



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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From our Chairman

Dear Friends

The report of Blythswood's work during 2022 in the following pages illustrate graphically what many people are doing on the front line to relieve suffering, support communities and bring gospel hope. You can see this strikingly not only in the work done by Blythswood's partners in Ukraine and neighbouring countries but also close to home in our Foodbanks and in many other locations and contexts.

Behind that front line work of course is an army of dedicated staff and volunteers manning our charity shops, running our recycling operations, organising and distributing Christian literature and providing essential administration for what has become a large charity.

And then behind that army, my fellow trustees and I have the privilege and responsibility of encouraging and overseeing Blythswood's fulfilment of its charitable purposes. Along with many praying friends across the world we give thanks to God that Blythswood continues to meet need where it arises and where it can.

A significant focus for any Board in any organisation is succession planning. Since January 2023 we have already seen Fiona Robertson succeed Ebbie Meiselbach as Head of People, Communication and Compliance, Alan Swanson and Balazs Csiszer succeed Finlay MacKenzie in the two roles of Head of UK Projects and Overseas Projects, and Elma MacKay succeed Danny Muschate as Head of Fundraising.

Back in 2022 we welcomed Richard McCallum as a new trustee and in December 2022 we announced that we had commenced the process of recruiting a successor for our Chief Executive James Campbell who has served 25 years in that role. My fellow trustees and I are deeply thankful to God for His leading throughout that process which led to the news in June of this year that we had appointed Jeremy Ross who will take over from James on 01 February 2024. Jeremy is a son of Blythswood's founder Rev Jackie Ross and joins us from pastoral ministry in the Free Church of Scotland.

We ask for your prayers for Jeremy as he settles into this new ministry role and for James as he finishes a remarkable career with Blythswood. We are immensely thankful to God for the sacrificial service of James and his wife Liz, and I hope to express our appreciation of them more fully at a later date.

For now, on behalf of our Board, let me express our thanks to the Lord for His rich provision and to all our friends for their generous support.



David K Laing
Chairman of Trustees

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees present their report and the group’s financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. The group comprises Blythswood Care, its subsidiaries Blythswood Ireland Limited, Blythswood Trading Limited, and its predecessor charity Blythswood Care 1993.

Charitable Aims

Our charitable purposes are:

- The advancement of the Christian religion
- The relief of sickness and financial hardship and the promotion and preservation of good health; and
- The promotion of education, particularly in the understanding of the Christian religion, by the printing, publishing, production and distribution of Christian literature and literacy materials

In brief, we long to see people of all ages come to living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to see God **transforming lives through Christian care.**

On this journey, our activities:

- Focus on the educational, practical and spiritual needs of the most vulnerable people
- Are managed by capable local leadership
- Are grounded in a solid financial base with the aim of achieving self-sustainability

Vision, Values and Mission:

Our Vision To see lives transformed through Christian care.

- Our Values**
- We aim to serve the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of others with integrity and compassion, at home and abroad
 - We strive for excellence in all that we do, giving opportunity to people with different levels of ability and treating each individual with respect, regardless of background or belief
 - We value our people, both staff and volunteers, and believe that they deserve an equitable and motivating working environment which expresses care for people
 - We are committed to care responsibly for God’s creation and to aim for sustainability in the projects we initiate and develop

Our Mission To see lives transformed through the impact of **educational** opportunity, **community** action and **gospel** teaching.

- Education projects offer opportunities for children and young people (and particularly the disadvantaged) to realise their potential
- Community action provides people of all ages with sustainable and transformational life-changing opportunities, especially in areas of deprivation
- Christian ministry and literature distribution enables effective sharing of the life-changing gospel message of Jesus Christ, bringing hope and purpose to those we serve

From our Chief Executive

The Shoe Box Appeal! For many of our supporters around the country, that's what Blythswood is all about. And while it's far from being the whole story, perhaps it is no bad thing that shoeboxes dominate the public's perception:

- Shoebox gifts are practical aid, helping to restore human dignity with items of clothing and personal hygiene in a thoughtful, individual way.
- They are distributed across that part of the world to which we have a commitment of over 30 years – eight countries from the Adriatic to the Black Sea.
- And in each one we include an item of gospel literature, age and language-appropriate, fulfilling Blythswood's original purpose and making the Shoe Box Appeal our biggest Christian literature project.

