

**Curdrige Reading Room and Recreation
Ground Charity**

Accounts for the year ended

31st December 2025

Curdridge Reading Room and Recreation Ground

Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2025

Independent Examiner's Report

Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees of the Curdridge Reading Room and Recreation Ground (Registered Charity 1153056)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st December 2025, which are set out on pages 3 to 10.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

- * the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- * the accounts did not accord with the accounting records.

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.



15th April 2026

*Sarah Spencely BSc CTA
Lime Tree Cottage, Outlands Lane, Curdridge,
Southampton, SO30 2HD*

Date

Curdridge Reading Room and Recreation Ground Charity
Trustees Report for the Year 1st January to 31st December 2025

Charity Registration Number: 1153056

Principle Address: The Curdridge Reading Room, Reading Room Lane, Curdridge,
Southampton, SO32 2HE

Telephone: 07704 208703

Website: www.curdridgereadingroom.co.uk

Email: info@curdridgereadingroom.co.uk

Charity Trustees:

Vanessa Hancock	Chairperson
Harriet Brocklehurst	Resigned 2 nd December 2025
Larry Burden	Existing
Bill Priest	Existing
Chloe Burden	Resigned 2 nd December 2025
Eric Bodger	From 22 nd May 2025
Graham Hill	From 22 nd May 2025

Structure, Governance and Management:

The Charity was formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and took over all the assets and liabilities of the Curdridge Reading Room Charity (Registration Number 203472) on 1st August 2013.

The Governing Documents of the Charity are published on the website www.curdridgereadingroom.co.uk and an individual may apply to the address or telephone number given above for a paper copy.

The Charity will have a minimum of four and a maximum of eight Trustees.

A rotation basis is adopted as detailed in the Governing Document in order that each Trustee position will be the subject of an election at least every three years. At the AGM, two of the Trustees, Larry Burden and Bill Priest will be standing down and seeking re-election.

The Charity maintains a Register of Members and all members of the community are actively encouraged to become Members. There is no charge for membership and as at 31st December 2025 the register shows that there were 42 members.

The Objectives and Activities of the Charity:

The full description of the Objectives of the Charity are contained in the Governing Document but can be summarised as:

Providing facilities for recreation and leisure time activities for members of the community who need them by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public in the interests of social welfare; and with the aim of improving the condition of life of the inhabitants in the Area of Benefit.

The facilities comprise of:

The Reading Room building which is available for hire in part or fully

- The main recreation ground which includes facilities specifically for the playing of cricket but is available for other sports and recreation as well
- A children's playground
- An open area commonly known as The Skinner Field

The Trustees have due regard to the Charity Commissions public benefit guidance and deliver the public benefit of the Objectives stated above by managing the facilities in a way that ensures all members of the community have an equal and fair opportunity to use them in the way they choose, this includes:

- Maintaining the facilities including the buildings and the grounds with a particular regard to Health and Safety
- Operating a booking system and maintaining a fair charging policy
- Publishing all relevant information on the website, on the notice board, in regular features in the local Parish Magazine and by using social media such as Facebook and Twitter
- Holding all Trustee meetings in public with an open session at the beginning for visitors to raise any issue
- Working closely with the Parish Council to obtain available funding and ensuring that activities and facilities provided are in line with local needs
- Working tirelessly to achieve compliance with all the requirements of the various laws and guidance that apply to the Charity

As reported in previous years, the Charity continues to face an enormous challenge because the building is showing signs of structural instability and is in need of significant repair and renovation. A part of the current building was erected in 1884 and various additions have been made over the years.

Steps are being taken to obtain current details on the structural state of the building so that the Charity can put in place a maintenance plan that is realistic and practicable to deliver given the financial constraints. At the time of writing this report, there is no intention to consider any potential replacement of the building. The reasons for this includes:

1. That there continues to be no interest from third parties in this option;
2. The current team of Trustees is established but the Charity continues to be financially vulnerable – although progress has been made in increasing hire income and therefore profit;
3. The Trustees feel that this is not currently a viable option and that the focus should continue to be on increasing hire income and undertaking a schedule of maintenance and repairs to keep the facilities going as long as possible with the ultimate aim of securing the longevity of the resources and, in turn, the Charity.

