



Older People Active Lives

Annual Report 2024/2025

(For the year ended 31st March 2025)

‘Taking OPAL to the next level’



OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire), P.O.Box 161, Whitchurch, SY13 9BG. OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire) is a company limited by guarantee; registered charity no. 1143753; registered company no. 7521625. Registered office: 18 Utkinton Road, Tarporley, Cheshire, CW6 0HS.

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Our Statement of Purpose

Our principal objective is to provide a benefit for older people who are in need of social inclusion because they are housebound or socially isolated and are finding it difficult to take part in social activities in their community without the support of others.

(taken from OPAL Services Memorandum and Articles of Association)

2. Overview of the Year from Geoff Hope-Terry, Chair of OPAL

Once again, it's my privilege to introduce our Annual Report. Life is never dull in OPAL, and it's been a very exciting 12 months with lots of highs, and some lows.

The biggest news was being awarded a grant from the National Lottery. The submission took an enormous amount of effort, and I can't praise those who were involved in putting the bid together highly enough. The funding was secured to fund expansion of some services and, for the first time, the appointment of a manager. These were key objectives in our 3-year plan. We started by recruiting Steve Bridge as Manager and he has quickly settled into the role.



Fliss Johnson-Cooke and Sue Downham joined OPAL and, together with the other members of our brilliant staff team and wonderful volunteers, they supported 350 older people in the year. I am in awe of what they all achieve!

Our fabulous fundraisers devised an interesting and popular fundraising programme. My favourite was the Christmas Fair held in Tarvin. We are extremely grateful to Lady Roisin Timpson, a great supporter of our work, who kindly allowed us to run the catering stall at Manley Knoll's Open Day, where huge quantities of OPAL's legendary home-made cakes were consumed.

It's not all been plain sailing, though, as despite valiant efforts, we were forced to take the difficult decision to close our club in Tattenhall. We found new services for our remaining members and many of the volunteers continue to help OPAL in other ways.

Jane Colville, a founding member and my predecessor as Chair, stepped down from the Trustee Board after 14 years of incredible service. OPAL wouldn't be what it is today without her. Of course, Jane, being Jane, still volunteers for us and helps in many other ways, which is brilliant.

We were also sorry to say 'Goodbye' to Brian Mackie, our Treasurer for the last five years, and we wish him well for the future. Fortunately we quickly found a new Treasurer, Andrew Evans, who has quickly made the role his own. Suzanne Rimmer, who has vast experience of the NHS and commissioning, also joined the Trustee Board and both have made an immediate, positive impact.

More recently we have recruited Saffron Cheetham, Julie Mann, Philip Milner and Andy Nevin as new trustees, further strengthening the skills and experience of the Board, and we warmly welcome all of them.

I hope you enjoying reading this report as we describe how we're taking OPAL to 'the next level'.

3. The Headlines for the Year

Farewell to Tattenhall's OPAL Club

Despite everyone's best efforts, OPAL had to close the doors at its Tattenhall Club for the last time. A few photos as a memento of past times...



OPAL's Successful Bid to the National Lottery

In July 2024, the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund awarded OPAL a grant worth more than £240,000 over 3 years. The proposal, entitled '**Taking OPAL to the Next Level**' consisted of 2 key aspects. The first was for funding so that OPAL could employ, for the first time, a manager to run all the operations covering services and staff. In our history, we have relied on brilliant and hard-working trustees to undertake these tasks but, in a time of greater scrutiny and complexity the new position will enable us to offer consistency and professionalism across all we do. It also frees up the trustees to focus on developing the organisation's strategy, policies and relationships, plus the all-important task of securing future funding.



The second strand looked at funding for growth so OPAL can meet the ever-increasing demand. Specifically, it covered the establishment of 2 new Activity Clubs and for developing and expanding our Carers Support and GoOnLine services.

We have appointed Steve Bridge to the role of Manager and work on expanding the services is underway.

For the National Lottery team to agree to fund OPAL at such a good level is recognition of the amazing work undertaken by volunteers, staff and trustees at OPAL over many years.



We say “Hello” to Steve Bridge, OPAL Manager...

Appointing a manager was a major step for OPAL and a search committee was formed to ensure a robust approach. The position was very popular, and we attracted over 30 applications, many of high quality. After a rigorous process (Steve will testify to that), we appointed Steve at the end of November 2024.

He brings over 20 years' experience working within the charity and public sectors and has wide skills including management of people, budgeting, building relationships and communications, all of which he has demonstrated in his first few months at OPAL.



Steve said the reasons he wanted to join OPAL were because of the impact that he could see it makes, and even from the interview process he could tell how everyone is happy to 'go the extra mile', which I think is a pretty accurate assessment.

