

# Thistles

Your Choice, Your Life



# Annual Report

Thistles Market Garden Ltd

## 2022 -2023

[www.ThistlesMarketGarden.net](http://www.ThistlesMarketGarden.net)

[thistles.enquiries@hotmail.com](mailto:thistles.enquiries@hotmail.com)

Thistles Market Garden Ltd.

Station Road

Sutterton

Boston

Lincolnshire

PE20 2JX

Tel: 01205 461286



### A Charitable organisation

Registered under the  
Co-operative and Benefit  
Societies Act 2014

Reg. Company number:  
IP031461

FCA Reference: 31461R  
HMRC Charities Ref. No.

### Management Committee:

Chairman:	Tony Clarke
Secretary/Treasurer:	Sarah Nash
	Sonia Bowman
	Nikki Phillips
	Sarah Nash
	Cheryl Gratton
	Sue Clark
	Kerry Gibson

<b>Service Manager:</b>	Liz Judge (retired February 2023)
	Michael Burgess (Feb 2023 onwards)



## **Chairman's Report**

2022 to 2023 has seen lots of changes for Thistles, the main one being Liz Judge, Service Manager, retiring. We successfully managed to fill the position and welcomed Michael Burgess onboard. It has been the first full year where Thistles has been able to fully function without any of the restrictions that COVID brought with it.

The service users have been busy carrying out tasks throughout the different seasons of the year, growing, watering, weeding and harvesting. When outdoor work was not possible, they enjoyed baking, stewing, pickling and taking trips around the county building new partnerships as they went.

Throughout the year Thistles has received some very generous donations which has very much helped.

As we end another year Thistles is looking forward to continuing in reviving old partnerships and also making new partnerships along the way.

Thank you to Michael and all the staff, service users, members of the committee and supporters, for enabling Thistles to continue doing what it does best.

*Sarah Nash*

## **Managers Report**

### **Update**

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who have welcomed me to Thistles since I took over in February 2023 from Liz, who has done an amazing job in keeping Thistles afloat from the aftermath of the COVID pandemic.

It has been a challenge this year with numbers down to 10 people at one point. Referrals were increasing up the end of this reporting period. This is in no small part due to successful marketing and hard work from the staff team.

We welcomed Tracey to the staff team and Barbara our new bus driver.

### **Partnership working**

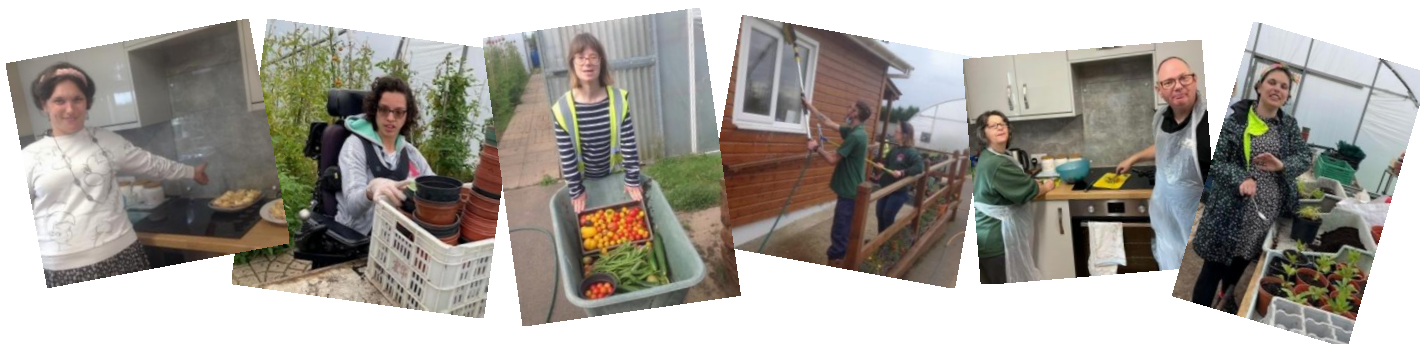
Thistles have continued to strengthen its relationships with existing businesses and organisations and formed some new partnerships too. There are lots of partners who have been extremely valuable to Thistles and we couldn't operate as effectively without them, so thank you to them.

