

VisionPK

••• Empowering Independence

Annual Review 2018



*VisionPK is the operating name for
Perth & Kinross Society for the Blind*



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Not wanting to be labelled, I was apprehensive to say the least. However, after an introduction to what VisionPK provides, I was more than happy to sign up. Thank you for being there for people like myself."

Our aim is to support the empowerment of people with a sensory impairment to take a full and fulfilling role in society and to help them to achieve the personal outcomes they aspire to.

We do this by providing and continuously developing a wide range of services and support for people with a visual and/or hearing impairment. We are committed to working in partnership with appropriate statutory sector, third sector, and business organisations so as to provide the best and most comprehensive services that we can.

Officials

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Hon President	Alistair (Jock) Munro (deceased 19/6/18)
Hon Vice-President	Valerie Wares
Chairman	Sandy Pearson
Vice-Chairman	David Willis*
Directors	Cindy Godfrey-McKay* (to 21/11/18) Irene Hill* Mike Martin George Nisbet (from 21/11/18) James (Brian) Scott* Clare Thomas (* denotes sensory impaired director)
Treasurers	Morris & Young, 6 Atholl Crescent, Perth, PH1 5JN
Bankers	Bank of Scotland, 10-16 King Edward Street, Perth, PH1 5UT
Investment Managers	Smith & Williamson, 206 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG
Independent Financial Examiners	Campbell Dallas LLP, 4 Atholl Crescent, Perth PH1 5NG

STAFF TEAM

Chief Executive	Bob Ironside
Client Services Manager	Gill Sutherland
Volunteer Services Manager	Bev Pettle
Operations Manager	Jane Alston
Rehabilitation Workers	June Dargie; Tina Williamson; Doreen McNab
Support Services Officer	Ann Hassan
Receptionist/Admin Assistant	Leanne Scobie
Hearing Loss Support Worker	Debi Wallace - employed by Action on Hearing Loss (Scotland)

Chairman's Introduction

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Welcome to VisionPK's latest Annual Review. At the start of 2018, many of our service users and other stakeholders contributed to VisionPK's Strategic Review, which reported in April. The outcome of that review was agreement by the Board that VisionPK should pursue a strategy of incremental growth for the organisation and its services. This has underpinned much of our work in the past year.



Various positive changes have been made, and we continue to rationalise and enhance the levels of specialist skills and expertise available to deliver and improve upon our services.

2018 was the middle period of our three-year initial contract to provide joint sensory services on behalf of the local statutory sector. Last April, the monitoring of the contract transferred from Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) to the Perth & Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership (PKHSCP). This reflects the continuing integration of adult health and social care services in the statutory sector. To date, feedback from the commissioners, service users and carers on our delivery of the contract has been entirely positive. We have also been working with the PKHSCP to develop new arrangements for monitoring the contract, which we believe will be invaluable in demonstrating our success in the future.

Unfortunately, our overall financial out-turn at 31 March 2018 was not as good as the previous year, mainly because the stock market was much less favourable. Our core funding continues to fall short of what is required to meet our operating costs. However, legacies and donations can make a significant improvement to our financial position. All the legacies and donations we receive greatly support our efforts to improve the services we can provide to enhance the lives of people living with sensory impairment in Perth & Kinross. Grants from charitable trusts are another valuable source of funding. For example, a particularly generous grant of £36K over three years was awarded to us by the R S MacDonald Trust towards to the core costs of our visual impairment services. We are hugely grateful for all the financial contributions we receive, and I would like to record our thanks to all individuals and organisations who support our services in this way.

In terms of service delivery we believe that VisionPK is already doing well, but we are constantly looking at ways to develop and improve our services, which I believe is reflected in this Annual Review, the main theme of which is 'Measuring our impact'.

As always, I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our expert and committed team of directors, staff and volunteers who underpin the success of VisionPK. I must also thank the many partner organisations with whom we work, especially of course Action on Hearing Loss (Scotland), which provides much of the statutory hearing loss service on our behalf.

The next year is going to be one of significant change. Our Chief Executive for the past seven years, Bob Ironside, will be leaving us at the start of April for a well-earned retirement. Bob's support, guidance and leadership has helped steer the development of the Society, improve its services and shape its future. On behalf of the Board, staff and everyone associated with VisionPK, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bob for all his hard work and dedication.

I am delighted to announce that Bob's successor will be Gwenn McCreath, who will start at the end of March. Gwenn comes to us with a wealth of experience in charity leadership and management, including previous work in the sensory loss sector.

