kay as she went off on Maternity leave. Running her last session with us on Tuesday and giving birth to Connie on the Friday! We hope to see Kay return to us in September.

Unfortunately, in the New Year, numbers dropped. This may have been due to weather, busy lives, or the fact that we were not offering Pilates.

In February, Stephen Magrath agreed to run some Mindful Art Sessions. Initially this was supposed to run for just 4-5 sessions. After people's initial misgivings that 'I am not artistic'. Those who have attended appeared to really enjoy the opportunity to be creative and produce some really beautiful pieces. Stephen agreed to continue the sessions after Easter and some of our artwork will be exhibited at the Life Project Art Sale in May.

We have also had a couple of visits from Sue Poole from BANES health watch, who has come along to discuss health and social care services in the local area and any positives or concerns that families have had.

Numbers have remained fairly low, with between 1-5 people attending each session over the weeks. However we are still getting new people coming along, as well as occasional visits from people who have attended the group in the past. I have therefore been reluctant to change the group and its venue, as people know where we are and are able to pop in when they can. However, with consistently low numbers we do need to consider what we do with the group.

When I started the post, there was a lot of discussion on the WhatsApp group about the need for support in the Radstock, Midsomer Norton area. I therefore looked at what we could do to help and in February I was able to set up a new group. We started as a pilot group meeting at Radstock Baptist Church, initially for five weeks to see the need, On the first session we had 8 people attend, which was really encouraging. New members have continued to join, with between 3 – 7 people coming along each week. We have set up a WhatsApp group for the Radstock members which is regularly used as a forum for information advice and support.



Early on we had a visit from Hannah Wilkins from SENDIAS an independent advice and support service, this was a really useful link and various members of the group have been able to get support and advocacy from the SENDIAS service.

One of the parents who has joined the Radstock group, has a job at the Radstock Museum as a development worker, she runs a carers café once a month, which I have been able to support and encourage people from our group to go along to.

I have also attended two Live Well events where I have been able to network with other support services and charities, then passing on information to our groups. If possible, we hope to have a Life Project stand at the next event.

So there have been some highs and lows for the Family Support over the last year, we need to make some tough decisions, but also celebrate the work we are doing in supporting the families we are involved with.

Sarah Moxham-Hendra (Family Support Coordinator)

5.3. Springs

April 2022 marked the 20th Anniversary of our Springs group. We gave thanks to God and celebrated with members and volunteers, old and new, and enjoyed a joyful evening of cake, worship, and dancing. It was wonderful to look back across the past 20 years and to see how much has happened in the group - truly beautiful. We produced a short video to mark the occasion, and this is available via the Life Project YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyJqSxAcuNY>)



During April and May we said a huge thank you and a sad farewell to Sarah Couchman who was instrumental in starting Springs back in April 2002 alongside Kathryn Spackman (who still volunteers to this day). Sarah has moved away, though remains very close to us all in our hearts (and sometimes on Zoom). We all miss Sarah at Springs and are so grateful for the ongoing legacy of her love, prayerful oversight and commitment to the group and her priority for member participation. This continues to bear fruit in Springs today as we continue to nurture spiritual exploration, growth and build community. Thank you Sarah.



Springs has always been run by volunteers and we are enormously grateful that following prayerful consideration Elizabeth Riley and Kay Labate stepped up to co-lead the group. It has been a huge amount to take on and a big learning curve for Elizabeth and Kay! They couldn't have done it without the amazing volunteer team who continue to help lead sessions and faithfully transport many members to and from the group. They are so proud of all the team who are stepping out in faith to work together. They are also

thankful and delighted that Springs has continued to grow, welcoming a number of regular new members this year as well as a new volunteer.

One of the joys of being involved in Springs is the way members encourage and support each other so well, showing so much love and care for one another but also for the world around us. This is demonstrated not only by the joy and enthusiasm of their reunions each session and the consistency of their attendance, but also by their readiness to welcome newcomers, their desire to draw alongside and pray for those who are struggling, and to remember in prayer those who are sick or unable to attend, and to pray for situations they've heard of in the news. Every member really matters to the group, and it is in the context of this love and care that we see members growing in confidence and faith. All the members love to participate and take turns in leading the sessions - this is such an encouragement to everyone. Recently, one new member shared a testimony in front of the whole group - something he had never done before.



