

2024/25

Annual Report

CreateBolton



The King's Award for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

Creationships that make a difference...

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1. Introduction

CreateBolton has had another rewarding year...

Our employed staff are functioning really well as a team, supplemented by our volunteers and all the artists supporting us, they are all an absolute blessing to us, perhaps in more ways than they will ever know.

Carol Hardman - Operations Manager

Jo Young - Creative Co-ordinator

Toby Wray - Chef/Kitchen Manager

Statement from our Chair

Alison Lomax - Chair of Trustees

I'd like to start by saying a huge thanks to all our customers, our staff, volunteers and to our supporters for being with us throughout yet another momentous year. We hope that you remain with us on the next phase of the journey. It makes such a difference every week, seeing volunteers turn up for duty, customers visibly enjoying what we do and seeing beneficiaries growing in confidence in so many ways.

We continue to see many examples of just how important the support we provide is to more and more people. We have so many stories sharing the difference we are making in the lives of those we connect with and for that we can be thankful.

On this occasion, I also want to thank my fellow trustees and to those people that have been praying for us especially at key points through the year.

Finally, I would just like to thank all our volunteers again and again, as their commitment and their service reflects the Kings Award for Voluntary Service every day.

This annual report **covers the period September 2024 through to August 2025**, as we are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation CIO (1179761) and these dates define our accounting year. We continue to work in reflection of our values, mission and our vision as follows:

2. The Vision – Why does CreateBolton exist?

Our **Objectives**, remain consistent with the Charity Commission Objects originally submitted within our application:

To advance and promote the use of the 'Creative Arts' in their widest sense, as a way of:

- ❖ *Providing support and creative experiences for young people that develop their skills, capacities, and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible creative individuals.*
- ❖ *Reducing social isolation and building confidence in both vulnerable adults and older people.*
- ❖ *To preserve and protect the health of those caring for people with physical, mental or sensory impairment within the family or home by offering a creative break from caring through the provision of a creative experience away from the home.*
- ❖ *To advance the Christian faith lived out in practice for the benefit of the public in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ.*

Vision

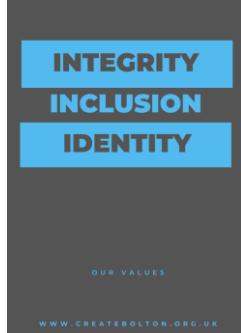
Our vision is a Bolton Community where everyone is included, and where everyone's creative talents and contributions are welcomed, utilised, and celebrated.

Mission

We use multiple forms of creative arts to bring out the gifts and talents of those people who face barriers to being able to confidently play an active part in their community. Through workshops, support groups and one to one mentoring we build confidence, trust, and an aspiration to both create and to contribute. We refer to this as '**creationships that make a difference**'.

Values

Our values reflect who we are and are synonymous with CreateBolton:



- ❖ **Inclusion**
 - We are a charity that includes all, that actively seeks to attract all and will bring all together
- ❖ **Integrity**
 - We are a charity that is authentic in all that we seek to accomplish; acting in our communities' best interests, and we can be trusted and relied upon to honour our commitments.
- ❖ **Identity**
 - We value all people as unique individuals with something to give. We are a Christian charity, and the teachings and person of Jesus are core to our identity

Within this year, we have been particularly struck by the following verse from Matthew and have used it as a guide at different points in the year:

Matthew 5:14-16 NIV

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

3. Resources

Section 4 will update you on the use of the CreateBolton space at Claremont House:

- a) **People** – Our paid staff team (3) function really well across their different disciplines. Carol our Operations Manager full-time, Jo our Creative Co-ordinator (24 hrs) and Toby our Chef/Kitchen Manager who has increased his hours to full-time (35 Hrs) make such a difference. We continue to be committed to paying the Real Living Wage.



- b) During the year our volunteer numbers have continued to grow to nearly 50 on our books, with different volunteers at different points across different services. We are seeing signs of new growth, in those supporting us to deliver services. We have also been sharing stories in our news bulletin of the difference that volunteering makes to both the volunteers and the customers in CreateBolton. We continue to deliver voluntary services consistent with being a Kings Award beneficiary.



