

# Dignity Boxes

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023



Dignity Boxes

Scottish Charity Number SC048930

Dignity Boxes is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

## Table of Contents

<b>TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Reference & Administrative Information .....	3
Structure, Governance & Management .....	4
Charitable Purposes .....	5
Operating Model .....	6
Activities and Achievements .....	8
Financial Report .....	12
<b>INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>STATEMENT OF BALANCES</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS</b> .....	<b>16</b>

## Trustees' Annual Report

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report together with the financial statements, and the independent examiners report for the period ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### Reference & Administrative Information

<b>Charity Name</b>	Dignity Boxes		
<b>Charity Number</b>	SC048930		
<b>Address</b>	3 Clement Rise Dedridge Livingston West Lothian EH54 6JY		
<b>Current Trustees (at date of signing report)</b>	Isabel Dosser	Founder	
	Nick Fannin	Chair	(appointed 1/2/22)
	Eve Dillon	Secretary:	(appointed 29/10/2023)
	Graeme Trousdale	Trustee	(appointed 29/10/2023)
	Norman Gill	Trustee	(appointed 24/4/21)
<b>Other Trustees during year</b>	Megan MacDougall	previous secretary	(appointed 24/1/21 resigned 30/04/2023)
	Mark Wilkinson	Trustee	(appointed 1/2/22 resigned –29/10/2023)
	Heather Darling	Treasurer	(appointed 24/4/22 resigned 31/12/2023)
	Jo Purdy	Trustee	(appointed 8/03/23 resigned – 15/08/2023)
<b>Independent Examiner</b>	Margaret Birse Tangram Accounting 23 Clark Avenue Linlithgow EH49 7AP		

## **Structure, Governance & Management**

### **Governing Document**

Dignity Boxes is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, governed by a constitution.

It was registered with OSCR as a SCIO on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018.

### **Appointment of Trustees**

The Trustees of the charity form the board which meets approximately every 3 months.

Trustees are the only members of the charity in terms of responsibility of members under charity legislation. There are 6 trustees, and any future appointments or changes will be made by the existing trustees.

Trustees will seek to make new appointments where necessary to ensure that the Board has the relevant knowledge and experience to support the development and growth of the charity. Potential candidates will be invited to an introductory meeting before being appointed.

New Trustees will be inducted / trained informally by the Founder of the Charity and at least one of the existing Trustees. All new Trustees will be provided with a copy of the Governing Document (Constitution), and the most recent Annual Report with accompanying Financial Statements. They will also be provided with a copy of the Business Plan and copies of the Minutes from the most recent Trustees' meeting to provide earlier context for future discussions. Trustees are also guided to the Governance documents available free on the SCVO website.

Beyond the formal management and administration structure, supporter membership of the charity is open to all individuals over 18, who support the aims and activities of the charity.

There were several changes to the Board of Trustees this year. Megan MacDougall resigned as Secretary on 30/4/2023. In addition, Mark Wilkinson resigned as Trustee on 29/2023. Jo Purdy joined as a Trustee on 08/03/2023 and resigned on 15/08/2023. All three left for personal reasons and the Board are grateful to the contribution made by Megan, Mark, and Jo during their time with Dignity Boxes.

Heather Darling has indicated that she will step down as Treasurer soon and so we will begin the search for somebody new to take over that position. Heather has made an invaluable contribution, and the Board would like to thank her for the great work that she has done on improving the financial governance of the charity as well as reviewing our risk register and other processes.

### **Management**

The trustees are responsible for the strategic direction and governance of the charity and for fund raising activities, to enhance provision of the existing service.

The trustees are responsible for the management of any risk the charity is exposed to and have established strategic plans to manage the risks. The primary risks include:

- Insufficient funds to continue operating.
- Insufficient products to continue distribution.

- Non-compliance with charity legislation/regulations and good practice, including issues following from Covid-19.

## Charitable Purposes

The charitable purposes as set out in the SCIO constitution are the:

- Prevention or relief of poverty
- Relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or another disadvantage.