Looking forward to the year ahead and beyond, we will be well equipped to develop even more support to enable our service users to lead their lives as independently as possible.

Sandy Pearson



At the end of March 2018 there were 351 Perth & Kinross residents registered as blind and 371 partially sighted, making a total of 722 on the Register. The number of non-registered people to whom we were providing services at the end of March 2018 was 348, compared with 301 in March 2017.

Measuring our impact

Setting out to do great work is one thing, and getting praise about the services that you provide is all very well, but how can an organisation like VisionPK actually demonstrate the impact that it has on the lives of the people it aims to support? In the following pages, we talk about some of the things that tell us we are making a positive difference to the lives of our service users.

Early Intervention

Over the last six years, we have seen a dramatic change in the nature of the referrals to VisionPK for people with sight loss. Historically, services were available only to individuals who had been certified by a consultant ophthalmologist and subsequently registered either partially sighted or blind.

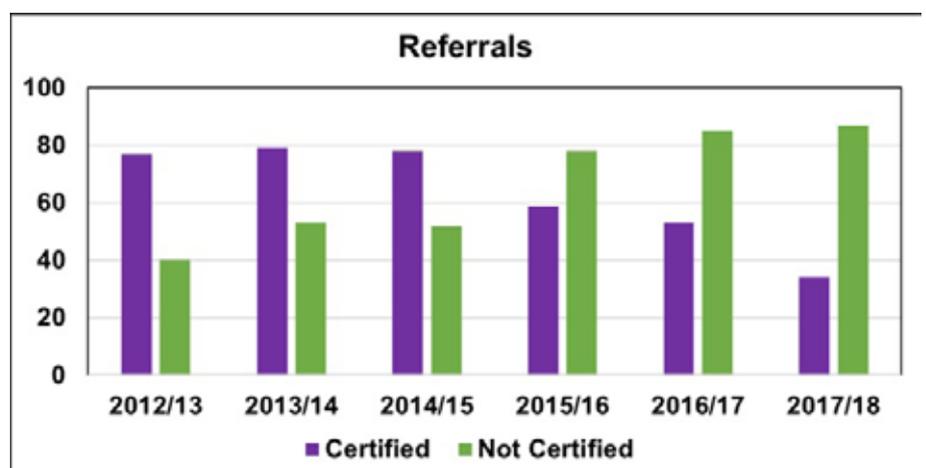
However, effective intervention and prevention at an earlier stage can not only increase independence but also lead to improved outcomes and quality of life for visually impaired people. As our older population increases and we face reductions in available resources, it is essential that we work to ensure that, where possible, low-level needs are prevented or delayed from developing into more serious or acute needs.

In recent years we have worked hard to make contact with individuals earlier in their sight loss journey through:

- raising our profile
- engaging with a wide range of potential referrers
- promoting the benefits of earlier help.

We now receive referrals from a much wider range of sources.

The chart adjacent compares the number of people referred to us with a certified (by a consultant ophthalmologist) visual impairment against those with a 'not certified' visual impairment in the years 2012 to 2018.



Success Story

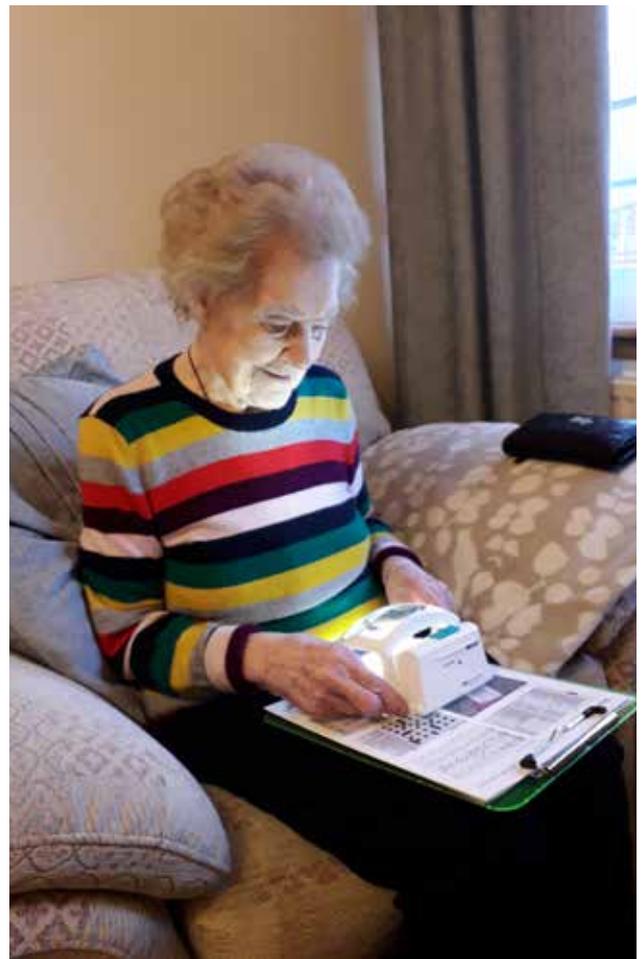
Jennifer (not her real name) was initially referred to VisionPK in 2015. At that time she was not registered. We provided her with advice and information, and she was able to make some changes to make the best of her functional vision and plan for her future vision loss, as she had been told that this would deteriorate. She improved the lighting levels in her home, began wearing UV filters to reduce the negative affect of glare and started using bold pens and large print options to manage her paperwork. Jennifer also accessed support to use her iPad and iPhone. One of our Rehabilitation Workers offered her some advice on her outdoor mobility. Almost two years later, she was certified and registered as partially sighted, as her vision had deteriorated. However, her independence had not. She continues to live independently, getting out and about, and is volunteering on a regular basis.

