

CYMERA FESTIVAL

Annual Report & Financial Statements

For the year ended

30 November 2024



ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

The trustees are pleased to present their report and financial statements together with the independent examiner's report for the year ended 30 November 2024.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity Number SC048809

Principal Address

Website Address

Current Trustees

Other Trustees who served during the year

Bankers

Royal Bank of Scotland
2 Bernard Street
Leith
Edinburgh
EH6 6PU

Independent Examiner

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

Cymera Festival is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and received charitable status on the 5th November 2018 with the charity number SC048809. The charity is governed by its Constitution.

Appointment of Trustees

The Charity Trustees who are the members of the charity, are also known as the Board of Trustees.

The Charity Trustees are recruited by the members of the organisation at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and any other vacancies can be filled by appointment.

Under the Constitution, there must be a minimum of 3 trustees and a maximum of 11. At each AGM, all the Charity Trustees must retire from office, but may be re-elected. There is no limitation on the number of terms served.

Employees of the organisation cannot be nominated as or become Charity Trustees.

Organisational Structure

The organisation is comprised of Members and Charity Trustees.

Membership is open to organisations and any individuals aged 16 or over who demonstrate an affiliation with the organisation's purpose. The Members appoint people to serve as Charity Trustees and take the decisions on changes to the Constitution.

The Charity Trustees are responsible for the activities of the organisation and the monitoring and controlling of its financial position.

OBJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Charitable Purposes:

Cymera Festival was established with the following charitable purposes:

- The advancement of the arts, heritage, culture, or science.

Activities:

Cymera Festival is an annual celebration of science fiction, fantasy and horror writing that aims to nurture the enjoyment of those genres by bringing together writers and readers from Scotland and beyond to share ideas, create stories and celebrate their imagination.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

"Same thing I always love about Cymera - lovely kind atmosphere, The sense of community and the warm welcome".

2024 Attendee feedback

2024 was a busy year for the Cymera team. Four new trustees joined the board in January 2024, bringing new ideas and energy to the 2024 festival and the Writers Conference in November 2024.

Preparations for the sixth festival were thrown into disarray when global pop superstar Taylor Swift announced three concerts at Edinburgh's Murrayfield Stadium over the festival dates. Faced with high hotel prices and a

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

lack of accommodation options, the Board decided to move the festival forward by a week, running 31st May to 2nd June 2024.

Nevertheless, our 2024 Festival was a great success, with attendee numbers once again growing. Over three days, Cymera hosted over 70 events, including 32 panels, 16 workshops, two open mics, the quiz and a number of RPG and Board Game sessions, hosted in collaboration with Edinburgh-based board game shop Ancient Robot Games

The weather was almost too kind to us, which resulted in some of the venue spaces becoming very hot, but attendees very much enjoyed spending time in the courtyard.

The programme featured over 130 participants, and 16 percent of speakers joined us from outside the UK.

Our digital offering remains popular, and the headline digital event with bestselling US author Cassandra Clare (interviewed by Edinburgh-based author V.E. Schwab) resulted in ticket bookings from across the world, including Australia, Canada, Israel, Luxembourg, Serbia and Poland. Multiple bookings from Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and France indicate that Cymera's reputation is growing in Europe.

Scottish writers were once again well-represented in the programme, and it was a strongest female line-up yet, with almost 75 percent of all participants identifying as female.

The festival continues to provide a diverse and interesting programme. For 2024 we were delighted to welcome back Edinburgh-based theatre company Strawmoddie with their production of Terry Pratchett's Men at Arms, adding a fourth performance on Thursday night due to popularity! For sci-fi fans, Dune The Musical! returned to Cymera for a second year, and [REDACTED] performed his work-in-progress piece A Rose Appears.

"[My favourite thing about Cymera 2024 was] the people and the atmosphere - it was so lovely to chat to random strangers and become friends simply because we were at a great event together. I also really liked the obvious immense amount of work that had gone into making sure there were so many great events for everyone, and so much Scottish/local talent."

2024 audience feedback

In total (but excluding the Pratchett play), 1388 tickets were sold for events at the 2024 festival. Weekend passes remain popular, with 103 in-person (of which 62 early-bird) and 20 digital-only (of which 14 early-bird) passes purchased for the festival. The festival also remains committed to providing complimentary weekend passes to those who are unable to join the festival otherwise, and a total of 36 passes were requested, 19 digital-only and 17 for in-person. Cymera also collaborated with the Scottish BPOC Writers network to provide Scottish writers of colour with weekend passes.

