

# The 106<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Council of Blind Veterans UK Year ended 31 March 2021



Rebuilding  
lives after  
sight loss



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Pancake Day with the Members

# Chairman's foreword to the Annual Report and financial statements 2020/21



unthinkable that we would all spend more than a year isolated from each other, communicating only through the screen of a laptop or a mobile device. Yet the last year has been just that.

The response of Blind Veterans UK has been genuinely extraordinary. I am proud that we set up a vital, remote service to our Members so quickly and that our wider team adapted to remote working and a change to working practices so readily and with such good grace. We could not have displayed that flexibility without the tireless and generous support of our donors and volunteers, all of whom deserve our immense gratitude.

Our wonderful Members have been a source of genuine inspiration for me over the last year. The resilience, spirit and mutuality of support that they have shown throughout the period has embodied the very essence of being a veteran: strength in adversity, resourcefulness and comradeship.

I have lost count of the number of messages I have received extolling the benefits of all the friendship groups, virtual meetings and on-line hobby clubs that have sprung up. It is

no exaggeration to say some of this activity has allowed Members as far afield as Cornwall and Cumbria to become on-line, next-door neighbours, and this could in future augment essential human contact, rather than replace it as has too often been the case in the last year.

We have learned a great deal about ourselves over the past year and right across the board we have witnessed a genuine spirit of ingenuity and adaptability that has meant that, even in the most trying of circumstances, we have been able to effectively support those the charity exists to serve. I have also received numerous messages from Members praising the virtues of the support, virtual friendship groups and other gatherings that have been set up during the pandemic. Those changes we have put in place are proving to be more than a simple stop-gap to maintain services during lockdown – the insight we have from the last year must and will inform the make-up of our broader services in the longer term.

That spirit and insight will be very much to the fore in meeting the second challenge. Last year we reported that trustees and the executive team had commenced a broader review of the charity to ensure that we live within stricter financial boundaries in the medium to long term. Our balance sheet has held up well during a period of volatility, which means that our response to this challenge is measured and strategic – while we need to streamline the organisation in the medium term, our reserves are strong enough to ensure that this is not done in a kneejerk fashion. The review, which was concluded at the end of 2020, resulted in the trustees approving a

“Our wonderful Members have been a source of genuine inspiration”

revised medium-term plan for the charity. The work to implement that plan has now started in earnest.

Central to that revised plan is the decision to stand down our Brighton facility in the medium term and replace it with a smaller, more modern alternative in the same part of the country. This was a decision taken after many months of careful consideration and comprehensive analysis. For many, the Brighton Centre is synonymous with the charity and has given great service to our Members since the 1930s. The fact remains, however, that a building which was designed in 1937 is not best suited to meeting the needs of our veterans and is expensive to run. Any alternative site must not only be more cost effective but also configured to enable the charity to deliver an even better service to those we exist to support.

This is my last report as Chair of Blind Veterans UK. After some nine years as a trustee, it is time to pass on the baton. The next few years will be a time of considerable flux but I stand down in the sure knowledge that this change is driven by one thing only: namely that we will hold true to the pledge we make of life-long support to those that we serve.

**Air Vice-Marshal Paul Luker**  
**CB OBE AFC DL**  
Chairman, Blind Veterans UK

**This last year has been one of considerable change for Blind Veterans UK. Our time has been heavily focused on two challenges that are of critical importance to the whole charity and the support we give to our beneficiaries or ‘Members’.**

The first of these is, unsurprisingly, how we have dealt with the worst pandemic in a century. A couple of years ago it would have seemed

# Chief Executive's introduction to the Annual Report and financial statements 2020/21



us and we had to adapt at pace. I am proud that, within weeks, we had set up a remote national support service, reaching Members by telephone and video. That service covered a whole range of things, from social contact to elements of rehabilitation delivered remotely. We were undoubtedly in a position where we had to experiment. But the alternative would have been not to try and, in the true spirit of our founder, we are not so easily deflected from our mission.

The feedback we have had since that point has proven beyond doubt that we did the right thing and, as the Chairman has mentioned above, many aspects of that remote service will continue to add real value even after we return to some degree of normality. Staff, Members and volunteers right across the charity played their part and the last year has, amongst many other things, reinforced the value of the pioneering spirit that guides so much of our work.

Alongside that extraordinary effort, Trustees and our senior team have been working hard on a revised plan that reflects a more cautious outlook on voluntary income. This will involve some significant streamlining of the

**I can say without exaggeration that this has been the most tumultuous and unprecedented year I have experienced as CEO of Blind Veterans UK. Like many other charities, we have had to radically rethink much of what we do as the stark reality of the pandemic became clear.**

Much of what we do is based on face-to-face contact with those we exist to serve. In the spring of 2020, however, the world changed around

organisation over the next few years and every part of the charity has been subject to critical review. That process of streamlining starts from the top, so we have taken the decision to run with a leaner leadership team of four.

One of the biggest changes we agreed was to spin our research activity off into a separate new charity, BRAVO VICTOR, albeit this new venture will stay within the Blind Veterans Group. It has long been the intention that the research arm of our work will become self-sustaining and during 2020 we concluded that this is best achieved by the creation of a new body which is wholly dedicated to ground-breaking research. It will receive some transitional funding from the parent charity but the plan is that it will quickly generate its own income and I am confident that it will flourish.

We have also put in place a comprehensive asset strategy which is geared towards driving the best rate of long-term return from all our assets while protecting the needs of those Members for whom we act as landlord. In addition, we have rationalised our fundraising activity to focus on those areas where we anticipate the best return on investment, as well as those that are most disposed to the type of work we undertake on the frontline.

By far the biggest decision we have taken is to move away from our centre in Brighton to an alternative, smaller site which is more fit for purpose. The much-loved Brighton Centre is now over 70 years old and the cost of upgrading it, as well as the expected ongoing cost of keeping it in operation, are considerable. Earlier in the year we took the decision to stop admitting

Members into new permanent residence in Brighton. Our existing resident Members remain a huge part of the Blind Veterans UK family and we will be inviting them to move with us to our new facility when we have it up and running.

It is right and proper that the Trustees and Directors should consider whether this would be value for money or whether our resources could be used in other ways and have a greater impact. Although an iconic building, designed specifically by architect Francis Lorne to house and help blind veterans, the fact that it is spread across seven floors means that it is not best suited to our current membership, where the typical age today is 87 years and where Members frequently have additional challenges, not least mobility. It is reasonable to suggest that if we were going to design a building to meet the needs of blind veterans today, it would be much easier to access and navigate, and the rooms would be better laid out. We are not rushing into this in a state of panic and have set ourselves the task of making this shift by spring 2024, following a comprehensive review of the options, and keeping the needs of Members paramount at all times. The search for an alternative site is already well-advanced and we remain optimistic about this change.

Our broader transformation programme is progressing well across a number of streams. The review of our services is being undertaken in consultation with Members, through the newly created Members' panels, and we remain committed to involving them throughout this period of change. We know that any change can be unsettling, but the driving force behind our mission is to ensure that we can plan with confidence for the long term so that we can continue to provide life-changing and vital support to this and future generations of blind veterans

**Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB**  
Chief Executive, Blind Veterans UK

# About us

## Our vision:

To achieve victory over blindness.

## Our mission:

To provide high-quality national support to blind veterans, as and where they need it, in order to help them achieve independence and fulfilment, and to transform their lives.

## What we do:

We provide rehabilitation, education, training and care for members and former members of the Armed Forces, both men and women, blinded from whatever cause, whether or not connected with service in the Armed Forces. We also look after certain men and women who are not or have not been members of the armed services injured in or as a consequence of war. We also provide support to certain family members, widows/widowers and carers who are in need of assistance.

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Since March 2020 we offered a broad range of support including emergency food and medication supplies, telephone support and befriending

## Our priorities:

For the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, our focus was to:

- Ensure the well-being of Members, volunteers and staff during the pandemic
- Rapidly adapt our services to keep our Members supported and connected during the pandemic
- Sustain and adapt our supporter base during the pandemic
- Complete our review of the organisation going forward
- Develop our research business model
- Continue to mature our business management practices
- Work in collaboration with others to make a bigger and broader impact

Our board of Trustees provides collective strategic and governance leadership in line with our values and aims. They have the legal responsibility for, and oversight of, the running of the charity. The board empowers and provides both support and challenge to the chief executive and senior leadership team, who implement the strategy on behalf of the Trustees and lead on the day-to-day operational management and leadership of the charity.



697 doorstep deliveries were made by our staff and dedicated volunteers

# Strategic report

The Trustees, who are also the company members and board directors for the purpose of company law, present their report, which includes the strategic report, together with the financial statements and auditors' report for the year ended 31 March 2021. The information required in the directors' report is included in this strategic report.

## What we achieved

### Rapidly adapted our services to keep our Members supported and connected during the pandemic

- From March 2020 community staff, centre staff and volunteers played a key role in identifying individual Members' needs during the pandemic. They offered a broad range of support including emergency food and medication supplies, telephone support and befriending, as well as a number of remote services to support Members through the social restrictions.
- One such area was the Health, Wellbeing and Rehabilitation Project. The project moved our face-to-face delivery of rehabilitation to a telephone and online offer, providing an introduction to the charity for new Members, low-vision assessments, support with daily living skills, support using technology to stay in touch with friends and family, access to creative projects and access to sources of emotional support. The work has received positive feedback from those Members who were able to access the service and the charity is looking at ways of retaining elements in a post-COVID-19 offer.
- Alongside the Health, Wellbeing and Rehabilitation Project, 'Operation Entertain' was set up to bring Members together in small telephone or online groups to chat, be entertained, to celebrate national events such as VE day and to keep up with their many hobbies and interests during the pandemic. The work

aimed to collectively support and entertain our Members during the period of isolation and to reduce the impact of the lockdown.

- Despite our best efforts, for some of our Members the past year has been extremely difficult due to isolation and ill health. In response, we offered residential stays within our registered nursing care facility in Llandudno. The permanent care offered at our Brighton Centre continued throughout the pandemic, with a focus on Member safety and wellbeing. Members in the Brighton Centre adopted a wartime spirit of 'soldiering on' through and supported each other and our staff through periods of isolation or when managing COVID outbreaks.
- Much of the work undertaken this year could not have been achieved without the support of our loyal volunteers. Volunteers have remained an integral part of the support offered by Blind Veterans UK. In response to the pandemic, our volunteers responded by providing assistance with shopping, dog walking, telephone social groups and telephone-based entertainment activities. The volunteer support aimed to keep Members safe, stay connected with the charity and their local communities and to reduce social isolation.
- Financial support continued to be important to our beneficiaries over the last year. Blind Veterans UK continues to offer a range of needs assessed

Continues over



RAF veteran Tony cycled 100 miles from his front door to Buckingham Palace to raise funds

grants to beneficiaries. The grants team worked in partnership with other military charities to ensure that veterans had access to timely financial support throughout the pandemic.

- Whilst the services this year have been forced to adapt to the change brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic the charity has continued to celebrate success. This year the charity hosted its first ever virtual Founder's Day event to celebrate the successes of its Members, staff, volunteers and supporters.

### Member Engagement

- Last year we explored how we could actively facilitate Member inclusion in service development. We established a framework for Member panels and piloted these panels in two communities. The aim of the panels was to explore whether Members want to be involved in service development and to what degree. The results of the pilot showed that Members really valued an active mechanism to feed into the charity and wanted to be involved in shaping Blind Veterans UK services now and into the future.
- Following on from the pilot, we will roll out community-based Member panels across the UK starting this summer. The panels will ensure that Members can voice their opinions, ideas and suggestions about the services provided throughout the organisation and to work with staff to improve those services for the benefit of all Members.

### Volunteering

Volunteers have played an integral part of the support offered to members across the charity

Throughout the year, we have adapted our volunteering approach to meet the needs of our Members

throughout the pandemic. This year, volunteering has taken a different approach by providing remote support to Members. This consisted mainly of telephone support, with 12,441 befriending telephone calls provided by volunteers. The befriending telephone calls have reduced Member social isolation and allowed Members to stay connected with their local communities.

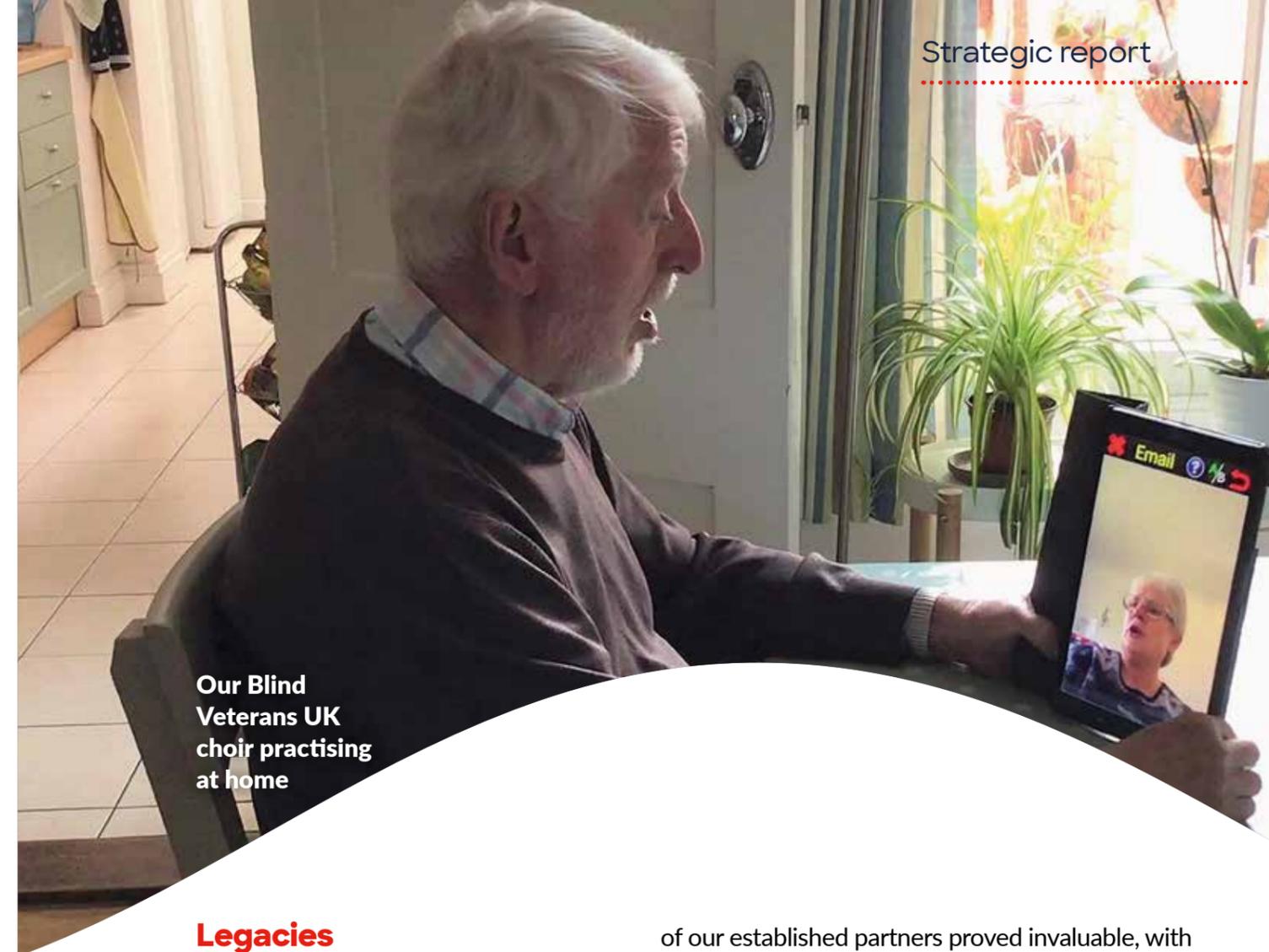
Throughout the year, we have adapted our volunteering approach to meet the needs of our Members. Centre and engagement volunteers have transitioned into Member supporting roles to provide support in the communities. Volunteers have supported remote social groups, bringing Members together virtually and enhancing their social networks, while at the same time meeting essential Member need by providing shopping and dog walking support.