Note from the Chair

The Trustees, staff and volunteers worked hard during 2025 to continue to improve the financial position of the Charity and this is reflected in the positive financial result for the year.

The Charity does continue to be financially vulnerable. This is largely due to the amount of funds needed to carry out maintenance to the building and the grounds combined with the facilities still not quite generating sufficient income to cover operating costs.

We are continuing to take steps to manage these operating costs and keep them to a minimum wherever possible. At the same time, a huge amount of work has gone into attracting bookings to generate income to improve the financial standing of the Charity. It is worth acknowledging that income from fees for venue and equipment hire did increase during 2025. Full details can be seen in the financial review on page 7.

There is still a lot to achieve and I will continue to work with the Facilities Coordinator, our hirers, stakeholders and the other Trustees to implement appropriate change to continue to secure the future of the facilities.

The support of the community is still pivotal to this success. Getting this message into the public domain and raising awareness of the challenges faced along with our successes will continue to be the focus of everything that we do.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team of volunteers who work alongside me as Trustees for their support and contribution to the management of the facilities.

I would also like to thank our two staff members, Becky & Rosa. They have worked hard throughout the year and continue to work with the Trustees to try to make the facilities the best they can be with limited time and resources.

I am incredibly grateful for the team of volunteers that make up the Events Planning Committee. Without their support none of the fundraising that we do would be possible and, the impact that this would have on our ability to progress our maintenance goals would be significantly hindered.

The support and assistance from the members of the Bishops Waltham Men's Shed was vital in 2025 for the work that has been done to improve the fabric of the building and create a space that is inviting and attractive to other users. Their presence at the Reading Room has helped me bring about a level of change that I believe has been unprecedented in recent years and I thank them for the role that they have played in this.

Thanks also need to be given to the volunteers who have helped with specific maintenance projects throughout last year. To Ian Hancock for his assistance with painting the lighting rig and maintaining the grass area outside the main kitchen. To Trish and Graham Attwood for their assistance with replacing the curtains in the Main Hall in time for the Panto performances. I would also like to thank Larry Burden and Chris Pink for their continuous efforts in keeping the facilities looking good due to the ad-hoc repairs that they do and assisting with putting any equipment in place at our fundraising events. Thanks once again to David Jacobs for his efforts in helping to maintain the appearance of the facilities by taking on some of the decorating inside the building.

Last, but by no means least, a huge thank you to all those who have used our facilities. This includes residents who have held their own parties and functions here, or attended classes or workshops held by our regular hirers, to the local business owners who use the facilities to hold those classes, workshops and activities, and to those who have attended our fundraising events. The progress that we are making would not be possible without you and I am grateful for all of your support. I hope that you will join us for the continuing journey of improvements and that you are as excited as I am about what the future holds.

The following information in this report outlines the Charity's financial performance throughout 2025 and the steps being taken to continue to maintain and improve the facilities and achieve financial security for the Charity in the future.

Achievements and Performance

As previously mentioned, income from hire fees increased in 2025. This is due to an increase in bookings for both private functions and regular hire as well as more equipment being hired out for use by local residents either for their own parties at home or at the functions they held at the Reading Room.

We welcomed some new local businesses to the Reading Room in 2025 including Philippa Rose who runs Kundalini Yoga, Aura of Angels with Sarah Allen who holds Shammanic Drumming workshops and also organises the Spiritual Events that take place a couple of times a year and, Maddie from Creative Studio's running gel-painting workshops and themed art classes. Creative Studio's is also one of the partners of The Learning Nest C.I.C. and we are delighted that they have chosen our venue to hold some home education learning opportunities for the children that they support.

