

2024-2025

BRCA+ Chat Annual Report



Navigating Gene Mutations Together



BRCA+ Chat 2024-2025

BRCA+ Chat

Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period
1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025



**“
I just had to donate! I can't imagine
having gone through any of the journey
from testing to op recovery without the
info and support from BRCA+ Chat -
it's been so so so valuable to me, and it
was so nice of Alison to reach out on
the day of my op when I was waiting for
them to take me to theatre!
”**



49 Station Road, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 6EA

BRCA+ Chat is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by a CIO
Foundation Constitution and overseen by a Board of Trustees

Registered Charity Number 1195944

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Executive Summary

This year has been one of growth, connection, and impact for our charity. Together, we've expanded our reach, deepened our support for those affected, and strengthened our voice in the community.

We hosted 24 in-person meet-ups across 10 locations, bringing together 261 attendees to share, support, and connect. Alongside this, our 9 themed online peer support groups including sessions on breast cancer and ovarian health welcomed 226 bookings. We held 6 webinars with specific topics, and introduced Dr Claire as our first guest doctor speaker, adding professional medical insight to our outreach. We also introduced four yoga and meditation sessions, offering mindful wellbeing to 38 participants.

Our communication channels continued to grow, with 12 newsletters now reaching 290 subscribers, 14 blogs published, and our mastectomy gallery surpassing 80 images, empowering others through shared experiences.

Fundraising efforts were exceptional, with seven events raising a total of £12,126. We also launched our first line of charity merchandise, helping to raise both funds and awareness. In governance, we welcomed Katie Ling to the Board of Trustees, bringing valuable HR expertise, and said farewell to Eleanor Howie, whose contributions have been greatly appreciated.

We amplified our voice nationally our co-founders were keynote speakers at the Oncology Professional Care conference, and Christen attended the House of Commons to represent our community. Our work reached further still with national news appearances on the BBC news and STV news platforms and the distribution of leaflets across healthcare locations nationwide.



BRCA+ CHAT TRUSTEES AT THE 2024 AGM

This year has been defined by growth, innovation, and dedication powered by our incredible community, volunteers, and supporters. As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring no one faces their journey alone.

Comments from our community will be present throughout this report.



IT IS AMAZING THAT YOU EXIST, NO ONE ELSE TRULY KNOWS, OR UNDERSTANDS. IT IS GREAT TO MEET OTHER PEOPLE WHO GET IT, AND ARE GOING THROUGH THE SAME THING





Objectives

Our vision is to build a world where people's lives are not determined by their gene mutations.

We will work towards this by:

- Providing emotional, mental and practical support for those affected by BRCA and other gene mutations within the United Kingdom
- Providing education in the United Kingdom on issues arising out of or pertaining to BRCA and other gene mutations
- Creating awareness and campaigning around issues arising out of or pertaining to BRCA and other gene mutations including, but not limited to, better access to genetic testing within the United Kingdom

Statutory Declaration on Public Benefit



The trustees declare that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH THE MASTECTOMY GALLERY HELPED ME BEFORE AND DURING MY DIEP PROCEDURE! VERY GRATEFUL TO ALL THAT SHARE AND HOPE TO BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO DO THE SAME SOON!

BRCA+ CHAT IS MORE GROUNDED THAN THE WILD WEST OF THE INTERNET

Registered charity: 1195944



BRCA+ Chat is a UK wide charity cofounded by BRCA carriers to support those living with genetic mutations increasing their risk of cancer.

BRCA+ CHAT provides:

- Emotional support
- Lived experience
- A buddy system
- In person meet ups
- Online zoom events and talks
- Awareness raising
- A mastectomy gallery

" We want a world where people's lives are not determined by their gene mutations."

Our mission

BRCA+ Chat supports people affected by BRCA and other gene mutations who are at a greater risk of cancer. We campaign, raise awareness and support others through our community. We provide information on options available and we are a vibrant community, offering help and support for genetic mutants.



