



Good evening everyone, I'm delighted to deliver my Chair's report for 2025, it has been an eventful year at the Charles Booth Centre and I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the staff and trustees who have made it happen.

Firstly to Tony Dandy who has continued to work through the building at a phenomenal rate, since last year he has built a new store cupboard to house all the extra chairs that were cluttering the place and I think all the ladies in the room will agree, the improvements to the downstairs ladies toilet are amazing. We're all very grateful to Tony for all his hard work.

Secondly to Beata for her endless patience dealing with the National Lottery which finally paid off after 4 years of phone calls, emails, getting quotes, form filling and visits. We were awarded around £90,000 in total which paid for a new boiler, brand new windows throughout the building, shutters and insulation in the roof. The shutters are being installed at the moment, to replace the tatty curtains and that will conclude the final phase of this mammoth project. I hope you all agree that the improvements are well worth the endless hours it took to secure the grant.

We still have a long way to go in renovating this old building. The tenants have just vacated the large bedroom upstairs so the next job is to decorate that room and we still have one toilet cubical to add to the upstairs toilets. We also want to create a baby change room for preschool in what was the old keg room so that the disabled toilet can be freed from nappy waste during the day.

We do need to continue to apply for grants and Bea has been very successful in getting small grants for a variety of events but I don't think we'll be able to apply for a such a large lottery grant again for many years.

We have several ongoing projects and are lucky to have a volunteer gardener Toni and we get valuable help in the grounds from the Community Payback scheme. The outside of the building looks much better with the new windows but there is still work to do making the place look inviting.

We are busy during the week, our monthly quiz nights are well attended and we will shortly be reintroducing the popular film nights that we used to run a few years ago. Every night of the week has a user group meeting upstairs in the evening and most weekends are also full with parties. Bookings have been made easier by the online system attached to our new website. We talked about the website at the last AGM and I hope you all agree that the new website is much improved and easier to navigate.

We also talked about physical publicity last year and one of the grants that Bea managed to obtain, allowed us to purchase some flyers and a banner for the music day which is reusable. The music day itself at the start of August was a great success, helped by the glorious weather. It's our biggest fundraiser of the year and we're gradually building back up to the size of event we used to run pre-Covid. This year's event gave us confidence that we can attract a good crowd of people so thanks go to Caitlyn for her efforts organising it and to the local community music groups and bands who performed and the scouts who gave their time on the day.

We continue to host a large array of groups, pre-school are here every weekday plus there are weekly or fortnightly meetings of a variety of exercise, music, theatre, craft, sport, and wellbeing groups and we rent out the smaller rooms upstairs to people running successful small businesses. We're still not quite

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breaking even but we have some plans for the remaining spaces in the building that don't bring in much income at the moment and we're hoping that this winter's heating bills will be significantly lower than previous years.

The accounts that are presented this evening are from April 2023 to March 2024 which seems a very long time ago. It wasn't a great year, the energy bills went up significantly and we had a tricky period with a lot of costly engineer visits. At this point I'd like to thank Andy Brown, our treasurer for his endless patience and good humour. We've just about got to grips with Xero, our accounting software and have recently taken our payroll in house to save on accountant fees and I'd like to thank Claire our admin assistant for being willing to take this on.

And so to the rest of 2025, the nights are drawing in but hopefully the building will be warm and inviting so do continue to support us, there will be coffee mornings, warm hub, bingo, film night and the usual Tpads shows to entertain you so please do support them.

I'd like to conclude by thanking the board of trustees who are all volunteers and dedicate countless hours to ensure that this charity is well governed.

Thank you very much.

Dr Amanda Berry

Chair of Trustees, Charles Booth Centre, September 2025.