With the growth in numbers, members and volunteers have risen to the challenge and have stepped out using their gifts and skills. Sometimes it's been out of their comfort zones, but they've stretched themselves and have grown together in faith – sharing ideas and having a sense of ownership of the group.

In the autumn we were preparing for the Life Project Carol Service, making props and practising a drama, expertly directed by volunteers Faith and Jess, telling the story of Christmas in a unique and special way. One of our members, Robert, preached at the Service (his first preach ever) and everyone was blown away by his confidence, clarity and the beauty of his message. Seeing Robert preach has encouraged all of us in our leading – with members being even more keen to lead and share with one another,



asking who will be leading next time. A recent theme was “Characters in the Bible” with each member choosing who they wanted to focus on when they led a session.

Throughout the year other highlights include:

- Christmas social - a full Christmas dinner for 29 people, preparing, eating and

celebrating together. It was a lovely evening with delicious food, karaoke (which we love), and showing a film about the angels appearing to the shepherds made by Josh, one of our new members.

- In the New Year Springs and many others from The Life Project headed to the St Philip's Church Pantomime, Cinderella. It was such a fun evening, enjoyed by all. We are so grateful too because the drama group generously chose to divide the ticket sales from the opening night equally between the Life Project and NICU at the RUH.

We give thanks to God for all His goodness throughout this past year. Because of the growth in numbers Springs is now at capacity so we are prayerfully considering whether to open a second group and the most suitable way to approach this growth. We appreciate the prayers of our supporters and welcome any visitors who would like to get a better idea of what Springs is all about.

Kay Labate & Elizabeth Riley (Springs Coordinators)

5.4. Socials Programme

During the year we have enjoyed a number of social activities and events that have been open to all the Life Project Family. In June we enjoyed our Annual Cream Tea and were blessed with delightful weather as well as delicious scones and other treats. It was something of a learning experience for many of us at it was the first time we could host the cream tea without the restrictions caused by covid over the previous few years and wonderful to welcome so many to the Old Acorn Barn.

We were also joined by a group of post-graduate students from the University of Bath who were completing a practical project as part of their studies. They were given a brief and worked hard planning for a day at the Allotment to which we could invite those local to the area. However, permissions from the local authority were not forthcoming in time and therefore we held "Colour Life for the Life Project" at the Barn. It was lovely to see Makers, Parent Carers and our neighbours from Englishcombe coming together for food, seed planting and rock painting.



In the Autumn we came together for a Barn Dance... or was it a Ceilidh? Most of us don't know the difference but we do know that we had lots of fun dancing around the hall at Manvers Street Baptist Church with our caller Dave ensuring we knew when to do-si-do, promenade or

swing our partners. A couple of months later we returned to Manvers Street for a delicious curry night cooked up by Dave, Col and Josie. The curry was delightful matched by the company with many of our Life Project friends.

The New Year was welcomed in with a visit to the Pantomime – a highlight of the year for all those who attended. We are told the audience for the first night was the best because we had so many from the Life Project cheering, booing and calling out the “Oh no he isn’t!” and “He’s behind you!” We are hugely grateful to the St Philip & St James Church Drama Group for such a wonderful evening as well as choosing to share the takings from the opening night between the Life Project and NICU at the RUH! There is no doubt we will be back next year, whether we are being supported or not!



5.5. Community Fundraising

We have been busy with our community fundraising throughout the year with mixed success.

In May we learned of a charity abseil taking place at St John’s Church, Keynsham and secured four places. Four intrepid souls took up the challenge and enjoyed launching themselves of the top of the church tower. Thank you for your bravery and for raising essential funds for the Life Project!



Hoping to build on the success of the previous year’s Swim 100, Run 100, Cycle 100 we introduced a combined event that we called Challenge 100. The premise is simple – chose a distance to aim to run, walk, swim or cycle with the aim of raising at least £100. Unfortunately we did not attract anyone to take part and the event failed to raise any money.



