



**Trustees' Annual Report for the period**

**From:** January to December 2023

**Charity name:** Open Table Network (OTN)

**Charity registration number:** 1193868

**Objectives and Activities**

<p>Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document</p>	<p>On 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 the Charity Commission approved a change in the charitable object of the Open Table Network, which the trustees formally adopted as part of a revised constitution at the charity's Annual General Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024.</p> <p><b>The new charitable object is:</b></p> <p>The object of the CIO is the promotion of equality and diversity, and the relief of those in need for the public benefit, particularly in the area of LGBTQIA+ equality in religious organisations in the UK, by:</p> <p>(a) building a network of mutually supportive communities for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex or asexual (LGBTQIA+) across the UK, to ensure they have equal access to a community where faith and LGBTQIA+ identities can be explored and celebrated in safe, non-judgmental spaces</p> <p>(b) relieving mental and emotional distress, reducing social isolation and promoting mental, spiritual and physical well-being for isolated, unsupported LGBTQIA+ people who seek the potential well-being provided by a faith community but currently find no welcome, affirmation or tolerance in many faith communities, by training and supporting OTN community leaders to provide long-term unconditional welcome to LGBTQIA+ people, their families and friends</p> <p>(c) providing activities and information to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds and cultivate a sentiment in favour of equality and diversity.</p>
<p>Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.</p>	<p><b>Activities - how the charity spends its money</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables Open Table communities for LGBTQIA+ people hosted by affiliated churches.</li> <li>• Resources Open Table communities, churches, individuals, and the wider community, by providing signposting, training, events, materials and support.</li> <li>• Maintains an online presence offering solidarity and signposting for LGBTQIA+ people.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works in partnership to share best practice and amplify marginalised voices.</li> </ul> <p><b>What the charity does:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious activities</li> <li>• Human rights / religious or racial harmony / equality and diversity</li> </ul> <p><b>Who the charity helps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other charities or voluntary bodies</li> <li>• Other defined groups</li> </ul> <p><b>How the charity helps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides services</li> <li>• Provides advocacy/advice/information</li> <li>• Sponsors or undertakes research</li> <li>• Acts as an umbrella or resource body</li> </ul> <p><b>Where the charity operates:</b> Throughout England And Wales.</p>
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	The trustees have read and are aware of the guidance issued.
Policy on grant making	We aspire to be able to make grants to communities within the Open Table Network, and other groups with similar aims, though as a recently established charity, we are not yet in a position to do this.
Contribution made by volunteers	<p>As a growing partnership of communities across the UK, we hugely valued the contributions of 316 volunteers across the 37 communities we supported in 2023. 124 were new to volunteering with OTN this year. Independent research into the experiences of OTN's volunteers in 2021 showed that gave significant contributions of time to OTN communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23% completed 1-2 hours a month</li> <li>• 59% completed 1-2 hours a week</li> <li>• 13% completed 2-4 hours a week</li> <li>• 5% completed 10+ hours a week</li> </ul> <p>Using this as a guide, we estimate that OT volunteers gave around 8,778 hours a month in 2023 - an increase of 37% since 2022.</p> <p>In this consultation it was clear that OTN's volunteers want to be better equipped to lead their communities and provide more informed pastoral support. In 2023 we secured additional funding to resource training to continue meeting this need.</p>

	The value of volunteering and delivery of social action with and for marginalised communities is a real asset to OTN's work.
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## Achievements and Performance

