

# Step Out Sheffield CIO (RCno 1210645)

## Annual report 2024-26

## First year of operation

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## Chair's Report for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Ask Copilot

Sheffield (SOS) has now completed ten years as a volunteer-led organization and what's are still the biggest entirely volunteer-led Wellbeing Walks scheme in the country. This achievement would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and unwavering support of our dedicated team of volunteer walk leaders. Thanks to them we continue to provide weekly short, led walks at 22 locations across the city and hope to continue to do so for many years to come.

Over the past two years Step Out Sheffield has undergone the process of becoming a Registered Charity and settled into a more formal Management Committee role.

I promised at the start of the process that very little would change for Volunteer Walk Leaders (VLWs). I hope you agree this is true.

The pedantic amongst you will have spotted that this, the first, Annual General Meeting of Step Out Sheffield CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) is taking place in April. This is to comply with Charity Commission rules.

The team of volunteers who administrate the SOS walks programme spent their first term as Trustees focusing on the best way to secure Step Out Sheffield's future and ensure its sustainability. In May 2025 42 of our VLWs learned what goes on behind the scenes to administrate a group as big as ours to ensure that both volunteers and walkers are safe and happy whilst walking. They were then asked for ideas on how this workload could be managed going forward given that currently the entire workload falls to a handful of volunteers. The outcome was that no one wanted to volunteer for an additional role and no one wanted to spend any of Step Out Sheffield's financial reserves. Nevertheless, everyone agreed that 'somebody' had to do it!

Following the May 2025 meeting the Trustees produced a paper identifying the roles they covered already, together with the roles not covered so far due to time constraints or lack of skills (building a new website for example). This information was used, with the help of Sam Carey, a consultant with the National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) to develop a 5-year Business Plan for presentation at the 2026 AGM. Producing the business plan and budget to go with it in the 18 months since SOS gained Charitable status was a remarkable achievement on the part of the Trustees. Their time, ideas and input are gratefully acknowledged. This also fulfills the commitment made two years ago that a development plan would be presented to this meeting for VWL approval.

Kath Williams stood down as Secretary early in April 2025 having been critical in preparing the paperwork leading to the Charity registration. Sharon Williams was co-opted to fill her role. Kath Cobley, our treasurer at the start of this accounting period, stood down at the end of July 2025. Kath was responsible for preparing the SOS accounts for scrutiny by the Charity Commission and for drawing up budgets for the same periods. SOS is very grateful for her expertise at this critical stage. Vickie Goddard was co-opted to fill Kath Williams's role. SOS wishes Kath C and Kath W all the best going forward whilst looking forward to working with Sharon and Vickie who have taken over these key roles.

Impressed by the loyalty of our volunteers, we commissioned this year's students (medical and psychology) to look at what it is that our volunteers gain from volunteering with us. We look forward to receiving their reports in due course. Lesley Webster is the Trustee with responsibility for the students we host each year and her input is gratefully acknowledged.

As SOS looks towards the future we can reflect on this year as being the one where futureproofing continued and succession planning began.

A small but very dedicated team of volunteers have now provided SOS with administrative support for 10 years and, having agreed not to go down the route of employing someone to help with the administration, the Trustees need more people to step up to the plate to fill the vacant roles. While it is desirable that these are drawn from VWLs we may have to seek volunteers from outside the current membership.

Overall, the period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 has been a successful one with a great deal of behind the scenes planning to help safeguard the future of our extremely valuable service.

*Francis Feeley*

Chair

## Financial Report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Following Nigel's concerns at the last AGM in 2024, of a "not for profit" organisation reporting a profit and holding far higher financial reserves than is allowed for a not for profit organisation, Step Out Sheffield (SOS) applied for and was granted permission to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

Becoming a CIO means that SOS is legally allowed to realise a profit, operate with a surplus and use those profits to fund its charitable activities. However, SOS must now adhere to the Charities Act 2011 and the CIO (General) Regulations 2012.

Due to the timing of the change, SOS operated within approximately an 18-month financial year from 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

During this period, Step Out Sheffield's expenditure was £9,281.05, which was almost £3000 less than the last financial year, despite a longer financial period.