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We continue using younger volunteers from 14+ in the Café and most of them either come to us through word of mouth, churches, schools or through one of the local colleges. Our eldest volunteer is in their late 70's, full of energy and wisdom. We cannot exist without our volunteers as they are the heart and soul of what we do, and we are blessed with such a diverse range of people. We continue to introduce a steady flow of new volunteers each year.

As Cafe Create is the hub of our charity, most of our volunteers are deployed in this service area. In January 2025, we held volunteer briefings where we shared updates on what's going on in CreateBolton, shared Policies and listened to ideas from our volunteers around areas we could improve. We provided practical safeguarding guidance and real examples of where our policies matter.

During this year, we have also cemented our working relationship with a growing number of local artists who have become associates with CreateBolton. This has been a blessing to us, and we can see more fruit to come in the years ahead. We continue in our wonderful partnership with Birtenshaw College providing mutual benefit to both parties.

- c) **Financial** – CreateBolton continues to operate in line with Charity Commission guidelines, holding enough reserves which are currently slightly greater than we require which is a healthy position to be in. Our reserve holding has been

established to reflect approximately three months operational costs, which is set at £40,000.

Our unrestricted liquid funds combined with appropriate use of our Designated and Restricted funds supports our policy to accumulate sufficient reserves to mitigate risks associated with delayed capital receipts (cash-flow), unforeseen essential expenditure, costs arising from management of change or short-term cessation of project funding.

We continue to rent space at Claremont House for many of our services but specifically for Café Create and Create Community, for all our activities that take place within the café, the Rudkin Room and the Create Studios on the mezzanine level. We are doing our best to manage the impact from the cost of living crisis, in particular the increase in energy costs. The cost of food has really increased, and it remains challenging keeping our menu prices affordable for both Create and our customers. The cost of 'creative' materials like clay, glazes, and glass have also increased significantly.

- ❖ We have continued to bid for grants to help achieve our financial targets and have maintained our partnership with [**Chell Perkins**](#) fundraisers to help us achieve sustainable funding options at the same time as supplementing the annual grants or one-off commitments.
- ❖ We have been blessed again this year by some amazingly generous donations and kindness, and we have noted an increase in regular giving.
- ❖ We are now self-generating significantly more of our income than we are asking for through grants and foundations.

d) **Physical** – The most significant change in the year in question has been to our pottery assets, new potters wheels, and repairs to the pugmill.



4. Claremont



We continue to creatively use the space we rent at Claremont House which currently stands at Café Create, the kitchen, The Rudkin Room, and the Create Studios on the mezzanine. The Boltones use the Rudkin Room as the Band Room. We continue to benefit greatly from additional storage space within Claremont and continue to maintain good relationships with the Church and other building users. We've been excited to welcome the new neighbours on the land next to the Church, as the completion of the 52 houses has meant the area now feels 'lived in'. We are very mindful that changes are constantly upon us, and we are therefore spending time planning and praying into the best way of engaging with new people.

5. The Services

The following update on services reflects the extent of the work during the last 12+ months (Sept 2024 - August 2025) and forms the basis of how we hope to grow during 2025/26 and beyond. We are very mindful as we celebrate each year as a charity that change always lies ahead and that we need to seek God's will not ours as we move forward. We will constantly review what we do and why we do it to ensure that it meets the needs of those we support and continues to be viable.