### Sustained and adapted our supporter base

Fundraising was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and our plans for the financial year were re-written in the light of the challenges which we all faced. We reorganised the team, adapted to remote working and put more emphasis on digital fundraising. By embracing an integrated, digital fundraising approach we were able to speak quickly to a wider audience to highlight the particular difficulties faced by our beneficiaries.

### Appeals

Our magnificent supporters responded to our request for help for our beneficiaries during the pandemic. We delivered all our planned campaigns as well as an emergency appeal.



Our Blind Veterans UK choir practising at home

### Legacies

Our Legacies remained a solid form of income this financial year, continuing to provide over 60 per cent of our fundraised income.

### Trusts and Foundations

We saw a strong showing from this area as we were able to gain support from a number of grant-giving organisations who recognised the importance of our support to a vulnerable population. These include the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, the Carmen-Butler Charteris Charitable Trust, the Thomas Pocklington Trust, The Red Arrows Trust and The Forces Trust.

### Corporate and Commercial

This income stream was particularly affected by the economic challenges of the last year. However, the generosity

of our established partners proved invaluable, with support from organisations such as ISG plc, No Fear Bridge and Darwin Technologies Ltd.

### Community Engagement

Traditional community fundraising was badly hit by the pandemic. However, we embraced virtual events such as 2.6 Challenge, Veterans Virtual 75 and Sight Run Virtual, which allowed us to embrace a new audience.

### Complete our review of the organisation going forward

The review of the wider charity was completed at the end of 2020 and a revised strategy agreed by Council at that point.

The conclusions of this review followed intensive financial modelling and options analysis, with the leadership team meeting regularly as a formal Change Board. The revised strategy is described

Continues over

more fully in the section on future plans (see page 18).

### Develop our research business model

Our research and innovation department has continued to grow. We have expanded and deepened our collaboration with our partners both across the UK and internationally as our reputation has built as a credible partner conducting important research. On a competitive basis, we have received a number of research grants. We are continuing to partner with Oxford University and international veteran organisations, other universities and ministries of defence across a range of biomedical research areas which have the potential to make a significant impact on the physiological health of blind veterans.

We are also undertaking cross-domain social and welfare research to consider epigenetics, state of mind, wellbeing, longevity and social inclusion. We continue to conduct scientific outreach and advocacy in collaboration with other specialists, informing related agendas and policy makers where appropriate. Innovation has always been important to the charity and we are actively working with many partners.

Our Trustees have now endorsed and funded the plan to separate the research department from the charity. They have set up a sister charity called BRAVO VICTOR, which will allow the research programme to develop and grow. BRAVO VICTOR will look to become self-funded, which will allow it to work on a number of exciting and agile research projects that will benefit blind

### We have agreed a modernised approach to procurement which is now in the early stages of implementation

veterans and humanity more widely. The intention is that this will allow even greater benefits to be realised from our research in the years to come. This will enable Blind Veterans UK to focus on its primary purpose of service delivery while maintaining an important and beneficial research interest by building a strong and mutually beneficial research partnership with our sister charity.

### Continue to mature our business management practices

During the year we applied significant focus to a number of areas.

We have agreed a modernised approach to procurement which is now in the early stages of implementation. It offers significant opportunities both for cost savings as well as engaging more meaningfully with our suppliers, whether that is by employee fundraising or improving awareness of how they can be VI-friendly businesses themselves.

We also agreed a comprehensive data strategy which we are now implementing and which has at its core the twin objectives of cost-effective rationalisation of our IT estate, as well as creating a better single customer view across our various platforms. We know from experience that a Member, supporter, volunteer or staff colleague can often be the same person and this initiative will improve our ability to engage with stakeholders effectively.

We also agreed an updated asset strategy during the year. This gives us a greater focus on which parts of our commercial property estate are best identified for disposal, a more robust methodology for future proofing our

strategic sites and a revised investment policy.

### Work in collaboration with others to achieve a bigger and broader impact

This has been an important year for partnerships. Following the challenges of COVID-19 and with the demise of Vision UK, Blind Veterans UK was a founder member of a new VI Charity Sector Partnership, formed to promote collaborative working to the benefit of the nation's visually impaired. We have contributed to all working groups and taken the lead on the sector's crisis response planning. Our research department has provided focused, responsive support to the sector through the year to improve knowledge and evidence.

Similarly, within the veterans sector we have worked closely with partner organisations within the Cobseo family (the CEO has continued to serve as a Director on the Cobseo Board). In addition, we have worked closely with the Blinded Veterans Association, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Department of Defence (DoD) to form a Joint Ocular Trauma Task Group whose purpose is to prevent sight loss and better support service personnel blinded as a result of their service.

We continued to provide support to Action Against Age Related Macular Degeneration, where the CEO sits as a Board member. Their work has focussed on aggregating ophthalmic images and scan data from the general population/community to provide early markers of AMD, in addition to examining drug repurposing opportunities to find options for halting the progression of AMD.

### Energy initiatives

In the past year Blind Veterans UK took the following energy initiatives:

- When older lighting was replaced LEDs were fitted
- Decision of purchase of equipment based on energy efficiency
- Maximise waste recycling at all centres
- The COVID-19 pandemic has made it necessary for Blind Veterans UK to provide services to our Members in different ways, by phone and electronically. Whilst not primarily an energy initiative, this has had the effect of reducing car mileage and the energy used in the centres and offices

Initiatives that have proved to be successful and that have benefitted Blind Veterans UK Members will be retained in the future.

	2020/21	2019/20
Blind Veterans UK energy use kWh	4,526,406.00	5,043,301.10
Associated greenhouse gas emissions Tonnes CO2e	895.19	1,053.70
Fleet mileage (total miles)	200,668	724,959
Associated greenhouse gas emissions Tonnes CO2e	65.95	244.41
Total associated greenhouse gas emissions Tonnes CO2e	961.13	1,298.11
Intensity ratio Emissions per staff member	1.92	2.37

Blind Veterans UK energy use includes all electricity, gas and car mileages. Associated greenhouse gases have been calculated using UK Government GHG conversion factors for company reporting. Intensity ratio is per staff member based on 501 FTE (2020: 539 FTE).

## The year at a glance



**95%**

Blind Veterans UK triaged 95 per cent of members needs within the first 30 days of the pandemic

**12,441**

Blind Veterans UK volunteers made 12,441 telephone befriending calls

**300**

Blind Veterans UK provided critical in-home support to 300 Members and widows during the pandemic (last year Blind Veterans UK delivered in-home rehabilitation and training to 667 Members and widows)

**697**

doorstep deliveries made by our staff and dedicated volunteers



**13,612**

Volunteers donated 13,612 hours (2020: 51,432), which equates to £193,699

**857**

Blind Veterans UK has provided remote rehabilitation to 857 individuals, enabling beneficiaries to stay safe, access information and services, stay in touch with family and friends and develop hobbies and interests

**237**

Blind Veterans UK issued 237 smart phones and tablets, enabling Members and widows to access information and services and stay in touch with family and friends

**184**

Blind Veterans UK ran 184 online social groups



**1,327**

Blind Veterans UK was supported by 1,327 volunteers who have supported our COVID-19 delivery (last year rehabilitation service delivery was supported by 763 volunteers)

**4,245**

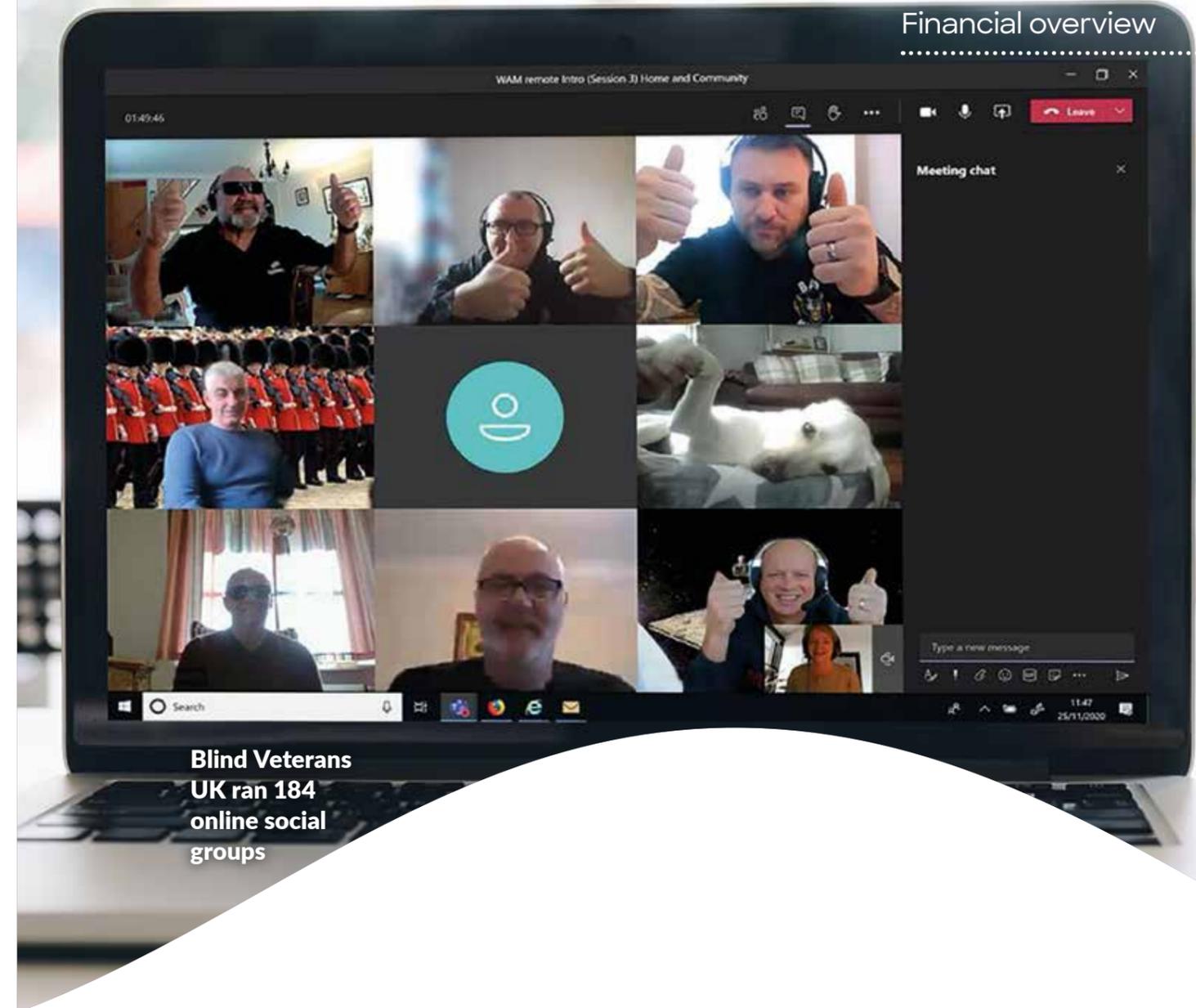
Blind Veterans UK has provided remote support to 4,245 Members and widows

**97.5**

From an independent Member survey this year, the charity achieved a Member satisfaction score known as a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 97.5 out of a possible 100 (2020: 93 out of a possible 100). This is considered 'World Class'

**445**

Throughout last year the charity recruited 445 new Members (2020: 917)



Blind Veterans UK ran 184 online social groups

## Financial overview

Total income for 2020/21 was £27.5 million, which was £0.6 million lower than the previous year. Centre income saw a significant decline due to the pandemic and having to close our Centres. Investment income saw a fall of £0.7 million. Legacy income was £0.5 million higher than the previous year and £2.0 million was received in furlough income and grants.

