

# ANNUAL REVIEW



2020 - 2021



## DOUG STALKER CHAIRMAN

When commenting on last year's annual review, I touched on Covid and how we were responding despite it only starting to impact on us in the last few weeks of the business year. It's hard to believe a full 12 months later we have lived with Covid all that time, and it looks like we will be managing its impact for some time to come. It's been a challenging year for everyone across the world, and at seescape in Fife we have done all that we can to maintain our services to clients, protect our staff and deliver our contractual commitments to our funders.

Like everyone else, we had to think quickly about how we could deliver a service remotely, whether it would meet the needs of our many clients and how it could deliver the level of support all of them deserved, whilst recognising that lockdown presented an additional challenge to those living with visual impairment. We even managed to help support the NHS by running clinics for them delivered by our Optician team.

We have come through it together, and whilst there may be some lumps and bumps still to overcome, we are getting there. And we have learned there are new ways to do things that will help us deliver quality services more effectively and efficiently going forward.



I want to thank everyone, whether client, staff member, Trustee, funder or supporter for their personal contribution to our joint success. And a special thank you to our volunteers and befrienders who acted as a lifeline to some of our most isolated clients during lockdown. And of course, in January 2021 our Chief Executive Carl Hodson moved on. Whilst we recruited his successor, Sheila Chappell and Sally Cameron stepped up and covered the vacancy until our new CEO was appointed. So to all of them a big thank you and a warm welcome to Lesley Carcary, our new CEO, who took up post in late May 2021.

You will see from the various updates in the report, some of the detail of what was achieved and our client journeys illustrate how important the support we provided has been to them. Seescape remains committed to doing that as we move forward whatever the future holds. We are currently looking to canvass the views of clients and others to look at how best we can develop our services as we learn to live with Covid. But for now, thank you again and please all stay safe. The virus is still out there and it's important we all look after each other.

## LESLEY CARCARY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



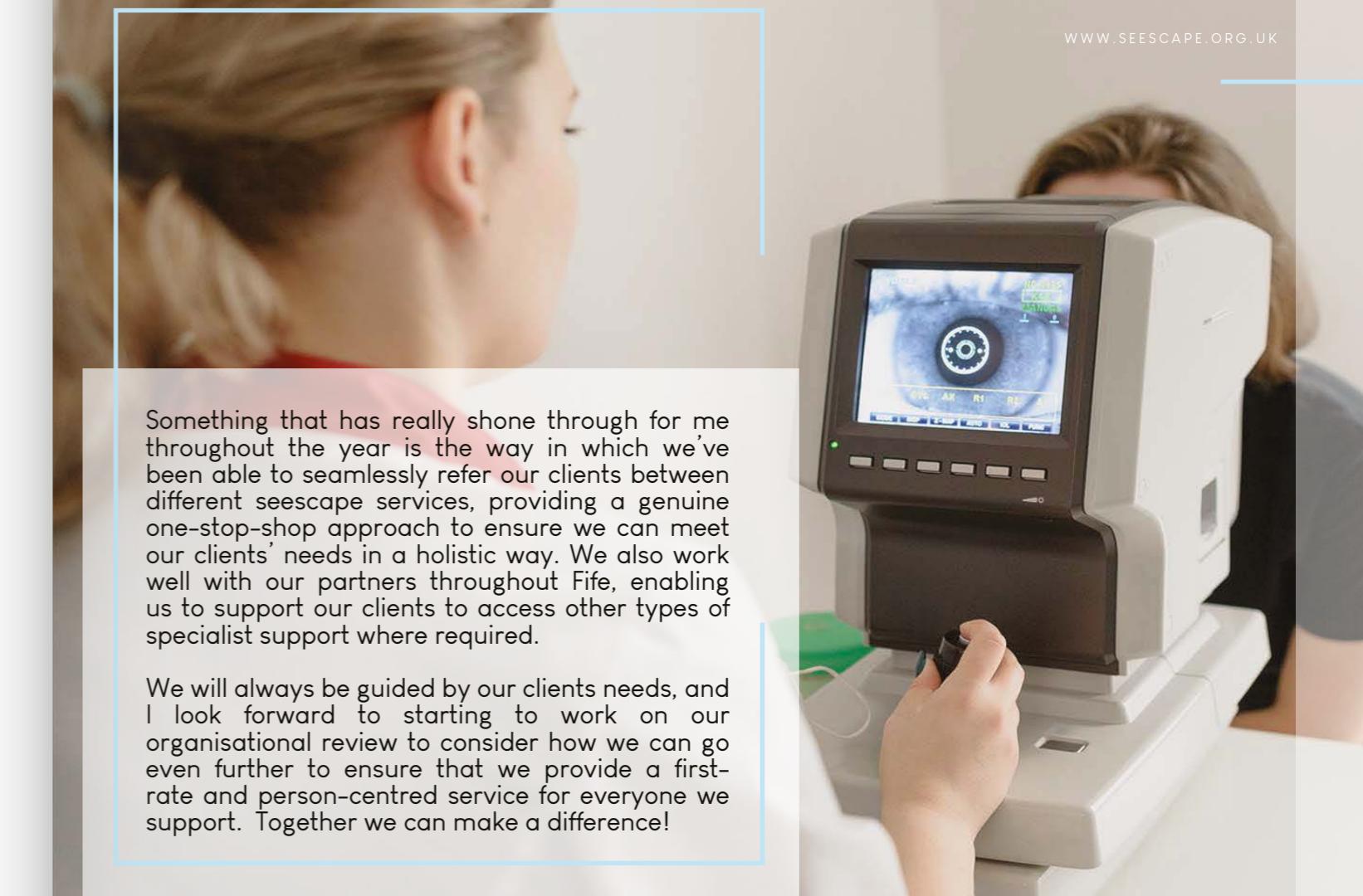
As the incoming CEO, I'm delighted to have joined such a well-established and respected local charity. Supported by a strong and committed team of staff, Trustees and volunteers, I am immensely proud of all that seescape achieved during a very challenging year.