He has settled in quickly, taking over the management of operations and becoming a key part of the team. Amongst many early successes, he has led on the design and implementation of a Customer Relations Management system which has already simplified processes and allowed us to capture important data much more quickly. The next step is to use it to measure the Social Value and Impact of all that we do.

...and “Goodbye and Thank You” to Jane Colville, after her amazing contribution as a trustee and former Chair over 14 years.



4. OPAL Clubs and Community Services – Highlights from 2024/25

OPAL Clubs

It's been another busy year for our clubs with some special celebrations!

“Frodsham Club celebrated its 10th Birthday, a great milestone. We were joined at the party by founding member Dorothy and local people that have supported the club in its growth,



including representatives from Frodsham Methodist Church, Frodsham Town Council, The Rotary Club and OPAL Trustees.

Several of our current volunteers have been with us since the beginning and this was recognised in the presentation of 10 years' service certificates. This year, members celebrated Chinese New Year, enjoyed an Australian theme for Anzac Day with travel talks, were treated to some musical

performances from regular visitors Melody Makers, Valarie Ball, Ken Walker, Barbara and Graham, Kathleen, Veronica and Arthur and one club member played his violin and talked of his experiences playing in the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.” - *Zoe, Frodsham Organiser*

“Kelsall Club members joined in with the rest of the country in remembering the 80th anniversary of D-Day, with music, buffet food, and reminiscences of rationing. We enjoyed talks from Jackson's Animal Rescue Charity and the Guide Dogs. A highlight of the year was a Christmas performance by the 30 strong Rock Choir held in the church. Members have enjoyed making season craft projects and an Oktoberfest themed day sampling non-alcoholic beers and listening to Oompah music.” - *Zoe, Kelsall Organiser*





“Tarporley Club has had another wonderful year. Many of our members are in their 90s, the oldest being 96 so we haven’t managed any trips out this year meaning we had to bring the fun to the club instead!

We enjoyed special fish & chip lunches, straight out of the paper of course!

We’ve also become quiz and word game aficionados, enjoyed exercise sessions, lots of

games and craft and of course, as always, plenty of bingo! Our themed days included dressing up and decorating for Halloween, Oktoberfest and a great Christmas party with all of our amazing volunteers joining in the celebrations!” - *Alice, Tarporley Organiser*

“Helsby Club members enjoyed a range of visits during this year including Becky the PAT dog who came and performed some clever tricks, Vision Support and SP Networks who gave out advice and freebies and Alvanley School Choir who came to entertain us at Christmas and presented us with some lovely artwork.

The highlight of the year was a visit by Mark from Gizmo Media who brought along virtual reality headsets, loaded with 360 degree footage filmed at various familiar locations along the Sandstone Trail.



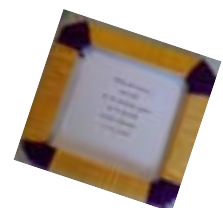
It was a totally new and inspiring experience for members. Mark was impressed at how well the members picked up the technology using their fingers to scroll through the film choices in mid-air. He believes that our member Olive, 98, is the oldest person in the country to have tried the technology. A big thank you to the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge for including us as part of their pilot study.” - *Zoe, Helsby Organiser*



“Malpas Club have had a fantastic, fun packed and varied year of activities. We had a range of talks from a chimney sweep to the history of knickers, monthly quizzes and sing-alongs and a visit from Louie the therapy dog.

The Carers Group joined us for the Christmas celebration and party and for our summer session. We’ve sailed the pirate seas and had a more traditional day at the virtual beach

including our own photo booth. For Lunar New Year, we had a Taiwanese prospective from Gore e Juin or Eva and celebrated Women’s Day with inspirational quotes. How do we stay so active? Weekly seated exercises!” - *Alison, Malpas Organiser*

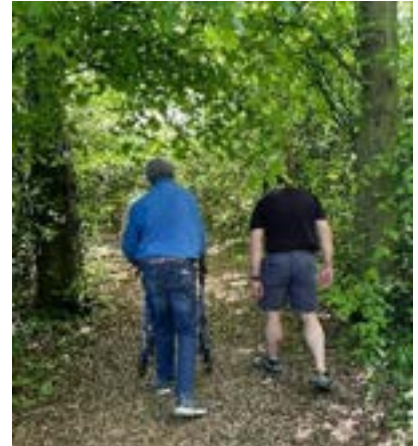


Good Neighbour Service

“Our Good Neighbour service delivers support and friendship to older people living at home. We match them with a volunteer who visits or phones them to provide friendship, and they may also help with transporting the member to an appointment or helping them with their shopping, as any Good Neighbour would do.

Over the past year we have supported 71 members of the Good Neighbour service with 63 amazing volunteers visiting and befriending them.