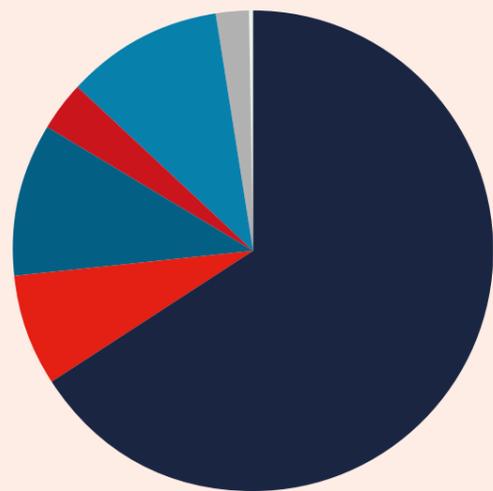
Total expenditure was £33.1 million, which was £6.1 million lower than

2019/20, primarily as a result of standing down most of our face-to-face fundraising and community activities and events, working from home and delivering our services remotely.

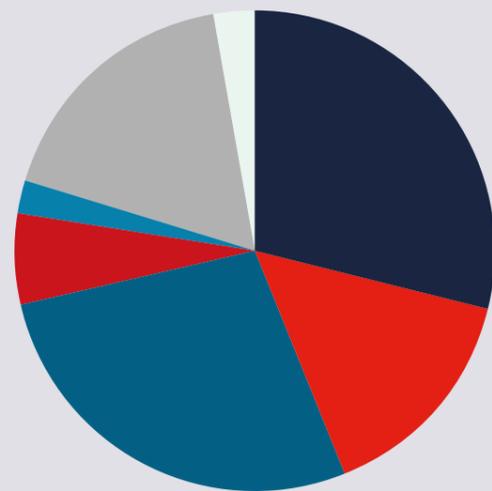
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Total expenditure was £33.1 million, which was £6.1 million lower than 2019/20

Income	£'000
Voluntary income	18,170
Grants**	2,047
Investment income	2,832
Care centre fees	915
Other	2,909
Housing provision	631
Social investment income	21
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>27,525</b>
Planned drawdown from reserves	5,537
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,062</b>



Expenditure	£'000
Providing care centre services	9,602
Supporting independent living	4,941
Providing community services	9,124
Providing housing	1,994
Reaching more veterans	700
Engagement (fundraising) and marketing costs	5,801
Managing our investments	900
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,062</b>



Further details on the income and expenditure breakdown is shown above:

Expenditure on charitable activities was £26.4 million, which was £5 million lower than the previous year, the cost of raising funds was £1.1 million lower than the previous year at £6.7 million (2019/20: £7.8 million).

\*\* Grants includes £1.4 million received from HMRC in respect of Coronavirus Job Retention scheme (CJRS).

Overall, net assets increased in the year by £6.6 million to £125 million, of which £27.4 million (21.9 per cent) is restricted for the benefit of Members who were blinded in active service

before 31 March 2010. The main driver of the increase in net asset value is mainly due to the realised gains on the investments of £13.8m (2019/20: loss of £6.0 million).

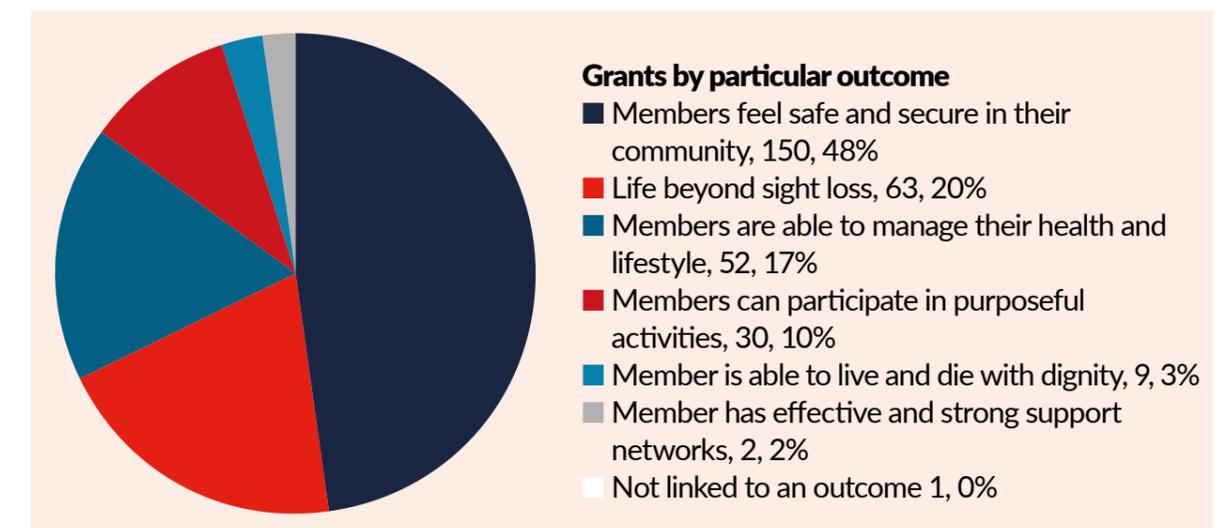
# Grant making

Blind Veterans UK continues to offer a grant-giving service as part of its commitment to supporting Members to achieve positive outcomes and in doing so rebuild lives after sight loss. Our grant-giving service enables us to provide lifelong support to our Members.

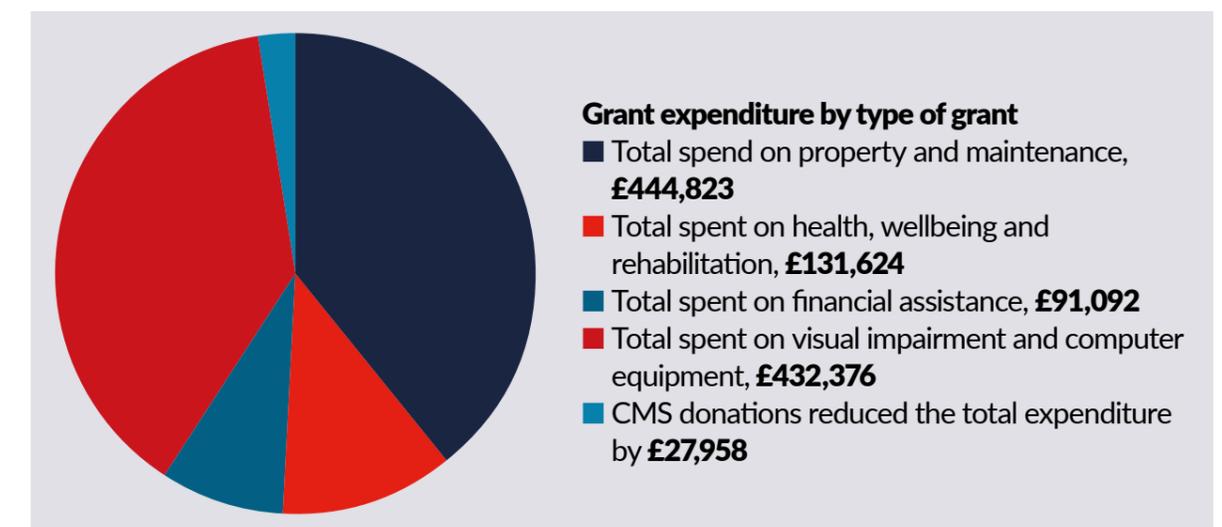
Policy was undertaken in 2018 and the revised policy was implemented in January 2019; one of the key changes introduced is that grant requests are linked to Member outcomes.

Blind Veterans UK continues as a member of a joint Case Management System (CMS) which gives access to over 100 military grant-giving organisations and provides opportunities for joint funding high-value grant requests for Members.

A comprehensive review of our Grants



Our total grants expenditure was £1.128 million made up as follows:



# Plans for future periods



At the centre of this change programme is the need to implement two very significant decisions which we made during the year:

Firstly, we plan to move away from our Brighton centre by 2024 to a smaller, more fit-for-purpose centre in the same part of the UK. This will allow us not just to reduce the deficit but also enhance the centre-based support we give to our Members through a facility that is more appropriate for the age demographic of the 21st-century veteran with sight loss.

Secondly, we have started the work to move our research activity into a separate charity within the Blind Veterans group, BRAVO VICTOR. It will be able to develop its own brand, identity and partnerships while still retaining a close relationship with the parent charity. We know from consistent feedback that participation in research studies is both a rewarding and stimulating experience for Members. Blind Veterans UK is providing 'parachute funding' to BRAVO VICTOR, which has targeted becoming self-sustaining by late 2022.

Our revised strategic objectives are:

## **We will develop a sustainable and agile business model**

- We will reduce underlying deficit in line with our revised ten-year model
- We will successfully transition from Brighton to a new site by the spring of 2024
- We will reconfigure broader service

**In December 2020 we agreed a revised strategy which reflects our revised expectations on voluntary income in the medium to long term. This revised strategy is geared towards bringing the charity out of a position of material structural deficit whilst protecting the support we give to our Members.**

The strategy is the culmination of a detailed review of the whole organisation. The consequent change programme, which touches every part of the charity, underpins a revised set of strategic objectives which we are adopting from the 2021/22 financial year. Given the magnitude of this change programme Members views are being actively sought via the Member panels ensuring that the Member voice is at the heart of our future offer.

delivery within a revised financial envelope

- We will streamline our corporate functions over the next three years
- We will execute our new asset strategy, focusing on those assets that consistently outperform our agreed investment benchmark, while deliberately prioritising investment in our operational properties to keep them responsive to member needs

## **We will provide sector-leading and responsive services and programmes**

- We will reach more Members in more places
- We will ensure every Member who wants a volunteer has one
- We will embed effective virtual team working
- We will ensure clear quality assurance systems are in place
- We will ensure our services meet the needs of Members and that we have the right external partnerships in place
- We will support volunteers and care teams to use our outcomes framework

## **We will exploit digitisation and data to maximise our insight and impact**

- We will implement our Data Strategy
- We will streamline the technology estate
- We will create a systematic single customer view
- We will codify our internal and external reporting
- We will recognise data as currency

## **We will nurture our supporters intelligently, raise the funds needed ethically and spend wisely**

- We will roll out our new procurement policy
- We will streamline our income

## **We have started the work to move our research activity into a separate charity**

streams to focus on those activities that give the best long-term rates of return

- We will always recognise the money we spend is a gift from our supporters, not our money

## **We will build a strong and mutually beneficial research partnership with BRAVO VICTOR**

- We will champion, encourage and enable participation in research among our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers
- We will inform our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers about research that impacts on matters of importance and interest
- We will amplify the voice of BRAVO VICTOR through our internal and external networks and communications channels and with our partners and collaborators

## **We will be a national force for good through partnership and collaboration**

- We will increase the choice of support available to Members across the UK through a comprehensive partnership strategy
- We will explore partnerships beyond the VI and veteran sectors in order to provide truly holistic support to our Members
- We will increase Member engagement to inform and build our partnership work and contribute to the evidence base for change
- We will demonstrate VI sector benefit through the Blind Veterans UK-led role in the Vision Partnership
- We will demonstrate veteran sector benefit through the Blind Veterans UK-led role in the Disabled Veterans Charity Partnership

# Governance, risk and internal control

The Trustees are clear about the need to have processes and assurance mechanisms in place to maintain transparency and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. It is recognised that maintaining the trust and confidence of the public is vital.

Well-constituted and effective Executive and Trustee meetings provide for regular holding to account, scrutiny, support and guidance and ensure that decision making is well informed and timely. There is a well-established and transparent process for the Executive and Trustees to assess performance, risk, internal controls and key governance issues, including serious notifiable incidents when appropriate. We have a commitment to continual improvement of this process. The Trustees and Executive have the opportunity to meet formally on a quarterly basis and more frequently and informally as required. There are a number of subsidiary committees responsible for specific areas of governance, risk and internal control which are described later in this report.

The Trustees have adopted the latest Charity Code of Governance as a mechanism to more objectively assess the quality of our governance and compliance. This useful tool highlights to Trustees and the Executive areas to improve governance standards and our overall

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In June 2019 we submitted our self-assessment and scored 74 out of 80

effectiveness in delivering our vision, mission and strategic objectives. In 2019/20 our initial review was modified to comply with guidance from The Confederation of Service Charities (Cobseo). In June 2019 we submitted our self-assessment and scored 74 out of 80 (rated as “Good Governance” standard). We have worked on the minor action points identified to further strengthen our compliance with the Code’s seven principles by comprehensively rewriting our Trustee handbook and updating our Terms of Reference for our Trustee Committees and Working groups.

The Trustees undertake an annual board effectiveness review. All Trustees are asked to comment and feedback through a questionnaire directly to either the Chairman or the Vice Chair. The latest review was conducted in December 2020 and was reviewed by the full Trustee Council in March 2021. There were no critical issues raised but Trustees now have a closed session with the Chief Executive Officer at the start of each Council meeting

## Performance management

Performance against the strategy, the annual Executive Plan and our Key Performance Indicators is continually measured using the Performance

**Continues over**



Blind veteran John collecting prescriptions for others during lockdown

Measurement Framework, which as it is developed is providing assured, key performance metrics, data and trends. This provides greater assurance to decision making. The trustees receive a narrative analysis, the Quarterly Performance and Risk Report, supported by a dashboard of Key Performance Indicators which will be developed to reflect the new strategy. The Chief Executive and his Senior Leadership Team use additional metrics from the same framework to review progress against delivery of the annual Executive Plan on a monthly basis.

### Risk management

The executive risk management process is well established and provides a useful and important governance tool to identify, assess, mitigate and manage risks before they become issues. The Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team consider these risks at their monthly meetings. Directors and their teams discuss and manage risk on a day-to-day basis. The Trustees consider the key risks faced by the charity on a quarterly basis both in Trustee committees and as a collective board. The Council has a strategic risk framework for Trustees, committees and Council to use, which considers strategic risk against Requirement, Resources, Reputation and Regulation. These risks are now regularly reviewed by key committees and at Council. This new process has been incorporated in a revised charity risk management policy.

### We consider that the charity faces two high risks

- That our plan for redesign does not develop an affordable and deliverable new model which delivers financial sustainability for the long term. Mindful of our imperative for change, the risk covers programme design together with achievability of the planned savings or income figures and is a risk that requires to be treated. To address this, we have instituted real-time scenario modelling and monitoring throughout the redesign process through improved KPIs and fundraising data and a Project Management Office has been

established which is governed by a Change Board comprising the CEO and Senior Leadership team.