I will end by thanking everyone, businesses, organisations, staff, volunteers, parents, committee members and carers for their continued support of Thistles this past reporting year.

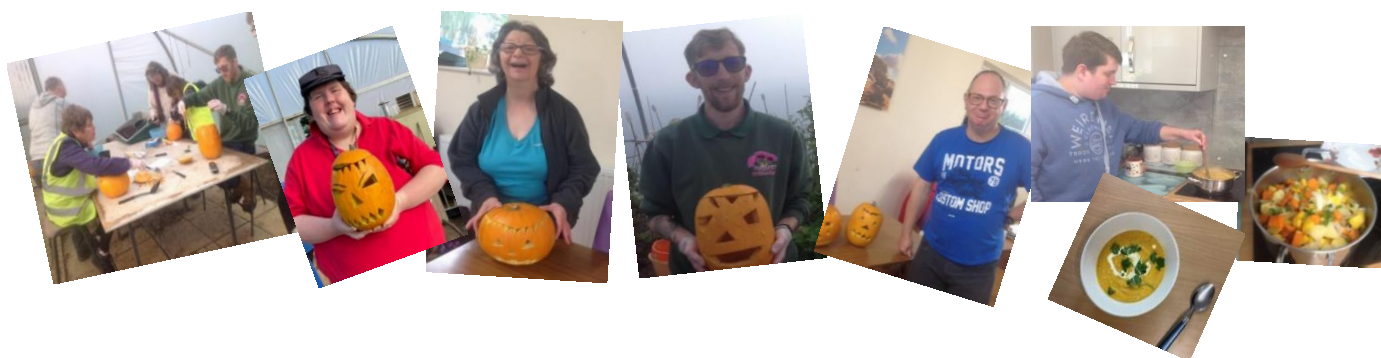
*Michael Burgess*

## Activities

September saw the Thistles group members' busy working outside, watering, weeding, mowing and harvesting produce including Tomatoes, Butternut squashes, Cucumbers, apples, pears, beans and courgettes. The group re-potted Shasta Daisies, Apple trees and fuchsia cuttings. Thistles encountered a slight problem in the small poly-tunnel when it became over-run with a swarm of bees and couldn't be used until they had died off. Instead activities such as cooking and pickling our own beetroot, baking cakes, stewing our grown rhubarb and making apple and pear crumbles were enjoyed by all. We also had a lovely trip to Pinchin's Farm shop for coffees and cakes.



October continued with harvesting the last of the tomatoes, runner beans and cucumbers before removing ready for the winter, some more fruit and some rather interesting shaped carrots were also harvested causing some amusement from group members. The group made some green tomato chutney and tomato soup. Mowing, weeding and watering continued along with deadheading on the site, bulbs were planted and Dianthus cutting were potted on. The group enjoyed designing and carving home grown Pumpkins ready for Halloween and then make some delicious pumpkin soup. Then preparations for Christmas commenced with wooden pallet project being started, so lots of sanding and painting for members to get stuck into. Members also enjoyed another visit to Pinchin's farm shop for coffee and a visit to Congregations at Swineshead to book Christmas Lunch.



In November the wreath preparation started early with, covering the wreath rings, tying bows and wiring baubles, spraying and wiring the cones. Mid November we collected foliage and commenced wreath making by the third week. The pallet Christmas decoration projects also continued with more sanding and painting, along with some Christmas stencilled decorations and were finished ready for sale. Other activities include moving the staging, taking the more tender plants inside for wintering, potting on some rooted cuttings, weeding the poly-tunnels and raking up autumn leaves to keep the site tidy. The Co-operative also helped Thistles by removing part of the rubbish heap. The last of the beetroots were dug up, washed, trimmed, cooked and pickled. The group also enjoyed making pumpkin soup, cupcakes, and baking and decorating mini Christmas cakes. We enjoyed several health walks in Westward woods usually ending in warm drinks in a café. Interviews for a new Manager also began this month in anticipation of Liz's retirement.