Many of the members join as they are feeling isolated and lonely. The weekly visit from their Good Neighbour volunteer not only develops friendships but helps to build members’ confidence and for some, going out for walks with their Good Neighbour has been a stepping stone to joining other groups and re-connecting with their local community.” - *Alice & Zoe, Good Neighbour organisers*



Branching Out

“We have had an exciting and creative year in our Branching Out groups, welcoming some wonderful new members and volunteers too.

At Farndon, we had a visit from our local MP Aphra Brandreth, and we were all impressed with her enthusiasm and sense of fun, getting stuck in with our Holi Day celebration painting activity.



Members have also been treated to some external speakers and visitors including a local guide dog in training, Hattie, and her lovely foster mum, Karen.



There have been food tasting sessions, including tasting and guessing some unusual condiments, and lots of talk about food, meals and recipes. There has been too much incredible food to mention everything, highlights were Eton Mess cheesecake, Simnel cake and Lemon meringue pie!” - *Fliss & Maria, Branching Out organisers*



Carer Services

“The Carer’s group continued to grow as did the number of outings. This group is quite unique in that carers can bring the person they care for with them.

We have enjoyed visits to the Storyhouse cinema, cafés, garden centres, coffee shops, pub lunches, golf courses, garden centres, an equestrian centre and in February enjoyed a trip to Norton Priory museum to see ‘Mars at the Museum’.



We also had several talks from chocolate making to bread making and model railways, a visit from Northwich Hedgehog Rescue with Victor the Hedgehog and joined OPAL Clubs for musical mornings and for Christmas parties.

In September 2024, OPAL welcomed Sue Downham, a new member of staff to the Carer Services team to lead on our Carer Support at Home service, matching a carer and their cared for with a volunteer who will sit with the cared for person and provide an hour or two of respite for the carer.” - *Debbie & Sue, Carer Support organisers*

GoOnline

“GoOnline operates the two services of GoOnline sessions and GoOnline@Home

Over the last year we increased the number of GoOnline sessions and now operate in Malpas, Tarporley, Kelsall, Helsby, Sandiway and Frodsham and took the service to some remote areas such as Norley to ensure people who may be isolated can attend our service.



In Autumn 2024, we launched our monthly Newsletter which provides details of the locations and times of the sessions along with relevant updates and information relating to tech or the world of technology. Our GoOnline@Home service has grown and we have supported people with a range of different needs. From a member who wanted to know what else she could do on her phone apart from making calls, to loaning an iPad to a member with failing eyesight and downloading a ‘Seeing AI’ app so that she can read books and emails more easily.” - *Bev & Fiona, GoOnline*

5. OPAL Volunteers' Highlights

At OPAL, we're incredibly fortunate to have the ongoing support of over 200 dedicated and passionate volunteers - with more than 50 new volunteers joining us this year alone, bringing fresh energy to our wide range of services.

Whether it's helping at the clubs, teaching IT skills, driving, cooking, fundraising or offering vital carer support and leadership as trustees, our incredible volunteers have been the heartbeat of our mission, helping us combat social isolation and loneliness among older people in our communities.



Our Good Neighbour service continues to grow from strength to strength, with 63 volunteers now visiting or calling older people in their homes across rural West Cheshire and new referrals arriving every week.

We continue to provide a diverse range of training sessions - including Cyber Protect, Dementia Awareness, and an Introduction to Loss, Grief, and Bereavement - all of which have been well attended and valued by our team.

As part of Volunteers' Week in June 2024, we brought people together through a series of celebration events held in six locations across rural West Cheshire.

Thanks to funding from Cheshire West and Chester Council through the Government's 'Levelling Up' scheme, our *Passport to Care* volunteer programme - delivered in partnership with local charity Snow Angels - has continued to make a meaningful difference in local communities. The programme provides structured volunteering experiences supporting older people and carers, both in community settings, in their homes, and via the telephone.

This year, we were especially proud to welcome our first cohort of 16 to 18 year old volunteers, opening new pathways for young people to engage in social care. Alongside volunteering, participants benefit from a suite of training opportunities that not only promote careers in the care sector but also equip individuals with practical, transferable skills for the wider health and social care workforce.

For more information about the volunteering opportunities available please contact our Volunteer Coordinator on volunteering@opalservices.org.uk or Tel: 07592 464856

6. The 2025 Volunteer Survey

In February, we conducted our Volunteer Survey and feedback from volunteers tells us that:



95% of volunteers feel valued & appreciated by their organiser



96% of volunteers feel that members appreciate the help and support they give them



75% of volunteers say that they are involved in decisions that may affect their volunteering



81% of volunteers feel well informed about changes within OPAL and events



96% of volunteers say that they would recommend volunteering at OPAL to a friend/colleague



93% of volunteers feel their role is important and valuable



62% of volunteers have gained new skills through volunteering with OPAL



66% of volunteers have improved wellbeing



56% of volunteers say they have gained in confidence due to their experience



85% of volunteers have a better understanding of the challenges facing older people



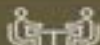
70% of volunteers have a better understanding of local services for older people



74% of volunteers say they now feel more part of their community



94% of volunteers say volunteering with OPAL has enabled them to give back



81% of volunteers have made new friends through volunteering



94% of volunteers say overall they have benefitted from volunteering with OPAL



I find it very enjoyable as I can pick and choose from the dates and activities and I am appreciated for the help I give.