Congratulations to the Curdridge Amateur Drama Group (CADG) for a very successful panto at the back-end of last year. With tickets selling out for nearly all performances, this production attracted a huge number of people to the Reading Room and it was lovely to see the car park full and hear everyone having a great time.

Fundraising:

The events in 2025 included an Easter Trail, three Bingo nights, the Village Fete & Colour Run (with the Curdridge School Association running the colour-run element of this event), Summer Sounds (an adult disco), the Beer Festival, two café opportunities for our volunteers at events organised by third party event planners, and a new event – the Christmas Lights Switch-on. The Sustainable Wardrobe, held another Clothes Swap event at the Reading Room in aid of our Charity. Sadly, the live music event that was scheduled to take place in November had to be cancelled due to a lack of interest. The financial results from the fundraising is outlined in the financial review.

Trustee Commitment

The trustees remain committed to delivering the following objectives:

1. Maintaining and improving the building and grounds for the benefit of users and the local community
2. Improving the financial position of the charity by:
 - Retaining and expanding a group of loyal regular users and hirers
 - Increasing the use of the Reading Room for ad hoc bookings
3. Managing the annual fundraising activities
4. Strengthening links with the school and other community groups
5. Supporting our stakeholders (Scouts & Guides, The Bishop's Waltham Men's Shed and The Curdridge Cricket Club) in their activities at the Recreation Ground
6. Evaluating opportunities to secure the longevity of the Charity and the facilities.

2025 Financial Review

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

The main source of regular revenue for the Charity is from the hire of the building and grounds – either from ad-hoc or regular hires.

The Charity adopts a Revenue and Capital Reserves Policy.

The hire rates for use of the building will be reviewed annually with the aim of the day to day income and expenditure balancing, having made reasonable provision for ongoing costs of maintenance and repair which may not arise on an annual basis. This balancing continues to be challenged by the significant maintenance required due to the age of the facilities and increases in costs for staff, utilities and other operating costs. The Trustees are proposing a new approach to the hire fees, applying a flat hourly rate and removing the two-tier approach currently being used. A separate document containing full details of this proposal has been shared with Members ready for them to vote at the AGM.

The Charity will hold sufficient Revenue Cash Reserves to maintain security for the day to day operations. In 2025 this was considered to be £20,000 but the figure will be up-rated as necessary with the effects of inflation in the future and any identified needs. No increase in this reserve amount has been identified for 2026.

All fundraising and special activities, donations and grants will be held in the Capital Reserve from which all capital projects will be funded. Any Designated Funds will be held as part of the Capital Reserve but may only be used for their specific purpose. As at 31st December 2025 the only Designated Funds are a little under £6,100 which are ring fenced for the play area project. These funds are carried forward to 2026. There is a zero balance on the Memorial Bench Scheme.

During 2025, one of the Trustees carried out work to develop and update the website for the Charity. This was agreed with the Trustees under a commercial arrangement and fees were paid upon the submission of an invoice. The total amount for this work in 2025 came to £170. An arrangement for ongoing website maintenance will continue into 2026 with an hourly rate of £20 an hour.

Should Revenue Reserves fall below the amount considered to be prudent by the Trustees, then Capital Reserves (except Designated Funds) may be used to top them up. The hire rate review each year is used to regulate this for the future so that Capital Reserves are not depleted unnecessarily.

Last year continued to be financially challenging due to increasing utility costs (although these were mitigated by taking on a new two-year contract with our supplier in October 2024), increasing staff costs due to inflation and the increase to National Minimum Wage combined with an increase to the working hours for the Facilities Coordinator in order to allow sufficient time to deal with the increase in booking enquiries. Overshadowing all of this was the extent of the maintenance requirements for the building and grounds.

However, due to an increase in hire income and various grants and donations received throughout the year, once again, there was no deficit in overall funds at the end of the year.