December continued to be busy making Christmas wreaths to keep up with demand, the group took some of the wreaths and pallet decorations to sell at Scott House's Christmas fair and enjoyed the entertainment that was put on there. December was cold and the site was well gritted and salted to ensure everyone's safety. The last of the butternut squash was harvested and the plants pulled up. Seeds were removed from seed pods and stored for future planting. The group put the Christmas tree up and decorations at Thistles, members enjoyed many festive activities such as card making, biscuit making and icing, games and Christmas DVDs. The group enjoyed Christmas Lunch at Baythorpe Tearooms, Swineshead, which also doubled up as a farewell meal for Liz's pending retirement (originally 31<sup>st</sup> Dec then delayed to Feb '23). The staff and group presented Liz with retirement gifts. The group were also treated to a Theatre trip to see Cinderella at the South Holland Centre by Thistles Friend and volunteer Rachel, and great fun was had by all. Members also went out for Christmas drinks at the Chain Bridge before breaking for the Christmas holidays.





New Year started with a good tidy up of the site and the building, with members getting involved with putting away decorations and art materials used to make Christmas projects, the kitchen cupboards and skirting boards all had a clean up, old bedding plants and weeds were removed from planters and replaced with bulb planters and troughs ready for the spring. The raised strawberry beds were weeded, on dry days we made a start on weeding the borders and tidied up the poly tunnels. Our wooden trolley was repaired and re-painted and stained, pots were washed, seed trays were prepared with sieved soil, and seed packets were identified and sorted according to sowing dates, labels washed ready to reuse and seeds removed from dried pods. By the end of January, the group had chitted the potatoes, set broad beans, seeded little gem lettuces, oregano, garlic chives, dill, thyme, and got the first few bedding plants sown for baskets (Verbena, Lobelia, Alyssum, Lavender, Calendula and Tagetes). Members also made bird feeders which they hung from the orchard trees. The group had several winter health walks, a trip to see Spalding flower auction and shopping trips for more seeds and supplies. In the office Liz began to hand over the manager's reigns to Michael Burgess in anticipation of his employment as the new manager commencing. And the group were lucky to have a tour of the growing process at Fountains to see how seed are grown on an industrial scale.



While the management hand over continued in the office in February and the group members got to know Michael, members continued their daily routine with the preparation of seed trays, sieving soil, soaking and sowing various seeds, such as; Celery, Busy Lizzies, Cucumber, Peppers, Petunias, Tomatoes, Sashta Daisies, Salvia, Courgettes, Aubergine,

Coriander and Basil. Thistles received a big donation of large pots which all required washing, and the small poly-tunnel got it's first dig over for this year. The 2<sup>nd</sup> early potatoes were chitted, and some raspberry canes planted along with the new strawberry plants taken previously from runners and some spider plants were re-potted. The main plot was rotavated, and a lot of weeding was done. Jakeman's planters were tidied up and some sprouting bulbs put in. Group members enjoyed some cooking activities and made Quiche, scones and pancakes; they also made valentine cards and went on several health walks locally. Towards the end of February some of the tomato and Tagetes seedling were ready to be pricked out to small pots, and dill and little gem seedlings were potted on to.



March was certainly a hive of activity at Thistles, with lots more seeding of vegetables and bedding plants alike, and pricking out of seedlings previously seeded into the first size of pots, and larger seedlings such as broad beans, cucumbers and courgettes were potted on to the next size pots. Our larger sized perennial plants and shrubs were tidied up and re-potted ready for resale. The small poly tunnel was prepped ready for planting, and the first lettuces were put in, the main plot was dug over and the 1<sup>st</sup> early potatoes were planted. Although there was much weeding, watering and mowing by March, the group managed to fit in several additional activities which included a morning of willow weaving and woodwork at Scott House which they enjoyed trying their hands at. Members also enjoyed a trip to Golden Grove Nursery to see how they grow, they grow ever-green trees for the commercial markets. March also saw the retirement of our Minibus driver Steve.