Thirty years after we first distributed 300 boxes to children in Romanian orphanages, the appeal has delivered 2.6 million of these most practical and personal gifts. The encouraging response to the

2022 Shoe Box Appeal meant that we could send 16,000 boxes to Ukraine alone, where our partners work night and day to help people whose lives have been devastated by war. Throughout 2022, Blythswood helped to feed, clothe and shelter thousands of people displaced by this conflict and we remain committed to this task.

Over these three decades a key figure has been Finlay Mackenzie, first as a volunteer but for most of that time as our head of projects, bringing his unique blend of logistical expertise and Christian encouragement to our partners across Eastern Europe. Finlay has now retired and I wish to place on record the organisation's huge indebtedness to him for his faithful service.

Indeed, I wish to thank all our workers, paid and unpaid, whose dedication ensures that Blythswood continues to serve and to adapt in times of rapid change. And to thank all our supporters for their persistent generosity. Together, by God's grace, we are changing lives for good.



Handwritten signature of James Campbell.

James Campbell
Chief Executive

2022 highlights and achievements

Story from Talita Kum - ROMANIA

Working through childhood trauma at Talita Kum

When Vlad joined Blythswood's after-school programme a year ago he demanded a lot of attention. The 11-year-old and his mother had just moved to Jimbolia from another village in western Romania and he was suffering unresolved emotional distress from learning that his father had died.

"His parents separated when Vlad was very young," explains Carmen Popa, teacher at Talita Kum. His father's death from liver failure was a huge blow to Vlad. He was unable to go to the funeral because it was too far away and sometimes he imagines that his dad may still be alive."

In spite of this inner turmoil, Vlad has fitted in well to the Talita Kum programme. "Vlad is very bright and we encourage him to tackle difficult puzzles which he is good at," Carmen says. "He enjoys reading but is easily distracted. His handwriting is not good but every day we make sure that he completes the lessons which he did not finish at school."

His mother is on a low wage as an unqualified factory worker, and she is unable to help Vlad with homework. For children in such a situation, the care, nutrition and one-to-one tuition offered by Blythswood's after-school programme is essential if they are to fulfil their potential.





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2022 highlights and achievements

Story from our Foodbank - UK

Foodbank support helps family shattered by grief

Julie* was shattered when she lost one of her children to cancer a year ago. Trying to pick up the pieces of her life she decided to move back to the Highlands where she had been as a child and to make a fresh start there with her teenaged daughter.

But having used her savings to make the move, by the end of the year Julie was struggling to cover the basic costs of food as well as fuel in their homeless accommodation. The week before Christmas, mother and daughter were referred to Highland Foodbank by Highland Council.



“We were able to help Julie with emergency food, toiletries and some household cleaning items,” says Lorna Dempster, manager of Blythwood’s Highland Foodbank. “We also included an adult colouring book and some colouring pencils. The referring agent got back in touch to say that Julie and her daughter were so grateful for the food, but also to say that the girl was really touched by the colouring book and pencils which were the only Christmas gift she received.”

*not her real name

2022 highlights and achievements

Story from

Cornerstone Trust - INDIA

Aanya wants a better future for her girls

When Aanya* was 12 years old and had lost both parents, an uncle sold her into the sex trade in Mumbai for 10,000 rupees.

Twenty-two years later she is still there and her number one priority is to make sure that none of her three daughters ends up in the same profession. For this reason, she has sent the eldest, who is now 14, back to her own home village. Aanya must pay her relatives to look after the girl and to do so she continues to earn money the only way she ever knew.

The younger girls, aged 11 and 5, remain with their mother in the red-light district. Each day they go to school and then to Cornerstone, a Christian ministry supported by Blythswood Care to bring the gospel to women and children in this sector of India's biggest city.

There they receive a healthy cooked meal, extra tuition with their lessons, and a training in life skills and social awareness designed to keep them safe in the dangerous environment in which they are growing up.

"Aanya knows the dangers of this area and would like to take her girls back to the village," says Asmita Vadavana who runs Cornerstone. "But she has nowhere to stay. None of her relatives will take her in because she has been working in the sex trade. She is trying to save money to get a house of her own.

