



Voluntary Action Orkney

Annual Report
2023/24

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Chair's Report

I'm pleased to introduce the 2023/2024 Annual Report for Voluntary Action Orkney on behalf of our team. This reporting period we have found ourselves 'taking stock and reassessing'. This of course will bring a wave of change, however along with the Board of Directors, we feel this is right time for VAO to make changes to allow us to grow and provide the support needed to our local community groups and charities.

As you read through this year's report you can see the results from our numerous core activities and project areas that directly affect our communities and how they continue to go from strength to strength.

During this year we have administered Round 3 of the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, which allocated £75k to projects in Orkney. We are seeing an increase in demand for funding, and this sadly is reflective of the current funding environment, which is becoming more competitive and scarcer. We continue to administer a Small Grant Scheme funded by Repsol Sinopec and Liam McArthur MSP, and would like to thank both for their continued support for such vital funds at this time to our local communities here in Orkney.

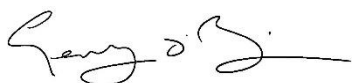
As reported in last year's Annual Report we are continuing to assess the projects which VAO host, with the intention to transition them into charities within this next year.

As recently reported in local news, VAO will be taking forward an exciting opportunity to build a new building for Orkney's Third Sector Hub. This brings the opportunity to design and build a building which is adaptable and flexible for our whole Third Sector here in Orkney to use.

We are grateful to our funders for their continued support in what is financially challenging times for us all. Our core work is primarily funded by the Scottish Government and Orkney Islands Council, while a variety of grant funders contribute to our projects.

The huge range of work VAO delivers during the year is only possible because of the support of our members, partners and funders as well as the commitment and hard work of the staff, volunteers and Board.

Gerry O'Brien



Chair
Voluntary Action Orkney

Chief Executive's Report

In this year's report we have experienced increasing challenges with financial and funding pressures, where service demand is growing across our Third Sector as we continue to navigate through the social challenges presented to us. Use of resources and capacity across our Third Sector here in Orkney is at all-time high. Further challenges including difficulties in recruitment, then add further strain on being able to deliver vital services.

This is one of many reasons why VAO have started to review how we as an organisation work and meet increasing demand while balancing our budget. We are currently in this process and hope to see progress of this during 2024/2025.

Our staff team are our greatest asset and believe me when I say this, they put everything into their roles to support our third sector communities here in Orkney.

I do hope you enjoy reading the work undertaken with young people, from the activities of the ROAR group to the support provided by our projects Connect and Young People Befriending.

And of course, the amazing support to people and communities delivered through our Community Link Practitioners and Isles Wellbeing Project, supporting Community Wellbeing Co-ordinators on the ferry-linked Isles. Community led support through these activities is strong and important, and we must recognise this.

We were delighted to support a third year of Community Mental Health Funding and new funding distributions from the Island Cost Crisis Fund from OIC as well. These are crucial in an environment that is increasingly harder for organisations to secure funding.

Demand for support within our membership is growing, which requires us now to review our membership to ensure it is fit for purpose for our third sector.

As we navigate our way through the challenges, we must remember we are here together and by working collaboratively we can make a positive impact and difference to the third sector here in Orkney.

Morven Brooks



Chief Executive
Voluntary Action Orkney

About Voluntary Action Orkney

Our Vision

Orkney has sustainable, resilient, inclusive communities with a thriving third sector at their heart.

Our Values

Our values and people are at the heart of everything we do including how we recruit our staff. It is important for us to find people who share our values, which are:

- Integrity and Honesty: We are fair, honest and responsible. We work to always achieve inclusion and equalities in all that we do.
- Collaborative: We are committed to collaborative working in an ethical way. We nurture and develop our staff, volunteers, partners to achieve excellence in all we do.
- Kindness and Respect: We treat people with kindness and respect, recognising everyone across our communities in Orkney.

We are committed to equalities, inclusion, fairness and human rights. We are also committed to collaborative working in an ethical, open, honest, flexible and responsive manner. We nurture and develop our staff/volunteers, to achieve excellence in all we do. We also subscribe to the TSI Scotland Network values of leadership, collaboration, integrity, diversity, equality and excellence and to community development principles.

Our Strategic Priorities

Orkney has a strong and resilient third sector delivering a wide range of services and activities to our communities of geography and interest.

Over the next year our Strategic Priorities revolve around working constructively with Scottish Government, local partners and third sector in responding to poverty and inequalities.

Our goal is to embed effective collaborative working to create preventative, joined-up pathway of support. We will develop a sustainable infrastructure for shared decision making, strengthened partnerships and networks thereby building community resilience and ensuring the sustainability of our approaches.

Our Third Sector Interface Core Functions

As a Third Sector Interface our core functions are:

- Building Capacity: Developing the capacity of volunteers, community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprise to achieve positive change and support future generations of our communities.
- Source of Knowledge: To be a central source of knowledge about: Third Sector locally, local and national policy and how it might affect local TS, communities and citizens, and how the Third Sector can contribute to those agendas.

- Connecting partners: Providing leadership, vision and coordination to the local third sector, to better respond to local priorities, including through partnership and collaboration.
- Voice of the Local Third Sector: Ensuring a strong local third sector voice at a strategic level within local planning structures and nationally.

Development Activities

Our development team enjoyed an active year, working to support over 129 separate organisations across Orkney with 309 individual queries.

Whilst the majority of work was undertaken through email (>109) or through online meetings (>65), we saw a noticeable increase in face-to-face meetings (50), development support telephone enquiries also grew to 22. For the most part the purpose of those interactions were to get information or advice (167). Our office services were also requested 56 times in this reporting period.

The queries focussed around a range of different support areas:

- 55 different organisations sought help with funding, including assistance with the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing fund
- 45 groups required support with their governance, and a further 46 specifically around their legal status
- 163 remaining interactions comprised capacity building support requests through our partnership contributions, and around business planning, and finance

A total of 9 group training sessions were held. These focussed on around areas such as Fair Work Funding, governance, setting up a charity and roles and responsibilities.

We supported 2 new groups to start up, including Soma's Light (Family support with suicide), Pride in Orkney (LBQTI support), and helped develop the Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) partnership.

The community groups supported through our community development team staff included those involved with:

- Advice law and advocacy (16 sessions across 4 organisations)
- Arts, culture and heritage (19 sessions across 10 organisations)
- Education and research (1 session/organisation)
- Older people (6 sessions across 4 organisations)
- Environment and animals (12 sessions across 9 organisations)
- Health, Disability and Social Care (34 sessions across 10 organisations)
- Housing (1 session/organisation)
- Local community groups such as Development Trusts, community associations and agricultural societies (84 sessions across 45 organisations)
- Religious groups (8 sessions across 6 organisations)

- Sport and exercise (35 sessions across 13 organisations)
- Youth and children (27 sessions across 11 organisations)

Support across Orkney was reflected in support sessions given to groups that operate for the benefit of all Orkney (155 sessions across 58 organisations) or national groups with an Orkney focus (35 sessions across 21 organisations). Support was also given to organisations specifically operating within Orkney with a more discrete geographical remit as follows:

- East Mainland (25 sessions across 9 organisations)
- North Isles (25 sessions across 13 organisations)
- South Isles (9 sessions across 7 organisations)
- Stromness (9 sessions across 5 organisations)
- Kirkwall (8 sessions across 7 organisations)
- West Mainland (14 sessions across 9 organisations)

Communities Mental Health Fund

As part of the Scottish Government's Recovery and Renewal Fund, the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care announced a new 2 year Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for adults in 2021. Round's 1 and 2 supported 29 projects in Orkney, and Round 3 which ran throughout 2023/24 built on this support for positive mental health and wellbeing in communities across Orkney. Following on from the initial priority to support communities and individual adults whose wellbeing and mental health had been compromised by the Covid pandemic, Round 3 of the Fund focussed more on the mental health impacts of the cost of living crisis. Orkney had £75,000 to disburse which was the same amount as in Round 2.

A total of 28 applications were received, with a total ask of £182,874. With a pot of £75,000 this meant that the request for funding was significantly more than double the amount available. As a result 18 projects received funding, with awards of between £475 and £6,900. Despite most of the awards being for less than the projects were originally seeking, all of those awarded funding were able to amend their project plans to ensure the core benefits of their projects would still be achievable with a lower level of funding.

The projects funded cover the majority of the isles as well as Mainland Orkney, or are Orkney-wide projects, and range from supporting the LGBTQ+ community to providing a beach wheelchair to make trips to the beach accessible at Inganess. Art and craft projects have benefited alongside those who enjoy sea angling or dancing as a social pastime, or those wanting to start up Men's Shed activities.

The projects can run up until February 2024 so the benefit and impact of the projects has not yet been established or evaluated, but it is expected that, as with the previous rounds, demonstrable benefits will be felt by individuals and communities because of this investment.

A 4th round has been announced for 2024/25 which will be seeking applications in the autumn of 2024

Small Grants Scheme

Funds from the scheme, which is supported by Repsol Resources UK Ltd and Liam McArthur MSP, were awarded to:

- Burray Ball Group
- Burray Community Association
- Community Garden Association
Burray and South Ronaldsay /
Marengo Community Garden
- Cromarty Hall Trust
- Friends of St Ninians
- Grieveship Residents Association
- Hope School Parent Council
- Hoy Youth Hub
- Inclusive Orkney
- North Ronaldsay Community
Association
- North Walls Centre
- Orkney Arts Society
- Orkney Fencing Club
- Orkney Historic Boat Society
- Orkney Marine Mammal
Research Initiative
- Orkney Rowing Club SCIO
- Orkney Traditional Music Project
- Rendall Community Association
- Transition North Ronaldsay
- The Yard Plant Nursery

Newsletters

To keep communities up to date, we issued 12 monthly newsletters containing local third sector news, links to information on national policy and consultations to over 975 people/organisations. They also included profiles of local organisations and volunteers and highlighted upcoming events.

A total of 12 monthly Training and Funding Updates were circulated to over 547 organisations/individuals to keep the sector comprehensively informed about opportunities for learning and funding.

Partnerships and Engagement

Strategic Progress

Morven Brooks, Chief Executive and senior staff attend many strategic groups, to take forward the strategic priorities of VAO.

This year has seen the opportunity to re-assess our strategic priorities and ensure we are strategically supporting and growing our third sector in Orkney, as well as building a sustainable future for VAO. A feasibility study was conducted to explore sustainable options for the projects delivered by VAO. The recommendations will be taken forward in the next financial period.

Remembering Together - Delivery Phase (phase 2)

In the autumn of 2023, VAO invited artists with experience of creating public art works through the process of co-creation with communities to apply to lead on the delivery of Remembering Together Orkney, as part of the Scottish Government's national community covid memorial project.

Phase 1 of the project had established, through community consultation and co-creation workshops, 5 places in Orkney where communities were keen to be involved in the creation of artworks that would provide space for contemplation, potentially for gatherings, events and happenings. Beautiful spaces where people could just be and think for a while. Whilst Covid had been the catalyst for this project, communities in Orkney were clear that they now wanted the emphasis on Covid and the experience of Covid to be less of a priority for the project going forwards, and for artists to work with them to provide contemplative spaces instead without any specific focus.

Managed at a national level by greenspace scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government, at an Orkney level the project is managed by VAO, closely supported by partners including Orkney Islands Council's Arts Development Service. Phase 1 artists Ainsley Phillips Projects have continued their relationship with the project, acting as mentors and support to the lead artists, having undertaken the consultation project and built relationships with communities across Orkney. The lead artists are:

- Ros Bryant from Westray is working with the community in Flotta to create a contemplative space using letter cut stone at the playpark
- Sanday resident Jake Ghaleb is working to create a photographic book and exhibition about the community response to and impact of Covid in the island
- Louise Barrington and Megumi Barrington-Uenoyama are working in Shapinsay and at Arcadia Park in Kirkwall to create platforms within landscaped spaces that can be used for poetry readings, other events or just to sit
- North Ronaldsay Development Trust is working with the National Dry Stone Walling Association to create a seating area alongside, and responding to, the sheep dyke on the island

Delivery of the project is ongoing and will be completed in the autumn of 2024.