@BRCA_CHAT

@BRCACHAT

www.brcachat.com

Activities, Achievements & Performance

Overview



Alison, our co-ordinator has been working tirelessly this year to streamline our website and booking processes as well as making huge leaps in terms of our social media presence and output. BRCA+ Chat is now present on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. The website has also undergone some great updates making the information more accessible and increasing the resources available.

This year, our lovely co-founders, Christen and Lisa, have been able to focus on networking and working on improvements of the services we offer. Through networking, more and more people are becoming aware of the amazing work we are doing at BRCA+ Chat and we are continuing to grow our community.



WHAT AN AMAZING GROUP YOU'VE MADE XXX



We are beginning to drive more traffic to our website so we do not solely rely on social media for information sharing. To enable this we have made a number of improvements to the website. Having Alison on board has meant that there has been consistent website upkeep which has made it easier to drive traffic in that direction.

We continue to receive lots of incredibly supportive messages as well as requests for information and advice. We provide information based on the experiences within our community, and aim to signpost toward accredited sources of information, highlighting new research and news when it is published. This has been helped through collaboration with other charities and building those important relationships.

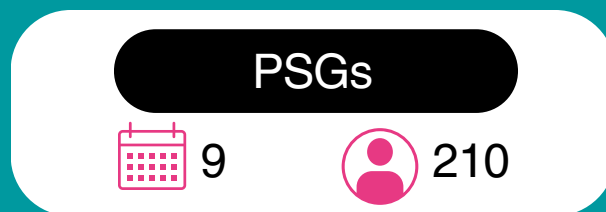


Activities

Peer Support Groups

BRCA+ Chat has always maintained that we are a charity driven by our community. Our community provides an incredible resource in itself through the sharing of experiences and supporting each other. Our Peer Support Groups (PSGs) have become a vital platform for this support and experience sharing as well as highlighting to us the key issues that our community is facing. We use these sessions to understand what resources we need to provide or find. Also, the increased number of PSGs has given us the opportunity to make them topic specific. Having general, ovary-specific and cancer-specific PSGs has allowed us to provide more tailored support to our community.

This year we held 9 PSGs with 210 bookings- a huge increase from last year, when we hosted 4 with 60 bookings.



The peer support groups are so helpful, not only to make me feel less alone with my own personal struggles in my BRCA journey but also giving me an opportunity to give back to people earlier along in their diagnosis makes me feel like I can be useful, that in itself feels like a silver lining to going through it all.

Thank you for all that you do, it's so vital



Meet Ups



Our BRCA+ Babes (volunteers hosting meet ups) continue to hold some amazing meet ups throughout the country. These consistently grow in popularity, providing that much-needed feeling of support and companionship throughout a difficult journey. The BRCA+ Babe role is also an ongoing development process for the charity; we are currently working on role profiles and volunteer processes to define these and expand across more locations. Feedback from meetings has been incredibly positive, and attendees particularly highlight reduced feelings of isolation on their journeys, something we feel very passionate about.

This year we hosted 24 meet ups, with 261 bookings across 10 locations. Again, this is a huge increase from 10 meet ups with 98 bookings last year.

Meet Ups



24



261



Manchester



London



Bournemouth



Doggo Friends



Leeds



I'm still very new into my journey, as I was diagnosed last month. I found this group useful to learn what to anticipate and to acknowledge that my emotional rollercoaster was normal! I find it difficult to explain BRCA to my friends and colleagues, so it's a relief to be in a space where you don't need to explain.

Information Sharing

✦ Webinars

Our webinars have been increasing in popularity. We have expanded the range of topics in our portfolio, introducing a mastectomy panel, and a panel of young adults who found out about hereditary cancer when they were children. We have also invited guest speakers, such as our first doctor, Dr Claire Macaulay, to deliver a talk on Sex and the Menopause. As BRCA+ Chat grows we are making more connections with healthcare professionals who are offering to provide informative webinars to our community, we already have a talk from a genetic counsellor lined up for next year.