The charitable purposes are a direct response to the [Scottish Government's policy on poverty](#) - which is for "Scotland to be a place where people are healthier, happier and treated with respect, and where opportunities, wealth and power are spread more equally".

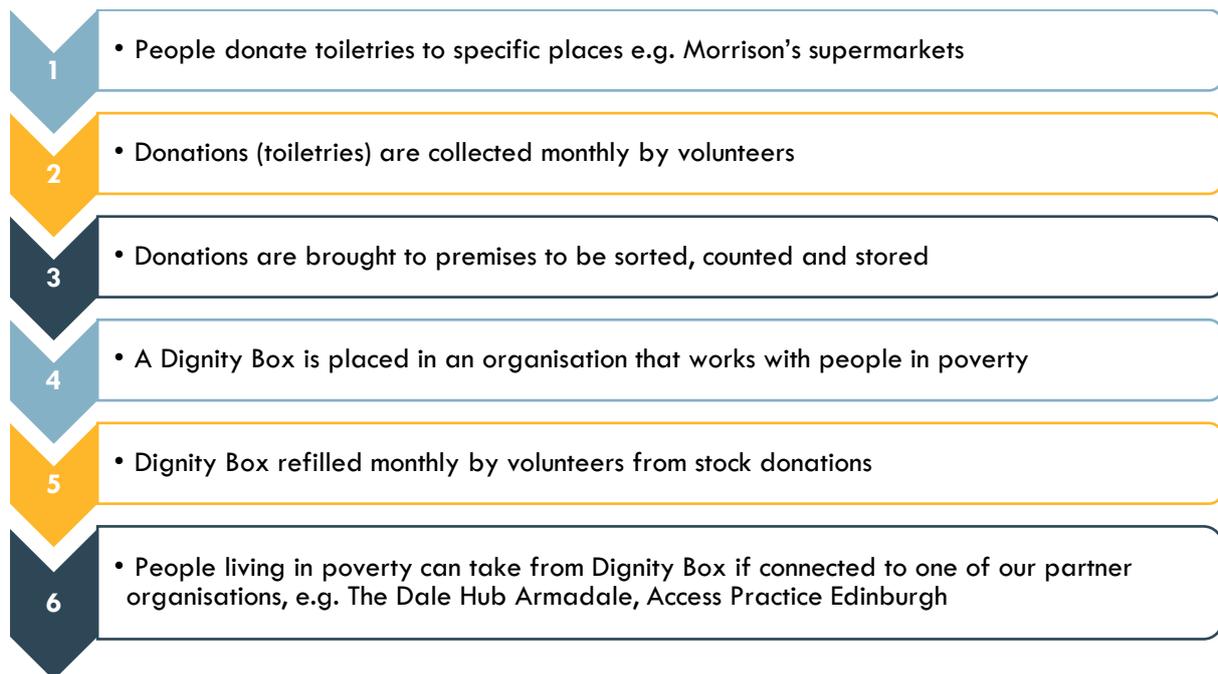
Please see link above for the full Scottish Government statement on poverty and social justice. The Charity's contribution to the prevention or relief of poverty is achieved by collating toiletries provided by our donating partners (most of whom regularly fill a 'Donation Box') and redistributing them in Dignity Boxes via our hosting partners (i.e. those who host a Dignity Box on our behalf) monthly. Individuals then take what they need from the Dignity Box (one or a few products, not the whole box – a whole box serves many people).

Our hosting partners are all like-minded organisations who share our values. Some are charities themselves who support the prevention or relief of poverty and those in need in their own individual way. Where possible the boxes are placed discreetly within each host organisation.

The aim of a Dignity Box is ultimately to promote self-worth (dignity) in the individual beneficiary - by allowing those in need to take what they cannot afford or gain access to, without having to ask or thank anyone. In pursuit of promoting dignity, anonymity is key in this respect and so all Dignity Boxes are placed by our hosting partners in such a way that the individual in need can take the products they require discreetly. Dignity is therefore about *what* we are enabling for the individual through the provision of our products, and *how* they access them.