- The charity is unable to retain and maintain sufficient and capable motivated staff which may reach a critical level putting service delivery at risk. This reflects the uncertainty linked to change and the impact of COVID-19 on our staff and indicates a risk that must be treated. To address this, we are developing a People sub-strategy to bring together the key issues which impact on staff and will include a new reward and benefits plan as well as a Learning and Development plan to take us forward. We have appointed an internal communications team who are governed by a Communications Board that meet every fortnight to ensure that staff have appropriate and accessible communications on all related matters and a staff survey on culture and working practices has been completed as part of a wider culture and capability review of the charity.

### Other significant risks, which if they occurred might have material impact and are being managed, are as follows:

- There is a building integrity risk at the Brighton Centre stemming largely from the building's age. Refurbishment and future proofing work is in progress to maintain the building as a safe place to work and to address the needs of ongoing service delivery in the building.
- There is a risk to life and service delivery at the Brighton Centre as a result of sub-standard fire detection and protection systems. Revised policy and procedures have



Haydn with his ukuleles and guide dog Webster

clarified responsibilities and this control measure is complete. An independent Fire Risk Assessment has been completed and identifies good compliance and all specific fire training is complete and in date.

- There is an enhanced risk of significant financial and reputational damage as a result of a serious personal data breach. The continuing compliance improvement plan is well advanced and is being driven by the Senior Leadership Team with assistance from the Information Governance officer (DPO).
- There is a risk that the health and safety of Members, volunteers and staff could be adversely affected by the charity's response to the COVID-19 crisis. We have put in

place a structured response via the National Support Service and an easement plan is in place to ensure that the charity's services are resumed in a way that is appropriate and suitably risk assessed. These programmes are being overseen by the Service Delivery Committee.

### Compliance

Compliance is about ensuring that we adhere to statutory, regulatory and internal policies, and that we have a framework in place to test this. The charity's Secretariat is responsible to the Chief Executive Officer and Trustees for ensuring that we have the right behaviours and policies in place to operate legally and safely and to confirm that we are complying with the policies.

There are several key regulatory bodies that the charity is required to conform to and these include the Care Quality Commission, the Care Inspectorate Wales, Information Commissioner's

Continues over

Office, Health and Safety Executive, the Fundraising Regulator, and the Charity Commission, as well as others.

The charity subscribes to the fundraising standards and code of practice of the Fundraising Regulator; is a member of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising; and follows guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). We believe we have appropriate standards for the operation and management of our engagement activities and respond pro-actively and rapidly when a failure or improvement is identified. In particular, given our purpose, Blind Veterans UK considers that its processes and controls should ensure that vulnerable people and other members of the public are protected from any unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy and that no fundraising activities would be unreasonably persistent or place undue pressure on a person to give money or assets.

We use Professional Fundraising Organisations (PFOs) to carry out some donor recruitment (for example to recruit new players to our lottery). Where we do so, we ensure that they follow all relevant legislation and best practice, including the Data Protection Act (2018) and the Code of Fundraising Practice. We also carry out (through the Institute of Fundraising) regular mystery shopping exercises to ensure their compliance. All other fundraising activities for the charity are carried out by the staff with assistance from our valued volunteers who support specific fundraising events. The charity uses Payroll Giving to provide a flexible scheme which allows anyone who pays UK income tax to give regularly on a tax-free basis. All fundraising activities, including our gambling regulated activities, are managed by the respective teams and are monitored by the engagement leadership team, with overall supervision by the Director of Engagement.

Over the past 12 months we recorded just 53 complaints compared to 101 last year. This represents a tiny fraction of over two million

contacts with supporters and potential supporters. Most of these complaints were about too much or unwanted contact. In almost all cases the appropriate law, regulation and best practice was followed by the charity.

We have continued to build upon our progress and to strengthen our data protection processes. The Information Governance Officer acts as our Data Protection Officer and continues to implement our continual improvement plan along with our Information Asset and Risk Owners and is also refining our policies. This person has been active in raising awareness and understanding and driving the required cultural change across the organisation. They are engaged with key personnel to inform their work and projects as they commence and ensures data protection is embedded from the outset. A small number of data right and data subject access requests were handled in a timely and effective manner.

### Section 172 Statement

The Board of Trustees have acted in the way they consider to be in good faith, would be most likely to promote the success of the charity and for the benefit of its Members as a whole, and in doing so have regard to the matters set out in s172(1) (a-f) of the Companies Act 2006. During the year, the Trustees have considered the long-term consequences of their decisions. For example, a focus of this reporting period was the review, development and implementation of the organisation's next five-year strategy, and during this period, different financial scenarios were modelled and considered to assist with long-term planning.



Blind veteran Win using a handheld electronic magnifier to read letters and look at old photos



# Reserves

The Trustees are responsible for ascertaining whether the funds we hold in reserve are adequate for our ongoing work. To do this, they consider the lifelong support we offer our beneficiaries, as well as the nature and type of reserve assets.

## The breakdown of our total Net Assets of £125 million is:

### £29 million of Restricted reserves

These funds are dedicated to our service men and women injured before 2010 while serving in the Armed Forces; these are often beneficiaries who require very considerable help over many decades of their lives. These funds are not available for use by our other Members, where we have the largest and increasing numbers

### £96 million of Unrestricted reserves (after accounting for the pension liability)

These funds consist of:

- £41 million of operationally committed assets which are beneficiary properties, operational centres and other assets
- £55 million of remaining Unrestricted reserves, which we categorise as the charity's free reserves

Because of the financial pressures of providing lifetime support for beneficiaries, Trustees consider the target level of reserves (£63 million), which are held as listed investments (£69.9 million as at 31 March 2021),

should be sufficient to cover the projected financial deficit during the expected average lifetime of the membership (approximately five years).

The Trustees remain committed to supporting as many Members as possible and, in the short term, are content to continue to draw on reserves to fund this. Trustees and senior management are reviewing longer term financial strategy and operating model and this is planned to significantly reduce the reliance on funding from reserves in the medium term.

Further information on the Restricted and Unrestricted reserves is below.

### Restricted reserves

Total Restricted reserves are £28.9 million, including the Sir Arthur Pearson Fund (£27.4 million), which is restricted for the benefit of beneficiaries blinded during active service on or before 31 March 2010. For some of our younger beneficiaries, this might mean supporting them for over several decades throughout their life after sight loss. Other Restricted reserves (£1.5 million) relate to unspent donations for projects such as the Life Skills Programme in Llandudno and for specific funds, including the Diana Gubbay Fund for the Blind, which supports emergency service personnel who have suffered sight loss.

### Unrestricted reserves

Beneficiaries who have lost their sight after service, and any new beneficiaries who have lost their sight during active service from 1 April 2010, are supported by the Unrestricted fund. Unrestricted reserves help us provide support to those beneficiaries for

## We have adopted a total return approach for our investment portfolio

the rest of their lives. A high proportion of these beneficiaries have age-related sight loss caused by macular degeneration and other conditions. Beneficiaries challenged by sight loss may also have a range of other medical problems in later life. We strive to collaborate with other organisations to provide them with the range of support they need.

### Investments

We have adopted a total return approach for our investment portfolio, with the actual performance measured against agreed benchmarks. The primary aims for our investment managers are to achieve a total return of 3.5% per annum above inflation over the longer term and perform well against the benchmarks. Each year there is a targeted level of investment income for budgeting purposes.

Cazenove Capital Management and Jupiter Asset Management were appointed as investment managers in 2012, with each managing a half of the then existing portfolio. Additionally, Cazenove Capital took over responsibility for administering a small private equity portfolio, although no further commitments are anticipated in this asset class.

During the 12 months to 31 March 2021, the value of the externally managed investment portfolios increased by £6.7 million to £70.1 million, after £13.8 million of net realised and unrealised capital gains, a £5.9 million draw down from the portfolios and the payment of fees (£0.2 million).

Since the two investment managers took over the portfolios in 2012, the total returns of the

**Continues over**

combined portfolios have outperformed the inflation-linked target (CPI + 3.5 per cent) by about 2.35 per cent per annum.

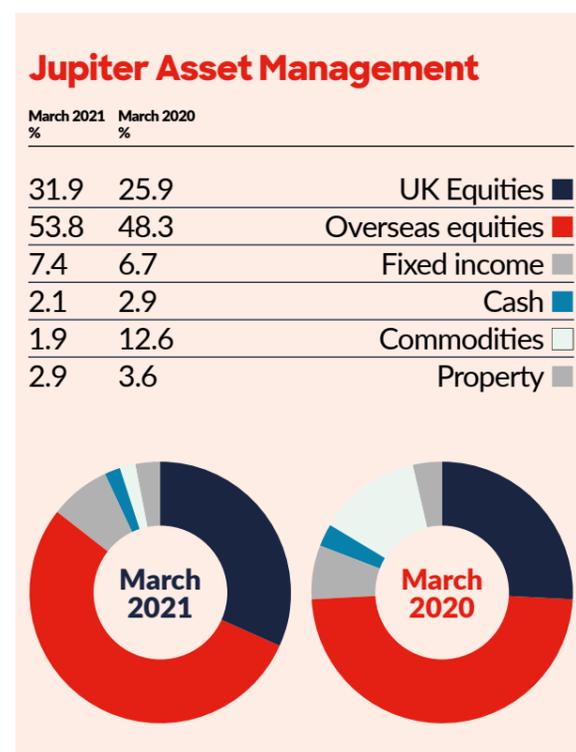
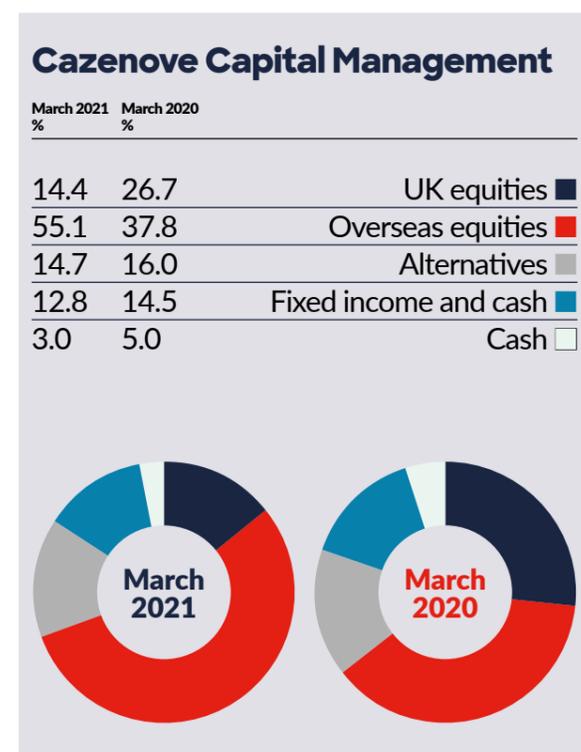
Over the past 12 months to 31 March 2021, the total returns of the two portfolios were Cazenove 24.4 per cent (-10.6 per cent last year) and Jupiter 22.3 per cent (-5.8 per cent last year). This compares to the ARC Steady Growth index return of 24.8 per cent (-7.6 per cent last year) and the inflation-linked target (CPI+3.5 per cent) of 3.7 per cent (5.1 per cent last year).

The charity holds some 55 investment properties (2020: 59) that are let out on commercial market rents along with a further 90 properties that could be used for future Member occupation (2020: 104). These 145 properties provided a rental stream of some £1.8 million per annum (2020: £1.7 million) with an aggregate asset value of £18.8 million (2020: £19.0 million).

In addition, there are a further 104 properties occupied by Members (2020: 114) which have generated £1 million of rent in the year (2020: £1 million). The rents are heavily subsidised for the Members and could be significantly increased as properties become available. The book value has been estimated at £16.7 million (2020: £18.0 million). Gains on the sale of land and property amounted to £1.4 million during the year (2020: £5.4 million).

Sales during 2021 raised £6.4 million, this includes £1.75 million raised from the sale of the closed Sheffield Centre, whilst during 2021/22 property sales are set to raise £8 million from the residential portfolios. These monies will fund operations with the aim of supporting more Members.

**At 31 March 2021, the portfolio allocations in institutional funds, with a high degree of liquidity, were as follows:**



# Organisation structure, governance and management

Blind Veterans UK was incorporated as a private limited company on 30 April 1923 as St Dunstan's. The name was changed on 27 January 2012 to Blind Veterans UK (registered company No. 00189648). The Trustees are registered with Companies House as the Directors of Blind Veterans UK and the CEO as the Secretary. The current version of its Articles of Association are dated 21 September 2016. Blind Veterans UK is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Registered charity No. 216227) and the Scottish Charity Regulator (Registered charity No. SCO39411). The charity is also the principal employer for the St Dunstan's Retirement Benefits Plan (1973).

Blind Veterans has three subsidiary companies: Blind Veterans UK Trading Limited, which is a registered company in England & Wales No. 06446944, this has now ceased trading as at 31 March 2021; Four Seasons NWMC Housing Limited, which is registered company No. 01882050; and BRAVO VICTOR, Incorporated as a private limited company on 19 January 2021, which is a registered company in England & Wales No. 13144807

Blind Veterans UK is one of three active governing charities (The Macular Society, and Sight Scotland Veterans (previously Scottish War Blinded) who

have equal interest in a charitable incorporated organisation called Action Against AMD, incorporated in November 2016.

### Public benefit statement

The Trustees have given due consideration to the Charity Commission's published guidelines on the public benefit requirements under the Charities Act 2011. Blind Veterans UK provides public benefit by providing support to blind veterans and other beneficiaries through support and advice, grants and access to the Centres located in Brighton and Llandudno as well as through our communities. Further information is included in the strategic report.

### Structure of the Council of Blind Veterans UK

The Council (Board of Trustees) of Blind Veterans UK normally consists of 14 to 17 Trustees (14 in 2019/20), of which three are Member (beneficiary) Trustees. The Trustees have a variety of skills and backgrounds, with a strong emphasis on experience in the Armed Forces, visual impairment, property, strategy and finance. We list our Trustees on pages 33-37.