Vision Loss Rehabilitation

Specialist services need specialist staff, and VisionPK has the expertise of three qualified Rehabilitation Workers for Visually Impaired People who have 65 years of experience between them.

These workers usually become involved when a new referral is received for someone who is experiencing significant loss of vision. Their role is to find out what difficulties the person is experiencing due to their sight loss and to work with them to provide solutions. Their involvement can be for a short time or in some cases may require months of periodic support.

Their time can be spent focusing on improving the person's skills, safety and confidence around the home, including in the kitchen, or offering intensive 'long cane' training so they can get out and about independently. For others, just some information and advice may be all that is required to assist them to maintain their current level of independence.



Measuring our impact

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Although offering practical support is a key role, our Rehabilitation Workers offer reassurance and emotional support too. Losing one's sight can result in many different negative emotions and it is vital that support is offered at the right time by the right person to ensure positive health and wellbeing outcomes in the future.

Sight loss is a journey, and our Rehabilitation Workers are available to offer support whenever it is required. Everyone is an individual, and our approach is to listen to what our service users tell us and to work alongside them on the outcomes they want to achieve.

The value of rehabilitation support for individuals experiencing sight loss is well documented. It has wider benefits too. Independent research commissioned by the RNIB in 2017 identified that the costs of providing vision rehabilitation services is dwarfed by the health and social care costs saved. In the area where the research was based, it was calculated that over £3.4 million of health and social care costs were avoided through timeous provision of rehabilitation support.



Success Story

The husband of one of our recently deceased clients told us:

"You came along at just the right time and she really appreciated what you did for her. You gave her hope, aids to assist with making a cup of tea and advice about new technology that would be useful. As time went on and her sight got worse you introduced her to other ways to read books and news which made a big difference to her quality of life. You even suggested a new hobby (a clay class) which opened up a new circle of friends and something we could do together on a weekly basis. She made some keepsake items for the grandchildren which she was so pleased to be able to do. Thank you so much for your support".

“As a consultant ophthalmologist in the Hospital Eye Service, I see patients on a daily basis who have benefitted from the tremendous support provided by VisionPK. Medical treatment has its place, but everyone’s goal is to support people with visual loss to lead fulfilling, independent lives. We are extremely lucky in Perthshire to have a visual support service providing such high quality, professional care. I am extremely grateful to VisionPK for the unfailing reassurance they provide for the people of Perthshire who live with visual loss as well as their families and carers.”

Hearing Loss Support

Since 2016, VisionPK has provided services to people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, as well as those with a sight loss. An integral part of our contract with the PKHSCP is to assess needs of service users for specialist environmental equipment that can be provided to help them deal with hearing loss.

To deliver this, we have an on-going partnership with Action on Hearing Loss (Scotland) who are experts in the field. As well as inputting specialist knowledge, they employ a full-time Hearing Loss Support Worker to work as part of VisionPK’s integrated sensory services team.

Any person, of any age, living within Perth & Kinross who is Deaf or hard of hearing and is experiencing difficulties in carrying out everyday activities due to hearing loss can be referred to us or approach us directly for advice and support.



He is like a different person, his whole persona and behaviour has changed in a positive way”

Since our hearing loss service first started two years ago, the number of referrals has increased by around 40%. This reflects our networking with other voluntary services and public bodies to raise awareness and to broaden knowledge about the services we offer.