Despite the significant impact of the pandemic, our team rose to the challenge; quickly adapting to working at home and developing creative and effective ways of supporting clients throughout the lockdown. Despite being unable to see many of our clients in person, we still managed to support almost 1,500 clients – this is quite an achievement for a small charity which has traditionally focussed on face-to-face support.

There's no doubt that the pandemic had a significant impact upon seescape, however the experience of the lockdown also presented an unprecedented opportunity to evaluate how we do things and how to put in place a number of efficiencies and improvements. It also gave us an opportunity to further invest in and support our dedicated team of volunteers, who went above and beyond to ensure that none of our clients were isolated throughout the worst of the lockdown.

Something that has really shone through for me throughout the year is the way in which we've been able to seamlessly refer our clients between different seescape services, providing a genuine one-stop-shop approach to ensure we can meet our clients' needs in a holistic way. We also work well with our partners throughout Fife, enabling us to support our clients to access other types of specialist support where required.

We will always be guided by our clients needs, and I look forward to starting to work on our organisational review to consider how we can go even further to ensure that we provide a first-rate and person-centred service for everyone we support. Together we can make a difference!



# WHAT WE DO



seescape (the operational name for Fife Society for the Blind) is the leading charity provider of support services for people with a visual impairment in Fife. We aim to empower people with visual impairment to live safely, independently and achieve their personal goals.

We offer a range of services as part of a one-stop-shop approach, including information and advice, rehabilitation, assistive technology training, befriending and social groups. We also operate our own Opticians, allowing us to take a person-centred approach towards eye care, and linking clients directly into our other services as required.



# OUR MISSION

We strive to help make visually impaired people's lives more fulfilled by empowering them to live and interact with their families, communities and surroundings in a positive way.