### Recruitment and training of Trustees

Our Trustees are recruited through a variety of means, including advertisement and networking. Potential Trustees are interviewed by the Chairman and proposed to the nominations committee, and recommendations are to the Council by assessing the knowledge, skills and experience of the

Continues over

potential Trustee and the requirement of diverse competencies and backgrounds of the collective Council.

Prior to appointment Trustees attend a committee and Council meeting as an observer and are required to familiarise themselves with the charity's purpose. Trustees are advised to undertake external training to ensure they are clear about their responsibilities and are provided with a Trustee Handbook which outlines the responsibilities of a Trustee and signposts to further information.

### Trustee meetings

The Council meets quarterly to consider strategic business. Some of its responsibilities are delegated to committees as shown below. In September 2020 Trustee committees and working groups were restructured and new Terms of Reference were agreed at Council.

### Trustee Coordination Group

Is primarily interested in strategic risk, balance, and direction. It coordinates activity across and between committees and working groups, integrates and balances strategic risks, identifies key business and decisions for Council and shares learning and best practice across the committees and working groups

### Service Delivery committee

To provide oversight of the delivery of holistic, needs based services that are both effective and efficient and strategic requirement risks

### Engagement committee

To oversee fundraising activity, supporter acquisition, development and partnership, external and internal communications, and strategic reputation risks

### Resources and Plans committee

To oversee short and long-term resources (staff and volunteers, financial, investments and assets including property), short-term plan (typically a rolling three-year period including in-year) and strategic resource risks

### Investment committee

To maintain the prudent and effective management of the charity's investments and formulate and oversee the investment policies

### Nominations committee

To consider nominations for new members of the Council and other honorific appointments, taking into full account the charity's requirement for particular skills or qualifications and appropriate diversity of people and backgrounds

### People Working Group

To oversee the people and volunteering sub strategies, policies, procedures and plans to ensure they are effective and efficient to have sufficient, capable and motivated people

### Employees

Our staff and volunteers are, along with our beneficiaries, at the heart of everything we do. As a caring organisation it is our people who generate the benefit in pursuit of our purpose. We actively encourage the recognition of good performance and sharing this across the charity in keeping with our value of celebrating Success.

Our primary communication channel on matters of concern to them as employees is through their line management chain within their directorates or the volunteering team. We have local team events to share news and spread awareness of the benefits and challenges being faced across the charity. There are also central messaging channels ranging from our weekly staff newsletter to the CEO's periodic General Staff Meetings at

Continues over

### Blind veterans and care staff celebrate VE Day



which questions and feedback are sought.

More formally, the Staff Communications and Consultation Group (SCCG) is our quarterly staff consultation mechanism whereby representatives are elected by the staff to air issues on behalf of the staff and volunteers directly to the CEO and Human Resources Lead and Director of Resources. A record is maintained and actions are followed up and reported back through the SCCG. This regularly informs decisions leading to changes in staff and volunteer matters.

A Trustee working group (People Working Group) regularly reviews people matters and their terms of employment or volunteering and recommends the annual remuneration changes to the Board of Trustees.

Our ability to recruit and retain high-quality staff is critical to the success of our charity. It is our policy to pay competitive and fair salaries in all parts of our organisation. We evaluate all jobs using the Kornferry Job Evaluation system (formally Hay) and apply median market-related salaries. We subscribe to external pay datasets as well as undertake our own research to establish appropriate regionalised median market salaries which are reviewed annually. Further details of our directors' salaries, key management personnel and recent redundancy payments can be found in note 14g on pages 61-62.

The charity has a well-established recruitment process which gives full consideration to all applications free from any bias. We understand the strength in diversity and welcome applications from all suitably qualified and experienced candidates irrespective of their age, long-term health conditions or disability, age, gender or gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation or marital status, race, religion or belief. Opportunities are available to all employees for training and career development.

The charity has recently conducted an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) review and has

already began work in implementing some of the recommendations from the report such as EDI policy, training and culture diagnostics to ensure that all of our people are treated fairly, with respect and dignity. We do not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment of any kind.

### Stakeholder management

We place particular attention on the views of, and feedback from our beneficiaries, our Members. This happens in a number of ways including; an annual Member survey which highlights trends and leads to direct staff response; the Member panels that meet on a regular basis to consult on programmes of change; the support service telephone line that is available every day to receive Member comments and feedback that is then actioned as appropriate; the monthly Review magazine which is distributed to every beneficiary in their chosen format and that invites views and response; and informal engagement with beneficiaries by Trustees and directors at the numerous Member-orientated events held across the country and through the year.

We maintain regular and open contact with other key stakeholders and suppliers and are pleased to report that engagement of our supply chain in broader promotion of our charitable work continues to grow. Multiple quotes are obtained as a matter of course and, for material initiatives and services, full tender processes are adhered to. We also have an experienced in-house procurement team who oversee our supply chain.

# Blind Veterans UK dignitaries



### Founder The late Sir Arthur Pearson Bt GBE

Sir Arthur Pearson founded our charity in 1915, which was originally named the Blinded Soldiers & Sailors Care Committee. Sir Arthur, who went blind through glaucoma, was a newspaper proprietor, owner and founder of the *Daily Express* and *Pearson's Weekly*.



### Patron Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO DSTJ CD

We are proud and honoured that our Patron is Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO. Blind Veterans UK has held Her Royal Highness' patronage since December 2016.



### President Colin Williamson

Colin became the sixth President of Blind Veterans UK in 2017. He served in the Royal Artillery as a driver, gunner and signaller, and has been a beneficiary of Blind Veterans UK since 2003 after a serious assault caused his sight loss. He has volunteered and worked for Blind Veterans UK for over 15 years and leads Project Gemini, our exchange programme between blind veterans from the UK, USA and South Africa. By virtue of being President, Colin also serves as a Trustee.

Continues over

### Vice-Patrons

**Professor Russell Foster CBE FRS**  
**General The Lord Richards GCB CBE DSO DL**  
**Viscount Chelsea DL (appointed June 2019)**

### Vice-Presidents

**Billy Baxter**  
**Paul Palmer**  
**Captain Michael C Gordon-Lennox OBE RN**  
**Major General Andrew M Keeling CB CBE**

## Trustees

### Air Vice-Marshal Paul Luker CB OBE AFC DL (Chairman)

Paul joined the Council of Blind Veterans UK in 2012 and became our Chairman in 2017. He joined the RAF in 1968, serving until 2006. He trained as a support helicopter pilot and subsequently his flying duties ranged across a wide number of RAF and Army helicopters. After attending the Royal College of Defence Studies, he went on to be Director of Overseas Military Activity at the Ministry of Defence and then Commander of Joint Helicopter Command. From 2006 to 2016 he was CEO of the Council of Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations.

### Sarah-Lucie Watson

Sarah-Lucie is a full-time ophthalmic surgeon and Clinical Lead in the eye department in the NHS in Berkshire. Her specialist interests include conditions of the retina and cataract surgery and she leads the macula service and is responsible for training junior surgeons. Her clinical role has made her aware of the impact of sight loss as well as being raised by a totally blind mother. Sarah-Lucie is married to a retired army officer, some of whose own men have returned from conflict with life changing injuries.

### David Turner

David joined the Council of Blind Veterans UK in March 2016. After studying at the College of Estate Management he qualified as a chartered surveyor. He worked in property consultancy before joining the UK board of a listed property development and investment company. Later he joined a leading UK bank where he became CEO of the group's property subsidiary and group Property Director. Post retirement, David has used his general management and property experience through a number of board appointments in the private and public sectors.

### Malcolm Cree CBE

Malcolm retired from the Royal Navy in 2016, in the rank of Rear Admiral. He served in all types and sizes of ship, from minesweepers to aircraft

carriers, and commanded variously a destroyer, a task force in the Gulf and the Navy's prized operational sea training organisation. He was deployed all over the world and served in the Gulf (Tanker War) and Adriatic. Since retiring, Malcolm is CEO of the Bar Council having previously worked for a management consultancy that specialises in decision analysis.

### Sir Mark Poffley KCB OBE

Mark was appointed a Trustee of Blind Veterans UK in March 2017 and left the Army as a Lieutenant General in 2018. He was Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff responsible for delivering the strategic balance of investment for all three services and is a logistician with management account qualifications. In his 32 years of service, he completed operational tours in the Balkans, the first Gulf War, Afghanistan and most recently in Iraq. Mark is currently working in various consultancy roles.

### Barry Coupe

Barry's knowledge of Blind Veterans UK goes back as far as he can remember: his father was supported by St Dunstan's after losing his sight in 1943, while serving in the Royal Navy. After working as a volunteer for the charity for two years, Barry became a Trustee in 2017. He also has extensive experience working as a non-executive for charities, as he is one of the founding Trustees of the Children's Hospices for the Eastern Region. Barry has also served as chairman of the national charity Dyslexia Action and is an award-winning architect.

Continues over



### Guy Davies

Since leaving the Army, Guy has spent over 20 years as a charity investment manager. He has been a Trustee of ABF The Soldiers' Charity, is a Trustee of The Army Central Fund, chairs the Advisory Committee of The BlackRock Armed Forces Growth and Income Fund, and Secretary of the Charity Investors Group. Guy co-founded Yoke & Co, which offers financial governance advice to charities, and established the Charity Intelligence, a free and independent website for charities to provide professional advice.

### Lady Nicky Pulford

Nicky trained as a medical secretary and has spent most of her career working for the NHS, local councils and latterly within the Thames Valley Police Force. She is married to a retired Royal Air Force Officer and for the past 35 years has accompanied him around the world. During these years she has been a Vice President of SSAFA and has chaired the RAF High Wycombe SSAFA In-Service Committee. She has served on the RAFA Welfare Committee and has been President of the Air Attache Partners' Association and the International Club for Air Force Officers' Wives and is currently a Parish Councillor.

### Neelesh Heredia

Neelesh is currently Chief of Staff in the Office of the Regional Chief Executive for Europe; the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey; Latin America; Canada at HSBC Holdings Plc. Neelesh has been with the HSBC Group since 1989 and has undertaken leadership roles in Latin America, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Mauritius, India and the UK. His extensive experience in Financial Services has encompassed Banking Operations, Internal Audit, Human Resources, Strategy and Planning, Credit and Operational risk management, Securities Custody & Clearing, Trade Services, Retail Branch Management and Chief of Staff roles and responsibilities.

### Chris Cardwell

Chris joined as Trustee in 2018 and as a blind veteran has been a Member since 2012. Following

Registered Nurse training he worked in the Professional Nursing Department at the Royal College of Nursing. He gained qualifications in medical and employment law specialising in contract interpretation and dispute resolution, eventually working at the Department of Health in Whitehall. He became a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development, a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, an Accredited Mediator and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators. In the 1970s he served in the Reserves as an Operating Department Practitioner with 212 Field Hospital, Royal Army Medical Corps. He is the charity's permanent representative on the NHS England Armed Forces PPV.

### Alan Holderness

Alan served in the Royal Marines in the South Atlantic and Cyprus. On being medically discharged he held various senior posts at the Royal British Legion branch in Blackburn and at regional level. He has served as President for the East Lancashire Royal Marine Association for 25 years and has been Chair of Governors for his local primary school for over 20 years. He has been a serving Magistrate since 2003, sitting on the adult and youth benches. Additionally, Alan sits with Judges and Recorders at Crown Court on appeals. Alan has been Managing Director of the family manufacturing business since 2000, taking an active participation in running all aspects of the company. Alan joined as Trustee in 2018 and as a blind veteran has been a Member since 2006.

### Tim Seal

Tim was appointed as Trustee in December 2018. He has a strong



Chairman Paul Luker, and family, join the fundraising effort

commercial background, specialising in performance and operational management in highly regulated sectors. As a senior director managing care homes and hospitals for BUPA, Anchor Trust and Barchester, he brings a wealth of health and social care experience. He combines this with 34 years as an Army reservist, currently serving as Deputy Commander, 1st (UK) Division. Tim is a strong advocate for youth development in his role as Honorary Colonel of the Army Cadet Force in Cambridgeshire and was appointed to serve as High Sheriff of the county in April 2020.

### Ian Sherriff BEM

Ian has been connected with the

charity since 1975. He served in the Fleet Air Arm for 25 years. Ian is a lecturer and researcher into dementia at The University of Plymouth Faculty of Health. Ian was a trustee for six years for the Alzheimer's Society and has been the national chair of the Prime Minister's Air Transport Dementia Group and the Prime Minister's rural Dementia Challenge Group since 2015. He also chairs a global group on dementia. Ian has been successful in obtaining significant research grants and travels extensively around the world giving lectures and sharing cross-country knowledge in the field of dementia. Ian is a Trustee of BRAVO VICTOR.

**The following Trustees retired during 2020/21. We would like to thank both of them for their commitment and service:**  
**Minoo Sahni Court** – retired October 2020  
**David Buckley** – retired September 2020

# Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Members and directors of Blind Veterans UK for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards. Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group, and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the charitable group for that period.

## In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business

## The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that:

- are sufficient to show and explain the group and charitable company's transactions
- disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the group and charitable company

- enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the provisions of the charity's constitution

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and the group, which includes taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities. Insofar as each of the Trustees/directors of the charity at the date of approval of this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the charity's auditor in connection with preparing the audit report) of which the charity's auditor is unaware. Each Trustee/director has taken all of the steps that he/she should have taken as a Trustee/director in order to make himself/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information. The report of the Council of Blind Veterans UK and strategic report were approved by the Council on 21 September 2021 and signed on its behalf by the Chairman of the Trustees.



**Air Vice-Marshal Paul Luker**  
**CB OBE AFC DL**  
Chairman, Blind Veterans UK

Joan Osborne  
outside the Brighton  
centre at her British  
Empire Medal  
presentation



# Independent auditor's report to the members and Trustees of Blind Veterans UK

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Blind Veterans UK ('the charitable company') and its subsidiaries ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Company Balance Sheet, the Group Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

## In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the group's income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (amended).