<p>Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.</p>	<p>At a time where most other public places welcome them equally, LGBTQIA+ people are still not always welcomed in UK churches. They are significantly more likely to experience mental distress, which research has shown relates explicitly to discriminatory pastoral practices of local churches, and the church's substantial contribution to negative attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ people in society (Oasis Foundation 2017). The communities that we help to establish, and support as they develop, are balancing that inequality, resulting in proven improved mental health and well-being for those who belong to them.</p> <p><b>Independent research into the experiences of OTN's community members in 2021 showed that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 56% said being LGBTQIA+ is a barrier to belonging in a faith community.</li> <li>• On average, our members experienced a 40% improvement in well-being after joining an Open Table community.</li> <li>• 87% feel less isolated and more socially connected after joining an Open Table community.</li> <li>• 92% said being part of an Open Table community increased their sense of belonging.</li> <li>• 89% said being part of an Open Table community provided a safe space for them.</li> <li>• 78% said there is a need for an LGBTQIA+ organisation to bridge the gap between the Christian community and the LGBTQIA+ community.</li> </ul> <p><b>We know that these communities are needed, and the need is growing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023 we supported 31 communities, including three which were struggling to meet regularly, and one which relaunched under new leadership. We stopped listing two of these as active communities but began conversations with potential new community leaders who may revive them in future.</li> <li>• We launched six new communities, bringing the total number of active communities to 35.</li> <li>• We also supported 35 other churches to explore whether to host an Open Table community, and hosted consultations with eight of these.</li> <li>• In 2024 we have already confirmed the launch of two new communities, and the relaunch of two communities which have struggled to meet regularly (one of which we have removed from the</li> </ul>
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	<p>list of active communities). We have also scheduled a consultation with another church seeking to host an Open Table community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of people engaging with OTN continues to grow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2023, the average number of monthly contacts across all our communities was 620, an increase of 31% on 2022. Adding consultations with churches and other in-person events brings the number to 668, a 2% increase on 2022). Although the growth in monthly community meetings continues, we hosted fewer consultations and took part in fewer events than the previous year.</li> <li>- If we also add contacts through online outreach and other activities, the total is 30,283 (a 40% decrease on 2022). Around 2% (690) contacts per month were new to OTN.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>We are neither an evangelising nor a campaigning organisation. Our aim is to create equality of opportunity. OTN works to give LGBTQIA+ people what other people take for granted: a safe space in church if they want it.</p> <p>The OTN website offers information to the whole of society, giving any interested party (welcoming, curious, cautious, or currently hostile) a chance to understand LGBTQIA+ people, a clear picture of what 'unsafe' means, and encouragement to engage with OTN to prevent it.</p>
<p>Achievements against objectives set</p>	<p><b>In March 2023 trustees reviewed objectives to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create a financially sustainable charity</b></li> </ul> <p>In 2023 OTN continued to support significant growth, not yet matched by the resources to sustain it for the longer term. OTN is working hard to grow contributions from individuals, the communities OTN supports and other inclusive churches, sale of merchandise, and a more diverse range of funders. In March 2023 OTN secured its first large grant of £50,000 over three years, which will support the charity's core work while fundraising continues. This grant enabled OTN to secure the employment status of its Coordinator, with the new title of Director to represent the way the charity's lead role has evolved since funding secured for full-time hours in 2020. The trustees have begun exploring a strategy to add an additional staff member to the national leadership in 2024. The United Reformed Church also offered practical support, including low-cost office facilities, enabling the charity to move to a new registered address in 2023.</p>

- **Support Open Table communities to offer welcome, inclusion, affirmation and empowerment for LGBTQIA+ people:**

We consulted with eight churches seeking to host an Open Table community, including around 200 people in conversations around how to create a community that genuinely invites belonging and full participation for its members.

Following a successful pilot in north-west England in 2022, OTN secured funding to offer hospitality training to volunteers from across the network in the south of England in 2024. This will equip them with resources so that they can create spaces that grow their members and communities and fulfil [OTN's vision, mission, and values](#).

OTN also hosted a national gathering on the theme [More Than Equal](#), which 46 people attended. They said:

- 'Spending a day in an affirming space with other LGBTQIA+ people and allies is basically the dream!'
- 'LGBTQIA+ people have much to offer but have largely been marginalised. We deserve extra care and support so we can flourish.'

- **Grow the spread and size of the network**

Of the six new communities we launched in 2023, one is hosted by an LGBT+ community centre as there is no inclusive church in the city. This is the first time an Open Table community has been hosted outside a church. Two communities are in south-west England where OTN had no communities until September 2022 – now there are four. One is in Cardiff, the first in south Wales. One is increasing the presence and reach of Open Table across Greater London, and one more has begun in Merseyside, bringing the total in the region where OTN began to seven.