Youth Workers Forum

The aim of the Youth Workers Forum is to aid and encourage a partnership approach between members from local agencies working with young people. VAO chair and administer the meetings, but anyone and everyone is welcome to bring items to the agenda and lead for their section. The forum itself doesn't have a plan or targets as it is shaped entirely by members' own work plans. If there is a joint piece of work to undertake, a subgroup is created to take it forward in a more structured way, or partnerships are formed independent to the forum.

Everyone around the table has a chance to contribute. In this semi-formal space, they provide up to date information, share ideas as well as training and funding opportunities and offer support for new initiatives. Below is a snapshot of business discussed in 2023/24:

- Sub Committee organised and delivered the Orkney Youth Awards 2024. The event was a partnership between VAO, OIC CLD and Orkney Youth Café, with on-the-night assistance from NHS, Active Schools, Pier Arts Centre as well as a whole host of young volunteers who perform MC duties and provide entertainment.
- Discussed potential measures to help curb antisocial behaviour at the Travel Centre in Kirkwall
- Members contributed leaflets which were sent to Westray for display in an information stand for their young people
- Provided a platform for partners to feedback suggestions for formation of Community Led Local Development (CLLD) youth local action group
- Provided a platform for Togetherall, a mental health charity to showcase their involvement in Orkney.

Through the forum we aim to bring together local agencies to work collectively and more effectively on joint issues. As a result, partnership working is improved between local and national Youth Services.

Local Employability Partnership (LEP)

Our Volunteer Development Worker is a member of Orkney's Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and works with partner organisations to support individuals in finding suitable volunteering placements that can help to develop their confidence and employability skills.

In 2023/24, we liaised with the services below to provide information about available volunteering opportunities and reach out to voluntary organisations to provide connections:

- Employability Keyworkers within the OIC Community, Learning, Development and Employability Service
- Employability Coordinators within the OIC Learning Disabilities Employment Support Team
- Work Coaches from Kirkwall Job Centre Plus
- Careers Advisers from Skills Development Scotland
- Employability Engagement Officer from Employability Orkney

This partnership approach helps VAO to contribute to the No One Left Behind strategy, which is the Scottish approach to employability that focuses on the needs of the individual first and foremost and recognises volunteering as having an important role to play in achieving that ambition.

Youth Development

Orkney Youth Awards

Every year, VAO team up with Orkney Islands Council's CLD youth workers to put on the Orkney Youth Awards. Planning begins in October and intensifies until the event itself at the end of March.

Building on the success of the 2023 event, the packed night held at The Pickaquoy Centre, saw 102 awards made to the county's youngsters. Exactly half of these, 51 were Saltire Awards, including 3 prestigious Saltire Summits.

Tom Kennaugh was delighted to receive his 500 hour Saltire Award for volunteering. He was also a Summit Award winner in 2023 but was unable to attend on that occasion. He said: "Receiving my 500 hour Saltire Award is a fantastic honour as I am one of few to have received one. It is also good to know that I am making a difference in my local community, especially with other like-minded, friendly people who I enjoy volunteering with."

Ronnie Taylor has volunteered in many roles during his school years and received a Saltire Summit Award at the ceremony. He said: "Volunteering has allowed me to get more involved in the community. I've met some fantastic people that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to get to know otherwise, along with doing really rewarding work that has a wider benefit"

By celebrating and publicising the achievements of our young people, the wider community is better educated and more aware of the positive contribution they make. The young people feel celebrated, that their efforts are valued and that they have contributed positively in their community.

Our young people host the ceremony and carry out other key roles on the night. This helps to boost their confidence in public speaking and encourage them to voice concerns and opinions.

Megan Clouston was an MC for the evening. She said: "I love hosting at the Orkney Youth Awards. It showcases the amazing volunteering that young people do in Orkney, it has given me confidence when speaking to an audience as I have dyslexia so sometimes struggle with words but hosting the Youth Awards has given me the confidence and courage I've needed to speak confidently to audiences."

Individual Placements

Individual volunteer placements help young people gain experience for a career, improving their employment chances. They can also help them to use their spare time well, building their confidence and improving their wellbeing.

We help young people find and settle into individual volunteer placements with partner organisations throughout Orkney. After discussing their aspirations, hobbies and career choices with them and completing our registration and reference processes, we contact

potential placements on the young person's behalf to set up an introductory visit. If all is well for both parties a trial period is set and a starting date agreed.

We spoke to over 120 young people in 2023-24. Of these, many went on to take part in group projects, while some took on individual placements with organisations including Gilbertson Day Centre, the school janitors, Papdale Nursery and the Red Cross shop.

We provide an obvious starting point visible and a link between organisations offering placements and young people interested in getting involved.

Individual Placement - Hannah's Story

Hannah Cockram from Eday already volunteered with Clan but wanted to get involved in something connected to art, fashion and design, with a view to studying this at university after school. We found her a placement at Pier Arts Centre. Hannah said: "I wanted exposure to this type of work and atmosphere as much as possible. It's really good to see how artists create so many different types of work, and how they use different media. I'm picking up so much as I go along and it's great for my CV when I'm looking to get into uni.

Carol Dunbar from Pier Arts Centre is in no doubt of the value of volunteers. She said: "When we're hanging a big exhibition such as this (the Christmas Open exhibition) and we're trying to match such a variety of work and of media, it's great to have as many fresh eyes as possible to help with that. There are often job opportunities such as seasonal assistants that volunteers have gone on to do in the past, and being here is also helpful if they're putting together a portfolio for further study."

Get Ready to Volunteer

Get Ready to Volunteer is a course which aims to help young people who need extra support begin their volunteering journey. In October to December 2023, the course was delivered to a class of 15 young people in the Curriculum Support department at Kirkwall Grammar School. The VAO staff-lead sessions ran weekly for one period, with additional work done by the class throughout the rest of the week lead by the class teacher.

Initially the focus was on introducing the concept and benefits of volunteering, along with getting to know the young people and their interests and skills. We then moved on to planning a group volunteering project which was led by the young people, with support from VAO and their class teacher.

The class chose to support Women's Aid Orkney by creating Christmas 'pamper packs' for women without family or loved ones. Morgan Maxton from Women's Aid Orkney came and spoke to the class, explaining the work they did, and the young people asked some very insightful questions. They then ran a donation drive, producing advertising, approaching local businesses and press to seek their support, and arranging collection of donations themselves. The aim of the group had been to produce 15 pamper packs, and in the end, they collected enough items to create nearly 40.

Class teacher, Amy Johnston, was very involved throughout the whole project. She said: "The pupils all engaged positively with the theory side of things and worked well with VAO in recognising their own skills and abilities."

The pamper packs were gratefully received by Morgan Maxton at Women's Aid Orkney. She said: "We were delighted when the pupils chose to support us and came up with the wonderful idea of making pamper packs for the women we support as Christmas presents. They were very engaged in what we do as a charity and how they could help, they did all the work themselves and the end product was sensational... The pupils did an amazing job and as a charity we were grateful for their help and enthusiasm."

As a result of Get Ready to Volunteer, at least two of the young people have gone onto do other volunteering placements.

As well as the practical aspect, the pupils learned more about work going on in the community and how to access support, and indeed how to continue supporting the charity's work themselves. Pupil Jessica Bruce said: "It was good to learn more about Women's Aid and the work they do as I didn't really know what they did before. Now I know what kind of things they need and how to support them in the future."

Teacher Amy Johnston added how the course had helped develop the pupils' confidence and skills. She said: "We were able to come up with our challenge, and all pupils were able to develop skills such as communication and teamwork."

The women who received the packs were grateful for the personal touches added to the packs. Morgan Maxton from Women's Aid Orkney said: "The women who received a pamper pack were delighted and the extra touches they made by including handmade cards with positive notes made everyone smile."

Gilbertson Day Centre

On Friday afternoons for the past year, a group of young volunteers aged 14-18 have met to organise and run activities for the old people at the Gilbertson Day Centre. Some weeks they chat and play games, and other weeks lead crafts and quizzes.

Many of the service-users at the Gilbertson Day Centre live alone and in a degree of isolation. Whilst attending the day centre itself helps reduce the feelings of loneliness this isolation can bring, visits from young people give the service-users an opportunity to interact with a generation that they don't necessarily get to engage with very often.

When asked about the young peoples' visits, service-users said: "They are like a breath of fresh air... They are keen to be involved and come with good suggestions... The young ones are learning from us and we are learning from them."

The young people also felt the benefit of spending time with the service-users. Daisy Cooper, one of these volunteers, said: "I started volunteering here because it was a really good opportunity to get to know people of a different generation and chat with them."

The care staff value the input from the young volunteers, Day Centre Manager Kirsty Wallace said: “There have been so many new friendships made which is hugely beneficial. A lot of our service users do not have the opportunity to mix with the younger generation through being socially isolated and unable to access any social events outside their own homes.”

Of the regular volunteers, 3 were looking to pursue a career in medicine, with this volunteering placement forming a key part of their experience, strengthening their applications and preparing them for their careers. Daisy said: “It’s definitely helped me to understand older people and the problems they might face, and how those problems mean you might interact differently with them.”

Kirkwall Grammar School Wider Achievement

As part of the S5 offer at Kirkwall Grammar School (KGS), pupils have to choose a wider achievement option, and one of these options is volunteering. VAO partner with the school to help sort placements for those who take part.

In 2023/24, a total of 23 pupils made this choice, with 21 finding active placements. Many of these were in the school itself, helping janitors and librarians, as well as in several teaching departments where the volunteers helped younger year groups through tutoring. From the summer to Christmas, 3 pupils left the school for the period to go to Gilbertson Day Centre for a cup of tea and a chat to the service users. After Christmas, another group of 4 young volunteers made the short trip to Papdale where they helped out for a short time in the nursery and with primary 1 pupils.

By taking part in this programme, many young people were able to test potential interest in a career. All of those who attended the Papdale settings for example had an interest in early years education.

Hamnavoe House

Throughout the year, a group of volunteers aged 15-18 have met after school on a Tuesday to organise and run activities for the old people in Stromness. This intergenerational group is highly valued by volunteers and the Hamnavoe attendees alike, helping to reduce isolation and give a sense of remaining part of the community. Based at Hamnavoe House Care Home, the group have enjoyed various activities and fun, including cards, dominoes and boccia.

Volunteer Sarah Corrigall said: “Volunteering at Hamnavoe was a great experience and it helped to improve my communication and problem solving skills immensely. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing stories from the residents and seeing their faces light up as they reminisced. I would highly recommend it to anyone who would like to put their spare time to good use within the community.”

Duty manager Shanea Linklater said: “The attendance of these pupils are invaluable, the delight and enjoyment these provides for our residents is exceptional. They would make fantastic carers with their approach.”

Two of the young people have gone on to employment in care at Hamnavoe House and a third works at Smiddybrae. Many of the other volunteers used the experience gained as an essential part of their personal statement in order to apply to study medicine.

Our partnership with Hamnavoe House raises awareness of the need for care and statutory provision with the young people.

ROAR

The ROAR project supports young people in planning, organising and running charity events in the community. It also provides a creative outlet for young people, with many making their first public performances at the events. This year the group organised:

- a big music night with a charity auction in August
- a TV themed quiz in October
- a 'Christmas Roadshow' for Kirkwall's care homes and day centres

The group raised £870 for the RNLI, £1137 for the Blide Trust and £275 for the Orkney MS Society.

Eilidh Garrett was one of this year's volunteers. She said: "ROAR helped me get a feel for volunteering and my favourite part was probably the planning and teamwork parts because it was fun to do things as a group".

Eilidh Walker also took part. She said: "ROAR has boosted my confidence and shown me how entertainment can pull together people of all ages/backgrounds."

Young people who have volunteered with ROAR's found their employment chances improved, and have gone on to become bookers for venues, as well as committee and board members for local festivals. Through recognition for their fundraising efforts, they contribute positively to their community.