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed,

**Continues over**



we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### Other information

The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit

- the information given in the Trustees' report,

which includes the directors' report and the strategic report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and

- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 38, the Trustees (who are also the

directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or

error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

Continues over

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charitable company's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charitable company and the group for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were CQC Regulations for service providers and managers, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), taxation legislation and employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

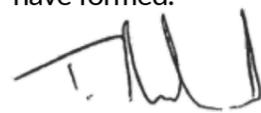
We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income, recording the impact of the CQC regulatory reviews, and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, and the Resources and Plans Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence including that with the Charity Commission, and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify

it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the charitable company's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body and the charitable company's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



### Tim Redwood

Senior Statutory Auditor  
For and on behalf of  
Crowe U.K. LLP  
Statutory Auditor  
London  
Date: 29 September 2021

## Consolidated statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 March 2021

Notes	Sir Arthur Pearson restricted fund £'000	Other restricted funds £'000	Unrestricted fund £'000	2021 Group £'000	2020 Group £'000
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
<b>Donations and legacies</b>					
	-	506	6,232	6,738	6,341
	-	425	1,622	2,047	-
	-	261	11,171	11,432	10,909
1f	-	<b>1,192</b>	<b>19,025</b>	<b>20,217</b>	<b>17,250</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
	-	-	631	631	674
	37	-	878	915	1,830
	<b>37</b>	-	<b>1,509</b>	<b>1,546</b>	<b>2,504</b>
<b>Other trading activities</b>					
	-	-	-	-	8
<b>Investment income</b>					
	252	10	2,570	2,832	3,507
	21	-	-	21	24
	<b>273</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2,570</b>	<b>2,853</b>	<b>3,531</b>
<b>Other income</b>					
2b	77	-	2,832	2,909	4,836
	<b>387</b>	<b>1,202</b>	<b>25,936</b>	<b>27,525</b>	<b>28,129</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
<b>Raising funds</b>					
	-	-	5,806	5,806	6,893
	-	-	(5)	(5)	6
	87	-	813	900	917
	<b>87</b>	-	<b>6,614</b>	<b>6,701</b>	<b>7,816</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
	114	89	4,738	4,941	5,588
	1,156	632	206	1,994	1,237
	365	69	8,690	9,124	10,025
	384	242	8,976	9,602	12,711
	-	-	700	700	891
	<b>2,019</b>	<b>1,032</b>	<b>23,310</b>	<b>26,361</b>	<b>31,352</b>
4	<b>2,106</b>	<b>1,032</b>	<b>29,924</b>	<b>33,062</b>	<b>39,168</b>
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>					
	<b>(1,719)</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>(3,988)</b>	<b>(5,537)</b>	<b>(11,039)</b>
	3,247	89	10,455	13,791	(6,011)
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>					
	<b>1,528</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>6,467</b>	<b>8,254</b>	<b>(17,050)</b>
<b>Transfer between funds</b>					
11	-	(75)	75	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains and losses</b>					
	-	-	(1,653)	(1,653)	2,969
15	<b>1,528</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>4,889</b>	<b>6,601</b>	<b>(14,081)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
	25,830	1,293	91,493	118,616	132,697
<b>Fund balance carried forward at 31 March 2021</b>					
11	<b>27,358</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>96,382</b>	<b>125,217</b>	<b>118,616</b>

**Consolidated balance sheet for the year ended 31 March 2021**

	Note	Charity 2021 £'000	Group 2021 £'000	Charity 2020 £'000	Group 2020 £'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	6	41,430	41,430	42,118	42,118
Investments	7	89,798	89,798	83,254	83,254
		<b>131,228</b>	<b>131,228</b>	<b>125,372</b>	<b>125,372</b>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	8	2,430	2,430	2,012	2,008
Current asset investment		-	-	1,450	1,450
Cash at bank and in hand		8,720	8,720	5,284	5,287
		<b>11,150</b>	<b>11,150</b>	<b>8,746</b>	<b>8,745</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Creditors, amounts falling due within one year	9a	(2,490)	(2,490)	(2,479)	(2,483)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>8,660</b>	<b>8,660</b>	<b>6,267</b>	<b>6,262</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>139,888</b>	<b>139,888</b>	<b>131,639</b>	<b>131,634</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>					
Long term loan	9b	(2,500)	(2,500)	-	-
Pension scheme liability	15	(12,171)	(12,171)	(13,018)	(13,018)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>125,217</b>	<b>125,217</b>	<b>118,621</b>	<b>118,616</b>
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>					
<b>Sir Arthur Pearson Restricted Fund</b>	10-13	27,358	27,358	25,830	25,830
<b>Other restricted funds</b>	10-13	1,477	1,477	1,293	1,293
<b>Designated funds</b>	10-13	50	50	-	-
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	10-13	108,503	108,503	104,516	104,511
<b>Pension reserve</b>	10-13	(12,171)	(12,171)	(13,018)	(13,018)
<b>Total charity funds</b>		<b>125,217</b>	<b>125,217</b>	<b>118,621</b>	<b>118,616</b>

The surplus for the financial year dealt with in the financial statements of the parent company was £6.6 million (2020: £14.1 million loss)

Company number: 189648, registered in England. These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Council of Blind Veterans UK on 21 September 2021 and signed on its behalf.



**Air Vice-Marshal Paul Luker**

CB OBE AFC DL  
Chairman and Honorary Treasurer

**Consolidated statement of cash flow for the year ended 31 March 2021**

	Notes	2021 Funds £'000	2020 Funds £'000
<b>Cash flow from operating activities:</b>			
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	(a)	<b>(9,821)</b>	<b>(17,849)</b>
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>			
Investment income		2,853	3,531
Proceeds from sale of properties, plant and equipment		3,623	6,079
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(2,258)	(1,891)
Proceeds from sales of property investments		636	2,286
Drawdown from investment portfolio		5,900	4,000
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>		<b>10,754</b>	<b>14,005</b>
<b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>			
Cash inflow from new borrowing		<b>2,500</b>	-
Change in cash and cash equivalent in reporting period		3,433	(3,844)
Cash and cash equivalent at the beginning of the reporting period		5,287	9,131
<b>Cash and cash equivalent at the end of the reporting period</b>	(b)	<b>8,720</b>	<b>5,287</b>

**Notes to cash flow statement**

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000	
(a) <b>Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period	8,254	(17,050)	
<b>Adjustments for:</b>			
Profit on sale of properties, plant and equipment	(2,898)	(5,472)	
(Gains)/losses on investments	(13,791)	6,011	
Investment income	(2,853)	(3,531)	
Depreciation	2,178	2,322	
Investment fees charged directly to portfolio	191	267	
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(430)	114	
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	7	(115)	
Additional pension contributions net of interest and service cost	(479)	(395)	
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>	<b>(9,821)</b>	<b>(17,849)</b>	
(b) <b>Analysis of cash and cash equivalent</b>			
Cash in hand	3,720	2,271	
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)	5,000	3,016	
<b>Total cash and cash equivalent</b>	<b>8,720</b>	<b>5,287</b>	
(c) <b>Analysis of changes in net debt</b>			
	as at 1 Apr 2020 £ 000's	Cashflows £ 000's	at 31 Mar 2021 £ 000's
Cash	5,287	<b>3,433</b>	<b>8,720</b>
Loans falling after more than one year	-	(2,500)	<b>(2,500)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,287</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>6,220</b>

# Notes to the accounts

## 1 Accounting policies and company status

### a) Company status

Blind Veterans UK is a company limited by guarantee No.189648 (registered charity 216227 in England and Wales and SCO39411 in Scotland). The members of the company are the Trustees, who are also ordinary members. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. Blind Veterans UK meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

### b) Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102 and UK Generally Accepted Practice, as it applies from 1 January 2016. They also comply with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The following accounting policies have been applied consistently.

### c) Basis of consolidation

Blind Veterans Trading Limited is a private limited company incorporated in the UK (company registration number: 06446944). The financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its subsidiary undertaking on a line-by-line basis. Blind Veterans Trading Ltd ceased to trade as at 31 March 2021, application for voluntary strike off and dissolution was filed on 14 April 2021.

Four Seasons NWMC Housing Limited is a private limited company incorporated in the UK (company registration number: 01882050). This company has not been consolidated, as it is not considered material to the group.

Action Against AMD is a charitable incorporated organisation set up on 16 November 2016 (charity registration number: 1170224). It is set up as a joint venture between Blind Veterans UK; Sight Scotland Veterans and Macular Society to which each entity will commit to supporting Action Against AMD with funds to undertake research. The legal form of this arrangement as noted is one of a joint venture, but the substance of the funding agreement does not align to that of a traditional joint venture as it has been constructed as an agreement underpinned by four parties to fund a specific area of research. Amounts committed under the founding agreement are decided upon annually and once committed are therefore treated as grants in the financial statements of Blind Veterans UK. The nature of the relationship will be kept under review, but at present the arrangement is not accounted for as a joint venture.

Each of the founding charities has undertaken to fund Action Against AMD for amounts up to £250,000 to cover a three-year period. As at 31 March 2021, an amount of £250,000 has been paid over by Blind Veterans UK. Action Against AMD has the objective of securing substantial donations to be invested in medical research into practical applications for the prevention, treatment and cure of age-related macular degeneration.

BRAVO VICTOR is a private limited company (Limited by guarantee), incorporated in the UK on 19th January 2021. (company registration number: 13144807). Charity status is pending. There are no transactions in 2020/21 financial year to consolidate.

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption allowed under section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 and has not presented its own Statement of Financial Activities in these financial statements. The parent charity has also taken advantage of the exemptions in FRS102 from the requirement to present a charity only Cash Flow Statement.

### d) Going concern

After making enquires and having considered the impact of Covid-19, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue its activities for the foreseeable future. Sensitivity modelling has been undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team with oversight from the Resources and Plans Committee, based on revised long-term plans being developed. Accordingly, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

### e) Fund accounting

The restricted fund comprises the Sir Arthur Pearson Restricted Fund, the Diana Gubbay Trust for the Blind (for blinded emergency services personnel), the Llandudno Capital Fund and a number of smaller funds. The Sir Arthur Pearson Restricted Fund must provide sufficient support to allow for lifelong care to war blinded beneficiaries as at 31 March 2010. The unrestricted reserves are for all beneficiaries including war-blinded beneficiaries admitted after 31 March 2010 and those who served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces and have subsequently lost their sight.

### f) Income

Donations, legacy income, investment income, mortgage interest, rents and accommodation charges are recorded on an accruals basis when the charity has entitlement and receipt is probably and can be measured reliably. Legacies are recognised at the earlier of estate accounts having been finalised or an interim or pecuniary distribution having been authorised by the executors. Donation income is credited to the statement of financial activities in the year in which it is received. Income received from interest and investments is recognised when earned. Income received for care, accommodation or other services is recognised in the period that the service is provided. Government grants such as those received for Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are recognised in the period they relate to.

### g) Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category.

### Raising funds

This comprises the costs associated with donations, legacy income and investment income, and includes engagement costs, publicity costs and investment management fees.

### Charitable activities

The expenditure relating to housing provision, independent living assistance, community services, rehabilitation and training and care centre costs is determined by reference to appropriate cost centres. Areas of shared cost are allocated based on staff time and the use of the assets concerned. Grants payable are based on amounts paid or due to individual beneficiaries.

Support costs comprise expenditure incurred in providing administrative and financial services in support of the charitable expenditure above and are allocated across the categories of charitable expenditure, governance cost and the cost of generating funds. The basis of the cost allocation has been explained in Note 5 to the accounts.

Irrecoverable VAT is included with the item of expense to which it relates and is charged to the statement of financial activity.

#### h) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £5,000 are capitalised and depreciated on a straight-line basis to write off the cost over their expected useful lives at the following rates:

Freehold and long leasehold buildings:	
Beneficiaries' property	2% pa
Headquarters	3% pa
Brighton Centre	2-4% pa
Llandudno Centre	2% pa
Computers, furniture and equipment	20-33% pa
Motor vehicles	12.5-20% pa
Property improvements	5-10% pa

#### i) Investments

Investments are included in the balance sheet at fair value. Realised investment gains and losses represent the difference between the market value of the investments at the beginning of the period, or the cost if purchased during the period, and the sale proceeds. The charity retains certain properties, formerly occupied and vacated by beneficiaries, wherever the opportunity is available for letting on terms which produce a suitable return to the charity. These properties are shown as investment properties and carried at fair value. Beneficiary mortgages are recognised at cost less impairment.

#### j) Pensions

Blind Veterans UK contributes to a defined benefits pension scheme providing benefits based on final pensionable salary; this scheme was closed to new members on 30 September 2007 and was closed to further accruals for staff pension benefits on 31 March 2016. Pensionable contributions are paid into the scheme in accordance with the recommendations of actuaries. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity.

Pension costs are charged to the statement of financial activities on a basis that spreads the expected cost of providing pensions over the employees' working lives with Blind Veterans UK. Actuarial gains and losses arising are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities under the heading pension scheme actuarial gain/(loss). Disclosures have been made in Note 15 in accordance with FRS 102. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately as other recognised gains and losses, after "net income/(expenditure)" for the year.

As detailed in Note 15, pension scheme assets are measured at market value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The resulting defined benefit pension



**Our Members  
have used adaptive  
technology to stay  
connected during  
lockdown**

scheme liability is presented separately under “non-current liabilities” on the face of the balance sheet.

Blind Veterans UK also operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as they fall due.

### k) Volunteers

During the past year, Blind Veterans UK benefitted from the contribution of unpaid volunteers. The activities carried out by these volunteers predominantly include assisting in the centres, fundraising, visiting beneficiaries in their own homes, helping to organise lunch clubs and assisting with social activities in local communities.

### j) Financial instruments

Blind Veterans UK holds only financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. These financial instruments are recognised initially at their transaction values and measured subsequently at their settlement values.

Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise bank loans and overdraft, trade and other creditors.

Investments held as part of a portfolio are recorded at fair value at the balance sheet date, with gains and losses being recognised in the SOFA. Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less impairment.

### m) Estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity’s accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying value of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant.

Legacies are recognised when evidence of entitlement exists and Blind Veterans UK is able to measure reliably. As a result, accrued legacy income is recognised at times, in advance of receiving the cash.

Investment properties are stated at market value and reviewed annually for impairment. The market value of the properties is assessed on valuations carried out by registered chartered surveyors on a fair value basis being higher of market value and existing use every five years.