I have made many friends with members and other volunteers.

My late mother loved going to her lunch club. She died in 2014 so when I saw adverts for volunteers to form a club in Frodsham I volunteered. Ten years later I still love it.



Overall, my volunteering experience with OPAL has been positive, and I appreciate the opportunity to contribute.



I enjoy both my club volunteer role and being a Good Neighbour. I have built a very good relationship with the person that I support and I know she enjoys our tea and chats.

I enjoy helping others and I get self-satisfaction from that.

I enjoy the interaction with both passengers and volunteers.



7. Our Impact

In an average month, OPAL delivers 51 activities to 181 members, supported by our amazing volunteers giving over 500 volunteering hours.

Our year in numbers...



**365 older people
accessed OPAL
Services**



**204 volunteers
supported OPAL**



**79% of Club
members live on
their own**



**88 people were
supported in their
home**



**1874 hot meals
served to Club &
Branching Out**



**85 GoOnline drop in
sessions delivered
across 7 venues**



**104 activities and
events delivered
for Carers**



**57% of Carers
attend with their
Cared for**



**£16,357 raised via
fundraising and
fundraising events**

Impact on Members

Here are some examples which show how OPAL helps its members...

GoOnline provides support via drop-in sessions at community venues and in the home.

Recently one of our members sadly lost her husband. As he did all the online activities using an old computer she was left feeling completely lost when he unexpectedly passed away. She found the computer very difficult and stressful to use and was unsure how to access to the many online accounts he had set up. OPAL provided her with a Samsung tablet and a dedicated GoOnline volunteer who helped her to set this up and how to find her husband's passwords saved on the old computer. After several sessions of support she gained the confidence to access her online banking, email, messages and use google searches. When her insurance was due for renewal, we showed her how to use "Compare the Market" where she was able to find deals that both suited her and saved her money for which she was very grateful.



Our Carer activities provide opportunities for carers and their cared for to meet other carers at different venues each month.

Paula is the carer for her mum. They discovered OPAL about a year ago and attend as many events and activities as they can, meeting so many lovely new people and going to new places.

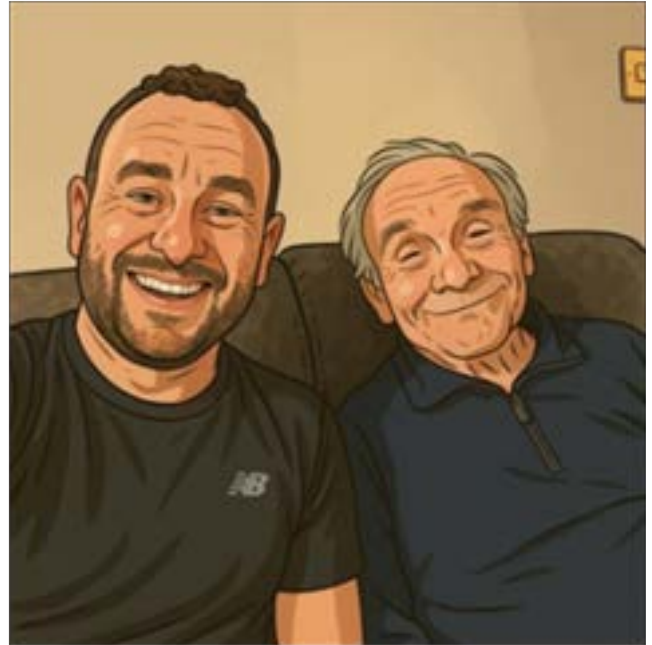
Paula says, "When the first Carer Support Group meeting came around Mum and I attended and found those two hours to be wonderful.

I got to spend time with the other carers whilst Mum was off having fun in another room, being cared for by the amazing staff and volunteers. It's not often I get time to myself and to be able to spend those two hours in the company of people who really 'get' what I'm going through whilst Mum is being looked after is such a relief. I get two hours where I just don't have to worry about Mum."

Ken, and his wife Faye, are Good Neighbour volunteers and are matched with Robert. Ken says “Faye and I are really enjoying getting to know Robert, he is full of character and curiosity, and we’ve had some great conversations covering everything from motorbike racing to artificial intelligence. We even made an AI generated image of the two us!

One area we’re gently helping with is building Robert’s confidence. He has such a brilliant personality and a sharp sense of humour that it would be a shame for him to keep it all to himself.