We hosted 6 talks this year, only 2 more from last year. However, we had 226 bookings compared to 91 bookings last year, which demonstrates that we have a much wider reach.

Webinars



6



226



“It is always great to hear other people’s journeys. I wish I had been a part of this before having my double mastectomy as I would have been more confident in the choices I made”



Information Sharing

✦ Newsletters

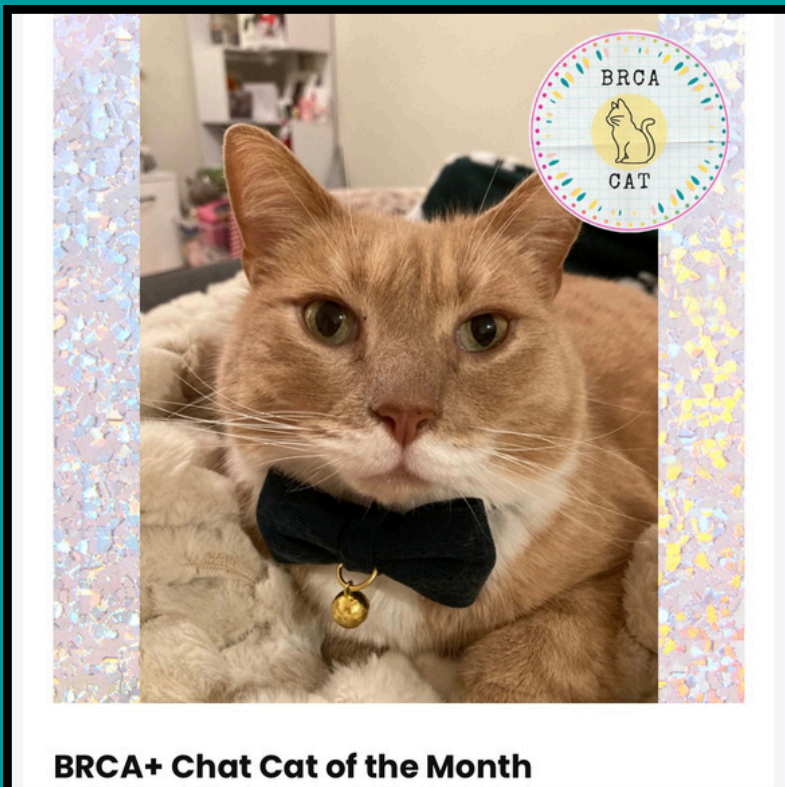


12



290

Our newsletters are an important way of keeping people informed about our plans, upcoming events, and news about everything BRCA+ Chat. We sent out twelve newsletters during this past year and have increased our subscriber list. Our newsletters are a vital source of information, including any new blogs, or national news or updates on BRCA and other gene alterations. They also reflect back on the past month's activities and promote future events. They are a mix of personal stories, news and research – and who can forget, the highlight of the BRCA Floof (animal) to keep things light-hearted.



I FEEL LESS ISOLATED!
HELPFUL TO SPEAK
WITH OTHERS THAT
FULLY UNDERSTAND
THIS MUTATION AND
ASSOCIATED
SURGERIES/RISKS.
THANK YOU!



✦ Blogs

We had more blogs this year than ever before, with a total of 14. We love hearing the individual journeys that connect us, and had a focus this year within Breast Feeding Week - with 3 lovely blogs about milk donation, milk banks, and connecting with newborns after a mastectomy.

BLOGS

14

✦ Building our Community

BRCA+ Chat is based on and built by our community. It is what keeps us going, keeps us strong and connects us across the country. We have built our community in a variety of ways this past year, including the growth of our BRCA+ Babes through recruitment in more areas of the UK, an increase in their meet ups and additional check ins with the Babes to gain vital feedback on processes and support they need to continue hosting meet ups. We have also increased the number of PSGs, talks, blogs and our social media presence.