Blind Veterans UK has obligations to pay pension benefits under the Defined benefit pension scheme to certain employees and former employees. The cost of these benefits and the present value of the obligation depend on a number of factors, including; life expectancy, salary increases, asset valuations and discount rates. Based on advice received from Actuaries, management estimates these factors in determining the net pension obligation in the balance sheet. The assumptions reflect historical experience and current trends.

## 2a Investment income

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Listed investments	1,050	1,721
Unlisted investments	3	2
Deposit interest	24	74
Rent on investment properties	1,777	1,734
	<b>2,853</b>	<b>3,531</b>

## 2b Other income

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Event income and merchandise sales	12	63
Gains on disposal of fixed assets	11	61
Gains on disposal of properties	2,886	4,712
	<b>2,909</b>	<b>4,836</b>

## 3 Governance costs (included within support costs, Note 5)

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Includes:		
Auditors’ remuneration		
– Audit fee	54	50
– Other services	10	28
Expenses reimbursed to zero (2020 – four) council members	-	1

## 4 Expenditure

	Direct costs £'000	Depreciation £'000	Other £'000	Group 2021 £'000	Group 2020 £'000
<b>Raising funds</b>					
Engagement (fundraising) costs	3,160	14	2,632	<b>5,806</b>	<b>6,893</b>
Commercial trading costs	-	-	(5)	<b>(5)</b>	<b>6</b>
Investment management costs	468	-	432	<b>900</b>	<b>917</b>
	<b>3,628</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3,059</b>	<b>6,701</b>	<b>7,816</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Independent living assistance	3,292	315	1,335	<b>4,942</b>	<b>5,588</b>
Housing provision	723	758	512	<b>1,993</b>	<b>2,137</b>
Community services	7,705	162	1,257	<b>9,124</b>	<b>10,025</b>
Care centre activities	5,857	315	3,430	<b>9,602</b>	<b>12,711</b>
Beneficiary recruitment and services	-	82	618	<b>700</b>	<b>891</b>
	<b>17,577</b>	<b>1,632</b>	<b>7,152</b>	<b>26,361</b>	<b>31,352</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>21,205</b>	<b>1,646</b>	<b>10,211</b>	<b>33,062</b>	<b>39,168</b>
Included in the above are support costs of:	<b>5,758</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>2,123</b>	<b>8,411</b>	<b>6,588</b>

## 5 Support Costs

	Engagement costs £'000	Investment management £'000	Independent living assistance £'000	Housing provision £'000	Community service £'000	Nursing and residential care £'000	Group 2021 Total £'000	Group 2020 Total £'000
Salary, NIC, pension	685	86	991	64	1,735	2,197	<b>5,758</b>	<b>3,607</b>
Other administration	54	7	78	5	137	170	<b>451</b>	<b>332</b>
Agency staff	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>5</b>
Information systems	82	10	119	8	208	264	<b>691</b>	<b>840</b>
Depreciation	63	8	91	6	160	202	<b>530</b>	<b>534</b>
Insurance	19	2	27	2	47	60	<b>157</b>	<b>159</b>
Selection and recruitment	2	-	3	-	5	5	<b>15</b>	<b>77</b>
Staff training	33	4	48	3	83	107	<b>278</b>	<b>202</b>
Catering	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>206</b>
Pension scheme administration	44	6	64	4	112	142	<b>372</b>	<b>291</b>
Equipment	2	-	2	-	4	5	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>
Premises	18	2	25	2	44	55	<b>146</b>	<b>312</b>
<b>Total support costs</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>1,448</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>2,535</b>	<b>3,207</b>	<b>8,411</b>	<b>6,588</b>

Support costs are allocated on the basis of head-count of staff within each category, except for depreciation, which is allocated based on charitable expenditure split of depreciation costs.

## 6 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold properties £'000	Long leasehold properties £'000	Computers, furniture, equip and vehicles £'000	2021 Total £'000
Cost or valuation at 1 April 2020	58,442	2,766	8,338	69,546
Additions	1,912	-	346	2,258
Disposals	(1,140)	-	(625)	(1,765)
Transfers	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	<b>59,214</b>	<b>2,766</b>	<b>8,059</b>	<b>70,039</b>
Depreciation at 1 April 2020	19,305	1,454	6,669	27,428
Charge for current year	1,448	37	693	2,178
Disposals	(427)	-	(570)	(997)
Transfers	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	<b>20,326</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>6,792</b>	<b>28,609</b>
Net book value				
At 31 March 2021	<b>38,888</b>	<b>1,275</b>	<b>1,267</b>	<b>41,430</b>
At 31 March 2020	<b>39,137</b>	<b>1,312</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>42,118</b>



Our Health and Safety Manager  
Rachel Jones  
taking part in 20 mile fundraising challenge

**Tangible fixed assets (at net book value) comprise:**

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Properties for occupation by beneficiaries	16,681	18,010
Brighton Centre	9,948	8,656
Llandudno Centre	11,230	11,390
London headquarters	2,304	2,395
Computers, furniture, equipment and motor vehicles	1,267	1,667
	<b>41,430</b>	<b>42,118</b>

**7 Investments**

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Balance at 1 April	83,254	95,977
Net gains / (losses) on investments	13,253	(6,139)
Additions to portfolio	-	-
Investment management fees paid directly from portfolio	(191)	(267)
Sale of investment properties	(550)	(2,255)
Drawdown from investment portfolio	(5,900)	(4,000)
Mortgage redemption	(68)	(62)
Balance at 31 March	<b>89,798</b>	<b>83,254</b>

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Being:		
Listed investments	69,883	63,026
Unlisted investments	238	348
Beneficiary mortgages	851	919
Investment properties	18,826	18,961
Balance at 31 March	<b>89,798</b>	<b>83,254</b>

The cost of UK listed investments at 31 March 2021 was £59.3 million (2020: £59.1 million), unlisted investments £1.1 million (2020: £1.8 million) and investment properties £2.8 million (2020: £2.9 million).

Independent (external) valuations for each investment property are obtained from registered chartered surveyors on a fair value basis being higher of market value and existing use every five years (20 per cent of investment properties held are valued independently each year on a rotation basis). Where independent valuations have not been possible due to COVID-19, the remaining investment properties have been valued by chartered surveyors who are employees of the charity, under the supervision of Mr Michael Summers, Head of Estates.

**Investments in subsidiaries**

Blind Veterans UK subscribed to the Memorandum of Association of Blind Veterans Trading Limited (a company limited by guarantee, registered address 12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H 4HD) on its incorporation on 6 December 2007. The company manages building contracts for Blind Veterans UK and sponsorship of Blind Veterans UK events. The profit and loss account and balance sheet is included in the consolidated accounts. The individual company's profit and loss account and balance sheet for the year ended 31 March 2021 are:

**Blind Veterans Trading Limited**

	2021 £'000	2021 £'000
<b>Profit and loss account</b>		
Sponsorship	-	<b>Current assets</b>
Less: Cost of sales	-	<b>Creditors</b>
<b>Gross trading profit</b>	-	<b>Net current assets</b>
Other fees and expenses	5	<b>Net assets</b>
<b>Operating profit before interest</b>	<b>5</b>	
		<b>Share capital</b>
Interest	-	Profit for the year
<b>profit on ordinary activities before taxation</b>	-	<b>Retained earnings</b>
Taxation	-	
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>5</b>	

Blind Veterans Trading ceased to trade 31 March 2021 and filed for voluntary strike off on 14 April 2021.

Blind Veterans UK purchased the interests of Four Seasons NWMC Housing Limited in May 2008 (registered address 12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H 4HD). The principle activity of the company is management of the retirement housing. The company's profit and loss account and balance sheet for the year ended 31 March 2021 are:

**Four Seasons NWMC Housing Limited**

	2021 £'000	Balance sheet 2021 £'000
<b>Profit and loss account</b>		
Service charges, sales and ground rents	114	<b>Current assets</b>
Less: Cost of sales	(89)	<b>Creditors</b>
<b>Gross profit</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Net current assets</b>
		<b>Provision for property management commitments</b>
Other fees and expenses	(25)	<b>Net assets</b>
<b>Operating profit before interest</b>	-	
Interest	-	<b>Shareholders funds</b>
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation	-	
Taxation	-	
<b>Profit (loss) for the year</b>	<b>-</b>	

**8 Debtors**

	Ref	Charity 2021 £'000	Group 2021 £'000	Charity 2020 £'000	Group 2020 £'000
Legacies receivable	i	839	839	559	559
Amount due from subsidiary undertakings	ii	55	55	64	59
Accrued income		504	504	645	645
Prepayments		264	264	100	100
Gift Aid receivable		133	133	108	108
Loans and stock		24	24	32	32
Other debtors		538	538	482	482
VAT receivable		73	73	22	23
		<b>2,430</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>2,012</b>	<b>2,008</b>

The charity was notified in the 1990s of a substantial legacy of £8 million, which has not been included in the accounts, as there is a life interest in the legacy. There are additional legacies totalling £6.8 million (2020: £6.1 million) which do not meet the criteria for recognition under the charity's accounting policy.

As at 31 March 2021, amounts due to/from related parties:

Blind Veterans Trading is net £350 due to Blind Veterans UK (2020: £4,600 due to Blind Veterans UK).

Four Seasons NWMC Housing Ltd is net £54,829 due to Blind Veterans UK (2020: £59,080).

**9a Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	Charity 2021 £'000	Group 2021 £'000	Charity 2020 £'000	Group 2020 £'000
Taxes and social security	406	406	441	441
Trade and other creditors	1,032	1,032	1,445	1,449
Accruals	1,052	1,052	593	593
	<b>2,490</b>	<b>2,490</b>	<b>2,479</b>	<b>2,483</b>

**9b Creditors: Amounts falling after one year**

Long terms loan of £2.5m is secured against the Cazenove Capital Management investment portfolio (Nil in 2019/20) and is repayable in full by August 2025.

**10 Fund accounts as at 31 March 2021**

	Movement in funds						
	Charity 31 March 2020 £'000	Income £'000	Net gains less expend. £'000	Sub total £'000	Transfer from restricted fund £'000	Charity 2021 £'000	Group 2021 £'000
<b>Sir Arthur Pearson Restricted Fund</b>	<b>25,830</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>1,141</b>	<b>27,358</b>	-	<b>27,358</b>	<b>27,358</b>
<b>Other restricted funds</b>							
Diana Gubbay Trust for the Blind	276	3	21	300	-	300	300
Doris Scupham Trust	95	-	22	117	-	117	117
Geoffrey Wilmore Trust	130	2	15	147	-	147	147
Capital fund	301	-	(4)	297	(75)	222	222
Other	491	1,198	(998)	691	-	691	691
<b>Total other restricted funds</b>	<b>1,293</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>(944)</b>	<b>1,552</b>	<b>(75)</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>1,477</b>
Designated funds	-	-	-	-	50	50	50
<b>Unrestricted fund</b>	<b>104,511</b>	<b>25,936</b>	<b>(21,969)</b>	<b>108,478</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>108,503</b>	<b>108,503</b>
<b>Pension reserve</b>	<b>(13,018)</b>	-	<b>847</b>	<b>(12,171)</b>	-	<b>(12,171)</b>	<b>(12,171)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>118,616</b>	<b>27,526</b>	<b>20,925</b>	<b>125,217</b>	-	<b>125,217</b>	<b>125,217</b>

**11 Fund accounts as at 31 March 2020**

	Movement in funds						
	Charity 31 March 2019 £'000	Income £'000	Net gains less expend. £'000	Sub total £'000	Transfer from restricted fund £'000	Charity 2020 £'000	Group 2020 £'000
<b>Sir Arthur Pearson Restricted Fund</b>	<b>29,232</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>(3,915)</b>	<b>25,830</b>	-	<b>25,830</b>	<b>25,830</b>
<b>Other restricted funds</b>							
Diana Gubbay Trust for the Blind	313	5	(42)	276	-	276	276
Doris Scupham Trust	124	-	(29)	95	-	95	95
Geoffrey Wilmore Trust	156	3	(29)	130	-	130	130
Capital fund	196	125	(20)	301	-	301	301
Other	841	1,582	(1,926)	497	(6)	491	491
<b>Total other restricted funds</b>	<b>1,630</b>	<b>1,715</b>	<b>(2,046)</b>	<b>1,299</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>1,293</b>	<b>1,293</b>
<b>Unrestricted fund</b>	<b>118,437</b>	<b>25,903</b>	<b>(39,830)</b>	<b>104,510</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>104,516</b>	<b>104,511</b>
<b>Pension reserve</b>	<b>(16,595)</b>	-	<b>3,577</b>	<b>(13,018)</b>	-	<b>(13,018)</b>	<b>(13,018)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132,704</b>	<b>28,131</b>	<b>(42,214)</b>	<b>118,621</b>	-	<b>118,621</b>	<b>118,616</b>

■ The Diana Gubbay Trust for the Blind is administered by Blind Veterans UK to provide relief to former emergency services personnel blinded on duty.

■ Income from the Doris Scupham Trust is used to support war-blinded members at our centres.

■ Geoffrey Wilmore Trust is restricted to members and used to support an individual undertaking, an

international sporting pursuit or training that could lead to participation in an international event.

- The capital fund is made up of capital raised for our Life Skills centre in Llandudno (£0.1 million) and other small capital appeal items.
- Other restricted funds include endowments held within our investment portfolio, which are restricted for a particular purpose, as well as other small restricted funds. None of which are material and therefore not separately specified. This also includes legacies and donations geographically restricted to a Blind Veterans UK centre or region
- Designated funds have been set aside for a co-funded research project looking into the challenges faced by disabled veterans.