We have had places for runners in the Bath Half Marathon for a number of years, which has proved a success means of raising money for the Life Project. Unfortunately the Bath Half was postponed twice, initially from March to May and then again until October. This gave many charities the challenge of attracting runners and runners being able to maintain their fitness for months on end. The impact of this was a few changes in runners, with some having to drop out as they were unavailable on the new date, but we were also able to add a few people who had not run with us before. In the end we had 8 people running



on behalf of the Life Project – some of whom organised a place themselves and ran for us and other who used our charity places. We did not fill all the places we booked but we are grateful to everyone who took part and for the money they raised.

In the lead up to Christmas we were invited to have a stall as part of the Bath Communities and Charities Fair in the Widcombe Social Club, and we also secured a charity stall at the Bath City Christmas Market for two days. There was a lot of work involved in preparing for these events, ensuring we had had enough merchandise and including Makers in the sales. We enjoyed ourselves at both the Fair and the Market, discovering at least one of our Members has a gift for drawing people in and securing a sale. We made some good connections with the other stall holders and also enjoyed a visit from the Mayor of Bath. There are lessons that we need to reflect on and decide how often to take part in such events – balancing the work involved, the publicity it gives us, and the funding we achieve.



Following on from the Market and the Fair we also trialed an Etsy shop but feel that this was premature and will need more attention and input if it is to be a successful fundraising venture.



Reviewing our community fundraising after the Second Quarter of the year we identified a significant deficit and we were not on track to meet our target for Community Fundraising. The implications of this would be a need to evaluate our service provision and as such an Emergency Appeal was launched with the aim of raising £30,000 in the 150 days between 1st November 2022 and 31st March 2023. It was our hope that we would be able to reach £15,000 to meet the shortfall for the reporting period as well as begin the next period with a head start

on fundraising. To encourage supporters to get involved in fundraising we also launched Fundraising February – asking people to complete a fundraising activity or event during the month of February 2023. This month witnessed coffee mornings, head shaving, and exercising challenges, with further events inspired by Fundraising February carried into the next reporting period. The result of the Emergency Appeal and Fundraising February an increase from £1.4k in donations received April to October 2022 to £9.7k between November 2022 and March 2023. This is short of our hopes and the trustees plan to review our fundraising initiatives for the year ahead – exploring the time and energy required to organise and promote fundraising initiatives versus the amount of money raised.



5.6. Grant Funding

We are thankful to The Roper Family Charitable Trust for providing us with £10k in unrestricted funds to support the work across of the Life Project.

We would also like to thank the Edward Gostling Foundation for their generous donation of £5k towards our Parent Carers Drop-In's.

We are grateful to Baily Thomas for a £5k contribution towards our core costs.

A number of local churches support us as part of their missional giving, those churches which have given to us prayerfully and financially include:

- All Saints Church, Weston
- Holy Trinity, Combe Down
- Widcombe Baptist Church, Widcombe
- St Philip and St James, Odd Down
- St Mary's, Saltford

Furthermore we thank Kingswood School and the Weston Social Club for their generous donations to support the work of the Life Project

We have several ongoing applications and continue to seek investment, trust and grant funding to support those projects which cannot generate their own income – namely Parent Carers and Springs as well as contribute to the core costs of the charity.

We would like to extend our gratitude to these funding bodies that have supported us this year.

6. FINANCIAL REVIEW

Over the year, the Charity received income of £93,349 with expenditure of £104,452, finishing with a deficit of £12,193.

There was a slight increase in overall income from the previous year, but this masks a drop in fundraising income which was compensated for by additional grant income, donations and fees.

Overall expenditure was also greater, with Day Services being hit by a significant increase in utility costs at the Barn. Staff costs also increased beyond the annual increment, largely due to consolidation of overtime by Day Services staff covering the third day at the Barn along with the new Day Services Coordinator coming in at 52 weeks and having some overlap with the outgoing Barn Coordinator.

At 31 March 2023, the Charity had net assets of £60,594 of which £4,905 were restricted funds and £55,689 unrestricted.

Whilst the charity finished the year with a deficit of some £12k, steps have been taken to address this. Trustees wish to ensure that Day Services fees fully cover the operating costs and so an increase in fees of 42% was agreed from 1 April 2023, in consultation with staff and makers. Grant funding for the Family Support work will be used up early in the new financial year and this will be reviewed with any continuation being dependent on securing further funding. As a result of these steps, along with ongoing monitoring of the finances, the trustees are confident that the Charity is financially secure to deliver its programme of activities for 2023/24.