*International enquiries:*

Although OTN is not an international charity, the substantial growth in enquiries from beyond England and Wales in 2022 was sustained in 2023. There were 24 enquiries, consistent with 2022, peaking at 7 in one month. Nine came from Uganda, where LGBT+ people are criminalised, and may face the death penalty. One enquiry came from each of the following: Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland, and further afield: Algeria, Canada, Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Portugal, South Sudan, and Zambia. Two international enquirers did not state from where they were contacting OTN. OTN's Secretary to the trustee board, who is

experienced in international development, has continued to respond to this rising trend by offering online support and signposting to local allies.

*We grew our online engagement in these ways:*

- **Podcast:** In August 2023 OTN launched a podcast called 'This is my story', an occasional series of short devotions, based around the Bible, the experiences of Open Table members, reflection, and prayer. The first four episodes were played on Spotify 74 times – an average of 15 a month. They are also available on eight other podcast sites.

- **Website:** Average monthly visits = 3,242 (+5%). A website hosting upgrade in 2023 will allow unlimited website contributors to enable volunteers to access and contribute to an online resource bank and members' area, plus support for e-commerce and donations.

- **Instagram:** Average monthly page reach = 478 (+7%).

- **LinkedIn:** 204 organisation profile followers (+92%).

- **MailChimp:** Average monthly of people who received and opened our e-news = 667 (+32%).

- **Email:** Average number of email contacts a month = 67 (+28%).

*We also saw a decrease in engagement:*

- **Facebook:** Average monthly post reach = 4,396 (-30%).

- **X / Twitter:** Average monthly tweet impressions 239,718 (-49%). This reflects a wider trend away from this platform.

- **YouTube:** Average monthly views 754 (-4%) as OTN published less video content and focussed more on in-person engagement.

- **Influence the Church to think differently about LGBTQIA+ Christians (and LGBTQIA+ Christians to think differently about Church).**