Summer Tours

During the months of July and August, whilst the schools were on holiday, 9 young volunteers aged 14-19 used their musical talents to entertain old people in residential homes and day centres across Orkney.

Singers and instrumentalists visited St Rognvald's House, Hamnavoe House, Smiddybrae, Gilbertson Day Centre and West Mainland Day Centre to play or sing to the residents and service-users for around half an hour, then join them for a cup of tea and a chat. These facilities welcomed volunteers mostly once a week throughout the summer, with the volunteers visiting at least once on a rota-style basis.

For the young people, this was an opportunity to practise performing to an audience in a low-risk and low-pressure environment. They were able to engage with old people with whom they might not usually come in contact.

Olivia Scott and Freya Montgomery went along together and sang at all the facilities over the course of the summer and said: "It was really good experience for us, and we had a lady who sang and danced along at one of the care homes."

It was suggested to the volunteers that they could sing some older songs that the residents and service-users would recognise, and in many of the facilities, the audience joined in and sang along.

The managers and staff at the various facilities also expressed their enthusiasm for the project and its benefits. Pam Dearness, activities Co-ordinator at St Rognvald's House, said: "The musicians were all very good and we would love to have them back again."

The inter-generational aspect of this project allowed both groups, old and young, to spend time together which they might not otherwise do. Kirsty Wallace, manager at both Day Centres said: "The musicians were all brilliant and all the folk thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment. It is so good for our older generation to be mixing with younger people."

For many of the residents and service-users, the opportunity to listen and join in with singing was clearly something they enjoyed and benefitted from.

As a result of their visiting St Rognvald's House, Olivia and Freya were asked to go back in the October break to entertain the residents again, and all the musicians were offered an open invitation to return.

Youth and Philanthropy Initiative

We are regional facilitators for The Wood Foundation's Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) in Orkney. This annual project sees all pupils in S3 at Kirkwall and Stromness schools produce presentations on local charities whose work addresses social issues here in Orkney. The presentation deemed best in each school is awarded £3000 which is then handed over to their chosen charity after a school showcase event.

We work with school staff in planning and improving these programmes year on year, and we're also responsible for facilitating the judging of the finalist presentations. One of the biggest parts of the job is organising charity fairs for both schools. This is an opportunity for participants to make first contact with their chosen charity, and also to broaden their knowledge of the level and diversity of support charities contribute across the county. For the charities, there is of course the chance to be given £3000, but the primary reason organisations take part every year is the golden opportunity to raise awareness of their work.

YPI remains a fantastic programme and dovetails perfectly with the aims and objectives of Youth Development at VAO. It is a chance to introduce VAO's work to the whole S3 year group in Orkney's two largest schools, just as they start to think about how they can be involved more proactively in their community.

For the young participants, the programme raises awareness of social issues and local charities, instilling an interest in getting involved on a more regular basis, and builds confidence to go out and meet with volunteer involving organisations. Through enabling devolved, locally driven grant making, it also shows participants that they can make a difference.

Melissa Lindsay of SimBA has had close involvement this year, with the team she supported emerging successful in the KGS final. Describing the change she said: “The money will make an incredible difference to the families in Orkney. We plan to enhance our Bereavement room allowing couples to have a more homely, comfortable environment when going through a loss. We will also continue to supply memory boxes to the hospital and finally we will be able to continue maintaining the garden containing The Tree of Tranquillity where parents can go to reflect and remember.

“YPI has been a fantastic venture to be involved with. The process has brought local charities together and raised awareness amongst us as charities as well as the pupils, teachers and everyone else involved.”

The RNLI were one of the organisations participating in YPI and the charity fair. For Kate Irving Lewis one of their volunteers, it was the first time she had been involved in the initiative. She said: “This is such a great opportunity for young people to engage in. Their knowing will help support others by not just recognising those charities that support our local community, but also where they can volunteer and get involved. The young folk showed such enthusiasm and willing support. They clearly enjoyed the day and worked hard to deliver their presentation of their chosen charity”

Throughout the programme, YPI connects young people with social issues and the charities who work tirelessly locally to improve conditions for so many. The charities fair raises general awareness between these community organisations and a whole year group across mainland Orkney. Those chosen to be the subject of the presentations then have the chance to give a more in-depth representation of their work to young people.

As well as connecting young people and charities, bonds are forged with schools, with many invited back to attend the final showcases as well.

Youth Local Action Group

The Youth Local Action Group (YLAG) empowers young people to be the decision makers in putting money towards a particular problem, issue or youth projects. A pilot scheme successfully ran in 2021/22, but due to a number of factors, the Orkney YLAG did not run again until 2023/24.

The YLAG reconvened in November 2023 with 8 young people aged 16 - 30, facilitated by VAO. The YLAG aims to be a good representation of Orcadian young people with a good geographical and societal spread. These 8 young people were from South Ronaldsay, North Ronaldsay, Westray, Shapinsay, Kirkwall and Rousay, and a range of backgrounds.

A funding tranche was opened in January 2024, with £7671.74 capital and £2328.26 revenue funding available. After the applications were all received, each member of the YLAG scored all the applications individually, then came together to decide which applications to put forward to Local Action Group at CLLD for approval to be funded.

There were 9 applications from organisations representing young people across Orkney. Of these, 8 were successful and most of the funding was awarded. These were:

- Eday Community Enterprises Ltd / Eday Youth Café
- Inclusive Orkney
- North Isles Dance Academy
- Orkney Athletic and Running Club
- Orkney Charitable Trust
- Orkney Sea Cadets
- Orkney Youth Café
- Sanday Parent Council

As a project for young people and run by young people, the YLAG is a rare opportunity for young people to share their concerns, hopes and wishes and have them heard.

YLAG member Tom Kennaugh said: “As a young person, it’s good to be involved with helping a cause receive funding.”

The members of the YLAG also gained experience, confidence. In reading and scoring applications, they learned about how funding in the third sector works.

Volunteering Activities

VAO supports volunteering by raising awareness, supporting organisations in their volunteer recruitment process and by providing advice on volunteering good practice. We also help individuals on a 1-1 basis with identifying suitable volunteering opportunities that match their needs and interests ensuring successful volunteer placements.

This year 72 individuals enquired about volunteering, leading to 62 new registrations compared to 45 the previous year. Of these, 33 volunteers were matched with a volunteer opportunity and successfully placed, a slight increase on the 29 volunteers in 2022/23.

VAO helped with volunteer recruitment for 30 organisations, promoting 40 new volunteering opportunities on our website. These ranged from committee positions, conservation and gardening, to volunteers needed to support events and festivals, and fundraising activities.

Over the period there were 4,409 views of the volunteering opportunities page on our website.

Including those we helped with volunteer recruitment, we engaged with 92 different organisations, up from 55 that was reported upon the previous year. This increase was due in part to more organisations seeking guidance with volunteer. The Volunteer Development Worker personnel also changed during the period and therefore a number of engagements were due to introductions being made to partner organisations.

We supported Volunteers’ Week 2023, which ran from the 1 to 7 June. This provided an opportunity to raise awareness about volunteering as well as the opportunity to

celebrate and express thanks to volunteers. The activities for the 2023 campaign included a number of case studies being featured on the VAO website and Facebook channel throughout the week, a Volunteers' Week window display, and an article about Volunteers' Week in The Orcadian newspaper. Taking part demonstrates our commitment to Scotland's 'Volunteering for All' Framework where one of the outcomes is around creating an 'environment and culture which celebrates volunteers and volunteering and all of its benefits'.

As described above we have seen a rise in the number of individuals enquiring about volunteering and being successfully placed, as well as the number of organisations that VAO are engaging with, which contributes to developing the capacity of volunteering and achieving positive change across Orkney.

The Blide Trust's Story:

The Blide Trust contacted VAO to ask for support in recruiting new Board Members. The volunteer opportunity was extremely popular and within a matter of days there had been enough expressions of interest in the role that we were asked by the Blide Trust to remove the opportunity listing from the website following its success. Clare Allison, Service Director at the Blide Trust, said: "VAO was very helpful in supporting us to recruit some new Board Members. We had a great response to our advert and as a result were able to appoint 3 new people with the sorts of skills and background that we were looking for. Our new recruits are keen to access some training on the roles and responsibilities of being on the board of a charity which VAO are helping us with too."

Young People Befriending Project

The Young People's Befriending Project exists to support, empower and champion disadvantaged young people in our community by providing them with 1-1 tailored support through a trained volunteer. Our Befrienders support their young people by being a trusted and steadfast friend, a listening ear, and an encouraging voice. Our Befrienders work to expand the horizons of our young people's lives, enabling them to take part in community activities that they may otherwise be unable to, encouraging them to take steps towards independence, to develop new skills, and to see and grasp the opportunities before them. Through Befriending we aim to increase our young people's confidence, self-worth, and wellbeing, enabling them to feel included and accepted in their community, and to increase their access to opportunities.

One Befriender said: "I really can't highlight enough how positive this project is and what I've gained from it."

Another Befriender said: "I really enjoy trying new activities with my young person and watching them grow in confidence over time."

This year the Young People's Befriending Project worked with 23 young people. A total of 11 through tailor-made 1-1 matches with their Befrienders, and a further 12 through our group work.

Through feedback from our matched young people, their parents, and volunteers we found that:

All of our young people reported an increase in their happiness and 75% said their skills and confidence increased. All of the parents/carers felt that Befriending was a worthwhile use of their child's time, that the Befriender had a positive influence on their child, and that their child's health and wellbeing had increased through Befriending. A total of 75% also reported an increase in their child's personal development and skills. And all our volunteers said that Befriending had enriched their lives, increased their personal development, their skills and improved their health and wellbeing.

Steph and Alaina's* story:

Alaina* was referred to the Project at the beginning of the year. She was a young lady who had recently transitioned to secondary school and was finding that she was becoming more and more isolated from her peers – she had Down's Syndrome and found it difficult to participate in the activities and clubs that her peers enjoyed.

She was matched to Steph, a young volunteer in her 30's who's energetic and enthusiastic personality was a wonderful fit for Alaina*. They hit it off immediately, and after a wobbly first session working each other out, they have gone on to enjoy a wide range of activities in the community together - swimming, falconry, baking, crafts, games, and story writing. They have grown a trusting and caring friendship in a relatively short amount of time. At her most recent review, Alaina* said: "I really like Steph, she's the best."

Alaina's* family also said: "Steph has been super at doing activities that Alaina* really loves. Steph has been really good at communicating with us and Alaina* enjoys her company. Steph has been a really good match for Alaina*."

During their relatively short match (6 months), Alaina* and Steph have formed a really lovely bond. Alaina* has been able to be involved in her community in a way that she wasn't able to previously, and she has grown in confidence and self-esteem as a result.

* The name has been changed to protect the privacy of the child or young person.

Each of our matches is unique and so each young person has their own story about how befriending has helped them to grow and mature and to feel more involved and included in our community here in Orkney.

Connect Project

The Connect Project worked with 26 individual young people over the past year. Some were with us for a shorter while, perhaps taking part in our summer programme after finishing school and others have been with us for longer with a bespoke learning programme to build their confidence and skills.

We understand the transition from school and becoming a young adult can be a challenging time and many of our young people are facing additional barriers which means they need to approach their next steps at a pace that is right for them. Connect

offers a safe and welcoming space for them to feel more positive and ready to make good decisions for themselves.

We have in person and online groups to suit different communication preferences and our young people take part in a range of activities around Orkney.

Through 1-1 sessions, group work, taking part in a range of activities and opportunities our young people feel valued and accepted at Connect and then able to make decisions and take action toward their own next steps.

Some young people have felt very isolated and disengaged but have been able to commit to volunteering, work or formal further education. They have moved on from Connect and sustained work and study. All of our young people said they felt more confident after time at Connect. A total of 90% said that their time at Connect had helped them work out what they wanted to do and they felt empowered to make decisions for themselves.