Looking ahead, the level of unrestricted reserves carried forward will support continuing work on restructuring projects to reduce the need for grant funding and to make them self-financing where possible. In due course this may involve relocating projects to a single venue that would allow greater capacity and improved accessibility.

Investment Policy

The Life Project holds funds in an instant access Deposit Account and a 90-day notice Treasurer's Reserve Account so as to provide some interest. These savings have been placed with Triodos Bank, which has a strong ethical investment policy.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation. As a result of this they aim to hold reserves equal to at least three months' unrestricted running costs. This is to ensure the continued running of the charity if unrestricted funding decreases, until new sources of funding can be found. At the year end unrestricted reserves were £55,689, providing adequate reserves whilst also supporting work on restructuring the projects.

Tony Russell (Treasurer)

7. FUTURE PLANS

As we reflect on the successes and challenges of the reporting period the trustees are confident that the Life Project (Bath) is emerging from a difficult period with a sharpened focus on the core values of the charity and sustainable growth.

Making the difficult decision to increase fees to a level that will be sustainable for the charity, ensuring Day Services are fully funded through fees will demonstrate how this service can be maintained and developed.

Due to the staff changes and periods of reduced staffing within the Day Services over the reporting period the trustees are inclined to maintain a desire for growth but recognise that a season of consolidation may be required. The time frame required for existing and new Makers to move through the process of expressing an interest, obtaining funding and starting at a session typically takes upwards of 6 months and therefore it is expected any new session will be prepared to launch at the earliest of Spring 2024.

The success of Springs and desire of people to join has led to the group reaching capacity. The trustees wish to maintain the uniqueness of the group being volunteer led but also want to ensure the team are well resourced. This will likely involve looking for funding to appointment a member of staff to support the Springs team, help with reviewing and developing a second group, and building up relationships with local churches.

The Life Project remains committed to Family Support and know how valuable the drop-in sessions are for those who attend. With a reliance upon grant funding that has been difficult to come by the trustees are aware that maintaining the groups is challenging and if funding is not forthcoming difficult decisions will need to be made as we consider whether this is affordable for the Life Project.

The founding families established the Life Project for “the provision of accommodation” or what became known as “homes for life”. Following the successful completion of the HAS Trust opening a home, with the support of the Life Project, in the Autumn of 2021, it was decided to focus on the other elements of the charity with homes projects placed on hold for 18 months. The trustees would now like to return to the core aim of the provision of accommodation, with the introduction of phases to explore the needs, existing provisions, capacity, the options and opportunities for the Life Project in the provision of homes of adults with learning disabilities.

Lessons from the previous and current reporting period have highlighted the limitations of the current fundraising strategy and the need to identify more sustainable and consistent income. One possibility is to look into the opportunities a charity shop could offer, both in income generation as well as opportunities for people with learning disabilities to volunteer and engage in meaningful activity.

In the first quarter of the next reporting period we know of three trustees who will be finishing on the board and we have an active recruitment campaign. We are therefore aware of transition at the board level and need for continuing to look forward to improvements and development whilst also balancing the needs of all stakeholders

whereby some consolidation is necessary. As the new board takes shape we expect to continue with many of the objectives from the current reporting year, especially:

- Becoming an increasingly robust organisation
- Developing a business plan that will result in becoming a financially sustainable charity.
- Continuing to improve involvement of Members and Service Users in decision making processes.
- Launching at least one new session of Day Service.

8. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

8.1. Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. The company was incorporated on 22 March 2011. The company was registered as a charity on 17 June 2011.

The Life Project (Bath) was initiated by over a dozen Christian families, mainly from the Bath area but also including Keynsham, most of whom had children, teenagers or adults with a range of learning disabilities. The families involved represented a variety of different denominations, but all shared a vision and passion for enabling their children to play a full role in the life of the church and in the community. The Life Project (Bath) aims for the highest standards of care and professionalism but is not seeking to create a home(s) or meaningful occupation(s) that isolate or removes those with learning disabilities from the wider world.