Gross Operational Income:

Despite a reduction in income from bank interest and the recycling bin when compared to 2024, gross income for 2025 increased by £13,185. This was as a result of an increase to hire and equipment income of £6,585 and a grant to assist with critical operating costs from the Curdridge Parish Council of £8,703. The Charity also received £1,078 from the Mens Shed as their contribution towards fire assessment and safety equipment costs for the cottage.

The income from the recycling bin reduced by £431 due to a reduction on the value of recycled fabric and the interest received from the bank reduced by £241 as a result of a significant reduction in the interest rate on the CAF Gold account which is the account where the majority of the Charity's funds were held. In November 2025, £45K was transferred from the CAF Gold account into a higher rate easy access savings account with Hampshire Trust Bank.

Operational Costs

Operating costs increased by just under 13% to £53,827 in 2025 compared to £47,750 in 2024. This increase is due to:

- An increase of just over £2K on staff costs (nearly an 18% increase);
- Greater spend on house maintenance projects, with a total spend of £20,259 (an increase of £6,590 compared to 2024 which is an increase of 48%);
- An increase to our insurance of nearly £75 (just under a 3% increase);
- An increase of £222 for our water supply (an increase of 49%) and;
- An increase of £1,513 for electricity bills (an increase of 85%). This significant increase is due to the Charity receiving just under £1,700 of credit from British Gas in 2024 due to overcharging. For full details of this please see the minutes from the January 2026 Trustee meeting.

These increases were offset by total reduction of £4,034 in relation to costs for:

- House cleaning (includes staff costs, pest control, waste removal and general cleaning products and materials): reduction of 4% (a saving of £222);
- 29% reduction of grounds maintenance costs. This is due to £1,129 being spent in 2024 on playground maintenance. This spend was not repeated in 2025 however, there was a greater spend on hedge cutting (£400 compared to £100 in 2024) and ground prep for parking at the Fete (£50) and £400 for the tree inspection survey (which was covered by the Critical Cost Grant from CPC). Overall though, a saving of £351;
- 31% reduction in our gas bills resulting in a saving of £1,161;
- 10% reduction on our phone bill (includes mobile phones, Landline, WIFI and Broadband services) which gave a saving of £166;
- 10% reduction for Licences (Premises licence, raffle and Temporary event notices for fundraising events). A saving of £71;
- A reduction of just under 13% in the cost for our music licence – a saving of £91;
- A 67% reduction in spend on marketing and website management, reducing this cost by £1,173. In 2024, the Charity paid for professional services to resolve issues with the email platform and transfer to Google. As a result of this work, a saving was made in 2025 by only paying one platform fee

instead of three. Savings were also made by signing up to a two-year subscription package for the website to further reduce costs;

- 75% savings on administration costs due to better management of office supplies and no costs incurred to have the Charity's accounts for 2024 independently examined (this cost £300 in 2024). Resulting in an overall saving of £794.

Capital Finances: Gross Income, Costs & Net Income

This is made up of income and costs from fundraising events, grants and donations to the Charity.

Gross income from fundraising totalled £14,427 for the year. Event related costs came to £6,132 with Net Income (profit) of £8,295. This is £5,901 less profit than 2024 due to a reduction in the number of events that were held in 2025.

Income from grants and donations totalled £5,329. This included donations of £578 from supporters of the Charity and a grant of £4,751 from Winchester City Council's Go Greener Faster Grant which contributed towards the cost of installing the UPVC windows on the Cottage.

Capital costs for 2025 came to £6,132. These costs relate to expenses incurred by holding the fundraising events including a £150 loss of deposit for the cancelled live music event that was planned for November.

Overall, the net income for capital in 2025 was £13,624.

Operational Loss and Overall Net Income

As a result of the increase in operational costs for 2025, the Charity saw an operational loss of £9,064 by the end of the year. Despite still showing a loss, the position saw an improvement compared to the loss at the end of 2024 which stood at -£16,173. This is an improvement of 44% (£7,109) from 2024's position.