It is the Trustees' intent to grow the number of donating partners and Dignity Boxes / hosting partners, broadening current reach and the diversity of hosting partners to maximise our contribution to the prevention or relief of poverty. We currently operate across Edinburgh and Lothian but have ambition to widen our distribution over time to other regions.

## Operating Model



The range of places / organisations hosting a Dignity Box is diverse. Our reach includes the provision of support for family units, a single parent creche, asylum seekers, homeless projects, rehab for women who have been involved in the judicial system and Women's Aid, amongst others. We also give to schools and universities for young people and students suffering hardship.

We continue to have a great team of 34 volunteers, some of which have remained with us from the beginning and others have joined over the last year. Our volunteers are across the age range from young students to retired people as well as people in middle age who are in full time employment but still make time in their busy life to help us once a month. They are inducted, once interviewed, and accepted, by visiting the HQ and having our processes explained. They are given a trolley on wheels as a means of promoting health and safety and discouraged to carry the products which can be heavy. We are fortunate to have a range of volunteer roles and continue to have the same graphic designer, web designer and bookkeeper which are out-with the usual roles of collecting and delivering donations. Through generous donations and funding, this community has played a pivotal role in maintaining our ability to provide hygiene basics.

The discreet nature of what we do makes it difficult to gain direct feedback from our beneficiaries, but here are a few quotes from partner organisations who hold a Dignity Box which provides qualitative feedback on the benefits:

*"I now have the confidence to leave the house."  
(Eastfield Hub, Fauldhouse)*

*"I love when the stuff comes, it makes me feel good about myself."  
(Lauriston Women Accommodation)*

*"Big thanks for the shower gel and shampoo."  
(Street Soccer Scotland)*

*"I had to flee my house and get rehoused by the team. I literally had nothing but through the project I was given toiletries for myself and family. Thank you so much."  
(Almond Housing client)*

*"I am so grateful for the hair conditioner, made my hair look and feel healthy again."  
(Granton Goes Greener)*

*"Being able to pick up products in privacy has been really helpful, no judgement and I don't feel embarrassed."  
(Change Grow Live)*

*"It might not have been much, but it was the first time in I don't know how long, someone gave me something for me, to care for myself."  
(Home Start)*

*"Being able to access personal hygiene products helped me attend school."  
(Inveralmond High School)*

*"Great to have products available for men and women."  
(Kidz and Kin)*

*"What a treat and relief to have toiletries provided."  
(West Lothian Women's Aid)*

*"Getting these things means I can spend money on food."  
(Heriot Watt student)*

*"One of our patients needed to go to a hospital appointment but refused to go. I was able to give her toiletries which gave her a confidence boost and she attended the appointment."*

*(Access Practice).*

*"I can't afford shampoo for the kids so use cheap washing up liquid. Thank you so much as getting shampoo means their hair smells nice."*

*(LIFT – Low Income Families Together)*

*"I don't know what I would do without this service."*

*(The Willow)*

*"I wouldn't be able to attend college if I didn't have this support."*

*(West Lothian College)*

*"The women are excited to get these essential products and are grateful for basic items."*

*(Shakti Women's Aid)*

## Activities and Achievements

As we reflect on the past year, we are grateful for the continued support and commitment of our volunteers, partners, and the communities we serve. This report highlights key activities, partnerships, and milestones achieved throughout the year.

In December 2022 we were thrilled to announce the appointment of Shelley Kerr as the Patron of Dignity Boxes Charity. Shelley brings her passion, expertise, and influence, significantly bolstering our commitment to supporting those in need. Shelley joined us for a very successful community event at the Polbeth Hub where the local school children were in awe of the former Scottish Women's National Team Manager.

Another significant event this year was our move to new premises in October 2022. The move was required due to the sale of our previous building. The move went smoothly, and we have settled well into our new space at Houston Industrial Estate. Our new accommodation offers space for a small office as well as storage and space for our volunteers to pack boxes. Local company, Scot Signs kindly offered to provide new signage for the premises for free. We are very grateful for their support and the place looks very professional.