This week was a big moment for him. We went for our first walk together. It’s a significant step, as Robert doesn’t usually go out alone, and walking his own street was a major achievement. It was a real sign of growing confidence.”





Older People Active Lives

8. OPAL Staff and Trustees 2024/25

Staff: Fiona Barry, Zoe Blocksidge, Steve Bridge, Deborah de Kock, Sue Downham, Janet Handley, Maria Hudson, Morag Hutson, Fliss Johnson-Cooke, Alice Leech, Alison Shackleton, Beverley Stubbs.



Trustees: Ian Bailey, Jan Bailey (not photographed), Kevin Bradburne, Gill Clough, Jane Colville, Juliet Compston, Andrew Evans (from August 24), Lesley Gough, Geoffrey Hope-Terry, Brian Mackie (to June 24), Suzanne Rimmer (from May 24), Rhiannon Wilson.





9. OPAL 3-Year Plan refresh : 2025/26 to 2027/28

At the end of Year 2 of the previous Plan, 6 of the 8 objectives had been completed or part completed, one was on-going and one not yet due. The Board felt it was time for a refresh and extension for 2 further years. This has resulted in 11 new objectives, some of which carry forward work carried out under the previous plan.

OPAL's Mission

Our Mission is to offer accessible, enjoyable and enabling activities for older people in rural West Cheshire, in order to reduce isolation and loneliness by increasing their social interaction. We aim to benefit older people and their carers who may be housebound and / or socially isolated, and who find it difficult to be part of their community without the support of others.

Commitment to Staff and Volunteers

A key feature of all OPAL's services is that they are delivered by volunteers working as a team, side by side with staff, who provide guidance and support. Without our volunteers we could not deliver the wide range of services we currently provide. OPAL encourages volunteers to be actively involved in deciding how its services are run, and the success of what we do can be directly attributed to the wide range of skills, knowledge, commitment, enthusiasm and experiences that our staff and volunteers bring. Their local knowledge is a key enabler and helps OPAL ensure local services are available to local people. Volunteers also gain many benefits themselves from participating in the activities as co-creators along with our members.

OPAL is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and staff and volunteer development. This will act as a cornerstone for encouraging a culture of continuous learning and adaptability, crucial to consolidating OPAL as a trusted provider and for ensuring its long-term success.

Strategy

The strategy for the 3 years is to consolidate OPAL's position as a trusted provider in rural West Cheshire. Whilst additional growth is not an objective over this period, it is recognised that the demand for our services is increasing and additional services, which run alongside our existing offer, could also be contemplated if there is a clear need. However, this must be on the basis of quality of service and meeting the needs of our communities and members, not growth for the sake of it. Working more closely with suitable partners, in terms of both operations and funding, will be explored as routes to increased sustainability.



Agreed by the Trustee Board

Specific Objectives to Support the Strategy	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Expand our range of potential funding sources through different grant-awarding bodies, additional public sector commissioning, large donors etc	X		
Undertake a full review of each OPAL service to ensure there is still a need and we are addressing it appropriately	X	X	
Provide the opportunity and support for development of our staff and volunteers through training and other measures, aligned to individual's needs and aspirations, and the 3-Year Plan objectives	X	X	X
Look at ways of improving our volunteering offer and measurement to ensure sustainable numbers for the long-term	X	X	X
Work closely with CWAC and engage with their strategies so they view OPAL as a "preferred partner"	X	X	X
Prepare regular Impact and Social Value Reports, including case studies and success stories which increase awareness and promote OPAL's services	X	X	X
Ensure a successful delivery of the NLRC grant and make preparations for a follow-on bid in 2027	X	X	
Consider new services where there might be gaps in our provision		X	
Explore opportunities for funding that might benefit from the heritage nature of our activities		X	
Investigate inter-generational projects to encourage younger people to become involved with OPAL's services		X	
Identify potential strategic partners, including voluntary organisations in Cheshire East and Warrington, with a view to joint bidding, cost sharing, or capitalising on devolution opportunities		X	X

Some activities in the 3-Year Plan will be supported from OPAL's Unrestricted Reserves, where the Board consider it to be affordable and appropriate.



10. OPAL Funders in 2024/25

We gratefully acknowledge the grants and donations we received from the following organisations during the year...

Funder	OPAL Service supported
National Lottery Community Fund	Funding for organisational growth and development
Cheshire and Warrington Carers Trust	Carers Services, and 'Better Together for Carers and Older People' service
Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority	Clubs, Carers Services, Good Neighbours, and Passport to Care programme (from UK Shared Prosperity Fund/ 'Levelling Up')
Cheshire Community Foundation Fund it Forward Programme	Carers Services
Tarporley War Memorial Hospital	Carers Services
Chamber of Commerce	Bid writing support
Forrester Family Trust	General service funding
Garfield Weston	Clubs
Charles Hayward	Branching Out
Essar Oil	Branching Out
Brian Wilson Foundation	GoOnline
Co-Op Fund	Branching Out
Rotary Trust	Clubs
Frodsham Churches Together	Clubs

11. OPAL Fundraising in 2024/25

We now have a great core group to put on fundraising events for OPAL. The group have been very busy over the past year organising a range of successful events which have raised a record total of just under £18,000.