Once again, thanks to the University of Sheffield Medical School, SOS received £20,384.00 across January 2025 and January 2026 for supervising placement students.

Therefore, SOS realised a surplus of £12,334.19 and at the end of the financial year to March 2026, Step Out Sheffield maintains a good financial position with a balance of £60,681.98.

I have prepared a proposed 5-year budget to accompany our 5-year strategic business plan. To support Step Out Sheffield's walking groups and Voluntary Walk Leaders, the board has proposed increased budgets for the following areas:

- Publicity (including a new website)
- Volunteer training (separate budget of £3,100 over 5 years)
- Small Grants Scheme (£12,500 over 5 years, by application from walking groups)

Step Out Sheffield will be recruiting volunteers to help set up the Small Grants Scheme framework and run a sub committee to approve claims made by walking groups.

Therefore, further details of how SOS walking groups can apply for this scheme and the size of grants available will be announced in due course.

Vickie Goddard  
Trustee and Treasurer

# Step Out Sheffield – Actuals Against Budget 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

## STEP OUT SHEFFIELD

### Actuals against budget

24th OCTOBER 2024 to 31st MARCH 2026

	Actuals for the period 24/10/2024 - 31/03/2026	Budget for the period 24/10/2024 - 31/03/2026	Remaining in the budget 24/10/2024 - 31/03/2026	NOTES
<b>INCOME</b>				
Medical School	£20,384.00	£20,500.00	£116.00	
Grants	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Council Pot Funding	£950.00	£0.00	£-950.00	£750 Lowedges received in June 2025 plus £200 Richmond received in Aug 25
Bank support	£200.00	£0.00	£-200.00	Apology for incorrect advice provided
Safeguarded funds	£1,498.41	£0.00	£-1,498.41	Funds safeguarded for CPWG
Uniforms	£110.00	£0.00	£-110.00	
Collections	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Donations	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Sale of Goods	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£23,142.41</b>	<b>£20,500.00</b>	<b>£-2,642.41</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Council Pot Funding	£950.00	£0.00	£0.00	£750 Lowedges and £200 Richmond
Payments to Walks	£706.32	£670.00	£-36.32	
Ramblers Wellbeing Walks	£1,200.00	£1,200.00	£0.00	
Publicity	£430.00	£750.00	£320.00	
AGM	£449.58	£650.00	£200.42	Interim meeting
Walk Leader Events and training	£1,026.50	£2,000.00	£973.50	
Consultancy	£3,067.80	£0.00	£-3,067.80	
New Clothing and hiVis jackets	£793.64	£1,700.00	£906.36	
Walk Certificates	£63.60	£250.00	£186.40	
Office Supplies and consumables	£45.72	£250.00	£204.28	
Travel	£1,911.46	£2,300.00	£388.54	
Telephone	£149.68	£250.00	£100.32	
Postage	£13.92	£250.00	£236.08	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£10,808.22</b>	<b>£10,270.00</b>	<b>£-538.22</b>	
<b>SUMMARY</b>				
Annual income	£23,142.41	£20,500.00	£-2,642.41	
Annual expenditure	£10,808.22	£10,270.00	£-538.22	
<b>Deficit/surplus for the period</b>	<b>£12,334.19</b>	<b>£10,230.00</b>	<b>£-2,104.19</b>	
Bank balance 24/10/2024	£49,846.20			
Bank balance 31/03/2026	£62,180.39			
<b>Reduction/increase in the period</b>	<b>£12,334.19</b>			