8.2. Governance Roles

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law.

Role descriptions for the Chair of Board, Treasurer and Bookkeeper as well as general trustees were updated in 2022. Code of Conduct for Trustees was produced in 2017 and is due for review along with other guidance and induction documentation use by new trustees.

8.3. Recruitment and Appointment of the Trustees

The trustees regularly review the skills and experience base of its board and new trustees are sought to reflect the needs of the organisation. A three-year term of office, with potential to renew, has been established. Based on a skills audit of trustees and identified skills gaps, potential trustees are approached. In order to be confirmed as a trustee DBS clearance is sought, a 'fit and proper persons' check carried out and candidates must sign up to all elements of the Confirmation of Appointment declaration.

During the reporting period the following changes have taken place at the board:

- Ruth Taylor – Resigned October 2022
- Paul Bright – Appointed January 2023
- Alison Tucker (Chair) – Resigned March 2023

8.4. Trustee Induction and Training

Induction is seen as a key element in retaining and supporting trustees. New trustees are given clear advice and support in relation to their obligations. A *Trustee Induction Checklist* is in use and all relevant documentation is made available, including details of resourcing, the current financial position as set out in the latest set of accounts and information about future plans and the strategic development of the charity. Other

governance specific training available for trustees in the charity sector is notified to trustees.

We are members of the local third sector network [3SG](#) and access the training, support and guidance offered to trustees.

8.5. Day to Day Management

The charity is run by its Chief Executive, Rich Blake-Lobb. During 2022-23 seven other part-time staff were employed at any one time.

The registered office is Old Acorn Barn, Englishcombe, Bath BA2 9DU.

9. SAFEGUARDING

The Life Project has continued to subscribe to *Thirtyone:eight* - an independent Christian safeguarding charity which helps individuals and organisations protect vulnerable people from abuse.

The Life Project use them as the umbrella organisation for the processing of Disclosure and Barring Service applications for volunteers and staff, support and guidance, and for the training of staff and volunteers.

Safeguarding training was provided for all staff and volunteers in September 2022.

There were no serious safeguarding incidents during the reporting year, and we have consulted with *Thirtyone:eight* experts for advice when we felt it necessary.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Life Project maintains a *Risk Register* that captures the main events that might have a significant adverse impact on the Life Project's service delivery, service users or financial/reputational integrity.

Following a review of the *Risk Register* trustees agree to include named responsibility/oversight for each identified risk event.

The register has been amended to describe the event, causes/ factors that will contribute to the event, the potential consequences of an event, and the mitigations that should be in place (with an implementation date for any newly recognised mitigations).

Each Life Project session has its own Risk Assessment, and these are reviewed by the Project Coordinators with relevant team members and presented to the Chief Executive with relevant elements being included in the management level Risk Register.

The risks associated with 'normal business' continued to be reported and assessed routinely at Trustee meetings throughout the year. The trustees have satisfied themselves that systems or procedures are established in order to manage those risks effectively.

At the end of the reporting period the risks include:

- Insufficient Funds for Personnel
- Insufficient Funds for Venues/ Resources
- Safeguarding Incident
- Health and Safety Incident
- Transport Incident
- Data Breach
- Unplanned Staff Absences
- Failure to Appoint Key Personnel
- Environmental Factors "Acts of God" (E.g. Storm damage, Freezing Pipes, Flooding, etc)
- Failure to Comply with Current Legislation

11. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Name and Charity Number:

The Life Project (Bath)
Registered Charity Number: 1142459
Company Number: 07573284

Registered Office:

Old Acorn Barn
Englishcombe, Bath
BA2 9DU

Trustees:

Alison Tucker (Chair)(Retired 30/03/2023)	Duncan Nash
Ben Stokes	Paul Bright (Appointed 11/01/2023)
Clive Brooks	Ruth Taylor (Retired October 2022)
David Twine	Tony Russell (Treasurer)

Independent Examiner:

Colin Goater
102 Freeview Road
Bath
BA2 1DZ

Banks:

The Co-operative Bank Plc
PO Box 250
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

Triodos Bank UK Ltd
Deanery Road
Bristol
BS1 5AS

12. TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The charity trustees (who are also the directors of The Life Project (Bath) for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing a 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 charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the 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 financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume 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.