a. Cafe Create

- ❖ Café Create continues to be the central meeting place at the heart of CreateBolton. We are now open every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday and have committed to maintain this. The café wouldn't exist without our regular willing and very able band of volunteers. We have benefited from a very static team of approx. 15-20 volunteers across Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and this continues to be an answer to prayer, and our thanks go to our Operations Manager Carol Hardman for managing the many different volunteers. She does it so well that she recruited a new team as we started opening the cafe on a Wednesday this year as well. Carol is regularly looking for new volunteers with the skills and commitment we need. Toby our Chef/Kitchen Manager has introduced a new menu which is very well received.
- ❖ We were re-inspected this year and retained our 5* status which is well deserved recognition for Carol, Toby and all the volunteers' hard work.
- ❖ We continue to put some of our volunteers' through their Food Hygiene training and for some, specific training in Allergens, and Toby has been undertaking a great deal of training locally to ensure he's suitably equipped.
- ❖ We have also refreshed our website this year www.createbolton.org.uk



b. Create Experience (Workshops)

- ❖ As we reach the end of this reporting period, we have been able to facilitate more and more creative workshops as an integral part of Cafe Create, with a mix of art/craft and both paid and free sessions. There is such a demand from people for these courses, for meaningful activity and a reason to break the cycle of isolation. It's been vital that we have provided weekly sessions for people that don't necessarily have the resources to access such activities, and we are providing more than we've ever done.
- ❖ One of our Associate Artists Andy has continued to run pottery courses and another, Sue has been selling her creations at Craft Fayres, from which they both choose to donate to CreateBolton.



c. Create Boltones

The Boltones have had a good year and celebrate being ten years old this year. Here are some images of the band in rehearsal. There's such a good feel about the band at the moment and there are more fundraising concerts planned for the year ahead.



d. Create Community



The Create Community continues to utilise the Create Studios space in Claremont and the Rudkin Room. Create Community (including Create HOPE and Studio Create meet regularly throughout the week, with the numbers still growing. Jo Young along with Andy Lees are delivering the service and managing the changes we have implemented in this year, constantly responding to changing need.

e. Create HOPE



Our allotment has had another up and down year, with significant changes in need for some people using the service. We have come to the decision this year to hand back the allotment, but we will continue to work with the people in need of Create HOPE.



f. Studio Create



Studio Create is an offshoot from the Create Community, a group of younger adults with a learning disability, creating their own range of work and in the process growing in confidence, communication, and social interaction. There is much potential in the people involved and they're supported by Jo, and Carol.

g. **Create Well**

During this period, we have spent many hours working with the Bolton Hospice Well-Being Hub, on a project called Murmuration's, culminating in an installation being revealed in September 2024.



h. **Create Retail**



Create Retail is a central feature of Cafe Create. The retailers are very committed to CreateBolton. They spend time with us and it's very clear that they 'get' who we are and what we're about.

6. The Future (2025/26)

In Summary

- ❖ Continue to raise awareness of CreateBolton across Churches, Community groups, the general public and of course the Town Centre of Bolton as an integral part of the Bolton 2030 vision.
- ❖ Expand the number and range of praying partners - in particular through our [**Create Prayer Facebook**](#) page and Christian outreach/inreach that we plan to facilitate going forward.
- ❖ To increase the numbers of people subscribing to our news bulletin

- ❖ To continue to increase the pool of volunteers and the range of gifts they bring to enable CreateBolton to be all that God wants us to be.
- ❖ To develop new partnerships that align to our charitable objects.
- ❖ Continue our work with Chell Perkins on a more sustainable funding strategy for CreateBolton - maximising the funding opportunities available to us to enable us to sustain and multiply that which God has already provided.

This Annual Report owes thanks and appreciation to our Trustees as they continue to serve God through this position.

We continue to appreciate all the support from everyone connected with Claremont Church; in particular, without their understanding of our charitable status we would not be in the position we are today. We give thanks to the growing range of partners linked to Create; and of course, to the volunteers that give of their time and resources out of their desire to serve, and ultimately to our wonderful Creator God for His faithful provision every day. We thank God for those that have supported us financially by providing us with grants, with donations, and with regular pledges. These people know who they are, and they know the difference this makes – thankyou.

Our desire through 2025/26 is to continue establishing Creationships that make a difference...

If you want to see more of what we're about, please go to our new web-site www.createbolton.org.uk or view us on Instagram [@createbolton](#), on Facebook [@createbolton](#) or on Twitter [@BoltonCreate](#)