Connect young people said:

“I would give Connect a thousand out of ten”

“Connect is different because you care... well I think you do”

“I put my confidence at 1/10 a year ago but now I feel so different that I can’t even remember feeling that way”

“Everyone here understands that we are all going through stuff and dealing with it the best way we can, even if that is a bit different from other people”

We have seen our young people take part in larger and larger patterns of activity that boosts their wellbeing and sense of agency. For some the ability to visit new places, travel independently or communicate with others were the changes that they wanted to see. For others, it was volunteering which helped them build their own skills as well as supporting other needs in the community. Working in shops, intergenerational groups, litter pick ups, beach cleans and community gardening has helped our young people make a difference to their community.

Connect young people said:

"Volunteering has helped me gain confidence in a working environment, improve my communication, and I'm happy to be of help."

Families and carers have seen a positive change in how their young person feels about themselves and the value of them belonging to a group and being supported to try new things.

Families and carers said:

“They always smile more on the days they are at Connect”.

“It’s been a while since I saw them happy to get up and out the house by themselves to take part in something”

Island Wellbeing Project

The Island Wellbeing Project is a partnership between VAO, Island Development Trusts, Orkney Health and Care (OHAC) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and coordinates health and wellbeing support across the ferry linked isles of Hoy, Westray, Sanday, Stronsay, Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre.

The Wellbeing Coordinators on these islands are employed by their local Development Trust. Their role is to support the development of community-led initiatives and they provide generalised 1-1 support. This dual role enables coordinators to respond to the immediate needs of the community, whilst developing long-term capacity.

This means that whilst all coordinators share a broad role profile and definition of wellbeing, distinct approaches and priorities have emerged on each island, which we identify and celebrate.

The project is currently funded by Esmée Fairbairn, The Tudor Trust, The Integration Joint Board and the island Development Trusts.

Outcome 1: There is an increase in the number of preventative community-led wellbeing initiatives, that residents in Orkney’s ferry-linked isles access.

During the past 12 months the coordinators have been instrumental in either the set-up or support to continue 36 groups/wellbeing initiatives, ranging from groups who talk, walk, exercise, craft and much more. A total of 4551 separate attendances to these groups have so far been recorded.

- Podiatry:

Podiatry has been rolled back in recent years by the statutory services but is a big contributing factor to decline in health and wellbeing of isles residents.

In Rousay the coordinator identified the need to source a provider. With a minimum number of clients (7) needed to make the trip viable for the provider, the Development Trust paid for any places not taken up and the transportation costs. The first session only had 2 empty places. Following that, on every visit all places have been taken.

- Events:

Stronsay organised a series of taster events during World Health Week, ranging from information health awareness sessions and talks, walks, music, swimming, craft, creative writing, gardening and singing. This was instrumental to help instigate the start of new groups.

- Exercise Groups:

- On 2 of the islands a chair-based movement group (Active Movers) is held in partnership with 'Orkney Dance and Fitness', utilising large screen TV's (that the coordinators have sourced), a live link (or pre-recorded) link to the group leader and the local community room.
- Men's Shed:
Shapinsay Men's Shed Group is a great example of a new preventative community-led wellbeing initiative. The coordinator gathered some of the interested men and they visited a 'Men's Shed' on the Mainland where they were most enthused. Momentum quickly gathered and soon there was a group of approximately 20 men who were meeting weekly. The coordinator has been integral to this development, guiding, facilitating and supporting the men on this journey.

Outcome 2: Partnerships between community, voluntary, public, private and cultural organisations are strengthened within and across the isles.

The role of Community Wellbeing Coordinator involves offering support to island residents who have care needs. The project developed a paper to provide feedback to partners in the statutory and third sectors who have a remit in care provision, to highlight some of the unique challenges experienced by ferry-linked isles residents with care needs.

The paper was shared widely with third and statutory sector partners including local elected councillors and the NHS. The paper was presented to the Orkney Planning Partnership's Local Equalities Group in May 2024 and subsequently a working group has been set up to look at addressing the issues raised.

Feedback collected from partners on the service from voluntary and statutory sectors show that all felt there is an ongoing need for the Island Wellbeing Project. A total of 54% of respondents said: "I feel more supported knowing I can refer people to the coordinator"

Outcome 3: Local people exert more influence over the decisions that affect their lives and their communities.

The Community Wellbeing Coordinators are ideally placed to enable effective informal consultation of the islanders needs, on an ongoing basis. They have found that the most effective way to gather opinions is at local events, chatting to people, especially where coffee and cake is involved. For example, in Shapinsay feedback from people at the local community café (soup, a roll and cake for a donation) identified that there were a group of men whose mental health could be improved, and isolation was an issue. This has led to a Men's Shed being set up.

The coordinators work closely with a range of both statutory and voluntary services and can identify, when working with isle residents, what services are useful to invite and host

a drop-in where required.

The coordinators have also been involved with promoting events and initiatives on behalf of project partners and participating in 'Getting it Right for Everyone' (GIRFE), an event to help Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership to shape services to support old people and those who are frail. Another consultation involved chatting directly to the Chair of the Board of the NHS with regards to ensuring the voices of the isles were heard in developing the NHS Strategic Plan.

Individual Support:

Over the year 623 support sessions have been delivered with 158 unique users.

The coordinators have improved ferry-linked isles residents health and wellbeing with 29% of support sessions being social, 27% physical health, 24% financial and 20% with mental health.

One beneficiary said: "I would not have gone to anyone for support"

This demonstrates the value of the coordinators being embedded in their communities and trusted by the residents.

Another said: "The well-being support is unique in the help I can access. They live locally, understand the logistics and challenges that I experience in island living. They are professional but less formal or distant than social workers and therapists. I have benefited much from both incumbents in the role, and I would honestly say it is essential to have such a person in the fabric of island communities."

Groups:

Feedback from group participants also demonstrated the positive impact of the project.

- 100% said that attending had 'improved their wellbeing'.
- 39% reported it 'helped with my physical health'
- 26% 'improved social wellness'
- 13% 'improved mental health'.

Participants said:

"I feel so much fitter and my mental health has improved"

"It is good to take part in activities with other people and learn new skills"

"It helped after lockdown with being able to socialise again & now that restrictions have relaxed it is still a great opportunity to meet up with folk"

"Lifted my spirits"

"Has improved my overall physical health and has helped me lose weight"

The project has been looking to the future, with long term sustainability as a priority for continued support to the residents of the ferry linked isles with this vital service.

Island Self-Management Group

The Island Self-Management Group (ISMG) was a cross-island, virtual self-management group for people with long term physical health conditions.

Funding for this project was provided by the Self-Management Fund for Scotland administered on behalf of the Scottish Government by the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE).

Group members came from across the isles with participants attending from Westray, Sanday, Stronsay, Graemsay, Shapinsay, Eday, Orphir, Papa Westray, North Ronaldsay and Hoy.

The group had 17 members. The project started in 2021 and ended in November 2023 at which point a final evaluation was carried out by an external evaluator.

Outcome 1: Reduce health inequalities: increasing the services and resources available to the non-linked isles.

When asked as part of the End Evaluation questionnaire, whether they felt this outcome had been achieved, 70% of the ISMG members and 60% of the wider stakeholders who responded, agreed or strongly agreed this outcome had been achieved.

An ISMG member said: “The majority of local support services and groups (statutory or voluntary/charities) are mainland Orkney based. There is a lack of offer on the islands, so I have really valued the opportunity to access support”

Outcome 2: Enable life-long learning: ensuring individuals are informed so they can pursue effective self-management.

When asked as part of the End Evaluation questionnaire, whether they felt this outcome had been achieved, all of the ISMG members who responded agreed or strongly agreed this outcome had been achieved. A total of 80% of the wider stakeholders engaged with the ISMG who responded, agreed or strongly agreed this outcome had been achieved. ISMG members said:

“The courses were the most appealing”

“Having the experts to run the courses was brilliant! The interaction with us and each other. We could spark off one another.”

Outcome 3: Enable opportunities to learn self-management techniques: providing access to activity tutors at no cost, so people can learn techniques to manage stress and to feel more in control.

When asked as part of the End Evaluation questionnaire, whether they felt this outcome had been achieved, 90% of the ISMG members who responded strongly agreed or agreed and 80% of the wider stakeholders who responded, agreed or strongly agreed.

ISMG members said:

“Useful tools to use, clearly taught and explained and easy to use out with the sessions.”

“Total relaxation and peace- helped with my anxiety.”

“Learned different methods of meditation”

Activities have included:

- smartphone photography
- yoga for chronic pain
- Zentangling
- meditation
- creative writing
- positive psychology
- creative therapies

Outcome 4: Facilitate relationship building: bringing together individuals with a shared experience to develop relationships which enable peer-support and a stronger collective voice.

When asked as part of the End Evaluation questionnaire, whether they felt this outcome had been achieved, 90% of the ISMG members who responded strongly agreed or agreed and all of the wider stakeholders who responded, agreed.

Outcome 5: Build the capacity of individuals as leaders: empower people to lead the direction of the group and build their capacity to influence elsewhere.

When asked as part of the End Evaluation questionnaire, whether they felt this outcome had been achieved, 50% of ISMG members who responded agreed or strongly agreed. 80% of the wider stakeholders who responded neither agreed nor disagreed.

The key findings of our final evaluation can be summarised as follows:

- from the outset there needs to be clarity of goals and a clearly thought idea as to how the group is going to achieve those goals
- identify what the participants want from the group, what would be of interest
- everyone’s input is important however it’s recognised all participants are different and everyone has different aspirations from the ISMG
- if you meet some of the ISMG participants goals, then it is worth it
- it is important to be inclusive, flexible and fun
- trying new ideas is helpful
- important to create an atmosphere in the ISMG where people are willing to give things a go

- address issues of privacy and confidentiality from the start and reiterate this throughout, as and when new members join
- publicise the ISMG more – contact GP surgeries (as GPs are constantly changing)
- put self-management at the core of the ISMG
- set the ISMG up so it is led by and owned by the group - that gives it longevity
- take time to carefully agree ground rules and support a feeling of non-judgement, safety, confidentiality and inclusivity
- be responsive – listen to the participants interest and use these to develop/modify the sessions

Had further funding been successfully acquired, many of the participants would have wanted to group to continue. Unfortunately, this was not possible at the time the funding concluded.

However, the learning and reflections gained by this 2 year project have been of interest to key stakeholders within NHS Orkney and we will continue to explore ways of supporting this work in the future.

Orkney Money Matters

Orkney Money Matters was established in September 2022 and was designed collaboratively between partner organisations. The partnership emerged from a community-led Food Dignity Strategy, which brought together key statutory and third sector organisations, as well as people with lived experience, as equal decision-makers. It also incorporates many of the actions from the Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022/26. These partnerships support coproduction and collaboration and the first phase from July 2023-May 2024 was funded by the Local Authority Covid-19 Economic Recover (LACER) fund and The Trussell Trust's Pathways to Advice and Cash Scotland programme.

Orkney Money Matters is a partnership between:

- Voluntary Action Orkney
- THAW
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- The Blide Trust
- Orkney Islands Council
- The Scottish Welfare Fund
- Social Security Scotland
- NHS Orkney
- Orkney Housing Association Limited
- The Foodbank

The Orkney Money Matters partnership is firmly embedded within the Community Planning Partnership, reporting directly to the partnership's board, which also operates with an Orkney-wide focus.

Orkney Money Matters has recently successfully applied for the Scottish Government's Cash First Fund programme which will bring significant value to the learnings emerging from this work, helping the Scottish Government to understand the challenges, opportunities and impact of cash-first initiatives in a rural, island setting.

Orkney Money Matters aims to reduce levels of financial insecurity in Orkney by increasing access to advice and cash for those experiencing or at risk of crisis. It is doing so through improvement of local 'advice-and-cash-first' referral pathways. The partnership supports outreach and advice activities of third sector organisations through funding and outreach position, administration of a shopping and energy vouchers and a referral pathway.