**We work towards this mission through delivering a range of services for people living with visual impairment, and are guided by our core values of:**

## RESPONSIBILITY

We will strive to ensure we meet our social and financial relationships

## PEOPLE

We are committed to building and maintaining relationships within our organisation and with the community we serve

## RESPECT

We believe in tolerance, acceptance, diversity and equal treatment for each and every one within the workplace and beyond

## PARTNERS

We value working in collaboration with other organisations and people to benefit our service users and supporters

## EXCELLENCE

We are committed to the highest quality of work, grounded in honesty, integrity, respect and professionalism

## SAFETY

We are dedicated to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of our staff, volunteers and anyone who may access our services

# OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



## SUPPORT

Our Sight Support team provided support and guidance to 1,106 clients



## COUNSELLING

We offered counselling services to 20 clients to support their well-being



## VOLUNTEERS

35 volunteers contributed 1,400 hours of their time to support 52 clients via social groups and befriending



## TECHNOLOGY

We supported 122 clients with assistive technology support



## OPTICIAN

Our Optician supported 191 patients throughout the year

## ADAPTING DURING COVID

When the country went into lockdown in March 2020, we had to quickly devise our response to the pandemic and decide how we would continue to support our clients. Staff worked from home throughout the period, keeping both themselves and clients safe, while still delivering vital support where it was needed.

Despite the significant impacts of both a global pandemic and severe flooding of our building, our staff and volunteers responded and adapted and continued to demonstrate many achievements throughout the year, including:

- continuing to support almost 1,500 clients throughout the lockdown, including transferring many services to telephone or video-based formats
- further investing in our Assistive Technology, Community Engagement and Early Intervention services through new fundraising income
- one-off Covid grants allowed us to purchase mobile phones and equipment as well as boost our digital presence
- we welcomed three new Trustees to our Board, bringing with them a broad range of skills and experience
- Our Optician service re-opened as soon as Government advice allowed, and emergency support and advice were provided by phone during closure.

# SUPPORT



Here are just some of the positive impacts our support has had on our clients lives.

- I learned how to use alexa to do things around the house
- I am able to identify and negotiate the steps outside my home
- I regained confidence in cooking independently
- I am able to read the newspaper again
- I can make hot drinks by myself
- I can guide my partner with confidence
- I am able to watch the football on the tv again
- I developed friendships with others in my community
- I can confidently use a magnifier and assistive kitchen aids



Being diagnosed with sight impairment can be bewildering, frightening and worrying, and even more so during a national lockdown, but our team continued to provide a high-quality service to support our clients throughout their journey. Here's what they told us:

“It’s the best thing I’ve ever got in my life”

“My mum didn’t want to ask for help as she thought nothing could be done to help her. But once I persuaded her to go to the seescape clinic, she was over the moon with the support she received, and I was in tears!”

“Your support helped me get my life back, and I’m going to start living again”

“I really look forward to speaking to my befriender each week at the arranged time. We talk about lots of different things, her life and what is happening. It’s made a big difference as I’m stuck at home a lot”

THANKS

## SIGHT SUPPORT & EARLY INTERVENTION

Our Sight Support team supports those with a visual impairment to develop the skills and techniques they need to live independently in their own home. They are able to provide a comprehensive assessment of clients' needs, as well as providing information and advice, assistive aids, and emotional support. We also recognise the significant benefits of early intervention work, and our team provide a range of support to help clients at the beginning of their sight loss journey – particularly those who may be unable to access other types of support.

When the lockdown began, our team quickly adapted and responded, switching all services to remote delivery, including telephone-based assessments, posting out equipment and providing outdoor-based mobility support when government guidance allowed us to meet in person again. We also created a range of instructional videos to support clients and their families and kept up to date with the wide range of new support services in response to Covid to ensure we could effectively signpost our clients.



Jean lives alone in a second-floor retirement flat and suffers from wet age-related macular degeneration. Due to an infection in her right eye, Jean unfortunately lost vision in this eye which significantly affected her confidence and ability to completely simple day-to-day tasks.

Jean was referred to our Sight Support team who carried out a full assessment of her support needs. Her main difficulties were the impact of her sight loss upon her mental health, struggling with reading and other hobbies, and day-to-day tasks such as making hot drinks and personal care.

Our team carried out a low vision assessment, and subsequently provided Jean with an LED magnifier and an easy-view magnifier to allow her to continue with her hobbies, a liquid level indicator and one-cup boiler to help with making hot drinks, and a walking stick to help her get out and about. They also referred her to an occupational therapist for handrails in the shower, and also arranged a counsellor to support with her mental health.

Jean is now fully engaged with reading and knitting again, feels safe getting in and out of the shower, and feels more confident when going out and about. She also greatly benefited from counselling support, as well as a 'living with sight loss' course.