Statement as to disclosure to the Independent Examiner

In so far as the trustees are aware at the time of approving our trustees' annual report:

- there is no relevant audit information, being information needed by the Independent Examiner in connection with preparing their report, of which the charitable company's Independent Examiner is unaware; and
- the trustees, having made enquiries of fellow directors and the charity's Independent Examiner that they ought to have individually taken, have each taken all steps that they are obliged to take as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Independent Examiner is aware of that information.

Approved by the Trustee Board on 13th September 2023

and signed on its behalf by: _____ **Ben Stokes** (Chair)

13. INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LIFE PROJECT (BATH)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's 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 charity'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:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 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
- 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.

Name: Colin Goater
Colin Goater
Date: 7 July '23

Address: **102 Freeview Road
Bath
BA2 1DZ**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds	Total Funds
		Funds	Funds	2023	2022
INCOME	Note	£	£	£	£
Donations		20,694	0	20,694	18,854
Gift aid on donations		1,472	0	1,472	1,539
Grants receivable		10,000	10,000	20,000	15,000
Contributions towards activities		40,701	472	41,173	39,983
Fundraising income		8,688	0	8,688	15,453
Interest on bank		322	0	322	48
TOTAL INCOME		81,877	10,472	92,349	90,878
EXPENDITURE					
Fundraising costs		1,157	0	1,157	437
Charitable Activities					
Staff costs		64,165	17,474	81,640	77,222
Staff expenses		2,509	240	2,749	1,258
Day Services running costs		10,213	25	10,238	8,140
Family Support running costs		0	3,750	3,750	5,471
Allotment		11	28	39	111
Springs / Mini Springs Costs		0	314	314	317
Administration		3,250	0	3,250	5,549
Insurance		772	0	772	645
Professional fees		384	0	384	986
Accountancy costs		250	0	250	250
		81,553	21,832	103,385	99,949
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		82,710	21,832	104,542	100,386
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	3	(833)	(11,360)	(12,193)	(9,508)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April		56,522	16,264	72,787	82,295
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March		55,689	4,905	60,594	72,787

All of the charity's operations are classed as continuing.
The notes on pages 38 to 44 form part of these accounts.
See Note 2 for fund accounting comparative figures.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Current Assets			
Debtors – Gift Aid		1,472	1,539
Prepayments		1,152	1,219
Accrued income		186	2,866
Cash at bank		62,060	71,583
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		64,869	77,207
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year			
Accruals and deferred income	5	4,276	4,420
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Current Assets		60,594	72,787
Funds of the Charity			
Restricted	6	4,905	16,264
Unrestricted	7	55,689	56,522
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Charity Funds		60,594	72,787

The Trustees are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477, and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the company keeps adequate accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act, and
- (ii) 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 financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006. These accounts have been delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Trustees on 13th September 2023 and signed on their behalf by

Name: **Ben Stokes (Chair)** Date: 13th September 2023.

COMPANY NO. 07573284

The notes on pages 38 to 44 form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Note 1: Accounting Policies

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) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006. Life Project (Bath) 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 note(s).

Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees have considered the immediate future of the charity for the next 12 to 18 months and consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Income recognition

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions before becoming entitled to it or where the donor has specified that the income is to be expended in a future period.

Grants and donations are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they are receivable and are allocated to the appropriate fund.

Investment income is included when receivable.

Expenditure recognition and irrecoverable VAT

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accrual basis in the year in which the expenditure is incurred.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. As the charity has only one activity, all costs are allocated against the charitable activity. They include attributable VAT which cannot be recovered.

Fund accounting

Funds held by the charity are:

- Unrestricted general funds – these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees.
- Restricted funds – these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (continued)**

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the accounts.