The ability to engage a Volunteer Coordinator was invaluable. Not only did this free up the rest of the team, it improved the volunteer experience immeasurably. With over 60 volunteers, this has been our most successful volunteer year yet, and it was brilliant to see so many familiar faces returning for another year.

"Every single volunteer we interacted with was so helpful and friendly, it made us feel so welcome"

2024 Attendee feedback

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

Cymera beyond the festival

On 9th November 2024, Cymera took over Central Hall, Tollcross, Edinburgh for our second Writers Conference, with a jam-packed programme for writers, with panels, talks, workshops, Agent one to ones and networking opportunities.

While the event remains small, we saw a ten percent growth in ticket sales, and more attendees showed their trust in us by buying Early-Bird tickets before we announced the conference speakers. Also encouraging is the growth in digital attendees, and Cymera remains committed to hosting the conference as a hybrid event.

Total	2023	2024
Total in-person	59	63
Total digital	10	13
TOTAL	69	76

Community building took centre stage at the conference with a dedicated panel on How to Build a Writing Network, while [REDACTED] ran a workshop on Mental Health Care for Writers. Feedback from the event shows that attendees really enjoyed the selection of panels.

"It was the right size for a one day session. A good mix of sessions but I didn't feel paralyzed by choice".
Attendee Feedback

In addition to the two key events, the Cymera team also attended WorldCon in Glasgow. Cymera shared a table in the Dealers Hall with Edinburgh-based sci-fi magazine Shoreline of Infinity, handing out leaflets and speaking with attendees. Several members of the team also took part in events and panels. Festival director Ann was on several panels, including hosting the Special Guest interview with [REDACTED]

2024 was a year of rebuilding and consolidation for the Cymera team. The lack of Creative Scotland funding the previous year meant that securing the funding for 2024 was key, as reserves were depleted and costs such as venue hire and accommodation were increasing. Following the 2024 festival, the board set up a Development Working Group to work towards a more robust funding model. This was just one of the ideas and approaches the new trustees brought to the festival, together with professionalizing Cymera's Social Media, adding expertise to panels and supporting the running of the Writers Conference.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overview

Income of £61,230 (2023: £45,403) was received and the main source of funds were from grants and ticket sales.

Expenditure totalling £60,981 (2023: £51,241) were made carrying out the charitable activities.

At the end of the financial period, the charity had a surplus of £249.

Donated Facilities & Services

The Charity Trustees would like to thank the service provided by all the charity's volunteers, who have helped contribute towards the success and achievements made within this past year.

Reserves Policy

Reserves at the end of the year were £1,613. The Charity Trustees have set a policy of £3,000 to cover website costs and the engagement of a freelance administrator. They have not met their target, and the financial position will be monitored carefully throughout the year by the Charity Trustees.

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

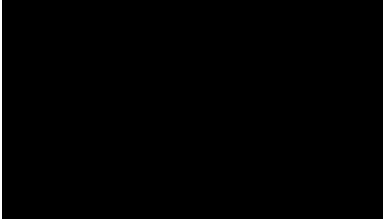
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

FUTURE PLANS

As our fifth in-person festival approaches in 2025, the enthusiastic and dedicated Board of Trustees is ready to take Cymera forward into the next stage of its evolution.

APPROVAL

This report was approved by the trustees on 7 July 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Trustee

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Cymera Festival

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 30 November 2024, which are set out on pages 9 to 12.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 ("the 2005 Act") and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) ("the 2006 Regulations"). The trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation (10)(1)(d) of the 2006 Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts under section (44)(1)(c) of the 2005 Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

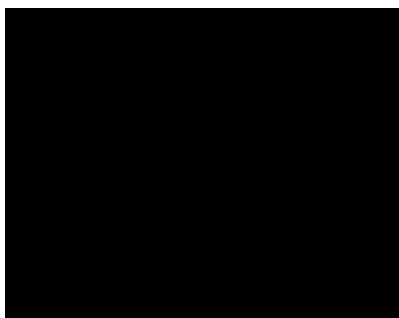
Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter came to my attention:-