Some of the highlights this year included the ever-popular OPAL Soirée and the OPAL Christmas Fair, both much-loved events we have hosted in the past. In addition to these we introduced a new event: a successful Fashion Show held in April at the beautiful Glasshouse at Abbeywood. Guests enjoyed an elegant show presented by The Wardrobe Boutique from

Tarporley, followed by afternoon tea, and each departed with a fabulous goodie bag. We were delighted to have this event generously sponsored by Boodles of Chester.



In May, we held our Spring Soiree at the home of volunteer Helen Campbell in her stunning garden on a beautiful evening. Guests were treated to tea and cake, followed by glasses of fizz as they relaxed in a sunny courtyard.

The OPAL Christmas Fair was held at Tarvin Community Centre in November. There was an excellent selection of stalls selling goods so that guests could start their Christmas shopping and afternoon teas were served throughout the event. The Christmas Fair will be held again this year at Tarvin on Friday 21st November 2025.

We are very grateful to the Timpson family for giving OPAL the opportunity to fundraise at their NGS Garden Open Days by serving the teas and running a plant stall.



Another new event was the Metal Detecting Day which was held in March on land near Northwich. This was organised by OPAL Volunteer Steve King who is a member of Crewe & Nantwich Metal Detecting Society. They made several interesting finds and raised £400 for OPAL.



Many other events are being planned for the coming year. If you would like to join this group or get involved with any of our events, please contact Juliet via email:

Juliet.Compston@opalservices.org.uk

April 2024	OPAL Fashion Show at Abbeywood	Raised £7,985
May 2024	Spring Soiree	Raised £870
May 2024	Manley Knoll Teas & Plant Stall	Raised £2,696
May 2024	Stall at Manley Spring Fair	Raised £300
July 2024	Decibellas' Concert	Raised £949
Summer 2024	Ian Pritchard's Walk	Raised £900
October 2024	Soup Lunch & Bingo at Kelsall	Raised £666
November 2024	Race Night at Railway Inn, Helsby	Raised £902
November 2024	OPAL Christmas Fair & Afternoon Tea	Raised £1,550
March 2025	Metal Detecting	Raised £400
March 2025	Soup Lunch with Bingo at Bickerton Village Hall	Raised £585
TOTAL RAISED (after expenses)		£17,803.00

12. Donations to OPAL 2024/25



We really are so grateful to those individuals, groups and organisations who generously gave donations, gifts and legacies to OPAL, during 2024-25 totalling £36,489.

Your donations make a huge difference in enabling us to deliver our services.

THANK YOU!



13. Partners

We gratefully acknowledge the support of many partners who, in many ways, have enabled OPAL to deliver its services in the last year...

Those supporting front line service delivery...		
Providers of our OPAL venues.	The providers of training events for staff and volunteers.	Those who have led OPAL in so many activities & provided entertainment at our clubs and groups.
Social prescribers, wellbeing co-ordinators and social workers who have signposted and referred people to OPAL services.	The Malpas Minibus Committee for their help with transport.	The Library Services for continued publicising of services as well as their willingness to undertake joint work with us around Branching Out and GoOnline.
...and our wider network partners ...		
Funders and Commissioners (highlighted elsewhere) who have listened, involved, advised and supported during the last year.	CWVA who support volunteer recruitment, provide advice, info about funding opportunities, co-ordination of training and sector leadership.	Local Parish Councils for support in disseminating information, signposting and funding through grants.
Community Care Steering Groups/ Partnerships: Frodsham, Helsby & Elton Together and Rural Together, including their associated member groups, for providing opportunities for networking and joined up local working.	Healthwatch for their advocacy role and provision of information and training opportunities.	Age UK Cheshire for their information giving and support.
The Carers Trust for their information-giving, practical help and support and our partnership working.	Snow Angels for their presence and the close working relationship we have developed through partnership working.	Cheshire Community Action (CCA) for their information-giving, practical help , support and advice.
The End of Life Partnership for their support, advice and training.	The Alzheimer's Society for their advice and guidance.	Bee Friends for supporting partnership working in the local area.