*OTN achieved this by:*

- *working with partners:*
  - [Ban Conversion Therapy Coalition](#): Following an open letter to the Prime Minister, signed by more than 60 organisations, OTN is now involved in Coalition meetings and actions.
  - [Church of England General Synod Gender & Sexuality Group](#): OTN hosted 130 people at a fringe event during a meeting of the CofE's governing body (more than a quarter of its membership). OTN's Director was also on the pastoral support team during debates about same-sex relationships and marriage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#"><b>Community of the Cross of Nails:</b></a> Supported the British &amp; Irish branch of this international reconciliation movement to host their AGM in an Open Table host church and begin a dialogue about OTN members sharing stories of exclusion and why inclusive language matters.</li> <li>○ <a href="#"><b>Faith &amp; Belief Forum:</b></a> Promoted recruitment for a project supporting LGBTQ+ allies in faith communities.</li> <li>○ <a href="#"><b>Gathering Voices [GV]:</b></a> Between 2017 and 2022, the annual GV conference experienced great success in providing a forum and focus to discuss issues that face Christian LGBTQIA+ people. OTN has been active on the GV steering group since 2018, supporting the delivery of five annual conferences, two in-person and three online. In 2023 the GV steering group recognised that in the five years of partnership with OTN and other organisations, the landscape has changed, and GV's core values are now being fulfilled by other organisations with complementary values. OTN and other organisations who partnered with GV will benefit from dispersal of GV's funds in 2024.</li> <li>○ <a href="#"><b>Joint Public Issues Team:</b></a> Following OTN's request to include LGBT+ History Month in their <a href="#"><b>Public Issues Calendar</b></a> in 2022, in 2023 they asked OTN for resources to which they could signpost people for use in churches.</li> <li>○ <a href="#"><b>Merseycare LGBT+ Staff Network:</b></a> Host of LGBT+ community outreach events on Merseyside sought advice on new venues. OTN advised where Open Table communities meet, and other inclusive churches, so they could explore potential. Merseycare offered advice on Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Informed training for OTN volunteers.</li> <li>○ <a href="#"><b>OneBodyOneFaith:</b></a> Took part in a Memorial Service to commemorate members of the LGBT+ community who have lost their lives to suicide and experienced harm. Met with them and <a href="#"><b>Modern Church</b></a> to explore potential to co-host an LGBT+ Christian retreat in 2024. Contributed to a resource on how to be a good Christian ally in association with them and the <a href="#"><b>Student Christian Movement</b></a>.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Positive Faith:</b> Supported this Christian HIV support charity to promote events for their 20th anniversary.</li> <li>○ <b>Quest (for LGBT+ Catholics):</b> Co-hosted with them an annual LGBT+ Christian retreat weekend in North Wales which is always over-subscribed - clear evidence of need for more opportunities like this. Feedback included: 'This was the most inclusive and safest space I have ever experienced. Radical inclusivity!'</li> <li>○ <b>United Reformed Church:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Equalities Committee:</b> Two members who proposed <a href="#">a resolution to recognise the inherent worth of people with diverse gender identities</a>, at the annual meeting of its governing body in 2023 support local Open Table communities.</li> <li>▪ <b>Youth Executive:</b> Requested info about OTN to share with members during Pride Month, and advice on creating a resource to educate people in the URC on the implications of the above resolution.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <i>sharing resources:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">blog posts</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">news articles</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">personal stories</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">reflections</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">videos</a></li> </ul> <p>to raise awareness, offer support to LGBTQIA+ Christians and challenge to discriminatory attitudes and practices.</p> </li> <li>● <i>delivering presentations / sermons / training / retreats for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ churches in five traditions (Baptist, Church in Wales, Church of England, Methodist, United Reformed Church), including two cathedrals.</li> <li>○ regional police chaplains.</li> <li>○ A national emergency food aid charity.</li> <li>○ trainee spiritual directors.</li> <li>○ a spirituality centre.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <i>taking part in:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a panel discussion following a play 'exploring conversion therapy and its effects on an ordinary British family'.</li> <li>○ a webinar on safeguarding LGBT+ people in the Methodist Church.</li> <li>○ an online service for LGBT+ History Month.</li> <li>○ multiple media interviews.</li> <li>○ recruitment of research participants.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">a touring art exhibition</a> of cathedrals and city centre churches to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion.</li> <li>○ a Religion Media Centre event with representatives of regional and national media organisations.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Ensure that Open Table communities are safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ worshippers.</b></li> </ul> <p>In 2023 we began work on a Network Agreement to outline the relationship and commitment between OTN, local Open Table communities, and the churches which host them. It includes commitments to our shared vision, mission, values, and objectives, to ensure that OTN, and all our Open Table communities, are welcoming, supportive, accountable and safeguarded.</p> <p><i>See 'A description of the principal risks facing the charity' on page 14.</i></p>
<p>Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set</p>	<p><b>OTN's income is mostly grants and donations.</b> <i>In 2023 OTN received three grants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>£16,666 from the United Reformed Church Legacy Fund</b>, the first part of a £50,000 grant over three years to March 2026. This, vitally, provides an element of financial security, enabling more robust financial planning.</li> <li>● <b>£9,964 from Awards For All</b>, to support the delivery of hospitality training for OTN local volunteers, and a national event for OTN's anniversary in June 2023. The grant was restricted to these purposes, and was fully spent both directly and on the costs of development work to deliver these events.</li> <li>● <b>£1,000 from the Consortium LGBT+ Futures Faith Fund</b>, restricted to expenditure on core costs, a significant contribution to meeting OTN's development needs.</li> </ul> <p><i>OTN also received one-off and regular donations from individual supporters and churches.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Donations:</b></li> </ul> <p>By the end of 2023, OTN had received £7,210 in donations, £2,000 more than in 2022. We aim to continue to increase the number of regular donations significantly, to increase OTN's financial security, and further develop our mission to welcome, include, affirm and empower LGBTQIA+ people so they can belong as themselves.</p>

- **Fundraising:**

In 2023, OTN raised £3,935, we more actively enabled Open Table community members and the wider public to fundraise for OTN. These initiatives included:

- promoting donations via [PayPal Giving Fund](#) and OTN's [Crowdfunder charity profile](#), which supports one-off and monthly donations and fundraising activities.
- increasing engagement with online shopping schemes: AmazonSmile donated 0.5% of the net purchase price of eligible purchases until it closed in early 2023, and [easyfundraising](#), through which more than 7,000 online retailers donate between 0.5% and 10% per purchase.
- Facebook birthday fundraisers.
- [crowdfunding during Advent and Christmas](#), which raised £2,528 in pledges. After deduction of card transaction fees and VAT, OTN received £2450.62. A further £814.65 was donated by cheque or other online payments, bringing the final total to £3265.27. As the crowdfunder closed on 2nd January 2024, this amount is recorded in our 2024 accounts. This does not include any potential Gift Aid payments on donations which are eligible.

- **Speaker & training fees:**

OTN has seen an increase in requests to provide a speaker or trainer on LGBTQIA+ and faith issues. Where possible, OTN requests a fee or honorarium and travel expenses to support this important outreach.

- **Contributions to travel expenses:**

Not every local community has the means to pay expenses for an OTN representative to visit. From those that do, OTN has requested a contribution to some or all of these costs. As the Network grows, these costs are increasing, so in 2024 we will seek to manage this in two ways – by fundraising specifically for this, and by enabling local volunteers to become regional coordinators, as a source of peer support.

- **Sale of merchandise:**

In 2023 a small but growing income came from the sale of OTN t-shirts and mugs, and resources from our partners. Introducing an electronic payment system has enabled OTN to sell merchandise and take donations at events, and to open [an online shop](#).

Feedback:

**Community leaders and volunteers said:**

- ‘There is great sense of family and belonging within the community and twice a year, Easter and Christmas, Open Table hosts an event for the wider church community...These events create a great sense of belonging and acceptance and provides a visible expression of inclusiveness’.
- ‘Those who are regulars... often attend other churches (and are sometimes out and sometimes not) but come to be out at Open Table in a place of celebration and acceptance’.
- ‘It is an absolute joy to be a part of Open Table and to worship with such an array of wonderful people. This group has, and always will have, a special place in my heart.’
- ‘We often receive feedback, including from those who only attend sporadically, that it is a really welcome ministry and has helped people get back to church having had bad experiences in other churches, or not having set foot in church in a long time.’
- ‘Listening to the comments of those who have attended our Open Table community over the last year, some of the differences that has made to their circumstances include:
  - Utter relief at finding themselves in a safe space with a welcoming, non-coercive group of people, who allow them to express deeply personal issues around sexuality, gender, identity and belonging, without being judged, excluded, criticised, or controlled.
  - Some have been deeply hurt psychologically by family, friends, colleagues, and other groups (including church groups) to which they have belonged, where they have in fact been judged, excluded, criticised or controlled, because of who they are as LGBTQIA+ individuals. Attendance at Open Table seems to be a significant element in their growing sense of self-acceptance and freedom to be who they are.
  - Some family members and friends of LGBTQIA+ persons have been able to express solidarity with or grown in their understanding of those they love.

‘I think the potential wider benefits to society as a whole are self-evident. It is highly likely that the positive differences experienced in our OpenTable community are being replicated in Open Table

groups nationally. This can only make for a safer, healthier, more inclusive society.'

**Community members said:**

- 'Try an @opentablelgbt service... the ones I have attended have felt so sacred and full of fellowship - and the liturgy is different, and magnificent, because it is inclusive and queer-centred.'
- 'You are such a blessing. So grateful for all you and the whole network do.'
- 'Open Table has changed the lives of many people for the better and long may it continue to do so!'
- Thank you so much for a safe sanctuary where I can be myself!'
- 'You do such amazing work! Open Table is so so important.'
- 'We all need to feel accepted and free to be ourselves.'
- 'Thank you for the work you do protect and uplift LGBTQ people in the Christian community.'
- 'I have really appreciated how ingrained within the church inclusion has been in everything I have attended, not just the Open Table services... Prior to coming here, I don't think I had realised the value of a church that is queer affirming, not just one that isn't actively homophobic... To be able to come to church without being conscious to hide aspects of myself or feeling that not doing so is a statement has only been a positive for my relationship with God.'
- 'You do a great job! It's been fabulous to see how Open Table has grown.'
- 'It is one of the most important church events each month'.
- 'The only place I feel truly accepted, valued, and able to come to God just as I am! With no fear of recrimination or judgement. Thank you for a safe space.'