We have now supported over 1000 people with a hearing loss, including providing environmental equipment to over 400 of these.



Success story

John (not his real name) lives in supported accommodation and has complex needs. Both his sister and staff members were becoming increasingly concerned as John was low in mood and reluctant to interact, spending most of each day in his room.

After having attended one of our sensory awareness training sessions, John's key worker made a referral to VisionPK. Our Hearing Loss Support Worker undertook an assessment and established that John's hearing aids were old and poorly maintained. She liaised with the Audiology service and John was provided with new hearing aids. She also provided him with other specialist equipment to assist him further with hearing conversations and the television.

When reviewed several weeks later, staff advised that John's behaviour had changed dramatically in a very positive way. He appeared to be much happier, smiling, laughing and communicating more with his sister, other residents and staff members. John was also able to communicate how well the equipment was working for him and how thankful he was for the support provided.

Maximising Benefits

The level of income of a person with a disability can have a big impact on their ability to meet their basic needs, cover the extra costs of their disability and stay connected.

The implications of living on a low income for people with sensory loss can include:

- social isolation, as they cannot afford to pay for transport to get out and about
- reduced independence, as equipment and technology that could help is not affordable to them.

Accessing essential benefits can therefore be vital to ensuring increased independence and choice. However, they can be difficult to access and stressful to claim.

At VisionPK, we employ a specialist part-time worker with extensive knowledge and expertise of benefits and an understanding of the impacts of sensory loss. We can therefore offer:

- easy access to advice and support about the benefits available for service users
- time to assist with completing lengthy forms
- reduced anxiety and stress for clients who can claim benefits
- more likelihood of successful claims.

In the past two years, we have been able to support over 30 service users with benefit claims and appeals. Within one year alone, 13 cases have had successful outcomes resulting in additional income for them totalling over £48,800 per year.



Success Story

Agnes (not her real name), who has a hearing loss, had made a claim for Personal Independence Payment. She was unsuccessful. VisionPK assisted her to compile a Mandatory Reconsideration submission. This resulted in her being awarded the enhanced rate for the daily living part of the benefit (£85.60 a week which is an additional income of over £4450 a year).

Prompt Response and Service Accessibility

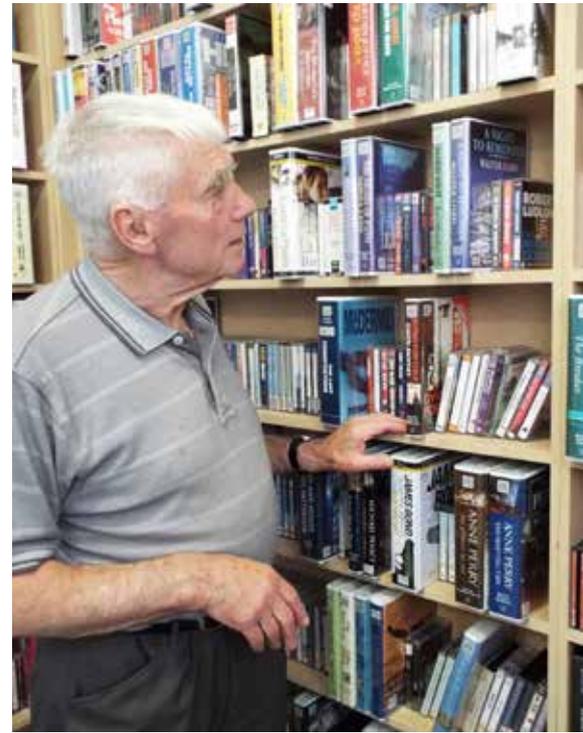
In these days of long waiting lists and 'rationed' services, we are proud of how responsive and accessible our services are.

We aim to respond to every referral that we receive within seven working days by making initial contact (usually by telephone) to acknowledge the referral and arrange a home visit to undertake an assessment of needs. Our target is for the initial assessment to be undertaken within 28 days of the referral.

In more than 95% of cases, both these timescale targets are met, unless there are particular reasons that the client cannot be contacted or is otherwise unable to attend appointments that are offered.

In most cases, after a period of assessment and support, there will come a time when ongoing support is no longer required by the client. This period varies considerably between clients, depending on their individual needs. However, sensory loss is usually a progressive process, and all our clients are advised that they can contact us at any time if they feel that they are encountering further problems with their sensory loss that they would like support with.