We developed new collaborations with employees from Morrisons Construction and employees from Morrisons Construction and Aegon volunteered at the premises and helped with packing and cleaning. These partnerships encourage volunteers from these organisations to work with us which adds capacity to our volunteer team and reinforces the community connections that we share. We also continued our partnership with CAS Ltd, with two volunteers contributing time each month and the manager of the company donating products on a regular basis.

We continue to build on our school donation drives. This year we collaborated with West Calder and Inveralmond High Schools, Boghall, Polkemmet, Deans, and Calderwood Primary schools for donation drives.

As we noted last year, poverty rates continue to rise, the use of food banks are at unprecedented levels and many of us are feeling the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. It is very apparent that the need for the Dignity Boxes service is greater than ever. We are in a position where many people who previously donated are now potential recipients.

The economic situation across the country has been very challenging and donations are still down on pre-Covid levels. We are constantly looking for new partners and trying to find places which will host a donation box. This has included where necessary buying products as required to meet the shortfall in donations.

We are currently working with 43 organisations. The products numbers, delivered monthly, are 1290 basic products which include soap, shampoo, toothpaste etc as well as 430 miscellaneous items which are products not requested, such as body lotion, bath and children's products. This equates to 1720 per month and 20,640 per annum.



At Dignity Boxes we believe that everyone is entitled to dignity regardless of background and circumstances. Our volunteers believe wholeheartedly in those values and are compassionate champions in our communities, campaigning for local funds and donations and ensuring that the Dignity Boxes service is delivered where it is needed. This year we partnered with Itison who kindly donated vouchers which we have used to reward our volunteers for the incredible work that they do.

This year we participated in several worthwhile projects including:

**Pilotlight** – This initiative required the Founder of Dignity Boxes to actively engage with key experts from Business as well as Health and Social Care whose skills were used in an advisory capacity. The Pilotlight programme, allows an in-depth consideration of the charity and strategic challenges and considering how to enhance our organizational strategies. This was an interesting and supportive experience, and we received useful feedback and advice.

**Edinburgh Napier Live Project** – The Founder engaged in the Edinburgh Napier University Live Project, fostering collaboration and community involvement. This project which involves several students from the Business School working with the Founder to achieve set goals and increase their knowledge in specific topics related to the challenge highlighted. On this occasion the students considered how the charity would go about organising various types of fundraisers using research and information from experienced fundraisers.

**Accelerate Programme** – We also joined the Accelerate programme, investing in the long-term sustainability of the charity. The accelerate team ask that the charity decide on two topics to be focused on which for us was fundraising and trustee governance. The first topic mentored and coached in how to write an application when applying for funding and the latter was to confirm that our Board have met expected criteria of a high standard of Governance.

**Child In the Rough, Kenya** – We continue to work with a school in Kenya. Dignity Boxes donated 1000s of sanitary products to Child In the Rough, the school were very grateful for this.



Finally, we were delighted to hear that Dignity Boxes Founder, Isabel Dosser, has been recognised for her inspirational work with the Alumni Impact Award from Edinburgh Napier University. Isabel lectured in Nursing at the University for 15 years before setting up Dignity Boxes in her retirement. Isabel continues to be a source of inspiration for students and staff alike at Edinburgh Napier.



As we look forward to another year of service, Dignity Boxes Charity remains committed to our mission of providing support to those in need. We express our gratitude to everyone who has played a role in our success, and we invite you to explore our website (<https://www.dignityboxes.co.uk/>) for more information. Your continued support ensures that we can make a meaningful impact on the lives of those we serve.