As previously stated, we are developing our BRCA+ Babes process and in addition to this we are looking at our BRCA+ Buddy system and ways we can develop and progress this. The BRCA+ Buddy system includes creating a community where our BRCA+ Buddies can have first access to events, talks and PSGs; have individualised information and resources; and have a link to other buddies in their area. Building a strong and robust network of Babes and Buddies across the country will enable us to continue to grow BRCA+ Chat's reach and also the resources we can provide.

✦ Well-being

This year we have had 4 extremely beneficial Yoga Meditation sessions with the lovely Rosie. There has been a total of 38 people booked onto these sessions. We know the valuable impact these sessions have. Making time and space to reconnect with yourself really makes a difference, not only to emotional and mental wellbeing, but it can have a significant impact on recovery and healing.

“Thank you for last nights session with Rosie, I have genuinely never felt so relaxed”



Campaigning

With Alison admirably navigating day to day operation of the charity, Lisa and Christen have had more time to put towards valuable and exciting campaigning events. ✨

In May 2024, Lisa and Christen were invited to present at the Oncology Professional Care Conference in London. They gave an incredibly well-received talk to healthcare professionals on their experience of learning of their genetic alteration predisposing them to cancer, the preceding emotional journey and the role and impact of healthcare professionals on the positive outcome of that journey. In preparation for this talk, we reached out to our community to truly understand and communicate our shared concerns to healthcare professionals; they included some case-study examples of these experiences together with really powerful quotes in our presentation. The feedback gained from this talk was extremely positive.

In addition, a number of networking relationships were pursued, including highly successful organisations, such as the NHS and Movember. Our interaction with Movember has been particularly valuable and led us to overhaul the resources available for Men on our website.

As well as the conference, Lisa appeared on the BBC news with Cancer Research UK, on STV news speaking about BRCA+ Chat and was invited to the Scottish Cancer Conference where she made some valuable connections with Breast ✨

Cancer Now and the Scottish Cancer Coalition. Lisa also has been working hard to increase reach in Scotland through meeting with specialist gynae oncology nurses in a number of hospitals which has resulted in leaflets being given out to patients. Lisa also gave a talk to over 500 people within the Scottish Government about her BRCA journey and the creation of BRCA+ Chat which has brought a few members to the BRCA community.



Campaigning

Christen was equally as busy and was invited to the House of Commons where she raised awareness of BRCA via networking with influential people leading to some valuable connections.

Lisa and Christen have been involved with focus groups for the Protect C study and Professor Ranjit Manchanda and his team. Professor Ranjit is a professor at the Wolfson Institute of Population Health (WIPH), Queen Mary University of London, and leads the Women's Precision Prevention Team. His main research interests focus on population-based genetic testing, mainstreaming genetic testing and precision medicine approaches for risk prediction. Professor Ranjit was involved in the NICE guidelines for testing anyone within the Ashkenazi Jewish community for genetic alterations related to cancer. The Protect C project has the aim of showing that blanket testing all women for genetic alterations can make a huge difference to the survival rate and prevention of breast cancer, in particular, but also looks to revamp genetic testing pathways. This is something very close to our hearts and we will be working closely with the project and Professor Ranjit as it progresses. ✨



Christen also provided a talk to Domestic Abuse charity, Daisy, to raise awareness and empower women to attend their regular breast screenings.

Together with her hard work getting BRCA+ Chat's website and socials up to standard, Alison also gave an amazing talk at Leeds Teaching Hospitals, informing those there of BRCA+ Chat and the work we do. There are some very exciting things coming from this talk and Alison's relationship with the genetics team at Leeds Teaching Hospitals.

Our new Trustee Katie came in with a bang and also gave a talk to her work during International Woman's Week about her BRCA journey and her involvement with BRCA+ Chat.