To help with this, we have a 'duty service', whereby at specified periods during the week there is a specialist worker on standby at our sensory centre to provide open access support for any existing service user who requires it. This extends to a weekly evening service which is more accessible to service users who are in employment.



**A very useful, informative and supportive visit.
I feel much more positive about moving
forwards. Thank you!"**

We are keen to develop this further. In the past year, we have extended our open access service to a monthly session provided at Crieff Community Hospital and it is planned to extend this to other peripheral locations as resources allow.

We have also been working in partnership with the Perth Carers Centre on a project called 'Bridging the Gap' between services in the hope of reaching different client groups. Through this, VisionPK now attends a monthly surgery at a local traveller's site which has increased the number of referrals from this minority group. The success of recent partnership working has led to discussions on setting up other monthly surgeries in other areas.

Our Hearing Loss Support Worker has developed an excellent working relationship with the local NHS Audiology Service and now provides an information stall at a 'Healthy Workshop' at Perth Royal Infirmary which is held fortnightly with alternating morning and afternoon 'drop-ins'.

For many years, we have also provided a patient support service at the low vision clinic at Perth Royal Infirmary, where an expert volunteer offers those attending the clinic an opportunity to talk and access immediate support and information. In the past year, 54 patients have used this service, and 16 of these have subsequently received further support from VisionPK.

“ The Rehabilitation Worker is very understanding of all my Aunt's problems regarding sight and hearing loss, giving plenty of advice and trying her best to solve any issues we have. The Rehabilitation Worker has arranged contact with the Department of Work and Pensions and has followed this up with home visits. Thank you for your service and advice”



Working with Partners

In addition to our formal relationship with Action on Hearing Loss (Scotland) as our partner in providing services for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, we are committed to working with any other statutory and voluntary sector organisation whose specialist knowledge, expertise and capacity can complement our own in supporting people with sensory impairment. This means that our clients can access a wider range of services and support than we can offer directly ourselves.



Examples of areas where our clients have benefitted from this approach are in employment support, new technology skills, specialist counselling, support with home adaptations, to mention but a few.

We regard it as a measure of our success that the range of partners we work with increases year on year. These organisations are too numerous to list but suffice to say, we are extremely grateful to all of them for their willingness to work with us in this way.

Student placements

VisionPK has been enriched over the past five years by the presence of student social workers from the University of Stirling. Benefits to the organisation include:

- increased capacity to undertake work that may not be a priority but offers opportunities for service developments
- bringing new perspectives to our team
- small amounts of additional income to VisionPK.

Work undertaken by students over the years has included the ground work which resulted in our ongoing 'One Vision Group' for working aged clients. Another student researched what emotional support is available to visually impaired people and consulted with carers of people with visual impairment, which led to the production of our Carers DVD.

Through offering student placements, voluntary organisations like VisionPK play a crucial role in enhancing social work education and practice. Students, when qualified, go into their future workplaces with a better understanding of sensory loss and the impact it may have on the individuals they are working with, thereby ensuring better sensory awareness among social workers in the future.

Individual students have consistently given us excellent feedback on the quality of the placement we offer and its value to them.

Success story

We have received the following comments from Stirling University:

"VisionPK has provided successful social work placements for Stirling University students over many years. Students evaluate their placements at VisionPK very positively, with the varied caseload and interesting learning opportunities highlighted.

In reviewing student placement reports, the Practice Sub Board has confirmed that students are provided with a range of appropriate learning opportunities that enable them to demonstrate competence against the Standards in Social Work Education and the SSSC Code of Practice.

In addition, students have noted that the staff team has been very welcoming, knowledgeable and supportive. Stirling University looks forward to continuing this positive relationship with VisionPK"



My placement at VisionPK has introduced me to a range of issues around sensory loss I had never thought about before. I will take all my new knowledge with me and use it wherever I land up working."

Quote from student

Our Fantastic Volunteers

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The importance of our volunteers cannot be overstated. They come from all walks of life and are all ages but have one thing in common in that they freely donate their time and skills to make a difference to the lives of people with a sensory loss.

We would like to say a huge 'thank you' to this group who enable us to continue offering many add-ons to our services. Together this year they contributed nearly 3,000 volunteer hours.

Many of our volunteers help to run our social clubs. The past year has seen an increase in attendance by our clients at several of these, a trend that we hope will continue. Volunteers also support our programme of outings that are so popular with service users during the summer months.

Other activities in which volunteers play an integral role are driving, to provide safe transport for less independent clients to and from our activities, befriending and assisting clients in our gym.