"With your support we can make sure that families stay together, that the children have access to better opportunities and that they can grow up in a safe and healthy environment."

*not her real name



2022 highlights and achievements

Story from UKRAINE Emergency Appeal

Generous public support for our Ukraine Emergency Appeal enabled Blythswood to help families displaced by the war within Ukraine, and also those who sought refuge in neighbouring countries. The experience of Larissa's family in Irpin, and of Sasha's family as they transited Moldova were published in the December 2022 issue of Blythswood News.

God opened your hearts

A mother who cares for a son with cerebral palsy is able to face the winter with glass in her windows once again – all thanks to the gifts of Blythswood supporters which paid to repair the damage done to her home by the Russian bombardment of Irpin, Ukraine.

Larissa was reduced to cooking for her family outside over an open fire in March. She and her two sons had no opportunity to be evacuated, and were trapped in the besieged town with no gas, water or electricity.

"It was extremely scary for them," reports Tanya Shpygunova from Go Serve who identified the family as being especially vulnerable and arranged for their assistance. "Shells were constantly flying over their heads and the explosions were never-ending. Several shells fell right in their backyard and caused a lot of damage. Their windows were broken and their door blown out."

Larissa says, "We believe that we survived all this because God is with us. He answered our prayers. We thank God that he opened the hearts of so many people around the world. With your help we were able to restore all the broken windows in our house."

"We really appreciate everything you do for us, especially as winter is just around the corner. I truly believe that God will repay one hundred-fold for all your help."





Traumatic journey for family fleeing to Moldova

The decision to flee from home in time of war is always traumatic, but especially so when one of the family suffers from disability. With their 11-year-old daughter Polina in a wheelchair, it was only at the last minute that Sasha and Nastia decided to evacuate their family from Kherson. By that time Russian soldiers were already in the city.

They bundled their children into the car and set off for the Moldovan border, but were stopped by the Russians and had their car taken away.

"It was an incredibly frightening experience for them," says Pastor Dumitru Sevastian who has been assisting Ukrainian refugees at Bethany Baptist Church in Chisinau since the end of February. "Some people took pity on them and helped them to reach the border with their children and all their things."

"Since Nastia's parents had already passed through Bethany, they called us and we were able to give them all the help and support they needed – food, accommodation and counselling. They are very grateful for this expression of love and care for them and want to thank you for your support."

The family are moving on to Germany, to be with Nastia's parents.

2022 highlights and achievements

Story from Eastern EUROPE

Aid Relief

In all, 238 tonnes of aid were delivered through 40 different organisations around the world. Some medicines were purchased to satisfy individual requests, and some food was purchased within recipient countries. All other aid was donated by individuals, by other charities or organisations such as hospitals or by manufacturers.



Shoe Box Appeal

This aid included 88,816 Christmas shoeboxes, all of which were sent out before the end of the year.

Since it began in 1993, the Shoe Box Appeal has delivered 2,655,117 boxes.



The Basis Project

The Basis project sees the distribution of food packages to families in need. Our partners have continued with precautionary measures, and are trying to reduce personal contact as much as possible for safety reasons, many of the beneficiaries being elderly people or people with health problems. The Basis project is still helping 30 families in a 50-kilometre radius from Cluj city.



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2022 highlights and achievements

Story from UK projects

Crisis Intervention

The Highland Foodbank has continued to help people in crisis, distributing 60 tonnes of food from donations of food gifted in 2022 by providing a three-day food supply to 5,616 people, preventing them from going hungry during personal financial crises.

People utilise foodbanks for a variety of reasons, the most common being benefit delays, low income and benefit changes. Apart from the Foodbank in Inverness, rural foodbanks have been supported in Alness, Dingwall, Tain and Nairn throughout 2022.

Edinburgh Southeast Foodbank also distributed food to 2,915 clients.



Christian literature and ministry

The children's book for shoeboxes in 2022 was *Samson – The Strong Man's Strength*. It was the thirteenth title from CFP's Bible Wise series to be produced in Eastern European languages since 2008. Our shoebox distributor in Kyiv felt that so much fighting in Samson's story made it inappropriate for Ukrainian children in 2022, so for them we reprinted *Jesus the Promised Child*, previously used in 2017.