Fundraisers

BRCA+ Chat is still entirely funded by our incredible donors and fundraisers. It blows us away the generosity of our community and their supporters but also shows the need for BRCA+ Chat and the service we offer. We absolutely would not be able to grow BRCA+ Chat the way we have this year if it had not been for the beautiful people that raise essential funds to help us develop our services, resources and reach.



Tough Paige



Our youngest! ✨



Abi & Laura

Christen conducted a 5-hour Hoop-A-Thon in celebration of her 5-year mastectomy anniversary where she not only raised awareness of BRCA and BRCA+ Chat but also raised a whopping £3,385 for us. It was an incredible feat of talent and dedication.

Alongside this, our biggest fundraisers have been Olivia and Daniella raising £2,099. Abi and Laura completing an ultra marathon and raising £3,492. Paige completing Tough Mudder and raising £1,335. Zach took part in a boxing tournament raising £390. Lucy did 30 days of movement in October raising £1050 and Tilly, our youngest fundraiser at 10 years old, raised £375!

A massive thanks to all of those who completed impressive fundraising events or made a donation. We appreciate each and every one of you.



Future Plans



Our future plans just keep on getting bigger and better each year. Next year we will finalise the development of our BRCA+ Babes and Buddy system, enabling us to host more events and reach more people throughout the year (& a national meet up is in the pipeline).

We will increase the number of talks we put on each year and deepen our collaboration with health professionals and institutes to support as many people affected by a genetic alteration as we can. With a wide range of topics within our repertoire now, and the popularity of these talks increasing, we will rotate the talks, so individuals can access them at different points in their journey.

We will have more leaflets, posters and pop-up banners in healthcare settings, enabling more health care professionals to signpost their patients to us. We are also in discussions with the NHS about setting up collaborative support groups within their hospital settings.

For the next year, we want to look at how we can increase our newsletter subscriber list and make our newsletter more appealing. As BRCA+ Chat grows, our newsletters will become a reliable way to communicate our upcoming events without worrying about algorithms on social media, therefore growth of our subscribers will become ever more important.

Our campaigning and networking will continue into next year with more connections and awareness raising.

“
It's great to be part of a special community where we all share similar journeys and know others will understand
”

“
It's so nice to have such a supportive environment where people all understand what I'm feeling. We might not have gone through the same experiences or surgeries, but all the ladies are so kind and understanding
”

From Christen & Lisa

Thank you to everyone in our community, our supporters and our board of Trustees. It has been an honour to work with you all this past year and we are very excited for next year!