## JEAN'S STORY



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Our Community Engagement service is a vital lifeline for many visually impaired people who may have become socially isolated due to their sight loss. We provide a comprehensive befriending scheme, matching clients with trained volunteers for a visit, a chat or a trip in their local community. We also have a network of well-established social groups across Fife, for those who would benefit from socialising with their peers and taking part in a range of activities together.

While the lockdown was inevitably difficult for many of our clients, our volunteers have been amazing; contacting our clients regularly to make sure no one was isolated, and many switching to telephone-based befriending to ensure the service could continue throughout the lockdown.

For our social groups, we trialled live Zoom calls and group phone calls instead of face-to-face meetings, and group volunteers called many of our clients individually to check in with them throughout the lockdown.

Of course, we couldn't have done all of this without the support and dedication of our amazing volunteers. We were able to show our appreciation for them throughout the year, including special messages from our President, Gordon Brown, and Patron, Barbara Dickson, and author Val McDermid attending a Zoom coffee morning.

Catherine had recently gone through a difficult time in her life, having lost her beloved dog and two recent bereavements, as well as having a heart attack. When the lockdown began, Catherine struggled with not being able to get out and about and socialise. As she was worried about the risk of Covid transmission, she felt telephone befriending would be a good idea instead of meeting face-to-face.

Following an assessment with seescape's Community Engagement Coordinator, Catherine was matched with a befriending volunteer, who arranged to call her once per week. Catherine told us her relationship with her befriender gave her the chance to 'talk it out', rather than keeping her feelings inside. She feels they are on the same wave length, and talk about lots of different things such as families, gardening, wildlife, etc.

Catherine highlighted the significant benefits of her relationship with her befriender, and told us:

*"I was quite down in the dumps; it's really quiet where I live and it gives me a bit of an oomph/boost to know that I'm getting to chat regularly to someone – especially in uncertain times.... It's good to 'talk it out', rather than feeling down.... I look forward to our conversations each week!"*

## CATHERINE'S STORY



## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



Our Assistive Technology service provides a range of support measures relating to both assistive and smart technology to empower people living with visual impairment. We can provide advice and training on the latest technology and software to help our clients live more independently, communicate easily with friends and family, and take part in day-to-day activities.

Although the lockdown meant that we could no longer support our clients within our Centre, we continued to support our clients throughout the period via telephone, email and Zoom. To ensure our clients could still access technology, we worked with technology partners to take equipment to clients' homes to demonstrate when we were able to. As this way of delivering tech support has worked well for many of our clients, we're making plans for further developing our approach towards both remote and community-based support.

We also worked with a technology provider to create a series of webinars to reach out to our existing clients and others, and we're making plans for further developing this service going forward.

## ISOBEL'S STORY

Isobel has a range of health conditions, which has unfortunately resulted in her losing sight completely. She therefore needed a device that would help her keep track of appointments, make to-do lists, take notes and allow her to keep attending her church group.

Following an initial assessment by our Sight Support team, Isobel was referred to our Assistive Technology team who conducted a technology assessment over the phone. Our Assistive Technology Trainer, Stuart, discussed various options with Isobel, who decided to purchase an Amazon Echo and an iPhone SE2 to help with day-to-day tasks. Stuart was able to provide advice, instructions and training on both devices over the phone, including how to use the built-in screen-reader on the iPhone, and how to use Siri and Alexa to carry out tasks such as creating reminders and notes, setting timers when doing cooking, and calling and texting friends and family.

Isobel now feels much more confident in using technology to support her with everyday tasks, and going forward is keen to try out Zoom on our Amazon Echo to take part in virtual church meetings.