Saved, the testimony booklet of Oana Ciucure, was produced for teens' boxes in all six languages, and *Words of Life* Calendars were purchased for the adult's boxes.

One of the secondary benefits of the Shoe Box Appeal is that it makes books of real educational value available in languages such as Albanian and Bulgarian. A literacy programme sponsored by Blythswood utilised Bible Wise series titles produced in Bulgarian for the Shoe Box Appeal in previous years. Run by our partners, Mission Possible Bulgaria, it concluded in June, having benefited 230 children in 12 groups at eight locations.

The revival of the cruise industry resulted in increased traffic at the Seafarers' Centre in Invergordon. While we count the Centre as just one grantee, in reality from there the gospel is going all around the world. It was our privilege to continue to support this gospel outreach on our own doorstep by providing nearly £4,000 worth of Bibles and New Testaments in 22 languages.

Apart from shoebox material, our largest grants of Christian literature were of Ukrainian gospels to partners assisting displaced people and refugees in Ukraine and Romania. Three thousand copies of Luke were supplied to each of three partners in May. A further 10,000 of John were supplied in June to the Elpis Foundation which has been carrying out gospel outreach in Ukraine over several years. Later in the year we took delivery of 20,000 Ukrainian NTs, some of which were inserted as an extra item in shoeboxes for Ukraine.

We took the opportunity presented to us by citybibles.com to add a 1,000-copy run-on to their purchase of Ukrainian Bible story colouring books. These were sent direct from the Netherlands to Elpis Foundation in Romania. Sorina Pop observed how important it is for refugee children to learn in their own language. Elpis supplied some of the books to centres for refugee children in Timisoara and Bistrita as well as taking most of them over the border to Chernivtsi, Ukraine. Sorina said: "The books were received with great joy."

In all, 106 grants were made to 39 grantees in ten countries. This included over 23,000 gospel tracts.

In 2022 Blythswood supported the ministries of nine pastors and mission workers in Central and Eastern Europe and three pastors in Asia.

Trading and recycling

In 2022 Blythswood Trading Limited (“BTL”) collected, processed and sold many items generously donated to us in our 19 Scottish charity shops and into other end markets, where the main items sold were clothes, shoes, furniture, bric-a-brac, media, toys and books.

Blythswood’s end-to-end capability (retail, recycling, humanitarian aid and logistical expertise) makes the organisation highly effective in the stewardship of these donations. This creates many employment and volunteering opportunities for people with various skill levels and backgrounds, including those with learning difficulties.

BTL’s turnover for 2022 was £2.429 M. Over 2,000 tonnes of donated goods were reused and recycled by BTL.

The turnover of Blythswood Ireland Limited (BIL) for 2022 was £1.073M through our 8 Northern Ireland charity shops. In September we celebrated 25 years of Blythswood’s work in Ireland with an Afternoon Tea in Banbridge. The following day a Buffet Supper was held in Ballyclare, where almost one hundred friends, supporters and staff gathered to give thanks for all that has been achieved in Blythswood Care through the faithful involvement of many from around the Province.

Blythswood is a member of Circular Communities Scotland (CCS) and the Charity Retail Association (CRA)

Volunteers

People of all ages find an opportunity to volunteer their time and skills for the work of the group. We have over 1,000 volunteers around Great Britain and Northern Ireland – checking shoeboxes, fundraising, participating in support groups, marking correspondence courses, giving talks, serving in charity shops, sorting donated goods, driving vehicles, and helping to run summer camps for children in Eastern Europe.

Over 30,000 hours were generously given by these volunteers in 2022 which have a value of more than £310,000 (based on the National Living Wage).

Appreciation

The Trustees take this opportunity to express their gratitude publicly to our dedicated staff and volunteers and our many prayer and financial supporters for their commitment and passion to see the work of Blythswood Care continue and develop. Despite all the challenges and uncertainties around us, we praise God for going before us and providing the resources needed to maintain our work in His service.

For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. Psalm 33:4

Results

The financial statements show net incoming resources of £231,877 (2021 – net incoming resources of £595,517)

Donation income was £6,552,275 (2021 - £6,197,166) with £4,115,742 (2021 - £4,598,243) being donations in kind. BTL made donations of £47,814 (2021 - £322,724) to the parent charity.