Pathways to Advice and Cash Scotland Evaluation Report March 2024 said: "The project began a 'test and learn' phase in July 2023 and has been operational since this time. To date, progress has included the creation of a crisis phone line, which is overseen by a dedicated link worker, based within the CAB. As part of their role, the link worker assesses the needs of those who call the telephone line, or who attend the CAB. The link worker then supports applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund and completes referrals to other relevant local services to meet each person's need.

As part of the project, a new referral process has been implemented to streamline and improve referral pathways. The new shared referral pathway launched in November 2023. To date, 25 people have received advice, and been referred to other services via the pathway."

During this first year, methods were trialled to improve sharing of information and integration of services.

The following financial support was delivered to the Orkney Community via THAW, Citizen's Advice Bureau and The Blide Trust:

- Energy Vouchers: £100,000
- Shopping Vouchers: £20,000

The funding also supported increased capacity in those 3 organisations, increasing the access to support and advice for the community and increasing the capacity to reach out to more isolated areas such as the ferry-linked isles.

Orkney Money Matters has now secured a Flexible Cash Fund from the Scottish Government that will allow the support provided to be extended to both short-term and longer-term crisis support by providing those in need with cash rather than only in-kind support in the form of vouchers. There will be a total of £60,000 in cash-first support available to the community through THAW in the coming year.

Successes of the first year:

- increased capacity for the delivery partners to deliver vital services and increased engagement across the partnership agencies
- £100k in energy vouchers and £20k in shopping vouchers made available to the community
- increased awareness of support beyond the Foodbank such as the Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants
- research, a workshop and action plan developed for Orkney agencies on how to improve take up of the Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grant.

The following areas for improvement were identified:

- challenges around referrals due to confidentiality concerns with sharing personal data over multiple agency systems - a digital referral system to be trialled
- monitoring data - agreed it would be better to collate the rich data already collected by partners than try to collect separate data for the project
- approaches to outreach and communications - it was felt that there were still improvements to be made in reaching those identified in previous research such as the Island Wellbeing Survey of the ferry-linked isles
- the overall approach could stand to be simplified

With the successful application for Cash First Fund from the Scottish Government, and implementation of the improvements mentioned above, the Orkney Money Matters partnership will continue to support the Orkney community for the next year.

Community Link Practitioner Service

Community Link Practitioners (CLP) in Orkney work within GP Practices and are part of the practice team. The roles are funded via the Primary Care Improvement Plan and the team are employed by Voluntary Action Orkney, bridging the gap between GP Practices and communities.

Working 1-1 with clients referred from the GP Practices, our role is very varied. It can include linking clients with community groups, services and resources available locally and nationally to support with issues such as debt, housing, social isolation, loneliness and low mood. We meet frequently with local and national agencies and services to keep our knowledge up to date and share information with the GP practices. Often, we ask for information from an agency to be displayed through social media or screens in the surgery to raise awareness.

Over the year we have worked with 184 clients in Heilendi, Skerryvore, Daisy Villa, Dounby, Stromness, Orcades (Westray and Papa Westray) GP Practices.

A total of 123 referrals have been received and 101 clients closed. Our clients are often very vulnerable so we work alongside them until they are in a position to be able to engage successfully with support services such as but not limited to GamCare, ORSAS, RSO, DWP, Housing, Social Work, Orkney Children's Trust, VAO volunteering, Connect, Advocacy Orkney, THAW, Fishermen's Mission, Learning Link and Right There .

Dr Catriona Kemp, Daisy Villa GP Surgery, said “We are very grateful to have a CLP based at our GP Practice. They are able to support our patient’s ability to access help and support in all aspects of financial and social wellbeing. I find them to be an invaluable member of our practice team.”

Babs Womack, Practice Manager and Local Co-ordinator Scottish Practice Manager Development Network at Heilendi Practice, said: "The CLP role has proven to be an invaluable resource to our MDT. Having someone who is aware of the other vital services within our community, and who can help our patients to navigate that path alongside building up their confidence and self- esteem where necessary, ensures that our patient's social and other needs are addressed, freeing up GP time to address medical needs. The role requires a unique set of skills, as it's widely varied but so very valued."

Through the service, clients have been able to learn or improve skills that positively impact on their quality of life and enable them to be more independent. As their confidence and belief in themselves and their abilities grow, they feel both mentally and physically better, and this sees a reduction in appointments with their GP. Many now engage in social activities within their local community such as volunteering or attending the Men’s Shed and report an improvement in their self-esteem and overall mental wellbeing.

Adult Befriending Service

The project aimed to reduce loneliness and isolation among adults in Orkney, and to help them to live independently, staying in their own homes as long as possible.

The Adult Befriending Service (ABS) was unsuccessful in obtaining funding beyond 30 September 2023 and the decision was made to close the project.

1-1 Befriending

The team matched volunteer befrienders with people who were lonely, significantly socially isolated and had very limited or no support around them. This helped them to be more connected in their community, increase their social connections and reduce their feelings of loneliness. Up until the end of September, 20 successful matches were supported with 2 moving on to becoming natural friendships.

Through training provided by the project, volunteer befrienders helped their befriendees to take more control over their own lives by making their own decisions and becoming more independent. They encouraged them to reconnect with family and friends, increase their social interaction, access help from other services, try new or old hobbies and set new goals.

Following the closure of the project, many volunteers have continued seeing befriendees, forging friendships and continuing the support.

Group Befriending

The team ran 2 weekly befriending groups for people over 60. Attendees played Scrabble, Dominoes, cards, bingo or took part in quizzes, or chair-based exercise. They also enjoyed entertainment including visits from speakers. These activities helped to improve the mental health and well-being of the attendees.

Since September, the groups have continued on their own supported by a young volunteer from the Connect Project.

Intergenerational Befriending

The intergenerational groups restarted in 2021/22 in partnership with the 2 two largest primary schools in the Mainland, continued to be developed and proved highly successful. Different generations came together in purposeful activities promoting respect and reciprocal learning. The pupils learned valuable skills from the older members of their community and vice versa. This challenged stereotypical opinions such as 'boring', 'slow', 'grey' and 'grumpy' and changed to 'kind', 'caring', 'cool' and 'fun'. Values including empathy, patience, respect, tolerance and compassion were encouraged.

After the closure of the project, Developing the Young Workforce have been working to create intergenerational opportunities.

Tech Peer Mentor Project

The Tech Peer Mentor project concluded in July 2023. It aimed to promote awareness, understanding, and uptake of Technology Enabled Care (TEC solutions in service delivery) in Orkney. It offered peer mentoring support to organisations that were developing services incorporating digital and TEC solutions, to meet health and social care needs. It sought to improve access and choice in health and social care through enhancing the digital and TEC skills, knowledge, and confidence, of both workers and people living in Orkney.

The TEC library helped to raise awareness and gave the community an opportunity to learn more about the technology and its uses in health and social care.

The project found that increasing digital inclusion, through support with digital skills or with using technology that did not require any digital skills, led to significant benefits for the individuals and their family members. This included:

- greater independence
- improved communication
- access to services
- enhanced wellbeing through having the opportunity to pursue personal interests

Many also appreciated the time spent with them, working at their own pace. This enabled them, with their families, to feel included, through a person-centred care approach.

The project was set up by VAO, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership from the Scottish Government's lead agency for Digital Health and Social Care, TEC Scotland, with funding from Transforming Local Systems (TLS) Programme.

Equipment from the project can be hired from Selbro Resource Centre which is open to the public every Wednesday afternoon and can be found on Scotts Road, Hatston, Kirkwall, KW15 1GR.

Directors / Trustees

Gerry O'Brien	Alison Sharkey (Co-opted October 2023)
Stuart Williams (Appointed August 2023)	Ian Carse (Resigned August 2023)
Jan Swain	Linda Lennie (Resigned August 2023)
James Temple (Appointed August 2023)	Malcolm Graves (Resigned August 2023)
Janice Annal	Sheila Garson (Resigned August 2023)
Willie Neish (Appointed August 2023)	

VAO Individual Members

Alistair Carmichael MP	Ian Carse	Linda Lennie
Elaine Grieve	James Temple of Stowe	Malcolm Graves
George Hannah	Keith Johnson	Sheila Garson

VAO Member Organisations

Access Orkney	Cromarty Hall Trust	Employability Orkney
Advocacy Orkney	Crossroads Orkney	First Kirkwall Company
Age Scotland Orkney	Deerness Community Association	Boys' Brigade SCIO
Amnesty International	East Mainland Agricultural Society	Firth Community Association
Birsay Heritage Trust	Eday Community Enterprises	Flotta Community Association
Burray Community Association	Eday Heritage Centre	Flotta Community Council
Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland	Eday Partnership	Flotta Day Club
CLAN Cancer Support	Eday Renewable Energy Ltd	Flotta Heritage Trust
Community Energy Scotland		Friends of Happy Valley

Friends of the Hoy Kirk	Orkney Blide Trust	Orkney Local Committee - Cancer Research
George Mackay Brown Fellowship	Orkney Charitable Trust	
Girlguiding Orkney	Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau	Orkney Men's Shed
Greener Orkney	Orkney Community Transport Organisation (OCTO)	Orkney Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre
Grieveship Residents Association	Orkney Creative Hub	Orkney Music and Culture
Haey Hope Club	Orkney Dance and Fitness Ltd	Orkney Natural History Society Museum Trust
Hamnavoe Carers	Orkney Disability Forum	Orkney News Ltd
Harray and Sandwick Community Council	Orkney Drugs Dog	Orkney Pilgrimage
Harray Community Association SCIO	Orkney Family History Society	Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service
Home-Start Orkney	Orkney Field Club	Orkney Renewable Energy Forum
Hope Cohousing Ltd	Orkney Folk Festival	Orkney Riding for the Disabled
Hoy Youth Hub	Orkney Foodbank	Orkney Rowing Club
Island of Hoy Development Trust	Orkney Friends of Palestine	Orkney Sailing Club
John Rae Society	Orkney Heart Support Group	Orkney Skate Trust
Kirkwall East Church	Orkney Hearts Supporters Club	Orkney Street Pastors
Kirkwall Squash and Racketball Club	Orkney Heritage Society	Orkney Tourist Guides Association
Marie Curie Fundraising Group - Orkney	Orkney Historic Boat Society	Orkney Traditional Music Project
MS Society Orkney	Orkney Housing Association Ltd	Orkney Trout Fishing Association
OIC Housing Services	Orkney Islands Sea Angling Association	Orkney U3A
Orkney Archaeology Society	Orkney Japan Association	Orkney Verusus Arthritis
Orkney Arts and Crafts	Orkney Library and Archive	Orkney Vintage Club
Orkney Arts Society		Orkney Wireless Museum
Orkney Athletic and Running Club SCIO		

Orkney Yole Association	Sandwick Community Association	Swandro-Orkney Coastal Archaeology Trust
Orkney Youth Café	Shapinsay Community Association	THAW Orkney
Orkney Zerowaste	Shapinsay Development Trust	The Hoy Trust SCIO
Papay Community Co-operative Ltd	Shapinsay Heritage Arts and Crafts	The Peedie Retreat
Papay Development Trust	Shapinsay Lunch Club	The Pickaquoy Centre Trust
Peedie Kirk United Reformed Church	Shapinsay Renewables Ltd	The Pier Arts Centre
Relationships Scotland Orkney	Skerries Toddler Group	The Workshop Loft and Gallery
Rendall Community Association	Soulisquoy Printmakers	Upside Down's Orkney
Right There (Orkney)	South Ronaldsay Golf Club	Victim Support Scotland
Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust	St Andrew's Community Association	Vital Talk Orkney Counselling Service
Royal Voluntary Service	Stromness Community Council	West Side Cinema
RSPB Scotland	Stromness Royal British Legion Pipe Band	Westray Community Association
Samaritans of Orkney	Stromness Shopping Week	Westray Development Trust
Sanday Afternoon Club	Stronsay Moncur Memorial Church	Westray Fairtrade Steering Group
Sanday Community Council	Stronsay Renewable Energy Ltd	Westray Golf Club
Sanday Community Craft Hub Ltd		Westray Heritage Trust
Sanday Development Trust		Westray Parish Kirk
Sanday Enterprises CIC		Westray Sailing Club
		Women's Aid Orkney