April is always an extremely busy month at Thistles, with the seedlings growing well and all needing potting into pots and or planting. Group members and staff alike work hard getting the broad beans, strawberries, carrots and asparagus planted into the land, and the large poly-tunnel was dug over and commenced getting the tomato, cucumber plants in the soil. More runner beans, courgettes, cucumbers and pansies were seeded, and baskets bedding plants such as Lobelia, Petunias and Alyssum were pricked out into small pots, while Marigolds, Lavatera, Geums, Salvias, Asters, Sweet peas, Cosmos and Mesermeranthemums were potted on to the next size of pots along with Courgettes, melons, Aubergines, beetroot and Butternut squash. Cuttings were taken from Fuchsia bushes, a second crop of potatoes were planted into the main crop and hilled up. The group enjoyed a trip to Butters in Spalding to purchase more plants, and a trip to Horse Therapy at Sunset Farm at Fosdyke, a wander up to Sutterton Parish Church to look at their Flower Festival and Thistles was invited to go and visit some Lambs by Pinchin's Farm Shop. The group also each painted pebbles to be set later at a friendly Bench in Boston.



May Continued to be busy, especially with one support worker down by mid month but the show went on preparing hanging baskets and planters ready for resale. Group members continued to work hard keeping the site tidy, watered, mowed, weeded the boarder and continued to hill up the potatoes periodically. Planting on the outside land of cauliflower, kale, broccoli, spring cabbage, courgettes, pumpkins and squashes, celery and beetroot, as well as mange-tout, sweet pea, carrots and chard. Lots of re-potting of basket plants, more tomatoes, water & honeydew melon, cucumber, peppers and aubergines that we later set in the ground in the small poly-tunnel. The group enjoyed constructing the wigwams to support the runner beans. Whilst busy on site the group were able to enjoy a few trips out buying more plants, planting wild flowers in central park Boston, preparing Pilgrims patch for planting for Boston in Bloom, and visiting the stones they had previously painted at Ancaster court's friendly bench. They also enjoyed a second visit to Sunset farm for another horse therapy session. Members also spent some time putting together interview questions for a new support worker, and we were visited by the Crime Commissioner who presented us with a cheque.





June was an exciting month for group members and staff alike as we had an open day on the 6<sup>th</sup> which the group had been preparing for several weeks beforehand. We had music, cakes and refreshments, raffle, tombola, plant and basket stalls, and we invited many other day services and members of the local community to visit us and see the great work we do here at Thistles. Despite a couple of rain showers the event was well attended and we raised some vital funds of £924 as well as promoting our day service producing several enquires to join our group. The group continued to mow, water and weed the site, deadhead the flowers and baskets, and some fuchsias were re-potted. Tomatoes were pinched out, trimmed back and tied up. Broad beans were harvested, and leaks, cucumbers, sunflowers and lettuces were planted. The group spent a morning planting Pilgrims Patch ready for Boston in Bloom to be later judged. Chris kindly came to Thistles to take some drone footage and interview group members and staff in order to put together a promotional video for us. Tracey was the successful candidate for the support worker position and started in the third week of June, it was great to have her on board with her knowledge of horticulture combined with her experience of support working.



Lots of harvesting took place during July, tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, courgettes and runner beans were in abundance. A second crop of potatoes were planted, along with more runner beans, cabbages and some excess tomato plants were put in the outside plot. Constant watering, weeding and mowing continued, deadheading and tidying of the hanging baskets, the finished broad bean plants were removed and the area dug over. Lavender and rosemary cutting were taken, and herbs and Lupins were seeded. The group went out to collect some donated paving slabs in order to prepare for additional paving to site to allow for disability access. Members participated in community work by watering Sutterton planters and weeding Pilgrims patch prior to Boston in Bloom being judged, and they enjoyed a lunch at Fidel House after. Members started some summer days out to Lincolnshire Wolds Wildlife, Skegness Aquarium, Sailability and a trip to the Cinema with a McDonalds lunch and walk around Westgate woods. We had many visitors to our site, including Chris to show us the final edit of the Thistles promotional video, Pelican Trust came and delivered a couple of courses chosen by the group, Prince's Trust young adults who came for a week and repainted our front shed and helped with other jobs around site, a visit from Skinners ice-cream, and Chapel centre. Group members also took part in a drawing competition for the Heckington Show, for which their collage won 2<sup>nd</sup> place and £30 for the kitty.