Trustees

The trustees who served during the year and to the date of this report were as follows:

J M Campbell (Chief Executive)

I Gillies (Resigned August 2022)

C Gordon

L Gray

D K Laing (Chairman)

P Lyall

J Ross

R McCallum (Appointed on 16 March 2022)

On 16 March 2022 we welcomed Richard McCallum as a new trustee of Blythswood Care. Richard is a senior finance director in the public sector.

On 25 August 2022 Iain Gillies stepped down from our Board after 17 years’ service as a trustee (during which time he served as chairman for a period). Iain provided invaluable service to the charity during times of change

and we benefited greatly from his wisdom and professional expertise. We thank Iain and his wife Christine for his valuable contribution to our work.

Appointment of new trustees

The Trustees, together with the Chief Executive, seek to identify potential new trustees with the character, energy, shared vision, skills and experience to provide a positive contribution to Blythswood Care. Prospective Trustees are given significant exposure to Blythswood before a decision is made on their appointment.

The power to appoint new Trustees rests with the non-executive Trustees who are guarantors of the charitable company under the Articles of Association. That power is exercised by special resolution.

Induction of new trustees

A full induction programme is provided for new trustees covering areas that include:

- Our vision, mission and values
- Explanations of all Blythswood's projects and services
- Details of our objectives for our coming year and our Strategic Plan
- The roles and responsibilities of trustees under charity law and our governance rules

Organisational structure

Blythswood Care is a company limited by guarantee, which is registered as a Scottish Charity. The charity previously operated under a trust deed (and that entity continues to exist under the name Blythswood Care 1993). Blythswood Care 1993 is an unincorporated charity that continues to hold legal title to some of the retail properties which are operated through BTL and acts as the prospective recipient of any legacies for the benefit of Blythswood Care.

BTL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Blythswood Care.

Blythswood Care is the sole member of BIL, a company limited by guarantee and a charity registered in Northern Ireland, which works in partnership with Blythswood Care. As the sole member of BIL, Blythswood Care has consolidated the results of BIL since 01 January 2021.

Related parties

The Trustees all gave of their time and expertise without any form of remuneration or other benefits in cash or kind. Expenses paid to trustees during the year 2022 amounted to £nil (2021: £nil).

During the year 2022, six trustees donated £960 to the charity's general funds. (2021: six trustees donated £3,250)

Future plans

The demands upon the charity increase both in the UK and overseas. The Foodbanks continue to serve an increased customer base. Applications to the charity, as it becomes more widely known, from all around the world, present increasing challenges as to how the available resources can be allocated for maximum impact. The Trustees earnestly hope and pray they will be able to identify additional sources of income through generous donations and internal activities so they are able to increase Blythswood's charitable activities at home and abroad.

The Talita Kum Project in Jimbolia, South-East Romania, plans to extend throughout 2023 providing additional support for youngsters' further education and vocational training.

The Beacon Centre, which opened in December 2022 has the potential to develop the work of the Turbe after-school programme in Navi Mumbai through their culinary and sports training, toddlers' groups, garden club and career guidance.

We continue to work through trusted partners and regularly evaluate projects with the aim of leading them towards self-sufficiency and self-sustainability.

Our response to the crisis in Ukraine continues as funding and practical aid, in the form of emergency equipment and specialised aid becomes available.

Reserves policy

The Trustees keep the level of reserves under regular review. Blythwood was founded on the basis of the Christian belief that a faithful God will supply all our needs. Therefore, the Trustees continue to maintain that it is not appropriate to retain significant surpluses. As a general policy, the Trustees intend to maintain sufficient reserves to cover the working capital and ongoing charitable activities of the charity.

Risk management

The Trustees are required to produce a statement of policy on risk identification and management, and this has been done to a good and established standard. To support this action, the Trustees follow a formal risk management process to assess business risks and implement risk management strategies. This involves identifying the types of risks the organisation faces, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and the likelihood of occurrence, and identifying means of mitigating the risks. This process is monitored by the Board quarterly and reviewed at least annually.

This work has identified that financial sustainability is the major financial risk for both the charity and its trading subsidiary. A key element in the management of financial risk is a regular review of available liquid funds to settle debts as they fall due, regular liaison with the bank, and active management of trade debtors and creditors balances to ensure sufficient working capital by both organisations. Attention has also been focused on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety at all the organisation's facilities.