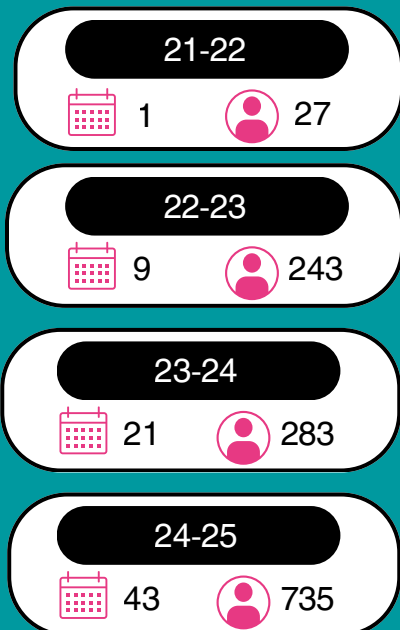




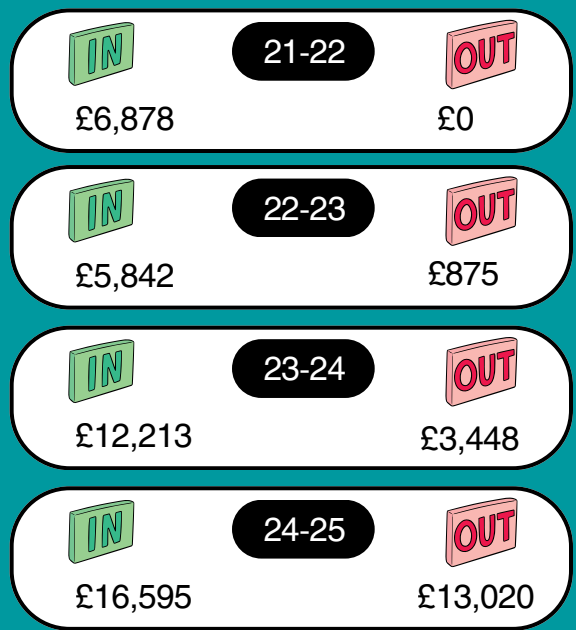
Annual Growth



Totals



Money





Governance and Financial Review

Trustees

Christen Williams (Chair)

Lisa Bancroft (Secretary)

Janine Duncan (Treasurer)

Alex Williams

Kate Biles

Lucy Hume

Katie Ling (from 15.12.2024)

Bank

Metro Bank

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Trustees are recruited through word of mouth or BRCA+ Chat advertising. The Trustees conduct an annual audit of the Board to identify where new Trustees with specialist skills or knowledge can benefit the charity. Prospective Trustees are interviewed by at least two members of the Trustee Board and then invited to attend a Trustee meeting to introduce themselves and their reasons for wanting to be a Trustee to the current Board members. A vote of the existing Trustees is then taken to confirm appointment.

Trustees are inducted by use of Charity Commission Trustee resources, introduction to the charity by Trustee Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and resources from charity infrastructure organisations.

Statement of the Charity's Policy on Reserves

Cash in bank at 31.03.2025 was £24,079 in unrestricted funds. The Trustees' policy on reserves is to hold enough reserves to cover dissolution of the charity. This is reviewed annually. They are confident that the charity has enough funds to cover any dissolution costs.

Details of Any Funds Materially in Deficit

The Trustees declare that the charity had no funds which were materially in deficit at the date of the statement of assets and liabilities.



State of the Charity's Finances

Thanks to the efforts of our many supporters who have raised funds for us our reserves have doubled in the past year and the Board has made plans in the coming year to use these funds to meet our objectives by budgeting for admin and specialist support services to provide more comprehensive support for our beneficiaries.

Restricted Funds

The charity did not receive any restricted funds.

Designated Funds

We did not receive any designated funds during the year.

Particulars of Any Outstanding Guarantee Given by the Charity

The Trustees declare that the charity has given no guarantee where potential liability is outstanding at the date of the statement of assets and liabilities.

Particulars of Any Outstanding Debt

The Trustees declare that the charity has no outstanding debts which are secured by an express charge on any of the assets of the charity at the date of the statement of assets and liabilities.

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved this report and authorised that it be signed on their behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light green, fish-shaped background. The signature appears to read 'Christen Williams'.

Christen Williams

October 2025



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 1st April 2024	To	Period end date 31st March 2025
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	16 587	-	-	16 587	12 213
Other (Teemill)	8	-	-	8	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	16 595	-	-	16 595	12 213
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	16 595	-	-	16 595	12 213
A3 Payments					
Co-ordinator Fees	-	-	-	9 750	1 920
Well being Webinars	-	-	-	225	151
Buddies Materials	-	-	-	640	231
Trustee Expenses	-	-	-	1 643	944
Licences	-	-	-	314	77
Insurance	-	-	-	96	106
Marketing	-	-	-	170	-
Fundraising Expenses	-	-	-	162	-
Other	-	-	-	20	-
Sub total	13 020	-	-	13 020	3 429
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	13 020	-	-	13 020	3 429
Net of receipts/(payments)	3 575	-	-	3 575	8 784
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	20 504	-	-	20 504	-
Cash funds this year end	24 079	-	-	24 079	8 784

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	24 079	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	24079	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
<i>Janine Duncan</i> Christen Williams	P. O. Duncas 	08.10.2025 08.10.2025