

## **Joseph Cowen Lifelong Learning Centre**

### **Commentary on the Financial Statements and Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 2023**

As planned by the Trustees, we made a small deficit in the year to 31 August 2023 of £5,832. The Board had planned for a deficit, keeping membership fees as low as possible during a cost of living crisis and at a time when we badly needed to attract new members. We have sufficient reserves (past accumulated surpluses) to be able to manage this in the short run, whilst seeking in the longer run to move back to a break-even situation. We shall need in the future to recruit more members or to put prices up in order to achieve a balanced budget, as our costs remain more or less the same regardless of the number of members we have.

Income from membership fees was up a little on the previous year, largely reflecting the rise in price. Membership numbers held up reasonably well compared to the previous year, but are well down on pre-pandemic levels.

Expenditure was a lot higher than in the previous year principally because of a higher level of activity and more face-to-face tuition, which involves a significant increase in room hire, and higher tutor fees. These are actually all good signs of a move back to a more normal style of operation. We also started renting an office within Brunswick Methodist Church where Nancy works one day each week and where we can store equipment and records.

Governance costs are things like the independent examiner's fee, payroll administration and the costs of holding board meetings.

Depreciation is the measure of the wearing out of furniture and equipment, which spreads the cost of the item over a number of years rather than it all being charged on purchase. Most of our furniture and equipment is so old that it's been fully depreciated. The increase in the depreciation charge as compared to the previous year is because a new laptop was donated to us.

During 2021/22 we received a grant of £3,089 from the Midgley Fund for the provision of additional activities in Philosophy. This grant is shown under Restricted Funds, as we are not free to spend it on whatever we choose. In 2022/23 we started to spend the Midgley Fund grant and members will have noticed a small increase in the number of philosophy sessions available, which has been accelerated in 2023/24.

Simon Pallett

Hon Treasurer

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