## 12 Analysis of net assets between funds as at 31 March 2021

	Sir Arthur Pearson restricted	Other restricted	Designated Funds	Unrestricted	Pension reserve	Total unrestricted	Total funds
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:</b>							
Tangible fixed assets	-	-		41,430	-	41,430	<b>41,430</b>
Investments	27,358	786		61,654	-	61,654	<b>89,798</b>
Net current assets	-	691	50	7,919	-	7,919	<b>8,660</b>
Non-current liabilities	-	-		(2,500)	(12,171)	(14,671)	<b>(14,671)</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>27,358</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>108,503</b>	<b>(12,171)</b>	<b>96,332</b>	<b>125,217</b>

## 13 Analysis of net assets between funds as at 31 March 2020

	Sir Arthur Pearson restricted	Other restricted	Unrestricted	Pension reserve	Total unrestricted	Total funds
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2020 are represented by:</b>						
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	42,118	-	42,118	<b>42,118</b>
Investments	25,830	802	56,622	-	56,622	<b>83,254</b>
Net current assets	-	491	5,771	-	5,771	<b>6,262</b>
Non-current liabilities	-	-	-	(13,018)	(13,018)	<b>(13,018)</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>25,830</b>	<b>1,293</b>	<b>104,511</b>	<b>(13,018)</b>	<b>91,493</b>	<b>118,616</b>

## 14 Employee information and staff costs

	Group 2021 No.	Group 2020 No.
(a) <b>Average full-time equivalent and headcount</b>		
The monthly average number of equivalent full-time persons employed by Blind Veterans UK during the year	517	539
The monthly average headcount of persons employed by Blind Veterans UK during the year	564	585
Note: Year on year decrease is mainly driven by the creation of new roles within the engagement and operation teams.		
(b) <b>Expenditure includes the following staff costs:</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Wages and salaries paid to employees	17,045	17,413
Employer's national insurance contributions	1,539	1,608
Employer's pension costs	2,238	2,508
	<b>20,822</b>	<b>21,529</b>
	<b>Group 2021 £'000</b>	<b>Group 2020 £'000</b>
(c) <b>Trustee remuneration and expenses:</b>		
No expenses were reimbursed to Trustees (2019/20 – Four trustees).	-	1
No Trustee received emoluments for any employed services.		
There were no other transactions with Trustees in the year.		
(d) <b>Redundancy and termination payments:</b>		
A liability for termination or redundancy is recognised when the charity has a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment.		
Following a review of the organisation and its structure, £174,155 was incurred for redundancy and settlements (2020: £126,486). £37,804 was accrued at the year-end (2020: none).		
(e) <b>Higher-paid employees (excluding employers' NI):</b>	<b>2021 No.</b>	<b>2020 No.</b>
Employee received emoluments within the band £130,001 to £140,000	1	1
Employee received emoluments within the band £110,001 to £120,000	1	1
Employee received emoluments within the band £100,001 to £110,000	1	-
Employees received emoluments within the band £90,001 to £100,000	1	2
Employee received emoluments within the band £80,001 to £90,000	1	1
Employees received emoluments within the band £70,001 to £80,000	2	2
Employees received emoluments within the band £60,001 to £70,000	9	10
(f) <b>Volunteers and donations of services:</b>		
At 31 March 2021 we had 1,081 active volunteers (2020: 1,217). Under the Charities SORP, volunteer time is not recognised in the financial statements however an estimate of the value of time provided to the charity is below.		

	2021	2020
Engagement volunteers	24	190
Non-direct support volunteers (administration)	49	41
Events volunteers (ski club and Cenotaph escorts)	113	81
Direct beneficiary support volunteers	895	905
	<b>1,081</b>	<b>1,217</b>
Total volunteer hours gifted	13,612	51,432
Average wage (0% increase on 2019/20)	@ £14.23	@ £14.23
Value	<b>£193,699</b>	<b>£731,877</b>

(g) **Key management personnel:**

Blind Veterans UK considers its key management personnel to be the seven Directors that make up the Senior Leadership Team (Seven in 2019/20). It consists of the Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Chief of Staff, Director of Operations, Director of Organisational Development (left in year), Director of Engagement and Chief Scientific Office. The total employee benefits of these key management personnel were £841,000 in 2020/21 (2019/20: £815,000 for seven Directors) including employer's national insurance and pension contributions.

**15 Staff retirement benefit scheme**

Blind Veterans UK operates a contributory pension scheme which provides benefits based on final pensionable pay. This scheme was closed to new members on 30 September 2007. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of Blind Veterans UK and are administered by a separate board of Trustees. The pension fund holds a charge over the charity's property at Brighton to the amount of £5 million. The scheme was closed to further accruals for staff pension benefits on 31 March 2016.

An actuarial valuation was carried out at 1 April 2019. The results of that valuation have been projected to 31 March 2021 and then recalculated based on the following assumptions:

	31 Mar 21	31 Mar 20	31 Mar 19	31 Mar 18	31 Mar 17
Salary increases	2.65%	1.95%	2.60%	2.66%	2.74%
Increases to pension in payment					
– Pre April 1997	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
– Post April 1997	3.38%	3.21%	3.36%	3.41%	3.73%
Liability discount rate	1.95%	2.25%	2.45%	2.60%	2.62%
Inflation	3.25%	2.65%	3.30%	3.36%	3.44%
Revaluation of deferred pensions	2.65%	1.95%	2.60%	2.66%	2.74%
				<b>31 Mar 21</b>	<b>31 Mar 20</b>
Life expectancy at age 65 of male aged 45				22.2	22.7
Life expectancy at age 65 of male aged 65				21.3	21.7
Life expectancy at age 65 of female aged 45				24.9	25.2
Life expectancy at age 65 of female aged 65				23.8	24.0

**The assets in the scheme and the expected rate of return were:**

	31 Mar 21 £'000	31 Mar 20 £'000	31 Mar 19 £'000
Multi-growth asset funds	36,844	29,406	28,368
Liability driven investments	8,395	12,665	13,057
Cash	2,491	196	213
Total market value of assets	<b>47,730</b>	<b>42,267</b>	<b>41,638</b>

The liabilities are determined using the projected unit method. Under the projected unit method, the current service costs will increase as the members of the scheme approach retirement. The mortality assumption used was the SAPS S2PxA tables.

**On this basis, the balance sheet figures in respect of the scheme for the previous five years are as follows:**

	31 Mar 21 £'000	31 Mar 20 £'000	31 Mar 19 £'000	31 Mar 18 £'000	31 Mar 17 £'000
Market value of assets	47,730	42,267	41,638	39,446	39,167
Value of accrued liabilities	(59,901)	(55,285)	(58,233)	(57,041)	(57,460)
Deficit	<b>(12,171)</b>	<b>(13,018)</b>	<b>(16,595)</b>	<b>(17,595)</b>	<b>(18,293)</b>

The actuary has excluded from both assets and liabilities items which have a neutral effect on the scheme's financial position, i.e. additional voluntary contributions, annuities secured in respect of pensions in payment and insurance contracts for death in service benefits.

**Analysis of charge to the statement of financial activities over the financial year**

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Operating charge		
Past service cost	-	-
Administration expenses	-	-
Net interest	479	395
Total operating charge	<b>479</b>	<b>395</b>

**Gains and losses included within the statement of financial activities**

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Return on scheme (excluding amount included in net interest expenses)	3,499	(276)
Experience (loss)/gain arising on the scheme liabilities	(5,152)	3,245
Administration expenses	-	-
Total	<b>(1,653)</b>	<b>2,969</b>

**Balance sheet surplus/(deficit) figures during the year**

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Deficit in scheme at 31 March 2020	(13,018)	(16,595)
Movement in year:		
Past service cost	-	-
Administration expenses	-	-
Net interest/return on assets	(479)	(395)
Contributions	2,979	1,003
Actuarial gain/(loss)	3,499	(276)
Changes to assumptions	(5,152)	3,245
<b>Deficit in scheme at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>(12,171)</b>	<b>(13,018)</b>

During the year, employer contributions have been paid at the rate of 15 per cent of pensionable pay (2020: 15 per cent), as well as an additional employer contribution amount of £2,979,000. Active members contribute at the rate of 5 per cent of pensionable pay (2020: 5 per cent).

**Defined contribution scheme**

From 1 October 2007, Blind Veterans UK has operated a Group Personal Pension Plan (GPPP) with Aviva for staff commencing after this date. The Aviva GPPP is a government registered scheme and is used for both Blind Veterans Auto Enrolment requirements as well as its contractual pension scheme. The plan enables each employee to build up an individual pension fund in their own name, making their own choice about how much they contribute. Staff who join the contractual scheme are required to make contributions, which are matched by Blind Veterans UK as per the defined contributions tables detailed below. Those who join under automatic enrolment rules will contribute at a rate of 5% from employee and 3% from Blind Veterans UK. The money in the fund is invested on the employee's behalf, and when they retire the fund is used to buy their pension. Part of the fund may also be used to provide a tax-free lump sum.

**Employed before 1 April 2020**

Employee Contribution	Employer Contribution
1%	7%
3%	11%
4%	13%
5%	15%

**Employed after 1 April 2020**

Employee Contribution	Employer Contribution
2%	6%
3%	8%
4%	9%
5%	10%

**16 Capital commitments**

Total contracted capital commitments of £365,000 existed as at 31 March 2021 (2020: £1.8 million). This consists of outstanding fire safety works at the Brighton Centre which started in 2020.

**17 Related parties**

Subsidiary	Balance as at 31 March 2020 £	Payments received £	Gift Aid in the year £	Mgt. fee £	** Other £	Balance as at 31 March 2021 £
Blind Veterans Trading – Other	4,600	-	-	(6,555)	2,305	350
	<u>4,600</u>					<u>350</u>
Four Seasons NWMC Housing LTD – Gift Aid	27,066	(21,042)	9,770	-	70	15,864
Four Seasons NWMC Housing LTD – Other	32,013	(5,815)	-	-	12,766	38,964
	<u>59,079</u>					<u>54,828</u>

\*\* Other includes loan repayment, audit, tax and filing fees

**At 31 March 2021, the following intercompany balances were outstanding between the charity and its subsidiaries:**

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Blind Veterans Trading – Gift Aid	-	-
Blind Veterans Trading – Other	-	5
	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>
Four Seasons NWMC Housing Limited – Gift Aid	16	27
Four Seasons NWMC Housing Limited – Other	39	32
	<u>55</u>	<u>59</u>

As stated in the basis of preparation of group accounts, Four Seasons NWMC Housing Limited is not consolidated into the group accounts.

There were no other related party transactions in the year.

**18 Leases**

At the year end, the charity held rental leases on its investment properties under which payments are receivable until lease expiry or for the minimum period before the leases are cancellable as follows:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Within one year	258	362

## 19 Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2020

Notes	Sir Arthur Pearson restricted fund £'000	Other restricted funds £'000	Unrestricted fund £'000	2020 Group £'000	2019 Group £'000
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
<b>Donations and legacies</b>					
Donations	-	434	5,907	6,341	6,740
Legacies	-	1,265	9,644	10,909	10,755
1f	-	<b>1,699</b>	<b>15,551</b>	<b>17,250</b>	<b>17,495</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Housing provision	-	-	674	674	730
Care centre fees	73	-	1,757	1,830	1,844
	<b>73</b>	-	<b>2,431</b>	<b>2,504</b>	<b>2,574</b>
<b>Other trading activities</b>					
	-	-	8	8	19
<b>Investment income</b>					
Investment income	413	15	3,079	3,507	3,811
Social investment income	24	-	-	24	29
	<b>437</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3,079</b>	<b>3,531</b>	<b>3,840</b>
<b>Other income</b>					
	3	-	4,833	4,836	1,409
<b>Total</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>1,714</b>	<b>25,902</b>	<b>28,129</b>	<b>25,337</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
<b>Raising funds</b>					
Engagement (fundraising) costs	-	-	6,893	6,893	5,899
Commercial trading costs	-	-	6	6	7
Investment management	89	-	828	917	936
	<b>89</b>	-	<b>7,727</b>	<b>7,816</b>	<b>6,842</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Independent living assistance	227	346	5,015	5,588	6,572
Housing provision	1,218	-	919	2,137	2,276
Community services	401	452	9,172	10,025	8,324
Care centre activities	508	1,071	11,132	12,711	12,673
Recruitment and services	-	-	891	891	1,574
	<b>2,354</b>	<b>1,869</b>	<b>27,129</b>	<b>31,352</b>	<b>31,419</b>
4	<b>2,443</b>	<b>1,869</b>	<b>34,856</b>	<b>39,168</b>	<b>38,261</b>
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>	<b>(1,930)</b>	<b>(155)</b>	<b>(8,954)</b>	<b>(11,039)</b>	<b>(12,924)</b>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	(1,472)	(176)	(4,363)	(6,011)	4,449
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>(3,402)</b>	<b>(331)</b>	<b>(13,317)</b>	<b>(17,050)</b>	<b>(8,475)</b>
<b>Transfer between funds</b>					
11	-	(6)	6	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains and losses</b>					
Pension scheme actuarial gain/(loss)	-	-	2,969	2,969	673
15	<b>(3,402)</b>	<b>(337)</b>	<b>(10,342)</b>	<b>(14,081)</b>	<b>(7,802)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Fund balance brought forward at 31 March 2019	29,232	1,630	101,835	132,697	140,499
11	<b>25,830</b>	<b>1,293</b>	<b>91,493</b>	<b>118,616</b>	<b>132,697</b>



# Blind Veterans UK

## Patron

Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO DStJ CD

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Chris Cardwell  
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Tim Seal

\* Members of the Resources and Plans committee

## Chief Executive

Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB

## Auditor

Crowe U.K. LLP, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, 55 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7JW

## Bankers

Barclays PLC, Hampstead & Whetstone Corporate Banking Centre, PO Box 12820, London N20 0WE

## Investment Managers

Cazenove Capital Management Limited, 12 Moorgate, London EC2R 6DA  
Jupiter Asset Management Limited, The Zig Zag Building, 70 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6SQ

## Solicitors

BDB Pitmans, One Bartholomew Close, Barts Square, EC1A 7BL  
Coole Bevis LLP, 15 Prince Albert Street, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 1HY  
Sackers & Partners LLP, 20 Gresham Street, London, EC2V 7JE

**Registered Office for Blind Veterans UK.** 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD A company limited by guarantee No. 189648, registered in England  
The charity is incorporated under its memorandum and articles of association originally dated 30 April 1923 and most recently amended on 27 January 2012  
Registered charity number: 21622. Scottish registered charity number: SC039411





Rebuilding  
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sight loss

**[blindveterans.org.uk](http://blindveterans.org.uk)**

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