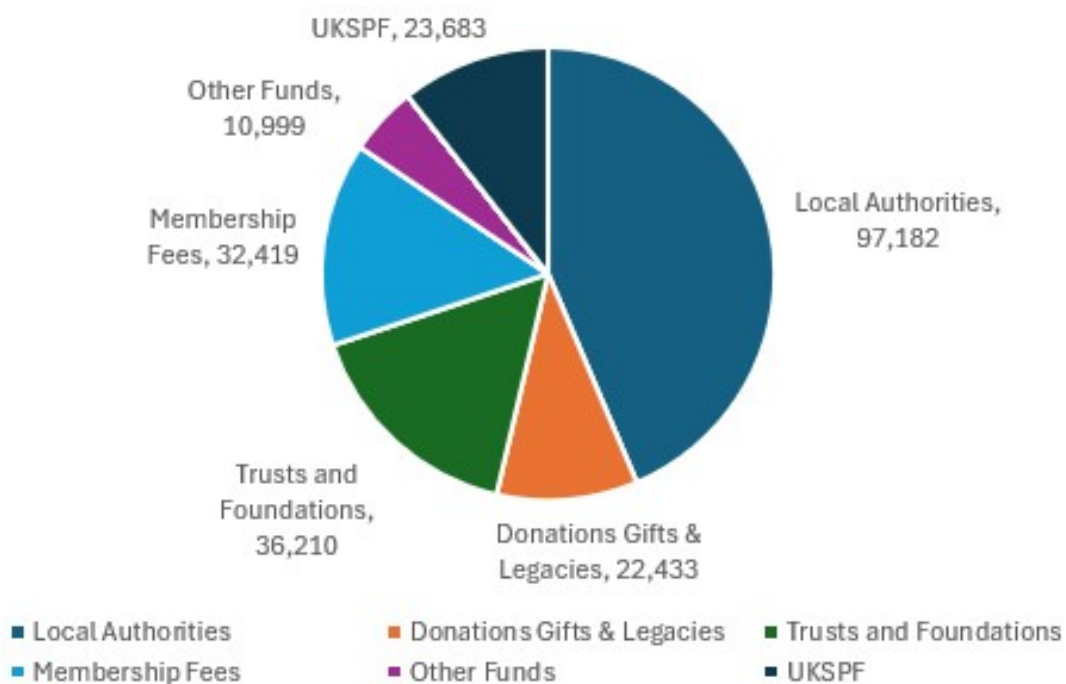
14. OPAL Money Matters

14.1 Year on year funding

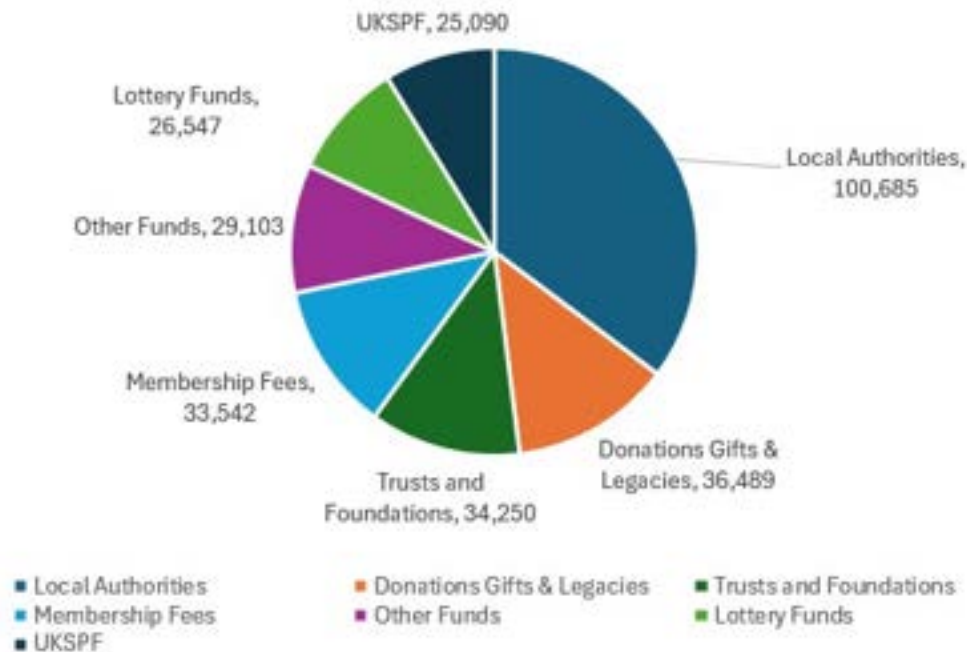
	Year to end March 2025 (£)	Year to end March 2024 (£)	Movement (£)
	£	£	£
Local Authorities	100,685	97,182	3,503
Donations Gifts & Legacies	36,489	22,433	14,056
Trusts and Foundations	34,250	36,210	-1,960
Membership Fees	33,542	32,419	1,123
Other Funds	29,103	10,999	18,104
Lottery Funds	26,547	0	26,547
UKSPF	25,090	23,683	1,407
Total Income	285,706	222,926	62,780