These risks are managed by ensuring the organisation has robust policies and procedures in place and regular awareness training for staff working in these operational areas.

The Trustees also review the central accident book and 'near misses' quarterly.

Post balance sheet events

On 19 June 2023 we were pleased to announce the appointment of one of our trustees, Jeremy Ross, as Chief Executive Designate who will take over from James Campbell when he retires from that position on 31 January 2024.

The directors consider that there has been no change to the operating activities of the group during 2022.

Accordingly, the Directors have concluded that the financial statements give an accurate and fair view of Blythwood Care's financial position, financial performance and cash flows; that the company has complied with FRS10.

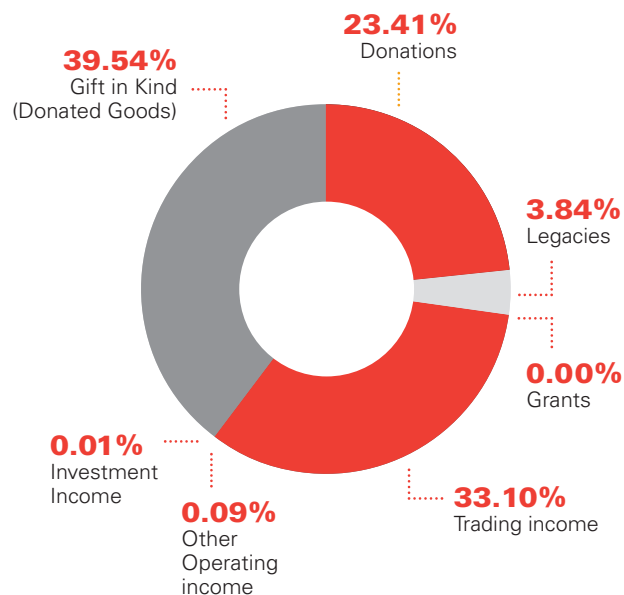
D K Laing
Chairman

Date:

2022 Finances

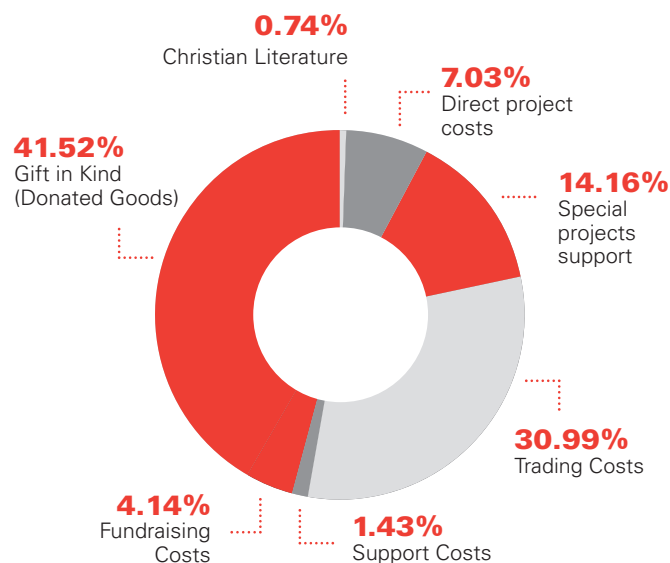
Income Resources

		2022
Income Resources		£
Donations	23.41%	2,436,533
Legacies	3.84%	399,926
Grants	0.00%	-
Trading Income	33.10%	3,445,509
Other Operating income	0.09%	9,678
Investment Income	0.01%	1,248
Gift in Kind (Donated Goods)	39.54%	4,115,742
Total	100.00%	10,408,636



Resources Expended

		2022
Resources Expended		£
Christian Literature	0.74%	75,139
Direct project costs	7.03%	714,950
Special projects support	14.16%	1,440,777
Trading Costs	30.99%	3,153,320
Support Costs	1.43%	145,957
Fundraising Costs	4.14%	420,955
Gift in Kind (Donated Goods)	41.52%	4,225,661
Total	100.00%	10,176,759



A copy of the full financial statements are available on request from Head Office



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Blythwood Care is a registered charity in Scotland no SC048001 and company no 583493
and Northern Ireland no NIC014515 and company no NI050683.