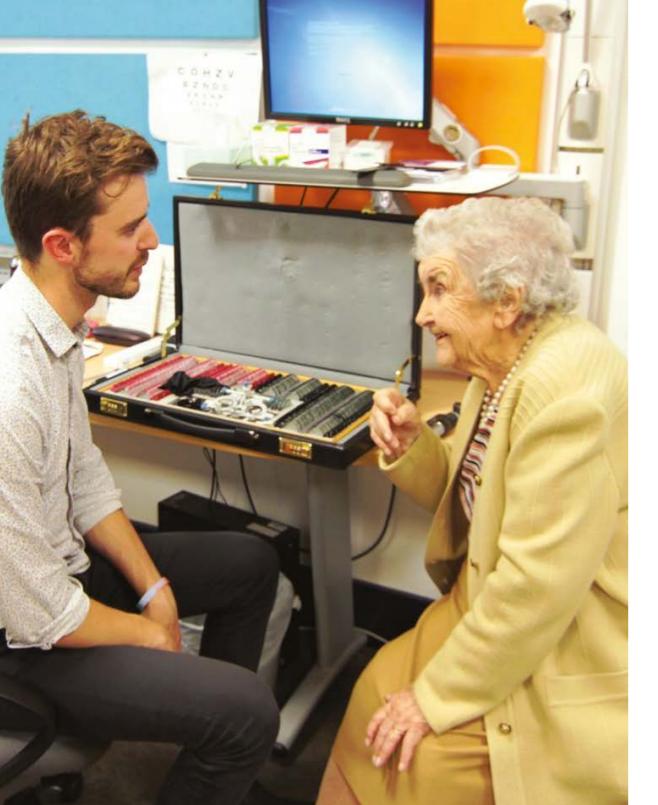


## THE OPTICIAN

Our Optician is an essential part of seescape's one-stop-shop approach; enabling us to take a person-centred approach towards eye care and eye health and linking clients directly into our other services as required. The team specialises in low vision conditions, and we also supported the NHS with specialist clinics for those with glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy throughout the year.

Although in-person services closed temporarily at the start of the lockdown, we were able to re-open for urgent and emergency patients, and then to the wider public as the lockdown restrictions eased. While an inevitable backlog of patients built up throughout the lockdown, our team worked hard to catch up and continued to provide high quality care and support, including telephone support where required.

You can find out more about The Optician service at [www.seescape.org.uk/theoptician/](http://www.seescape.org.uk/theoptician/)



## ANNA'S STORY

Anna was initially referred to the opticians at seescape, where we conducted an eye exam and a low vision assessment. We dispensed new distance and near glasses, as well as issuing a small wedge magnifier for reading small print which she found very beneficial

Anna returned for another eye examination after the lockdown, and the team updated her glasses to new pairs for distance and near. They also referred her to our Sight Support team and our Assistive Technology trainer for support with cooking, getting out and about independently, and trying out different technology to enable her to continue using the internet.

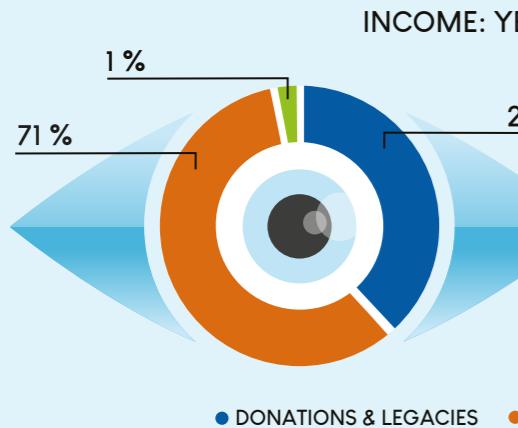
Anna really appreciated the wide range of support we provided, covering all of her sight-related needs, and told us:

*"You were amazing absolutely – amazing everyone was brilliant , I have never had this much help anywhere else, the optician took time with me and I wasn't rushed, my new glasses are great."*



# SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The majority of seescape's income comes from charitable activities and fundraising, and while our income streams were inevitably affected by the impact of the pandemic, we are immensely grateful to all the people and agencies who continued to support us throughout a difficult year.



## DONATIONS & LEGACIES

This income included donations, legacy income and trust funds (both those restricted to particular projects as well as for general purposes). A huge thank you to everyone who has helped us with our fundraising throughout the year – without your support we would not be able to offer the range of services that we do for people living with visual impairment across Fife.

## TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS:

- A M Pilkington Charitable Trust
- Bank of Scotland Foundation
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Business Gateway Fife
- Fife Council settlement fund
- Florence Nightingale Aid in Sickness Trust
- Independence at Home
- Independent Age
- JTH Trust
- Northwood Charitable Trust
- RNIB Technology Grants
- The Bruce Charitable Trust
- The James Thowat Charitable Trust
- The Lady Margaret Skiffington Trust
- The Robertson Trust
- The Scottish Government
- The Wellbeing Fund
- Westwood Charitable Trust

## CORPORATE:

- Amazon Smile
- Fife Chamber of Commerce
- Sense of Direction
- Raytheon
- Sight and Sound Technology
- Mutch More Active

## LEGACIES:

- Anne Younger
- David Innes
- Evelyn Rita Brodie
- John Bell
- Mary Lannan
- Robert McDougall

## IN MEMORIAM:

- Margaret Thomson

## INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

seescape receives core funding through the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership to provide sight support services, a low vision clinic service, and befriending and social group services. We also generated income via our Optician, including through eye test and clinics.

# HOW WE SPENT OUR MONEY

While our income for the year decreased over the year, the pandemic (and the move towards home-working) also meant that our expenditure decreased. We also made cost savings with property costs and staff wages throughout the year.



## £7,993 ON GENERATING FUNDS FOR SEESCAPE

This includes costs relating to fundraising and managing our investments. Money we spend on generating future income is an investment to make sure we can carry on providing vital services for our clients in the future.



## £607,369 ON DIRECTLY DELIVERING SERVICES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE

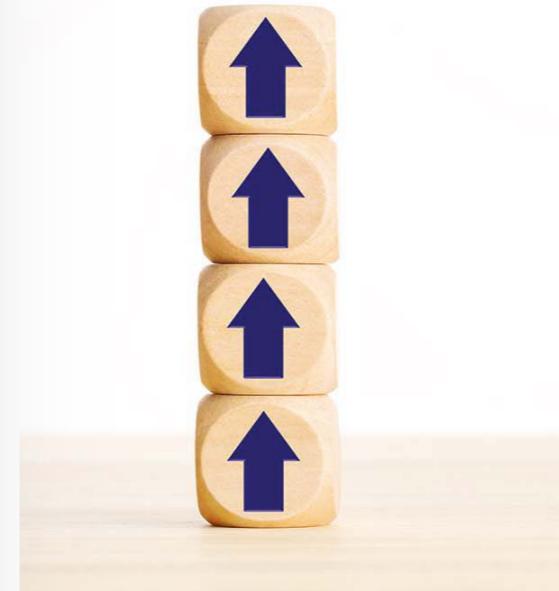
We spent 93% of our expenditure on directly delivering services for visually impaired people in Fife. This included our Sight Support service, Assistive Technology support, our Community Engagement service, and the Optician. This expenditure also includes costs for the equipment and people we need to deliver these services, as well as essential running costs.



## £34,591 ON SUPPORT COSTS

Our support activities enable us to deliver our charitable activities for the benefit of our clients. This includes vital costs to make sure we are a well-run, accountable and resilient organisation. These include audit and governance costs, office costs and finance costs.

EXPENDITURE	2020	2021
RAISING FUNDS	£3,994	£5,373
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	£783,864	£641,960
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT	£2,754	£2,620
	£790,612	£649,953



# LOOKING FORWARD

In the wake of the ongoing pandemic, we recognise that the world is a different place, requiring a new way of working for many organisations, groups and people. Not only do we need to reconsider the way in which we deliver services and projects, but also how we can futureproof the charity to ensure stability and effective change management. We therefore plan to conduct a comprehensive organisational review, considering where we want to go, and how we will get there, and how we can best meet our clients' needs in this ever-changing world.

Our key focus for the next year will therefore be around financial stability and income diversification to underpin service delivery and improvement for the benefit of those we serve. We will use what we learn from our organisational review to create a modern new strategy to help seescape plan for the future and take the charity to a new chapter in our journey.



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## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

F Dewar

K McIntosh

K Norris

R Kennedy

J D Stalker (Chair)

C Watson (Vice Chair)

A Cuthbertson (appointed November 2020)

B Hamilton (appointed March 2021)

K Scott-Brown (appointed January 2021)

## AUDITOR

Thomson Cooper

## SOLICITORS

Employease

Young & Partners LLP

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