

Our Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 - Summarising a year of change and the first year of our strategy for 2022-25 (6 minute read)

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This article is about our Annual Report and Financial Accounts for 2022/23, which can be accessed in full here [John-Ellerman-Foundation-Annual-Report-and-Financial-Accounts-2022-2023.pdf](#)

A charity's Annual Reports and Accounts can often serve a very functional purpose – ultimately their primary purpose is to fulfil a legal requirement in which the charity's finances, resources and activities are reported on publicly. Here at John Ellerman Foundation, having onboarded an entirely new team between October 2022 and January 2023, the process of compiling our Annual report and Accounts for 2022/23 has been very important in bringing the Board and team together to reflect on what we delivered and learned in the last year, and how this can be used to support our ambitions for the year ahead.

The last financial year was one of significant change for us as an organisation. In March 2022, we approved [our strategy for 2022-25](#), which seeks to determine how we can advance wellbeing with 100% of our assets. We continue to be values led in all that we do, by working in ways that are responsive, discerning, connected, flexible, and offer a personal touch. Our work is now split across four strategic pillars:

- **Our funding offer**, ensuring that we embrace and deliver best and promising practice;
- **Our investment policy**, ensuring that we invest in ways that are aligned to our aim, values and funding categories;
- **Our work with others**, ensuring that we understand our stakeholders and can work with them to deliver our work together more effectively; and
- **Our commitment to accountability**, ensuring that we make further progress on diversity, equity and inclusion, transparency, and impact and learning.

In July 2022, the Trustee Board and I took the difficult decision to begin a restructure consultation with three of our team, after two other colleagues had handed in their resignations in December 2021 and June 2022 in order to take on new roles elsewhere. The primary reason for the restructure was based on our new strategy, alongside the learning from delivering the five different activities to celebrate our 50th anniversary celebrations in 2021/22, the Grant Assistant vacancy from January 2022 onwards, and ongoing feedback from staff on whether their workloads were deliverable within the current structure. The consultation resulted in three staff being made redundant in August 2022. We are grateful to them for their service and commitment and all that they achieved in their time with us.

These staffing changes meant that from August 2022 to December 2022, our grantmaking and finance operations were delivered through a team of interim staff. We were delighted to welcome our new permanent team of six new staff to the organisation. They have been settling in very well and bring a great deal of expertise and enthusiasm to their roles.

During the last financial year, we also said goodbye to Gary Steinberg, Trustee and Chair of our Finance and Investment Committee, who stepped down as a Trustee in February 2023, after nearly seven years of service. We were thrilled with the level of interest in the vacant Trustee role, and are very pleased to have been joined on the Board in January 2023 by Lily Tomson. Lily has worked across responsible investment, social and environmental action, and network building. She

is currently the Senior Research Associate at Jesus College, Cambridge, where she is leading the development of a 1.5°C aligned corporate bond index.

Despite all these changes internally, we remained committed to delivering our grantmaking, investing and wider operations as effectively and ambitiously as we could. Over the last year, we have continued to be inspired and motivated by our grant-holders and the vital work they do. In our 2022/23 report, we have shared what we hope are interesting insights into the 74 grants we made for nationally significant work in the arts, social action and the environment, worth a total of £6,267,269. This includes six case studies on grants we made. The reality is that any one of our grant-holders could be featured as a case study, but we hope that we have chosen six that demonstrate well the ways in which we seek to deliver our aim to advance the wellbeing of people, society and our natural world. We are very grateful to [Kakilang](#), [Pesticide Action Network UK](#), [Falklands Conservation](#), [Breakthrough](#), [Environmental Funders Network](#) and [Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts](#) for agreeing to be featured.

We have also included more data about the grants we have made, including: our success rates based on the 357 applications we received in 2022/23; the number of applications received by category; the percentage of successful applications by type of applicant; the average size and duration of our grants; the number of core, core (unrestricted) and project grants we made; the kinds of work we supported; and the shape of the live portfolio of 194 grants we were managing as at 31 March 2023. As before, we hope that each year we will offer even more data and insights relating to our grantmaking in our next Annual Report.

Other highlights from the last year include:

- Our research into our history and the origins of our wealth continuing at pace, which culminated in us publishing [John Ellerman Foundation: A Historical Review](#) to our website in May 2023.
- Delivering the last stage of Protea, our international curatorial exchange involving eight curators working in the UK and South Africa. This included publishing a report about the programme on our website in November 2022.
- Running a second round of the UK Overseas Territories Fund, which is a funder collaboration that we lead, and this year involved contributions from three other funders, including the Postcode Planet Trust and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch).
- Successfully commissioning and offering three funder plus activities for our grant-holders, provided by [Aim-Hi Earth](#), [More in Common](#) and [Smarter Not Harder](#).
- Remaining a collaborative and outward-facing organisation, by actively participating in discussions with other funders and stakeholders across all three of our funding categories, and sharing our views on different topics through articles, blogs, podcasts and at conferences.
- Being one of seven organisations to achieve an A rating (B, A, A for diversity, accountability and transparency respectively) in the [Foundation Practice Rating](#).

As much as we have valued the time to reflect and look back on 2022/23, we are also very much looking forward too. 2023/24 represents the second year of delivering our new strategy, and work is well underway on key aspects of the strategy, like designing and implementing an impact framework that allows us to determine the difference we make across our grantmaking, investing and wider operations, as well as further refining our approach to our investing to ensure that we are being as environmentally sustainable as we can be, and continuing to consider our time horizon as an organisation. As ever, you can learn more about the kinds of things we are thinking about in our work in the [monthly updates](#) we share on our website.

Thank you for your interest in and support of our work. We cannot say how much it means to us. If you would like to get in touch to discuss any aspect of our Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23, then please do feel free to contact me directly.