Note 2: Prior Year Comparatives

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£
INCOME			
Donations	18,654	200	18,854
Gift aid on donations	1,539	0	1,539
Grants receivable	10,000	5000	15,000
Contributions towards activities	39,402	580.88	39,983
Fundraising income	15,453	0	15,453
Interest on bank	48	0	48
TOTAL INCOME	85,097	5,781	90,878
EXPENDITURE			
Fundraising costs	437	0	437
Charitable Activities			
Staff costs	44,340	32881.57	77,222
Staff expenses	1,206	52.25	1,258
Day Services running costs	8,085	55	8,140
Family Support running costs	0	5471.47	5,471
Allotment	0	110.81	111
Springs / Mini Springs Costs	0	317.21	317
Administration	3,569	1,980	5,549
Insurance	645	0	645
Professional fees	986	0	986
Accountancy costs	250	0	250
	59,080	40,868	99,949
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	59,517	40,868	100,386
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	25,580	(35,087)	(9,508)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (continued)**

Note 3: Net Income/(Expenditure) for the year

This is stated after charging:	2023	2022
	£	£
Independent examiner's remuneration		250 250

Note 4: Staff Costs and Related Party Transactions

	2023 Total	2022 Total
Gross wages and salaries	78,318	73,862
Pension contributions	3,321	3,360
	<u>81,640</u>	<u>77,222</u>

Note

None of the Trustees receive fees or reimbursed expenses in respect of their trusteeship.

The value of waived expenses were not considered significant. There are no other related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

The aggregate value of donations received from Trustees and related parties was £1,050.

(2022 - £1,013).

The Trustees considers its key management personnel is the Chief Executive who received total employment benefits of £36,498. No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.

	2023 Number	2022 Number
The average number of persons employed as full-time or full-time equivalents by the charity during the year is detailed below.		
Management	1.0	1.2
Carers / other	1.6	1.7
	<u>2.6</u>	<u>2.9</u>

The average headcount during the year was 7.5 (2022 – 8).

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (continued)**

Note 5: Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
HMRC liabilities	1,896	1,690
Other accruals	2,380	1,883
Deferred income	0	847
	4,276	4,420

Note 6: Restricted Funds

	Springs	Barn activities & allotment	Family support	Core Costs	Totals
b/f 1 April 2022	1,387	54	14,823	0	16,264
Income	200	0	5,272	5,000	10,472
Expenditure	314	54	16,464	5,000	21,832
c/f 31 Mar 2023	1,273	0	3,630	0	4,904

Purpose of Funds:

Springs - Springs caters for adults with learning disabilities which meets twice a month in the evening, supported by volunteers.

Barn Activities and Allotment – Grant to allow additional activities to be provided for users of the Barn, such as Pilates and Wheels for All sessions, and to improve and develop the allotment.

Family Support – Further funding to continue Family Support, previously the Parent / Carer group.

Core Costs – Grants received specifically to cover core costs.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (continued)**

Note 7: Unrestricted Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	Balance at 31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£
General Fund	56,522	81,877	82,710	55,689
Total	56,522	81,877	82,710	55,689

Note 8: Analysis of Net Assets between Funds

	General Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£
Current assets	2,809	0	2,809
Cash at bank	57,155	4,905	62,060
Current liabilities	4,276	0	4,276
TOTAL	55,689	4,905	60,594

Note 9: Bank Balances 31 March 2023

	£
Petty Cash	41
Current Account	26,427
Deposit Account	10,122
Treasurer's Account	25,470
TOTAL	62,060

14. Appendices

14.1. Appendix 1: Our Vision, Mission, and Objectives

Our Vision

An inclusive world in which people with learning disabilities know they belong.

Our Mission

To create and model supportive community for people with learning disabilities, their families, and carers.

Our Objectives

- To provide purposeful activities which value the holistic needs and well-being of each individual and the community.
- To create an environment that promotes social development and nurtures healthy relationships.
- To offer platforms for people to express their uniqueness to the world around them and opportunities for those who want, to develop their faith.

14.2. Appendix 2: Our Ethos and Values

Our Ethos

The values of The Life Project (Bath) are at the heart of who we are and what we do – they are guided by a Christian ethos. These values have strong roots in the Christian teaching and practice, whilst also being accessible and meaningful for all – regardless of background. We believe that every person is unique – fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:4) – and is a valuable gift to the world and our community.

The work of the Life Project, its staff, volunteers and service users, are supported by prayer.