**Partners said:**

- 'Open Table demonstrates what being inclusive really means, it has grown to be a powerful symbol of inclusion to the wider church.' - Bob Callaghan, former National Co-ordinator, Inclusive Church.
- 'It warms our hearts and gives us hope to know that the Network has such a strong presence and is growing; offering spaces of community, of safety, of healing and of love for so many.' - Gerard Swan, Chair, Quest.
- 'It is... wonderful to be able to signpost those who have been so injured by the church to safe sanctuaries where you know they will receive a

Christ-filled welcome.' - Leader of spiritual directors' training course, Diocese of Liverpool.

### Contacts in 2023

In 2023 OTN had 363,291 contacts, online and in-person. The monthly average was 30,283. 8,283 were new contacts, an average of 690 per month.

Contact source	2023 total	2022 total	% + / -	2023 monthly average contacts	2023 new contacts	2023 monthly average new contacts
YouTube	9,050	9,387	-4%	754	4,133	344
Website	38,909	36,892	+5%	3,242	2,165	180
Facebook	52,747	75,053	-30%	4,396	282	24
Instagram	5,738	5,358	+7%	478	101	8
X / Twitter	239,718	468,900	-49%	19,977	261	22
LinkedIn	204	106	+92%	17	34	3
Spotify	74	N/A	N/A	15	11	2
Mailchimp	8,003	6,077	+32%	667	118	10
Email	803	582	+28%	67	238	20
International	24	24	0	2	23	2
Communities	7,436	5,666	+31%	620	500	42
Consultations	131	357	-63%	11	82	7
Events	454	1,832	-75%	36	336	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>363,291</b>	<b>610,234</b>	<b>-41%</b>	<b>30,154</b>	<b>8,283</b>	<b>690</b>

### Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	<p>As a small emerging charity, we have continued to achieve much with few resources, as detailed above. We are punching above our weight in achieving so much and making a real impact.</p> <p>Our financial situation improved when the URC Legacy Fund agreed a £50,000 grant over three years. The first instalment (£16,666) was received in March 2023.</p> <p>Costs continue to be managed carefully but activity is still restricted by lack of funds.</p> <p>During 2023 the charity took on its first employee. This increases the pressure on resources, and we continue to seek extra funding to develop the work further.</p> <p>As OTN is determined that its impact should be as great as possible, and as resources are limited, virtually all income goes on furthering the charitable objectives.</p>
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	<p>At the current levels of income, it is difficult to build reserves. Ideally, we would keep up to six months' worth of expenditure in reserve. This would enable us to continue operating during times when income may be drying up.</p>

Amount of reserves held	£855 at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023.
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	The charity has slowly increased funding. Having amended our charitable objectives and secured a grant from the United Reformed Church Legacy Fund of £50,000 to be spread over 3 years to March 2026, more prospective new funders may be sympathetic to our work and reassured of OTN's sustainability.
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	<p><b>Finance:</b> OTN has mitigated the financial risk to the charity by seeking alternative and more diverse sources of income, and careful control of credit and expenditure.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding:</b> OTN was created by, and for, LGBTQIA+ people, who have too often found churches to be unsafe places. Owing to this experience of hurt and harm, we are particularly committed to protecting children and adults at risk of harm in our communities.  <a href="#">Read OTN's Safeguarding Statement &amp; Policy.</a>  OTN has appointed two people with responsibility for safeguarding our activities. In 2023 they were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OTN Co-Chair Alex Clare-Young.</li> <li>• OTN Director Kieran Bohan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reputation:</b> In our engagement with individuals, local communities, other organisations, and the media, we seek to maintain and develop OTN's trustworthiness, competency, and values. Damage to any one of these aspects of reputation would damage OTN's entire reputation. Safeguarding these and keeping everyone as safe as possible in our communities, are very important to everyone connected with OTN. One of our community leaders wrote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>'Open Table is a quality mark. It says clearly that there are LGBTQ people active and in leadership in the Church. It's shorthand for "yes, you really are welcome" for a whole range of questions that most LGBTQ people would ask before they stepped over a threshold of a church... Open Table already has a trusted reputation that would take a church many years to build on its own. That means you are starting years ahead of what you could do by yourself to prove you are trustworthy.'</b></li> </ul> <p>There is an established process for joining the Open Table Network, which is built on loving principles of safety in belonging. Part of that safety and belonging is consistency. It is important that people searching for understanding and support come to a place that has agreed, formally, to create a regular, predictable welcoming space - and has learned how to offer that</p>