Updated to 31/03/2026

# Step Out Sheffield – 5 Year Budget 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2031

## STEP OUT SHEFFIELD

5 Year Budget to coincide with 5-year Strategic Plan

1st APRIL 2026 to 31st MARCH 2031

	BUDGET FOR THE PERIOD 01/04/2026 - 31/03/2031	POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION
<b>INCOME</b>		
Placement Supervision	£50,960.00	5 years income from University of Sheffield for placement students (not guaranteed)
Grants	£1,500.00	3x£500
Donations	£500.00	Estimate £100 a year via the website
Investment Return	£1,800.00	Low/Modest estimate depending on how much we place in a fixed rate and for how long
Sale of Goods	£0.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£54,760.00</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Ramblers Wellbeing Walks	£0.00	Confirmed by Ramblers
Consultancy	£2,950.00	
Payments of Safeguarded Assets	£1,498.41	SOS currently holds £1498.41 for Crystal Peaks Walking Group
Payments to Walks from SOS Grant Scheme	£12,500.00	most of 1st year to implement scheme
Publicity	£3,500.00	£500 yearly re-print of leaflets, £100 stalls per yr plus website domain and inflation
Freelance work to implement strategy	£30,000.00	Including the website
Fundraising Registration Fee	£60.00	One off fee
Walk Leader Events	£6,500.00	3 events a year at £400 (in addition to the AGM event) and inflation
AGM and committee meetings	£6,600.00	£850 a year for 5 years plus room hire for committee meetings and inflation
Training	£3,500.00	This is something we said we'd increase in our strategy
New Clothing and hiVis jackets	£2,000.00	£1000 every 2 years
Walk Certificates	£650.00	Estimate £100 a year based on last year's figures and inflation
Office Supplies and Consumables	£300.00	Estimate £50 a year based on last year and inflation
Travel	£12,250.00	Based on average monthly mileage of 300 miles plus inflation
Telephone	£800.00	Estimate based on current rate plus inflation
Postage	£150.00	Estimate of £25 a year based on last year and inflation
Miscellaneous	£2,500.00	£500 a year
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£83,258.41</b>	
<b>SUMMARY</b>		
Period income	£54,760.00	
Period expenditure	£83,258.41	
<b>(Deficit)/surplus for the period</b>	<b>-£28,498.41</b>	
Bank balance 01/04/2026	£62,180.39	
Bank balance 31/03/2031	£33,681.98	
<b>(Reduction)/increase in the period</b>	<b>-£28,498.41</b>	

# Independent Examiner's Report for Step Out Sheffield Financial Period: 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

## Scope of the report

I report on the accounts of Step Out Sheffield for the period 24 October 2024 to 31 March 2026, as set out in the spreadsheet "Accounts Oct 24 – Mar 26.xlsx".

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and for ensuring compliance with relevant charity law. My role is to independently examine the records, compare them to the accounts presented, and identify any issues arising.

The examination included a review of a sample of bank statements and income and expenditure records, reimbursement evidence, restricted fund tracking, budget performance, and reconciliations, and committee meetings minutes.

The accounts were found to be well supported by documentation.

## Independent Examiner's Statement

No material matters have come to my attention that give cause to believe that proper accounting records have not been kept, or that the accounts do not agree with those records.

The accounts present a true and fair record of financial activity.

## Financial Overview for the Period

Income totalled £21,644, primarily from University of Sheffield Medical School funding (£20,384), Sheffield City Council funding (£950), bank compensation (£200) and uniform sales (£110). The Crystal Peaks funds (£1,498.41) were transferred into the Step Out Sheffield bank account for safeguarding. Whilst reflected in the bank account statement, these funds are not considered direct income for the charity.

Expenditure totalled £10,808.22, including Ramblers fees, consultancy, travel, clothing, payments to walks, training, and publicity costs.

This generated a surplus of £10,835.78 which is slightly higher than what was budgeted at the start of the period.

## Bank Position

The opening balance on 24 October 2024 was recorded in the accounts as £49,846.20. Whilst the bank statement states that the balance was £50,465.35, the difference of

£619.15 includes expenses incurred in the previous financial period but paid out in the current one.

The closing balance on 31 March 2026 was £62,180.39, resulting in a net increase of £12,334.19 which includes the safeguarded funds.

The minor discrepancies between accounting records and bank statements are due to the accrual-based accounting currently used by the organisation. Accrual-based accounting, while useful for larger organisations, is not the best fit for Step Out Sheffield's structure or financial activity. Under the accrual method, income and expenditure must be recorded when they are *earned or incurred*, rather than when cash actually moves. This requires tracking outstanding invoices, prepayments, liabilities, and other adjustments that significantly increase the administrative workload.

For a small, volunteer-run organisation like Step Out Sheffield, continuing with accrual accounting would introduce unnecessary complexity without providing meaningful benefits.

### Ring-Fenced Funds

The Bolehills fund opening balance was £577.17 and was fully spent or returned by March 2026. The Crystal Peaks Walking Group fund held £1,498.41 with no expenditure recorded. Both were correctly separated from general funds.