14.2 Funding sources

2023-24



2024-25



14.3 Summary

	Year to end March 2025 (£)	Year to end March 2024 (£)	Movement (£)
Total funding	285,706	222,925	62,781
Staff Costs	201,934	139,417	62,517
Volunteer Costs	4,503	4,888	-385
Services' Direct Costs	56,568	35,186	21382
Support Costs	11,755	17,207	-5,452
Fundraising	234	342	-108
Total expenditure	274,994	197,040	77,954
Net surplus/deficit	10,712	25,885	-15,173
Reserve funds	278,780	268,068	10,712



Summary Notes

Total Income	Increase from 23/24 £61,782 (28%)	Income rose across all funding categories apart from a minor decrease in income from Trusts and Foundations.
	Local Authorities	OPAL benefitted from the continuation of funding across several of its services in 24/25. Some of this funding falls away in 25/26 and OPAL will face a challenging funding environment.
	Donations Gifts & Legacies	160 donations and legacies were gratefully received in 24/25. Significant donations were received from the Brian Wilson and Forrester Foundations.
	Other Funds	Our fundraising team had a successful year with income of £19,642 from a fashion show, race night and other events. A £2,000 grant was received to contribute to the costs incurred in obtaining the Lottery grant.
	Lottery Funding	OPAL were successful in obtaining a three-year grant valued at £243,819 starting in October 2024. £26,547 has been taken into income to cover salary costs for the new manager and other costs for the new activities.
Costs	Increase of £77,089 from 23/24	The large increase is primarily due to the recruitment of a manager to drive the expansion of OPAL's services and the introduction of a new staff pay structure. Both factors are detailed below.
	Staff Costs	Our new manager started in November and was recruited to drive the introduction of the new services that are funded by the three-year lottery funding described above. A structured salary scale was introduced in August to rationalise the existing pay scales, reward our staff for their excellent work and performance, and to reward continuity of service.
	Services' Direct Costs	Our increased level of activity and the inflationary pressures in 24/25 have been a factor in the increase in costs. Also £5,000 in fees were incurred in obtaining the Lottery Funding Grant Income. Depreciation and IT costs showed increases from 23/24.



15. Financial Statements and Balance Sheet

OPAL SERVICES (RURAL WEST CHESHIRE)

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets			799		1,807
Current assets					
Debtors		11,080		73,394	
Cash at bank and in hand		349,850		264,249	
		<u>360,930</u>		<u>337,643</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		<u>(82,949)</u>		<u>(71,382)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>277,981</u>		<u>266,261</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>278,780</u>		<u>268,068</u>
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds			61,308		66,935
Unrestricted funds			<u>217,472</u>		<u>201,133</u>
			<u>278,780</u>		<u>268,068</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

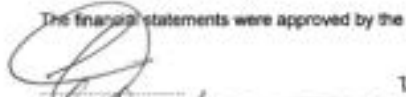
The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on

17 September 2025.


G Hope-Terry
Trustee

Company registration number 07521625 (England and Wales)



Older People Active Lives

16. Independent Examiner's Report

OPAL SERVICES (RURAL WEST CHESHIRE)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF OPAL SERVICES (RURAL WEST CHESHIRE)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire) (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law), you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, the independent examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the Companies Act 2006;
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a true and fair view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Rebecca Davies-Lees
HLB House
68 High Street
Tarporley
Cheshire
CW6 0AT
Date: 25/9/25



Older People Active Lives

17. Company Information

OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire) is a company limited by guarantee.

Charity name:	OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire)
Registered company no:	7521625 (England and Wales)
Registered office:	18 Utkinton Road, Tarporley, Cheshire CW6 0HS
Date of Incorporation:	8th February 2011
Date activities commenced:	22nd May 2011
Accounting reference date:	31st March
Registered charity no:	1143753

Board of Trustee Directors 2024-25:

Ian Bailey	From March 2021
Jan Bailey	From March 2021
Kevin Bradburne MBE	From June 2021
P Cllr Gill Clough	From February 2011
P Cllr Jane Colville	From February 2011
Juliet Compston	From March 2022
Andrew Evans	From August 2024; Treasurer from August 2024
Lesley Gough	From June 2021; Secretary from September 2021
Geoff Hope-Terry	From March 2022; Chair from August 2022
Brian Mackie	From March 2020 to June 2024
Suzanne Rimmer	From May 2024
Rhiannon Wilson	From September 2019

Company Secretary: Lesley Gough

Independent Examiner: Rebecca Ellams FCCA, Hall Livesey Brown
HLB House, 68 High Street, Tarporley, Cheshire
CW6 0AT

Bankers: The Co-operative Bank plc,
PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP



Older People Active Lives