As a result of the income from fundraising, donations and grants, the overall net income for the Charity in 2025 was £4,560. This is the second year running that the Charity has made a profit since 2019 and is a reflection of the efforts being made to increase income and keep costs to a minimum.

Net Cash Assets

As you would anticipate, there was an increase of £4,560 in the Charity's net cash assets by the end of 2025 with a total of £59,185 cash (after liabilities).

Liabilities

Our liabilities reduced slightly to £1,050. This reflects the security deposits held from hall hires. £750 of this liability relates to deposits paid for wedding receptions taking place in 2026. A further £150 relates to deposits for other hall hires also booked for 2026. £100 relates to deposits for two bookings that took place during December which meant that their security deposit was not returned until after the end of the financial year. This leaves only one £50 deposit that has not yet been refunded due to lack of contact from the hirer to confirm the details of their bank account. Efforts to return this will continue to be made.

Significant efforts to return unclaimed security deposits were made by the Facilities Coordinator and this is reflected in there only being a £50 deposit return outstanding for bookings in 2025.

Actions to improve the Charity's financial position:

Throughout the year, the Trustees took the following actions to try to improve the Charity's financial position:

- The contract for the Grounds Maintenance was still not renewed. Instead, work was carried out when it was needed and grass cutting was kept to a minimum on Skinners Field by only cutting a pathway and leaving the rest of the field to grow as a meadow to increase wildlife and insects. Many thanks to Rob, a local resident, Ian and Darcy King from Pinkmead and Mike Smith, also a local resident, who helped us with hedge and grass cutting at minimal to no cost throughout the year to help us keep our costs down;
- The new contract for Gas & Electric which commenced in October 2024 helped us to keep gas and electricity costs as low as possible. This contract is due for renewal in October 2026;

- Extensive marketing of the facilities continued to attract regular hirers and private bookings. Combined with the promotion of the packages for wedding receptions and more recently, the new celebration packages, I believe that this increase in bookings will continue;
- Careful management of stocks and supplies continued to reduce over-ordering and increase effective use of cleaning products and office supplies;
- Continuing to run smaller, more regular fundraising events aimed at the local community to improve engagement and generate income whilst reducing the financial risk to the Charity and the impact on our volunteers;
- Taking a more considered, planned approach to maintenance to help the Trustees deliver their maintenance goals and ensuring that every bit of spend is being invested in improving the facilities for our users and the benefit of the local community.

Moving forward, further steps continue to be undertaken to help keep costs down, generate income and improve the facilities. These include:

- Monitoring costs and removing / reducing non-essential spending where possible;
- Continuing the promotional campaign to generate bookings for the facilities and raise awareness of the packages on offer;
- Holding Community Maintenance Days to carry out some of the essential tasks required to improve the look of the facilities and make them more attractive to hirers. We only had the resources to hold one community maintenance day in 2025. Plans are underway for more of these this year;
- Continuing to exploring partnerships with local businesses who can offer services to enhance private bookings (catering, wedding planners, inflatables, balloon decorations and more);
- Taking steps to implement a robust, practicable maintenance programme following the completion of surveys commissioned by the Curdridge Parish Council in support of the Charity.

Play Area Regeneration Project

Many thanks to Curdridge Parish Council who worked closely with us in 2025 to help progress plans for a new playground which is due to be delivered this year.

As a result of their efforts, the CPC were awarded grants from the National Lottery Scheme and Winchester City Council. The scope of work went out to tender and a selection process was undertaken to reduce the number of quotes to two choices. Following this, a consultation process was carried out with local school children to help choose the design and, as a result, a play equipment specialist was appointed. At the time of writing this report, the groundwork has been completed and the date of commencement for the installation is the 20th April. Details of how the designated funds (held by the Charity) will be spent will be released as soon as they are known.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the above Trustees Report and attached Accounts.

The 2026 AGM will be held on the 19th May at 7.30pm

Signed: 

Dated: 16/04/26

Vanessa Hancock - Chair of Trustees