	consistently and practically. We ask all who enquire about hosting an Open Table community NOT to use the Open Table name and logo, until they have completed the process.
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### Structure, Governance and Management

Type of governing document	Constitution
How is the charity constituted?	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	<p>Trustees have been recruited by nomination from within the membership and leadership of Open Table communities, and from stakeholders with whom we have worked in partnership. All persons appointed or re-appointed as charity trustees shall be asked, on being invited to accept appointment, to indicate in writing whether they identify as Christian and whether they accept the following Statement of Faith. No appointment shall have effect if the person appointed does not accept the Statement of Faith. No appointment shall have effect if it would bring the proportion of charity trustees not identifying as Christian at the time of last appointment to greater than one-third.</p> <p><b>The Statement of Faith is as follows:</b></p> <p>‘The Open Table Network is a Christian organisation, but not a church. Its work is built on a common profession of the faith of Jesus Christ but not confined to the detailed tenets of any one denomination. It believes human lives, identities and relationships are precious gifts from God, which all are called to live out with integrity. Its goal is to build a community where this is evident, and which equips others to go out and do the same. It seeks to serve members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual communities and the wider Church by sharing the Christian gospel and promoting invitation, understanding, acceptance and reconciliation between them. It values and supports the practice of Christian common worship, specifically the celebration of Holy Communion, which it regards as the primary context of its welcome and outreach to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual individuals.’</p>

### Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	The Open Table Network
Other names the charity uses	Open Table Network, Open Table, OTN
Registered charity number	1193868
Charity’s principal address	c/o URC Mersey Synod Office, 1 Fingall Road, Liverpool L15 9JE.

**Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity**

Trustee name	Office	Term of office
Ms Sarah Louise Hobbs	Co-Chair	4 years (from 19/03/2021)
Revd Dr Alex Scott Clare-Young	Co-Chair	3 years (from 19/03/2021)
Mr Neil Gordon Rees	Secretary	3 years (from 02/03/2023)
Mr Andrew (Roo) George Stuart	Trustee	3 years (from 02/03/2023)
Revd Andrew John Howorth	Trustee	3 years (from 02/03/2023)
Revd Anne Yvonne Bennett	Trustee	3 years (from 02/03/2023)
Revd Dr Augustine Tanner-Ihm	Trustee	3 years (resigned 09/06/23)
Mr Liam Greenbank	Trustee	3 years (from 10/03/2022)
Revd Lucy Elizabeth Rowan Berry	Trustee	2 years (until 02/03/23)
Mr Peter Nicholas Jones	Trustee	3 years (from 02/03/2023)
Revd Rosemary Elizabeth Hill	Trustee	3 years (from 02/03/2023)

**Names and addresses of advisers**

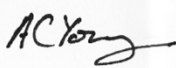
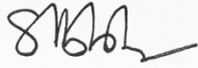
Type of adviser	Name	Address
Treasurer	Mr Jeff Prescott	c/o URC Mersey Synod Office, 1 Fingall Road, Liverpool L15 9JE.

**Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members**

Director	Mr Kieran Bohan	c/o URC Mersey Synod Office, 1 Fingall Road, Liverpool L15 9JE.
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**Declarations**

**The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.  
Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

<b>Signature(s)</b>		
<b>Full name(s)</b>	Alex Clare-Young	Sarah Hobbs
<b>Position</b>	Co-Chair	Co-Chair
<b>Date</b>	12/03/2024	