Our Funders

British Science Week	Health and Social Care Alliance
Children in Need	Hugh Fraser
Esmee Fairbairn	Liam MacArthur MSP
Greenspace Scotland	Mind on

Mrs M A Lascelles Charitable Trust
NHS Orkney
National Lottery Community Fund
Orkney Islands Council
Repsol-Resources UK Limited

Robertson Trust
Scottish Government
Stafford Trust
Tudor Trust

Annual Accounts

Charity registration number SC010691 (Scotland)
Company registration number SC143208 (Scotland)

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Directors

J Annal	
F Couperwhite	(Appointed 29 July 2024)
K McKerrell	(Appointed 16 June 2024)
W Neish	(Appointed 1 August 2023)
G O'Brien	
A Sharkey	(Appointed 16 October 2023)
J Swain	
J Temple	
P White	(Appointed 10 May 2024)
S Williams	(Appointed 17 July 2023)

Secretary M Brooks

Chief Executive M Brooks

Charity number SC010691

Company number SC143208

Registered office

Anchor Buildings
6 Bridge Street
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1HR

Auditor

A.J.B. Scholes Ltd
8 Albert Street
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1HP

Bankers

Bank of Scotland
56 Albert Street
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1HJ

Virgin Money
3 Broad Street
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1DH

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

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VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

DIRECTORS' REPORT (INCLUDING TRUSTEES' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The directors present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charitable company's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "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 2019)"

Objectives and activities

The charity's objects are:

- to advance throughout Orkney, citizenship, community development, rural regeneration and the promotion of civic responsibility through volunteering and the voluntary sector; and
- to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of charities and voluntary organisations throughout Orkney, including those that are engaged in advancing education, furthering health and protecting and promoting Orkney's arts and heritage, in order to relieve poverty, sickness and distress.

VAO's vision is that Orkney has resilient, sustainable inclusive communities with a thriving third sector at their heart.

VAO works with local and national partners to offer integrated services inclusive to all people in Orkney. VAO supports the high level and quality of volunteering activity in Orkney and is committed to working in partnership to support and strengthen communities through the provision of quality services. The organisation has four key aims:

- **Building Capacity:** Developing the capacity of volunteers, community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprise to achieve positive change and support future generations of our communities.
- **Source of Knowledge:** To be a central source of knowledge about: Third Sector locally, local and national policy and how it might affect local TS, communities and citizens, and how the Third Sector can contribute to those agendas.
- **Connecting partners:** Providing leadership, vision and coordination to the local third sector, to better respond to local priorities, including through partnership and collaboration.
- **Voice of the Local Third Sector:** Ensuring a strong local third sector voice at a strategic level within local planning structures and nationally.

The main objectives for the year were to meet the local and national targets set out in the VAO Workplan 2023-26. These relate to the Scottish Government's aspirations for Third Sector Interfaces, the needs and priorities identified by the local third sector and the Orkney Community Plan, incorporating the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

The Small Grants Scheme of up to £500 is supported by Repsol Resources UK Ltd and Liam McArthur MSP, were awarded to 20 organisations this year.

Achievements and performance

The charity achieved all planned targets for the year, as detailed in the quarterly, six monthly and annual reports submitted to a variety of funders, including local and national government.

Our community development team enjoyed an active year, working to support organisations across Orkney. Whilst the majority of work was undertaken through email or online meetings, we saw a noticeable increase in face-to-face meetings. Information and advice saw the greatest number of requests for help. 46 organisations advised about legal status; 55 organisations helped with funding; 45 organisations helped with their governance and 2 new organisations assisted with setting up.

Our Youth Development team worked with partners from the Youth Workers Forum to organise the Orkney Youth Awards. This year we made 102 awards to the county's youngsters, 51 were Saltire Awards, including 3 prestigious Saltire Summit Awards.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING TRUSTEES' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Our Volunteer Development team promote volunteering by raising awareness and supporting organisations in their volunteer recruitment process. We also help individuals on a 1-1 basis with identifying suitable volunteering opportunities matching their needs and interests ensuring successful volunteer placements. This year we supported 40 opportunities with 30 organisations; 62 volunteers were registered with 33 volunteers placed in roles and 4,409 volunteering opportunities were viewed.

We continued to support and deliver our projects: Young People Befriending Project, Connect Project, Isles Wellbeing Project, Orkney Money Matters and Community Link Practitioner Service.

Financial review

The charity had total incoming resources of £945,513 for the year compared to incoming resources of £821,396 reported in the previous year. Unrestricted funds at the balance sheet date stood at £268,223, including £46,822 of designated funds, while restricted funds totalled £515,009.

The Board are committed to build an adequate reserves account to allow for organisational contingencies and to demonstrate good financial management and has implemented a reserves policy.

It is the policy of the charitable company that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level at least equivalent to three month's operating expenditure. The directors consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charitable company's current activities and meet ongoing contractual obligations to staff while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The reserves policy will be reviewed every two years. All decisions on reserves will be made by the Board.

The charity's principal funding sources are the Scottish Government, Orkney Islands Council, The National Lottery Community Fund, Repsol Sinopec, BBC Children in Need, NHS Orkney, The Robertson Trust, The Health and Social Care Alliance, Hugh Fraser Foundation, Tudor Trust, and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. This funding has allowed the charity to deliver core business and project services based on targets in the Workplan.

Reserves will be invested to secure a financial return for the charity and the amount will be determined and reviewed annually. The investment policy adopted will ensure that a proportion of the charity's reserves can be accessed at short notice. Investment risk will be assessed to ensure that sums deposited are spread across several institutions and are covered by the Government's Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

VAO is a risk aware organisation and during the year the Board established a formal risk register. The register will be regularly reviewed and actions taken and reported as appropriate.

Failure to obtain sufficient levels of funding to meet the charity's operational demands continues to be the main risk facing the charity. The charity applies for funding from a wide range of sources. In addition, the charity actively identifies and eliminates expenditure which is deemed unnecessary to reduce costs where possible.

Projects funded by restricted funds are monitored closely to ensure that expenditure does not exceed the restricted funding receivable. This ensures the charity maintains sufficient unrestricted reserves to continue to meet its day to day requirements.

All organisational aims and key priorities are detailed in the VAO Workplan 2023-26 and are responsive to the need of Orkney's third sector and communities. Activities meet charitable objects and the outcomes specified by Scottish Government and other funders. Progress is continuously monitored and reported through agreed monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

VAO will continue to provide, develop and establish responsive services for and with the third sector and the wider community, which encompass the breadth of voluntary sector delivery, volunteering and social enterprise.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING TRUSTEES' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Plans for the future

The organisation also will continue to play a key role in The Orkney Partnership, the Integration Joint Board (Orkney Health and Care) and other partnerships and work with the third sector to enhance their engagement, involvement and influence.

Progress towards a new building was delayed by the pandemic and planning issues but VAO will continue to work with Orkney Islands Council (OIC) to secure new accommodation. VAO and sharing groups are very grateful to OIC for their continued support and commitment to ensure that this long held aspiration is realised.

VAO will work to sustain and develop the organisation, services and projects and is committed to continuous improvement using the EFQM framework.

Structure, governance and management

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee and a registered Scottish charity managed by a volunteer board of directors/trustees. It is governed by its memorandum and articles.

The directors who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

J Annal	
I Carse	(Resigned 3 August 2023)
F Couperwhite	(Appointed 29 July 2024)
S Garson	(Resigned 3 August 2023)
M Graves	(Resigned 3 August 2023)
L Lennie	(Resigned 3 August 2023)
K McKerrell	(Appointed 16 June 2024)
W Neish	(Appointed 1 August 2023)
G O'Brien	
A Sharkey	(Appointed 16 October 2023)
J Swain	
J Temple	
P White	(Appointed 10 May 2024)
S Williams	(Appointed 17 July 2023)

The charity has two methods to recruit and appoint new directors. Directors are either appointed at the AGM (ie proposed and seconded) or through co-option at Board meetings at any other point during the year as required. Directors are appointed from a list of Board approved members ie named representatives of member organisations. No other body or person is entitled to appoint directors.

None of the directors has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the directors are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

The Chief Executive manages organisational and project staff and is directly accountable to the Board. Recommendations are put forward by the Chief Executive to inform Board decision making and where appropriate staff/volunteer views are sought. The Chief Executive has autonomy to make decisions in line with the position and as agreed by the Board. In addition, several sub groups with specific terms of reference have been established to support Board decision making: New Facilities, Finance and Audit, Policy and Procedure, Communications and Services Development.

Policies and procedures are in place for inducting and training directors. All new directors are given an induction pack and meet with the Company Secretary/ Chief Executive. Director's interests forms are completed and details of their relevant knowledge and experience recorded. Training is provided to the board approximately twice a year and individual training needs met as required.

Certain of the directors are also directors of other charitable entities or funding bodies with whom the company had transactions during the year. Details of these transactions, which were conducted at arms' length, are provided in the notes to the accounts.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING TRUSTEES' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Funds held as custodian trustee

The charity holds funds on behalf of several third parties. The third parties are responsible for approving grant applications and instructing the charity to process payments from funds held by the charity on their behalf.

The details of these bodies and the movements on funds held by the charity as custodian trustee are as follows:

North Alliance (TNA)

The objects of North Alliance are: to increase opportunities and access to continuing professional development for the community learning and development workforce in Highlands and Islands.

During the year the charity received funds of £nil (2023- £2,000) from TNA, and paid £3,600 (2023- £1,796) to successful applicants on behalf of TNA. £3,032 (2023 £nil) of funds was transferred to another charity when VAO ceased to hold funds. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023- £6,632) on behalf of TNA.

Public Protection Committee (PPC)

The objects of PPC Communications are to communicate, inform and educate the public on all matters relating to child protection.

During the year the charity received funds of £nil (2023- £61,742) from PPC, and paid £4,970 (2023- £4,155) to successful applicants on behalf of PPC. £76,886 (2023 £nil) was transferred back to PPC when VAO ceased to hold funds. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023- £81,856) on behalf of PPC.

White Ribbon Orkney (WRO)

WRO is a male-led campaign working to end violence against women.

During the year the charity paid out £50 (2023: £502) on behalf of WRO. £420 (2023 £nil) was transferred back to WRO when VAO ceased to hold funds. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023: £470) for WRO.

Child Poverty Steering Group (CPSG)

The object of CPSG is to provide funding to third sector organisations to deliver interventions aimed at reducing child poverty in Orkney.

During the year, the charity paid £1,471 (2023: £nil) to their chosen donors. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023: £1,471) for CPSG.

ROAR

During the year, the charity received funds of £2,098 (2023: £2,846) from ROAR and paid out £2,283 (2023: £2,661) to their chosen donors. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023: £185) for ROAR.

Orkney Islands Council Third Sector Cost of Living Crisis Fund (OIC)

During the year, the charity received funds of £nil (2023: £289,750) from OIC and paid out £289,750 (2023: £nil) to successful applicants on behalf of the OIC. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023: £289,750) on behalf of OIC.

Orkney Islands Council Orkney Money Matters Project (OIC)

During the year, the charity received funds of £200,000 (2023: £150,000) from OIC, and paid out £272,110 (2023: £66,241) on behalf of OIC. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £11,649 (2023: £83,759) on behalf of OIC.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

**DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)(INCLUDING TRUSTEES' REPORT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the directors has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

The directors' report was approved by the Board of Directors.



G O'Brien

Director

Dated: 14/08/2024

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The directors, who also act as trustees for the charitable activities of Voluntary Action Orkney, are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the directors to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its net income and expenditure for the year.

In preparing these accounts, the directors are required to:

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

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

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Voluntary Action Orkney (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the accounts in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out in note 26 to the accounts, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

TO THE MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- the information given in the Directors' Report, which includes the Trustees' Report prepared for the purposes of charity law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report included within the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report included within the Directors' Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the directors were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of directors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and then design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

TO THE MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we considered the following:

- . the nature of the industry and sector, and control environment;
- . results of our enquiries of management;
- . any matters we identified having obtained and reviewed the charitable company's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- . the matters discussed among the audit engagement team.