August continued to be busy month harvesting our fruit and vegetables at Thistles; these include tomatoes, radish, runner beans, cucumber, peppers, chard, potatoes, beetroot, apples pears, and plums. Strawberry runners were potted up and rosemary, lupines, herbs and chrysanthemums were re-potted. Group members also got involved with all activities such as mowing, weeding and digging the plot, and trimming back some shrubs. They then helped to sand down and repaint the front display stand. Summer trips to Ostler's plantation for a walk & picnic and obligatory ice-cream stop off, Westgate woods for refreshments at Fisherman's rest, and Horncastle for a chippy lunch and coffee. Members also participated in horse therapy at Sunset Farm and a BBQ on site at Thistles, a seed buying trip to Spalding and visited Scott House for their summer fair. The group also had several cooking sessions using some of our own produce.



**Community Support:**

Thistles are especially grateful for the continued support we have received from our community throughout this year. We would like to thank local businesses and individuals that have given their time and supported us financially.

**A big thank you to the many organisations and individuals who have help Thistles during this period, including the following:**

Jessie Scattergood, our landowner who continues to support Thistles with our peppercorn rent as well as her generous cash donations, treats of coffee & cakes at Baythorpe Tea Rooms and sweets.

Burdens of North Kyme who donated the repairs of our mower.

Rachel Bowser who not only volunteers her time, but treated the group to see the Pantomime at Spalding, and supplied us with mince pies.

Michael Bowser for giving your time and materials to come and strim and put weed killer in our car-park area.

Jakemans, who continues to donate boxes of their Jakemans sweets.

Lincolnshire Co-Operative, from whom we received a funding bit to buy a new printer and some rubber mats for inside and outside the building, as well as raffle donations.

John Marshal for the donation of the website domain and his time & work in maintaining the Thistles website. Donations of plants & foliage for our Christmas wreaths.

Cheryl Gratton for her time and support with the Thistles open day, donations of raffle prizes, biscuits as well as financial donations.

Nick Gratton for providing the disco for our open day.

Boston Freemason's for the £500 donation.

Fountains for their continued donations of compost, seeds and the fascinating tour of your growing process on an industrial scale.

Dave Sharpe and the Police Commissioner for the £500 donation, and Dave's assistance in acquiring office equipment on Thistles behalf.

Lincolnshire Police for donating propagators, secateurs, large plant pots, compost bags, twine and other gardening equipment, thankyou for Nicky for bring them to Thistles.

Golden Grove Nursery, for the interesting tour of your nursery and the donation of the trees.

Chris Chrisford and Ian Davis for coming to sing at our open day, and Chris for the donation of the fabulous drone footage and putting together our promotional film clip.

Vanessa Oscroft for the donation of cakes, borrowing her tools for making wooden decorations, garden chairs, tables, bunting and various other items for the open day. Also for raising money for Thistles by selling plants outside her house through the summer weekends.

Steve Ring for continuing to support Thistles after your retirement as our driver, and the many tip runs you have done for us.

Local Businesses who have supplied us with Raffle donations:

Sutterton Fish & Chips, Kirton Flower shop, Sutterton Hairdressers, Co-Op and Sylvia's Beauty.

Andy Butler who kindly lent us his potato ridger, provided some seed potatoes and came to help us plant potatoes, and who replaced & fixed the wheels on a trolley.

Clarke Builders who kindly donated hardcore and Turnbolls who kindly delivered it to Thistles.

B & Q (Peterborough) who donated pots, paints and tools via the neighbourly scheme.

Elson Seed for their donation of seeds.

The ATAM Garden Maintenance, aka the mower man who has been looking after our mowers and strimmers for us at minimal cost.

Kevin Feary of KDF Motors, Sutterton, for the donation of the brake-light replacement and for looking after our minibus for us, and fixing our rotovator wheel.

Henny Pinchin of Pinchins farm shop and café, Algekirk, for the donation of cakes for our Open Day and for treating the group to coffee and cakes at your café.

Debbie Lane who sourced and donated many tombola and raffle prizes.

Barbara Milligan who has donated many cakes, and also donated many raffle and tombola prizes.

Iren Crawford for the £10 donation toward Christmas drinks and the donation of hand wipes.

Rox Croot from the Co-Op who organised the removal of some of our rubbish heap.

Tina Nixon, who donated pots and baskets on behalf of her mother Clair Nixon.

Joyce and Chris from Kirton who donated pots and hanging baskets, biscuits and Chris who made Thistles a planter.

John, The owner of the Bluebell Inn who donated plastic crates.

Shane Sanders for the tin of Quality street, and numerous trees.