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Regulations, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Regulationshave not been met, or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



9 July 2025

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Receipts		£	£	£	£
Donations		1,616	-	1,616	835
Grants	5	14,838	-	14,838	8,495
Fund Raising		-	-	-	2,850
Loan		2,500	-	2,500	-
Trading Income - Ticket Sales		42,276	-	42,276	33,223
		61,230	-	61,230	45,403
Payments					
Charitable Activities	6	60,231	450	60,681	50,941
Governance Costs					
Independent Examination		300	-	300	300
		60,531	450	60,981	51,241
Net movement in funds		699	(450)	249	(5,838)
Transfers between funds		(214)	214	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for year		485	(236)	249	(5,838)

The Notes on pages 11 to 12 form an integral part of these accounts.

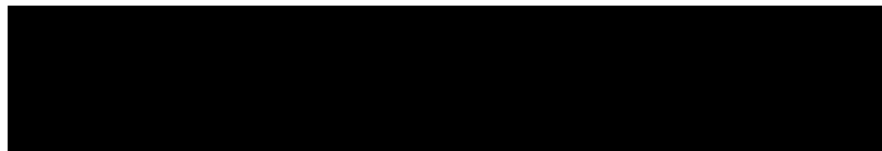
STATEMENT OF BALANCES

AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Funds Reconciliation		£	£	£	£
Balance as at 01 December 2023		1,428	236	1,664	7,502
Surplus/(Deficit) for year		485	(236)	249	(5,838)
Balance as at 30 November 2024		1,913	-	1,913	1,664
Bank & Cash Balances					
Cash at Bank		1,913	-	1,913	1,664
		1,913	-	1,913	1,664
Liabilities					
Independent Examination		300	-	300	300
		300	-	300	300

The Notes on pages 11 to 12 form an integral part of these accounts.

These accounts were approved by the trustees on 7 July 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

A large black rectangular box redacting the signatures of the trustees.

Trustee

Trustee

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

1. Basis of Preparation

These accounts have been prepared on the receipts & payments basis in accordance with:

- (a) The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
- (b) The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

There have been no changes to the basis of preparation or to the previous year's accounts.

2. Fund Accounting

- (a) Unrestricted funds are those that can be expended at the discretion of the trustees in the furtherance of the objects of the charity.
- (b) Restricted funds are those that may only be used for specific purposes. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor, or when funds are raised for specific purposes.
- (c) The purposes of the funds are shown in Note 8.

3. Taxation

- (a) The charity is not liable to income tax or capital gains tax on its charitable activities.
- (b) The charity is not registered for VAT, thus all costs are shown inclusive of VAT charged.

4. Transactions with trustees and related parties

- (a) No remuneration was paid to trustees or any persons connected with them during the year (2023: £Nil).
- (b) No expenses were reimbursed to the trustees during the year (2023: £Nil).

5. Grants received

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Creative Scotland	14,838		14,838	5,950
Scottish Book Trust for Book Week Scotland		-	-	545
People's Postcode Lottery	-	-	-	2,000
	14,838	-	14,838	8,495

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2024

6. Payments relating to Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Marketing	1,373	-	1,373	396
Speaker Costs	26,924	450	27,374	25,352
Venue Costs	11,730	-	11,730	12,125
Catering/Hospitality	9,544	-	9,544	5,823
Administration	832	-	832	123
Staffing Costs	5,713	-	5,713	3,652
Travel	112	-	112	50
Promotions	73	-	73	-
Volunteers	669	-	669	350
IT & Websites	647	-	647	558
Digital Events	2,614	-	2,614	2,512
	60,231	450	60,681	50,941

7. Movements in Funds

	As at 30/11/2023	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	As at 30/11/2024
<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	£	£	£	£	£
General Fund	1,428	61,230	(60,531)	(214)	1,913
<u>Restricted Funds</u>					
Scotland's Future Forum	236	-	(450)	214	-
	236	-	(450)	214	-
Total Funds	1,664	61,230	(60,981)	-	1,913

8. Purpose of Funds

Scotland's Future Forum

Restricted funds to be expended on the Cymera Prize for Speculative Short Fiction in conjunction with Shoreline of Infinity and Scotland's Future Forum.