Our Values

The Life Project (Bath) has four key values – **Creative, Inclusive, Enabling, Community** – which are detailed below:

- **Creative:**

We refer to those who come along to our sessions at the Old Acorn Barn as 'Makers' to emphasise their role to come and be meaningfully, purposefully, and creatively engaged.

For Christians this name also has the added significance that we remember the first revelation of God in the Bible was as a Creator, a Maker.

- **Inclusive:**

We recognise the intrinsic value of each individual and welcome into our Life Project community adults with learning disabilities as well as family, friends and carers from all backgrounds, all faiths and none.

Christians believe that all of humankind are made in the image of God.

- **Enabling:**

For us inclusion means enabling all people to have choices, to participate, and to undertake tasks whether these are considered ordinary or extraordinary.

Christians understand that God does not dictate our actions but offers us the choice to participate in the kingdom of God.

- **Community:**

We believe we share the responsibility to support one another through community. We understand our true selves and reach our full potential when we share life with others – respecting and celebrating differences through healthy relationships.

Christians believe in one God in three divine persons (Father, Son and Spirit), a living example of community. Although we are each unique individuals, humans are created for living together in community – one body with many parts.

14.3. Appendix 3: Our Faith in Practice

The Christian ethos and foundations of the Life Project (Bath) are important to us and yet we also understand that having a faith-based ethos can mean different things to different people. We are always open to answering people's questions and hope that this short page of information demonstrates our respect and welcome to people of all faiths and none.

Staff & Volunteers

Our governing documents require certain positions to be held by people with a Christian faith (agreeing with the Apostles Creed¹). These roles include:

- Trustees
- CEO
- Project Coordinators
- Staff and Volunteers working with our Springs Group

Other staff and volunteers are asked to respect our Christian ethos but do not have to share our faith.

Day Services and Family Support

Our Day Services and Family Support are open to all, whatever your background, and we will not proselytise to you – that is we will not attempt to make anyone believe in Christianity. We are non-discriminatory and uphold the protective characteristics of Equality Act (2010).

We will celebrate Christian festivals (namely Easter & Christmas) and we may use examples from the Bible to illustrate or explain a value or tell a story but not to promote Christianity.

Some service users may choose to share their own faith and religious experiences.

Only if our service users give prior consent and ask for personal prayer will staff who have a Christian faith provide this.

Discipleship (Springs)

Springs is an overtly Christian group for adults with learning disabilities and includes Christian worship, Bible teaching and prayer.

The group is open to all but has distinctly Christian content and is designed to encourage and support adults with learning disabilities in their Christian faith and relationship with the God of the Bible. Springs is also open to those wanting to learn more about the Christian faith.

All staff and volunteers involved with the delivery of Springs are committed Christians and members of local churches.

14.4. Appendix 4: Statement on Provision of Transport

The Life Project (Bath) is a creative, inclusive, enabling community and as such has always sought to make our services as accessible as possible.

Growing from a group of like-minded families who supported one another voluntarily into a charity for which fees are paid for services rendered has meant the need to ensure policies and practices are robust and meet the standards required by legislation and our own ethos and values.

The provision of transport has enabled service users to access and engage with the Life Project. As a small community organisation it was possible for members of staff and volunteers to provide this transport. However, it has become unsustainable to continue to offer transport to all who may benefit from it.

In consultation with staff, volunteers and service users the trustees have agreed the following:

- All those who provide transport for service users and/or colleagues to/from sessions do so voluntarily – there is no obligation or contractual arrangement for anyone provide transport.

- All those providing transport must abide by the relevant policies of the Life Project (Bath) including “Transportation of Service Users & Colleagues by Staff & Volunteers in Vehicles Policy” – this includes ensuring adequate insurance, driving license and vehicle as well as risk assessments.
- Any arrangements for the provision of transport must be agreed between the driver, service user (and their representative/s), and the service coordinator.

Furthermore, for journey’s which involve payment for services (beyond basic expenses) the following has been agreed as a means of phasing out the provision of paid transport:

- Existing agreements for the provision of transport will be upheld for duration the service user attends sessions or as long as staff are available and willing to provide transport.
- No transport agreements will be entered into for new service users or new sessions.
- If a service user leaves, this does not open a new space for another service user to fill, it will be an end of the provision.

ⁱ **Apostles Creed**

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.*