Natalie Mumby for the donation of a Beauty and the Beast DVD.

John donated seed packets.

Sarah Charlton who donated biscuits and chocolates to the group.

Bridgette (from Boston in Bloom) who donated pots.

June Matthews who donated pots.

Stuart Lindley who donated gardening tools and pots.

Wendy for the donation of seeds.

Aaron for helping set up a laptop.

Rob Holmes, our Thistles neighbour who donated apples.

Helen Marshall who donated pots.

Mrs Mossam who donated £10.

Maureen who donated £5.

Patricia Bleasdale who donated £20.

Cheryl (Sonia's work Colleague) who donated foliage for wreaths.

Cannon Margaret Barnsley for the Helibore plants.

Tracey Mulvaney for the Mint plants.

Candy Burton who donated sweets.

Sarah Patrick who has donated milk on several occasions and a box of quality street.

Angie Johnson Pinchbeck for the donation of seed.  
Colin from Burtoft who donated trays and pots.  
Steve from Sutterton who donated trays and pots.

And to all the group members, staff and parents that donated toward both Liz's and Steve's retirement gifts.

**Thank you to you all...we could do what we do without your continued support.**

### **Treasurer's Report**

The 2022 – 2023 year was much on par with the previous year. It has been a stable year for Thistles and has provided a good basis on which to build on moving forwards and enable Thistles to grow and welcome new service users. Income and Expenses were like for like when comparing against the 2021 – 2022 year.

The addition of money from fund raising activities, the open day, roadside sales, and donations of items and money has helped towards any shortfall that Thistles may have had whilst going through the process of welcoming new service users which obviously takes time.


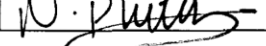
The positive things to take from this year is that all bills have been paid, all equipment along with the minibus has been maintained, all staff have been paid and Thistles has managed to keep a healthy balance in the bank towards anything unexpected that may occur in the future, or to enable Thistles to invest into future projects.

*Nikki Phillips*

# Statement of Accounts

THISLES MARKET GARDEN LIMITED 31461R					
Receipts and payments accounts					
	For the period from	Period start 01/10/2022	to	Period end 30/09/2023	
<b>Section A Receipts and payments</b>					
	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 £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations & gift aid	2,269	-	-	2,269	3,627
Fund raising activities	1,574	-	-	1,574	1,094
Fees for provision of services	62,640	-	-	62,640	65,720
Open Day	900	-	-	900	-
FIT	428	-	-	428	-
<i>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</i>	<b>67,812</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>67,812</b>	<b>70,441</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
<i>Sub total</i>					
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>67,812</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>67,812</b>	<b>70,441</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Salaries, cover staff & pensions	63,053	-	-	63,053	61,427
Vehicle & transport expenses	3,597	-	-	3,597	3,990
Repairs & maintenance	1,560	-	-	1,560	1,499
Light & Heat	896	-	-	896	239
Water rates	335	-	-	335	359
Premises Insurance	2,051	-	-	2,051	2,587
Telephone & internet	1,019	-	-	1,019	1,098
Stationery, postage and carriage & advertising	7	-	-	7	639
Bookkeeping charges	182	-	-	182	2,272
Accountancy charges	420	-	-	420	360
Cleaning	110	-	-	110	496
Sundries	2,877	-	-	2,877	1,104
Training costs	170	-	-	170	163
<i>Sub total</i>	<b>76,279</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>76,279</b>	<b>76,233</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
Property					
Equipment					
<i>Sub total</i>					
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>76,279</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>76,279</b>	<b>76,233</b>
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	<b>- 8,467</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 8,467</b>	<b>-5,792</b>
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end					
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	<b>- 8,467</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 8,467</b>	<b>- 5,792</b>

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	Cash at bank	11,422	-	-
	Cash in hand	1,415	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b> <small>(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))</small>	<b>12,837</b>	-	-
		Agreement Error	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets				
		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	Property	119729	-	-
	Motor vehicle	14940	-	-
	Equipment	757	-	-
		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use				
		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities				
	Accumulated fund	148,263	-	-
Examined and approved on behalf of the Society Chairman	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		SARAH NASH	27/2/24	
Treasurer		Nicci Philips	28/2/24	