## Financial Report

With the challenging economic climate, we decided to focus on the following key areas over the course of the last operating period:

- Maintaining communication with our existing partners
- Building back our network of donation box hosts
- Increasing the level of product donations
- Increasing the level of financial donations
- Finding sponsors

We are truly grateful for continued support of the charity by West Lothian Councillors from their disbursement funds and many individuals, including those who give regular monthly donations via direct debit, and those who have supported in the year through other donations, fundraising and sponsored events such as the Kiltwalk, for which we are very thankful. Thank you also to the donations and grants we have received from organisations and businesses such as Livingston United Church, Morrisons, 8 Million Stories and McLaughlin Harvey.

Our income this year has increased from £5,171 in 2022 to £6,449 in 2023. This is due to an increase in general donations, offset by an overall reduction in councillors disbursements.

Our expenditure has also increased this year to £8,467 (2021: £7,835). This reflects a continued requirement to purchase products when product donations are not sufficient to fulfil demand. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic these were almost solely donated to us. As in the prior year we anticipate the level of donations continues to be impacted by the economic conditions and cost of living crisis hitting our regular donators. This has meant that the charity ended the year with a deficit of £2,018 (which is however a reduction from the prior year deficit of £2,664 due to our increased financial donations). Our fund balances at the year-end have therefore reduced to £6,952 (from £8,969 in 2022).

### Our Reserves Position

The Unrestricted Reserves that we currently have, £6,621 (2022: £8,969) provide financial stability and the means for the development of our principal activity. We intend to maintain our reserves at a level which is at least equivalent to 6 months ongoing expenditure but does not exceed 18 months. Our current reserves level is sufficient within this window.

Where funds provided are restricted by donor conditions, we will use the funds according to the prescribed terms and conditions set by sponsors and donors. Restricted funds are not included in our Unrestricted Reserves.

The Trustees will, every 3 months, review the unrestricted reserves that are required to ensure that they are adequate to fulfil our continuing obligations. We will endeavour to raise product donations which would enable us to reduce the reserves required for buying products.

## Future Plans

Dignity Boxes remains committed to the relief of poverty and the idea that everyone is entitled to dignity regardless of background or circumstances. Our purpose is to provide people in poverty with free toiletries to promote dignity and to make people feel better about themselves even for a short time.

- Continue to rebuild and grow our network of donating partners
- Expand the number of Dignity Boxes hosted across Lothian
- Capture new funding opportunities
- Continue to review and formalise policies
- Launch a new strategy and operational plan for the charity

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers and supporters who are constant and encourage us to keep going in these times of adversity.

Approved by the trustees on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

And signed on their behalf by

*Nick Fannin*

---

Nick Fannin (Trustee)

## Independent Examiner's Report

To the trustees of Dignity Boxes (SCIO)

I report on the statement of account of the charity for the period ended 30th September 2023 the accounts of which are which are set out on pages 15 to 17.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the statement of account in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of regulation 10(1)(d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the statement of account presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention, other than that stated below:

**1.** Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations have not been met, or

**2.** To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*Margaret Birse*                      7<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Name: Margaret Birse CCFA CIPFA (Affil) FCIE

Address: Tangram Accounting

23 Clark Avenue, Linlithgow, West Lothian, EH49 7AP

## Receipts and Payments Account

For the year to 30th September 2023

	Note	1st October 2022 - 30th September 2023			1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022
		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>					
Donations		5,376	700	6,076	4,225
Grants		-	-	-	750
Fundraising		373	-	373	196
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>5,749</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>6,449</b>	<b>5,171</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Fundraising Costs		18	-	18	14
Charitable Activities		7,835	369	8,204	7,591
Governance Costs		245	-	245	230
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>8,098</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>8,467</b>	<b>7,835</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit for year</b>		<b>(2,349)</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>(2,018)</b>	<b>(2,664)</b>
<b>Opening Balance</b>		<b>8,969</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,969</b>	<b>11,633</b>
Surplus/Deficit		(2,349)	331	(2,018)	(2,664)
<b>Closing Balance</b>		<b>6,621</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>6,952</b>	<b>8,969</b>

## Statement of Balances

As at 30th September 2023

	Note	As at 30th September 2023			As at 30th September 2022
		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		£	£	£	£
<b>Opening Balance</b>		<b>8,969</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,969</b>	<b>11,633</b>
Surplus/Deficit		(2,349)	331	(2,018)	(2,664)
<b>Closing Balance</b>		<b>6,621</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>6,952</b>	<b>8,969</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
IE Fee		270			245
<b>Total estimated Liabilities</b>		<b>270</b>			<b>245</b>

Notes on pages 16 to 17 form part of these accounts.