As a result of these procedures, we considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and irregularities. Income recognition was a key area of focus. In common with all audits under ISA's (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charitable company operates in, focusing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, such as the UK Companies Act 2006, tax legislation, and relevant charities acts.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the charitable company's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. These include laws and regulations pertaining to: the protection of vulnerable individuals; and employment.

In addition to the above, our procedures to respond to risks identified included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- enquiring of management concerning actual potential litigation and claims;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

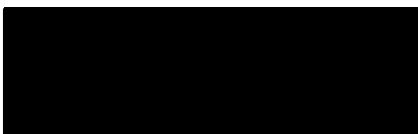
VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

TO THE MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed .



Ryan Allan (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of A.J.B. Scholes Ltd

14/08/2024

Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor

8 Albert Street
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1HP

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Income from:						
Donations and legacies	3	262,987	570,235	833,222	259,046	691,139
Charitable activities	4	-	-	-	253	253
Other trading activities	5	42,659	-	42,659	77,066	77,066
Investments	6	69,632	-	69,632	52,938	52,938
Total income		375,278	570,235	945,513	432,093	821,396
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	7	34,188	-	34,188	34,139	34,139
Charitable activities	8	357,460	571,208	928,668	653,633	998,778
Other	10	-	-	-	18	18
Total resources expended		391,648	571,208	962,856	653,633	1,032,935
Net outgoing resources before transfers		(16,370)	(973)	(17,343)	10,001	(211,539)
Gross transfers between funds		6,659	(6,659)	-	5,068	-
Net expenditure for the year/ Net movement in funds		(9,711)	(7,632)	(17,343)	4,933	(211,539)
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		277,934	522,641	800,575	739,113	1,012,114
Fund balances at 31 March 2024		268,223	515,009	783,232	522,641	800,575

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	14		7,337		8,174
Tangible assets	15		6,586		4,987
			<u>13,923</u>		<u>13,161</u>
Current assets					
Stocks	16	500		500	
Debtors	17	299,832		387,978	
Cash at bank and in hand		560,517		500,809	
		<u>860,849</u>		<u>889,287</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	18	<u>(91,540)</u>		<u>(101,873)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>769,309</u>		<u>787,414</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u><u>783,232</u></u>		<u><u>800,575</u></u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	20		515,009		522,641
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	21	46,822		48,918	
General unrestricted funds		221,401		229,016	
		<u>268,223</u>		<u>277,934</u>	
			<u><u>783,232</u></u>		<u><u>800,575</u></u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The accounts were approved by the Directors on 14/8/2024

G O'Brien
Director

Company Registration No. SC143208

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash absorbed by operations	24		(3,758)		(17,667)
Investing activities					
Purchase of intangible assets		-		(6,500)	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(6,166)		(523)	
Investment income received		69,632		52,938	
Net cash generated from investing activities			63,466		45,915
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents			59,708		28,248
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			500,809		472,561
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			560,517		500,809

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Voluntary Action Orkney is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in Scotland. The registered office is Anchor Buildings, 6 Bridge Street, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1HR.

1.1 Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102"), "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice as it applies from 1 January 2019. The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charitable company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the directors have a reasonable expectation that the charitable company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the directors continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the directors in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the directors for specific purposes. The purposes and uses of the designated funds are set out in the notes to the accounts.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the accounts.

1.4 Incoming resources

Income is recognised when the charitable company is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charitable company has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

Grant income is recognised in the same manner as donation and legacy income unless the grant is subject to the satisfaction of performance related terms and conditions. The recognition of performance related grant income is deferred until the charity has met the terms and conditions attached to the grant, or the conditions are within the charity's control and satisfaction of those conditions is probable.

Incoming resources from services and from the sale of goods are included when receivable.

Investment income, including interest and rent receivable, is recognised when receivable by the charity.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Resources expended

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation to pay for expenditure. The charity is VAT registered and all expenditure is shown exclusive of VAT, where applicable.

Expenditure on raising funds comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and the costs of fundraising events.

Expenditure on charitable activities comprises those costs incurred in the delivery of the charity's activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity

1.6 Intangible fixed assets other than goodwill

Intangible assets acquired separately from a business are recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Amortisation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Website	20% straight line basis
---------	-------------------------

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Leasehold property	Over lease term
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	50% straight line basis (computer equipment); 20% reducing balance/ straight line basis (other assets)

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.8 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charitable company reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

Recoverable amount is the higher of fair value less costs to sell and value in use. If the recoverable amount of an asset is estimated to be less than its carrying amount, the carrying amount of the asset is reduced to its recoverable amount. An impairment loss is recognised immediately in income/(expenditure) for the year.

Recognised impairment losses are reversed if the reasons for the impairment loss have ceased to apply.

1.9 Stocks

Stocks represent stationery and other consumable items held for use by the charity, at the balance sheet date.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.10 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand and deposits held at call with banks.

1.11 Financial instruments

The charitable company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charitable company's balance sheet when the charitable company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Impairment of financial assets

Financial assets are assessed for indicators of impairment at each reporting date. Financial assets are impaired where there is objective evidence that, as a result of one or more events that occurred after the initial recognition of the financial asset, the estimated future cash flows have been affected.

If an asset is impaired, the impairment loss is the difference between the carrying amount and the present value of the estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The impairment loss is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

If there is a decrease in the impairment loss arising from an event occurring after the impairment was recognised, the impairment is reversed. The reversal is such that the current carrying amount does not exceed what the carrying amount would have been, had the impairment not previously been recognised. The impairment reversal is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

Derecognition of financial assets

Financial assets are derecognised only when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the asset expire or are settled, or when the charitable company transfers the financial asset and substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to another entity, or if some significant risks and rewards of ownership are retained but control of the asset has transferred to another party that is able to sell the asset in its entirety to an unrelated third party.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charitable company's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.12 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charitable company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.13 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

Rentals payable under operating leases, including any lease incentives received, are charged as an expense on a straight line basis over the term of the relevant lease.

1.14 Capitalisation of fixed assets

Expenditure on fixed assets held for ongoing use by the charity is capitalised and depreciated over the life of the asset, in accordance with the accounting policy described above.

1.15 Grants payable

The charity is responsible for making grant payments to certain individuals and institutions. These payments are made from funds provided by third parties for distribution by the charity. The charity is responsible for approving the applications of claimants in line with the conditions laid out by the fund provider.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charitable company's accounting policies, the directors are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	429	1,178	1,607	504	948	1,452
Grants receivable for core activities	260,750	569,057	829,807	256,682	431,145	687,827
Membership fees	1,808	-	1,808	1,860	-	1,860
	<u>262,987</u>	<u>570,235</u>	<u>833,222</u>	<u>259,046</u>	<u>432,093</u>	<u>691,139</u>
Grants receivable for core activities						
Scottish Government	207,168	-	207,168	199,200	-	199,200
Orkney Islands Council - core	53,232	-	53,232	53,232	-	53,232
Roberston Trust - Connect Project	-	2,500	2,500	-	75,000	75,000
Robertson Trust - Cost of Living	-	-	-	3,750	-	3,750
NHS - Covid Community Testing Centre	-	-	-	-	1,200	1,200
Community Fund - Young People's Befriending Project	-	1,073	1,073	-	65,117	65,117
Orkney Islands Council - Counselling Centre	-	20,358	20,358	-	20,358	20,358
Repsol Sinopec - Small Grants	-	7,000	7,000	-	14,000	14,000
Greenspace Scotland - Remembering Together	-	102,332	102,332	-	-	-
Hugh Fraser Foundation - Young People's Befriending Project	-	4,000	4,000	-	4,000	4,000
NHS - Community Link	-	91,826	91,826	-	84,466	84,466
OIC - Tech Enabled Care	-	-	-	-	9,380	9,380
Scottish Government - Community led Local Development Fund	-	-	-	-	10,000	10,000

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

3 Donations and legacies	(Continued)					
Co-op - Young People's Befriending Project	-	-	-	-	6,477	6,477
The Stafford Trust - Adult Befriending Service	-	-	-	-	5,000	5,000
OIC - Cost of Living Taskforce	-	46,900	46,900	-	4,375	4,375
OIC - Culture Fund	-	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
The Wood Foundation - YPI Orkney Delivery Support	-	880	880	-	880	880
British Science Association - Connect	-	-	-	-	500	500
IJB - Island Wellbeing Project	-	63,589	63,589	-	-	-
OIC - Orkney Money Matters	-	89,544	89,544	-	-	-
Scottish Government - Aspiring Communities EWOIC 2	-	-	-	-	(1,407)	(1,407)
Scottish Government - ACF Community Engagement	-	-	-	-	24,854	24,854
The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland - Self Management	-	(3,199)	(3,199)	-	-	-
OIC - Multiply Funding	-	30,000	30,000	-	-	-
Mind-On - Connect	-	2,000	2,000	-	-	-
Scottish Government - Mental Health & Wellbeing	-	82,090	82,090	-	83,945	83,945
OIC - Youth Local Action Group	-	9,980	9,980	-	-	-
Scottish Government - CLLD	-	8,700	8,700	-	-	-
OIC - Third Sector Cost of Living Crisis Fund	-	8,469	8,469	-	-	-
DWP - Access to Work	-	1,015	1,015	-	-	-
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation - Island Wellbeing Project	-	-	-	-	20,000	20,000
BBC CIN - Cost of Living Increase	-	-	-	500	-	500
RGU - Orkney Youth Awards	350	-	350	-	-	-
	260,750	569,057	829,807	256,682	431,145	687,827
	260,750	569,057	829,807	256,682	431,145	687,827

The above grants include £262,062 awarded but not yet received within debtors (2023: £369,346).

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

4 Charitable activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Contracted services	-	253

5 Other trading activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Other trading activities	42,659	77,066

6 Investments

	2024	2023
	£	£
Rental income	66,533	52,445
Interest receivable	3,099	493
	69,632	52,938

7 Raising funds

	2024	2023
	£	£
<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>		
Staff costs	34,188	34,139
	34,188	34,139

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

8 Charitable activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Staff costs	562,116	599,301
Depreciation and impairment	5,404	2,614
Other costs	296,899	251,269
	<u>864,419</u>	<u>853,184</u>
Grant funding of activities (see note 9)	64,249	145,594
	<u>928,668</u>	<u>998,778</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	357,460	345,145
Restricted funds	571,208	653,633
	<u>928,668</u>	<u>998,778</u>

Other costs include total governance costs of £9,190 (2023- £7,100), including payments to the auditor of £3,690 (2023- £2,850) for audit fees and £5,500 (2023- £4,250) for other services.

9 Grants payable

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants to institutions:		
Island Wellbeing Fund	55,329	55,228
Repsol Sinopec - see narrative	8,920	5,552
Mental Health & Wellbeing - Scottish Government	-	73,945
Adult Befriending Service	-	11,469
Community Recovery Fund	-	(600)
	<u>64,249</u>	<u>145,594</u>

Island Wellbeing Fund: grants paid to local island Development Trusts to fund the employment and overheads of island wellbeing coordinators, using funds awarded by The Tudor Trust and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

Repsol Sinopec: VAO disburses small grants to local voluntary and charitable organisations using funds provided by Repsol Sinopec.

Mental Health & Wellbeing: grants paid to local initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing.

Adult Befriending Service: the Lunch Club Innovation Grant scheme makes payments to local Lunch Clubs to assist with tackling social isolation and reducing malnutrition and food insecurity.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

10 Other

	2024	2023
	£	£
Net loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	18

11 Directors

A Sharkey received £986 (2023: £nil) for services rendered in the year whilst also serving as a director. None of the other directors (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charitable company during the year.

12 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
	24	27

Employment costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	517,702	551,863
Social security costs	37,158	41,017
Other pension costs	41,444	40,560
	<u>596,304</u>	<u>633,440</u>

The total paid to key management personnel during the year was £42,428 (2023: £47,187).