Volunteers have also been crucial to the development of our city-centre garden. Working with clients they have made a lovely, colourful space for everyone to enjoy. There is even talk of entering a local garden competition next summer!

“As a volunteer at VisionPK, working with friendly staff and engaging in chat and banter with clients, is enjoyable and worthwhile. I find that being able to help and support even in a small way is very rewarding.”



“

My experience of helping this gentleman has changed my life. Far from being an onerous task, we have become firm friends and as well as our normal Tuesday driving routine, we look forward to seeing each other when the VisionPK centre is closed over holiday periods.”

As we look forward to the rest of 2019, we want to build on the successes that we have achieved to date. First and foremost, we hope that our track record will enable the Health & Social Care Partnership to award VisionPK an extension of the statutory sensory services contract. With the help of our new Chief Executive, there will be additional emphasis on developing other business opportunities and generating income from a range of sources.

We hope to further develop our support to visually impaired people through even closer links with the hospital ophthalmology outpatient departments. Our fieldwork staff have been provided with equipment and training so that they will be better able to demonstrate to service users the opportunities offered by new technology to improve independence of people with sensory impairments.

In other areas, there will be 'more of the same', but always with our commitment to continuous improvement in mind.

Some words from our new Chief Executive

After meeting staff around the time of my appointment and learning more about VisionPK's work, it became obvious to me that the ethos is 'doing it right' for clients, as much as 'doing the right thing'

I am looking forward to being part of the opportunity to help more people experience this approach in future.



My most recent experience is of leading and developing a mental health charity. I also have a background in fundraising and service management with RNIB, and I am a Trustee of Royal Blind and Scottish War Blinded. I hope this experience will enable me to help VisionPK to continue to thrive.

I'm delighted to be joining VisionPK at what I know will be an exciting and challenging time. My aim will be to build upon the great work Bob and his team have done to ensure that, despite huge challenges, VisionPK offers quality, person-centred services for even more people with a visual or hearing impairment.

Financial Summary

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(This is an extract from the final accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	2018	2017
	£	£
Donations	14,723	11,173
Fundraising	6,508	5,239
Legacies	58,480	19,557
Grants Receivable - P & K Council SLA	-	66,439
Grants Receivable - P & K Council SIS	182,194	91,133
Grants Receivable - Miscellaneous	17,225	9,280
Income from Charitable Trading Activities	8,060	9,226
Investment Income	22,511	26,164
Rental Income	42,817	42,621
Interest Receivable	240	7
Other Income	2,225	2,926
Total Income	<u>354,983</u>	<u>283,765</u>
	£	£
Cost of Activities in Furtherance of Charity's Objects	382,344	353,931
Trading Costs	10,906	16,116
Governance Costs	47,675	19,495
Total Expenditure	<u>440,925</u>	<u>389,542</u>
(Deficit) of Income over Expenditure	(85,942)	(105,777)
Net (Loss)/Gain on Investment Assets	(6,614)	133,915
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	<u>(92,556)</u>	<u>28,138</u>

FINANCIAL REPORT

Investment Policy

Investments are stated at market value. The market value of investments held at 31 March 2018 totalled £689,221 compared with £842,609 at 31 March 2017.

Principal Funding Sources

In 2017/18 funding came from donations and legacies totalling £73,203.

Total rental income was £42,817, of which £7,151 was room rental income.

The main source of funding came from Perth and Kinross Council. The grant funding for our Specialist Sensory Service contract from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 was £182,194

Financial Summary

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(This is an extract from the final accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018)

BALANCE SHEET

	£	£
Assets		
Tangible Fixed Assets		183,192
Investments		<u>954,221</u>
		1,137,413
Current Assets		
Stocks	8,217	
Debtors	7,915	
Cash at Bank and In Hand	<u>73,741</u>	
	89,873	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(23,314)</u>	
Net Current Assets		66,559
Net Assets		<u>1,203,972</u>
Funds		
Restricted Funds		53,387
Unrestricted Funds: Charitable Funds		1,150,585
Total Charity Funds		<u>1,203,972</u>

Reserves Policy

The balance on unrestricted funds is £1,150,585, which mainly comprises capital funds.

The Trustees have agreed that the level of reserves should be based on three months of normal operational expenditure after the deduction of property and investment assets from the total funds. The Trustees continuously review the balances held in all funds to determine whether or not these funds are likely to be committed in the near future. In the event there is no identified immediate need the Trustees will seek an appropriate project to which the funds can be applied.

VisionPK

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One Hundred and Fifty-Second Annual Review

On request this publication is available in other accessible formats.



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