The accounts were approved by the trustees on 4th March 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

*Nick Fannin*

Nick Fannin (Trustee)

## Notes to the Accounts

### 1. Basis of Accounting

These accounts are prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

### 2. Fund Accounting

Unrestricted Funds are those funds which can be used at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Restricted Funds are those funds which can only be used for specific purposes as specified by the donor or when the funds have been raised for a specific purpose. the charity name.

### 3. Transactions with Trustees and Related Parties

The Founder, Isabel Dossier, is the only trustee to receive reimbursement of travel expenses during the period. She was paid travelling expenses totalling £689 (2022: £321)

No trustee or related party received any form of remuneration from the charity. Purchases of toiletries are made at times via a business owned by one of the charity's former trustees, Alan Preston. The toiletries are provided at a reduced price to the charity.

### 4. Fund Movements

	Opening Balance at at 1st October 2022 £	Receipts £	Payments £	Closing Balance at at 30th September 2023 £
<b>Restricted Fund</b>				
Supplies Fund	-	700	(369)	331
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	-	<b>700</b>	<b>(369)</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>				
General Fund	8,969	5,749	(8,098)	6,621
<b>Total U/R Funds</b>	<b>8,969</b>	<b>5,749</b>	<b>(8,098)</b>	<b>6,621</b>
<b>Total Charity Funds</b>	<b>8,969</b>	<b>6,449</b>	<b>(8,467)</b>	<b>6,952</b>

### 5. Purpose of Restricted Fund

**Supplies Fund** These funds were provided to be used specifically for the purchase of supplies.

### 6. Volunteers

We rely completely on volunteers to run the day-to-day operations of the charity, and are Incredibly grateful for their support. Without them we would not be able to operate. During the year, we were fortunate to be gifted "Itison" vouchers. 15 of which were gifted to volunteers, as thanks for the work they do for us. A further 7 were gifted in the next financial year.

## 7. Analysis of Receipts

	1st October 2022 - 30th September 2023			1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
<b>Donations &amp; Grants</b>				
General Donations	4,287	-	4,287	2,138
General Donations via PayPal	1,073	-	1,073	
Councillors Disbursements	-	700	700	2,080
Grants	-	-	-	750
Bank Cash-Back	16	-	16	7
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>5,376</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>6,076</b>	<b>4,975</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>				
Christmas Fayres	360	-	360	173
Amazon Smile	13	-	13	23
<b>Total Fundraising</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>196</b>

## 8. Analysis of Fundraising Costs

	1st October 2022 - 30th September 2023			1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
PayPal Charges	18	-	18	4
Cost of Fundraising Event	-	-	-	10
<b>Total Cost of Fundraising</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>

## 9. Analysis of Cost of Charitable Activities

	1st October 2022 - 30th September 2023			1st October 2021 - 30th September 2022
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Storage Boxes & Small Equipme	329	-	329	23
Stationery & Print & Postage	267	-	267	491
Internet & Website	84	-	84	13
Rent, Utilities & Water Charges	5,131	-	5,131	3,884
Legal & Professional	-	-	-	-
Volunteer Supplies	18	-	18	188
Refreshments	12	-	12	22
Product Purchases	1,244	369	1,613	1,988
Promotional Activity	-	-	-	134
Gifts/volunteer appreciation	61	-	61	120
Travel & Subsistence	689	-	689	498
SCVO Membership	-	-	-	230
<b>Total charitable activity cost</b>	<b>7,835</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>8,204</b>	<b>7,591</b>