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

13 Taxation

The company does not pay tax on its charitable activities.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

14 Intangible fixed assets

	Website £
Cost	
At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	10,685
Amortisation and impairment	
At 1 April 2023	2,511
Amortisation charged for the year	837
At 31 March 2024	3,348
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2024	7,337
At 31 March 2023	8,174

15 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold property £	Fixtures, fittings & equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2023	75,473	51,049	126,522
Additions	-	6,166	6,166
At 31 March 2024	75,473	57,215	132,688
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 April 2023	75,473	46,062	121,535
Depreciation charged in the year	-	4,567	4,567
At 31 March 2024	75,473	50,629	126,102
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2024	-	6,586	6,586
At 31 March 2023	-	4,987	4,987

16 Stocks

	2024 £	2023 £
Consumables	500	500

Stocks represent stationery stock held at the balance sheet date.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

17 Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	16,167	9,874
Other debtors	275,865	374,029
Prepayments and accrued income	7,800	4,075
	<u>299,832</u>	<u>387,978</u>

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Other taxation and social security	9,773	8,121
Trade creditors	30,475	23,783
Other creditors	637	134
Accruals	50,655	69,835
	<u>91,540</u>	<u>101,873</u>

19 Share capital

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. At the balance sheet date, the number of ordinary members was 148 (2023 - 153). In the event of the company being wound up, the liability of each member is limited to £1.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

20 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds				Movement in funds				
	Balance at 1 April 2022	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Orkney Money Matters - OIC	-	-	-	-	-	89,544	(89,003)	-	541
Connect - Various	82,611	89,497	(65,282)	-	106,826	5,250	(63,831)	911	49,156
Counselling Centre - OIC	4,000	20,358	(19,631)	(1,544)	3,183	20,358	(21,148)	-	2,393
Multiply Funding - OIC	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	(2,890)	-	27,110
Adult Befriending Service - various	159,859	5,000	(115,294)	-	49,565	1,015	(48,131)	(911)	1,538
Repsol Sinopec	2,963	14,428	(6,552)	-	10,839	7,428	(9,920)	-	8,347
Island Wellbeing project - various	320,000	20,000	(112,073)	-	227,927	63,589	(136,523)	-	154,993
Mental Health & Wellbeing - Scot Gov	-	83,945	(85,792)	1,847	-	82,090	-	-	82,090
Aspiring Communities (EWIOIC) - Scot Gov	-	(1,407)	(3,953)	5,360	-	-	-	-	-
Tech Peer Mentor - OIC	17,706	9,380	(14,248)	-	12,838	-	(6,179)	(6,659)	-
Rural Communities Action - Inspiring Scotland	11,000	-	(10,180)	-	820	-	-	-	820
Self Management - Health & Social Care Alliance	43,513	-	(22,173)	-	21,340	(3,199)	(18,141)	-	-
Covid Community Testing Centre - Scot Gov	26,506	1,200	(27,711)	5	-	-	-	-	-
YP Befriending - Various	34,550	65,117	(38,241)	-	61,426	5,073	(40,742)	-	25,757
Remembering Together - Greenspace Scotland	-	-	-	-	-	102,332	(23,405)	-	78,927
Community Link project - NHS	18,034	84,466	(91,772)	-	10,728	91,826	(88,468)	-	14,086
YLAG - OIC	-	-	-	-	-	9,980	(1,714)	-	8,266
Aspiring Communities (Supporting Communities) - Scottish Government	7,898	24,854	(21,184)	-	11,568	-	-	-	11,568
Cost of Living Taskforce - various	-	14,375	(12,112)	-	2,263	46,900	(2,263)	-	46,900
Other funds	10,473	880	(7,435)	(600)	3,318	18,049	(18,850)	-	2,517
	<u>739,113</u>	<u>432,093</u>	<u>(653,633)</u>	<u>5,068</u>	<u>522,641</u>	<u>570,235</u>	<u>(571,208)</u>	<u>(6,659)</u>	<u>515,009</u>

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

20 Restricted funds

(Continued)

At the end of the reporting period, the charity held a number of funds for specific purposes, imposed by the funder. Notably, the following balances were held:

- Orkney Money Matters - represents a partnership project which has been developed by local third-sector and statutory organisations (THAW, CAB, The Blide, the Foodbank and OIC). It aims to reduce levels of financial insecurity in Orkney by increasing access to advice and cash for those experiencing or at risk of crisis.
- Connect - represents grant funding from Orkney Islands Council, BBC Children and Need, Robertson Trust and other organisations to provide one to one and group support to young people with activity agreements in order to develop and strengthen life and employability skills.
- Counselling Centre: grant funding from Orkney Islands Council to provide an efficiently run resource centre for Counselling and Support Centre sharing groups through provision of accommodation, an office administrator and volunteer receptionists.
- Multiply Funding - Funding provided by Orkney Islands Council to deliver community-based numeracy courses, support and training.
- Adult Befriending Service - grant funding from the Community Fund and Stafford Trust to the existing Adult Befriending Service, to develop, enhance and expand activities to meet current and future demand in order to help older people in Orkney maintain their independence and remain living in their homes.
- Repsol Sinopec: a donation which the VAO Board disburses in small grants to local voluntary and charitable organisations.
- Island Wellbeing Project - funding provided by Tudor Trust and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, which aims to improve the health, economic and social wellbeing of residents across Orkney's ferry-linked isles.
- Mental Health & Wellbeing: funding provided by Scottish Government, to fund local initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing.
- Aspiring Communities (Extending The Reach of EWIOIC) - Funding awarded by the Scottish Government to build on the EWIOIC project, with an expanded focus on all age groups, social inclusion and community and individual resilience.
- Tech Peer Mentor - OIC funding provided to explore and establish innovative uses of technology in the delivery of care.
- Rural Communities Action: funding provided by Inspiring Scotland, to develop a food dignity strategy.
- Self Management - Health & Social Care Alliance funding which aims to help those with long-term physical conditions in Orkney's ferry linked isles.
- Covid Community Testing Centre - funding from NHS to provide management, portering and administration support for the Covid Community Testing service.
- Children and Young People's Befriending Service - funding from Community Fund, Chance to Connect and STV to the existing service (previously funded by Community Fund and Lloyds TSB) to support young people across the county who are vulnerable or isolated for any number of reasons. Befriending is a special kind of intentional friendship between a young person and a trained volunteer, built on trust, mutual respect, shared interests and compatibility.
- Remembering together - Funding provided by Greenspace Scotland at the request of the Scottish Government for a notional programme of remembrance with communities across Scotland. This will result in a memorial project (artwork, garden, events, film, collaboration) in Orkney, co-created between artists and communities.
- Community Link Workers- funding awarded from NHS Orkney to establish a new service to work with two GP Practices to provide advice and support to patients on social issues and to support them to access specialist third and statutory services and community activities.
- YLAG - Funding provided by Orkney Islands Council for the Youth Local Action Group (YLAG) which aims to empower young folk to be the decision makers about putting money towards a particular problem, issue or youth projects.
- Aspiring Communities Community Engagement - funding awarded from Scottish Government to deliver a community engagement project, allowing those experiencing disadvantage and inequality to participate in the shaping of local plans.
- Cost of Living Task Force - funding awarded by the Scottish Government and OIC to help tackle the cost of living crisis by setting up a Cost of Living Task Force.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

20 Restricted funds

(Continued)

As noted above, transfers were made between restricted funds where the purpose of those funds are the same and therefore now disclosed as a single fund.

Transfers were made from restricted funds for spend on fixed assets which have no continuing restrictions on their use. Those transfers were made to unrestricted funds. Transfers were made from unrestricted funds to cover the deficit in certain restricted funds.

21 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds				Movement in funds				Balance at 31 March 2024 £
	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	
New facilities	50,000	-	(1,082)	-	48,918	-	(2,096)	-	46,822
Kirkwall Travel Centre	-	24,688	(27,630)	2,942	-	22,718	(31,183)	8,465	-
	<u>50,000</u>	<u>24,688</u>	<u>(28,712)</u>	<u>2,942</u>	<u>48,918</u>	<u>22,718</u>	<u>(33,279)</u>	<u>8,465</u>	<u>46,822</u>

- Income received from tenants of the Kirkwall Travel Centre was designated for the payment of premises costs incurred by the charity in letting the property. A transfer was made from unrestricted funds to cover overspend in the fund.
- Reserves are designated by the board to cover anticipated costs associated with the development of new facilities. At the year end, these developments are still ongoing.

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

22 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2024	2024	2024	2023	2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:					
Intangible fixed assets	7,337	-	7,337	8,174	8,174
Tangible assets	4,507	2,079	6,586	1,898	4,987
Current assets/(liabilities)	256,379	512,930	769,309	267,862	787,414
	<u>268,223</u>	<u>515,009</u>	<u>783,232</u>	<u>277,934</u>	<u>800,575</u>

23 Operating lease commitments

At the reporting end date the charitable company had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Within one year	48,939	48,838
Between two and five years	-	13,500
	<u>48,939</u>	<u>62,338</u>

At the reporting end date the total future minimum sublease payments expected to be received under non-cancellable subleases was £31,943 (2023: £34,381).

24 Cash generated from operations

	2024 £	2023 £
Deficit for the year	(17,343)	(211,539)
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(69,632)	(52,938)
(Gain)/loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	18
Depreciation and amortisation of fixed assets	5,404	2,614
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease in debtors	88,146	255,781
(Decrease) in creditors	(10,333)	(11,603)
Cash absorbed by operations	<u>(3,758)</u>	<u>(17,667)</u>

VOLUNTARY ACTION ORKNEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

25 Funds held as custodian

The charity holds funds on behalf of several third parties. The third parties are responsible for approving grant applications and instructing the charity to process payments from funds held by the charity on their behalf.

The details of these bodies and the movements on funds held by the charity as custodian trustee are as follows:

The North Alliance (TNA)

During the year the charity received funds of £nil (2023- £2,000) from TNA, and paid £3,600 (2023- £1,796) to successful applicants on behalf of TNA. £3,032 (2023 £nil) of funds was transferred to another charity when VAO ceased to hold funds. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023- £6,632) on behalf of TNA.

Public Protection Committee (PPC)

During the year the charity received funds of £nil (2023- £61,742) from PPC, and paid £4,970 (2023- £4,155) to successful applicants on behalf of PPC. £76,886 (2023 £nil) was transferred back to PPC when VAO ceased to hold funds. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023- £81,856) on behalf of PPC.

White Ribbon Orkney (WRO)

During the year the charity paid out £50 (2023: £502) on behalf of WRO. £420 (2023 £nil) was transferred back to WRO when VAO ceased to hold funds. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023: £470) for WRO.

Child Poverty Steering Group (CPSG)

During the year, the charity paid £1,471 (2023: £nil) to their chosen donors. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023: £1,471) for CPSG.

ROAR

During the year, the charity received funds of £2,098 (2023: £2,846) from ROAR and paid out £2,283 (2023: £2,661) to their chosen donors. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023: £185) for ROAR.

Orkney Islands Council Third Sector Cost of Living Crisis Fund (OIC)

During the year, the charity received funds of £nil (2023: £289,750) from OIC and paid out £289,750 (2023: £nil) to successful applicants on behalf of the OIC. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £nil (2023: £289,750) on behalf of OIC.

Orkney Islands Council Orkney Money Matters Project (OIC)

During the year, the charity received funds of £200,000 (2023: £150,000) from OIC, and paid out £272,110 (2023: £66,241) on behalf of OIC. At the balance sheet date, the charity holds funds of £11,649 (2023: £83,759) on behalf of OIC.

Funds administered by the charity in its role as custodian are not recognised in the charity's statement of financial activities or balance sheet.

26 Non-audit services provided by auditor

The relevant circumstances requiring disclosure in accordance with the requirements of APB Ethical Standard - Provisions Available for Small Entities are that, in common with many charities of our size and nature we use our auditor to assist with the preparation of the accounts.