### Conclusion

The accounts are properly prepared, well supported, consistent with bank records, and aligned to the activities of Step Out Sheffield. Financial management is sound and restricted funds have been appropriately handled.

### Recommendations for Trustees

There are several areas which can be considered for improvement to maintain a more robust financial governance:

- I recommend that Step Out Sheffield adopt a cash-based accounting system. As a volunteer-led community organisation with relatively simple financial transactions, cash-based accounting offers a clearer, more straightforward method of tracking income and expenditure. It records money only when it is actually received or paid out, making it easier for treasurers and committee members—particularly those without formal accounting backgrounds—to manage day-to-day finances.

Switching to cash-based accounting will also improve transparency, support smoother reporting to funders, and reduce administrative time. This approach aligns well with the scale and nature of Step Out Sheffield's operations, ensuring financial records remain accurate, accessible, and easy to maintain.

- Step Out Sheffield will benefit from introducing a formal financial procedures document which outlines the process of incurring and approving costs on behalf of the organisation, and reimbursement claims. This could also include a formal policy to guide the process of dealing with restricted funds.

- A standardised expense claim form and clearer guidance about costs classification and receipts organisation will improve the audit trail. It will also encourage the submission of expense claims in a timelier manner. Claims for reimbursement should be submitted before the end of the financial year in which costs have been incurred. Similarly, Step Out Sheffield could also consider increasing online payments to reduce administrative workload and improve clarity

### **Independent Examiner**

Name: Krassimira Teneva MBA MA SFHEA MInstLM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Krassimira Teneva', written in a cursive style.

Signature:

Date: 6 April 2026

## Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Ramblers continue to provide insurance cover, training guidelines, some resources such as hi vis vests, and 'light-touch' administrative support. For this they have been charging £1,000 per year. This arrangement has been under review, and, on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 Ramblers announced that all Wellbeing walks schemes that provide a quarterly report with the number of walkers attending all walks, the £1,000 subscription fee is to be waived without any compromise to the level of support that they previously provided.

Social prescribers are gradually reaching out to enquire about our walks on behalf of their clients and, as a result, the number of NHS referrals is rising. Ideally, we'd like all NHS workers to think of Step Out Sheffield as the 'go-to' service when they recommend gentle exercise for their patients. However, whilst social prescribers are now getting the message, we still need GPs to think about health promotion as opposed to disease management. An increasing number of new walkers found out about our walks from either the Ramblers website or the Step Out Sheffield website although word of mouth continues to be the main way that people find out about our walks and come along to try.

In the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 we lost 8 volunteer walk leaders. Eight retired as volunteers due to ill health and very sadly four died. They were Diz Feeley (Pitsmoor), Peter Griffin (Grenoside), Alan Broadhead (Stocksbridge) and Jill Cheatle (Dore). Each of them had volunteered as a walk leader for at least 20 years and they are all very much missed. On the plus side, four walk assistants completed their training to become fully fledged walk leaders during the year and a further six are part way through their training. Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to overcome the challenge of recruiting volunteers for the North and East side of Sheffield where support is very much needed.

During the period of this report two walks (Firth Park and Pitsmoor) quietly celebrated 25 years of walking and Graves Park celebrated 20 years of walking rather less quietly with a bun-fight for walkers both past and present. As a matter of record, 33 of our currently active volunteer walk leaders have now completed at least 10 years of service, 8 of them have completed 20 years of service and Jim Swift, from the Grenoside walk, has now been volunteering for 25 years.

There have been some downsides across the year. Two walks (Hillsborough and Lowedges) lost their venues and had to change their meeting points. Gleadless walk had to move to a temporary location while their venue is refurbished. Also, in September 2025 the Handsworth walk closed at short notice leaving a large residential area of the city without a weekly safe led-walk.

As the volunteer who looks after the volunteers, and acts as the channel of communication between Ramblers and Step Out Sheffield, I'd like to formally record my thanks to all the SOS volunteers for their continued support. Without such a big team of dedicated volunteers, Ramblers would not have a Wellbeing Walks scheme here in Sheffield at all.

*Sue Lee*