



**FOSS**  
Friends of Scottish  
Settlers - Falkirk

**FRIENDS OF SCOTTISH SETTLERS**  
**Charity Registration Number SC05254**

**Trustees Annual Report**  
**for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024**



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## COMPANY INFORMATION

Friends of Scottish Settlers (FOSS) is a Registered SCIO charity. The organisation was registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO SC05254) on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 and has a Company Registration No.: CS004695.

Our Registered Office is at: 31 Gartcows Drive, Falkirk FK1 5QQ

Correspondence Office is at: 8 Drummond Place, Falkirk FK1 5PN

### Trustees:

Trustee recruitment and appointment is by:

identification and invitation, direct and/or by advertisement; selection by interview; approval at a meeting of the Board of Trustees; election at an AGM.

Trustees are appointed for three-year terms. After the first three-year term they may be re-elected for a second three-year term. After a second successive three-year term they are not eligible for re-election for a further term until the expiry of a two-year break.

Trustees in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 were as follows:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Staff:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



# FOSS

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## **Governing Document:**

The governing document of Friends of Scottish Settlers is the Constitution.

## **CHARITABLE PURPOSES and ACTIVITIES**

The organisation's purposes as stated in the Constitution are:

The advancement of citizenship and community development

The promotion of equality and diversity

The promotion of religious and racial harmony.

Through the efforts of our Staff and our Volunteers, FOSS is dedicated to welcoming all those who settle in the Falkirk area and supporting community integration. We work in support of refugees and those seeking asylum regardless of where they have come from and how they have arrived here. We work in the main with two groups: 1) people who have come here through a recognised refugee scheme (from Syria, Ukraine, and Afghanistan, for instance), and 2) people in the asylum system who are seeking 'Leave to remain' in this country. There are presently about 85 people seeking asylum from a wide range of countries housed in temporary accommodation in Falkirk, and as many refugees.

We help people in any aspect of their lives which is not already provided for by the Home Office or Council, whether in terms of their material needs, informal or small-scale language support, search for work, social activities and general wellbeing.

**Vision:** Integration from day one. We envision a Falkirk District that is multicultural, multilingual, and welcoming, where local people, organisations, and services are equipped, supported, and willing to cultivate wellbeing, solidarity, community, curiosity and friendship among newcomers and longtime residents.

**Mission:** We enable newcomers to the Falkirk district to stand on their own two feet and make use of the knowledge, networks and services they need to live full, self-determined lives.

FOSS's partnership, befriending and other volunteer activities contribute to our vision because they embody **our values of empowerment, solidarity, respect, integrity, and welcome.**



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## CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2024

### Exciting developments

#### **Ukrainian inroads:**

During the last year FOSS has expanded our work to the Ukrainian refugee community. In partnership with Falkirk Council and with the support of Historic Environment Scotland and a local historian, FOSS Volunteers have coordinated with a group of local Ukrainians to introduce them to local sites of historical and cultural significance. Trips have included Linlithgow Palace, Stirling Castle, Edinburgh Castle, the Antonine Wall, Callendar House, the Scottish Parliament, and the Smith Art Gallery. Future visits planned include Kelvingrove Museum, the Railway Museum Bo'ness and further trips to Stirling and Edinburgh Castles. We now also have our first Ukrainian FOSS Volunteer and are in the process of signing up a second.

#### **Other new/developing community connections:**

- Afghan asylum seekers are now integrated into the regular teams and matches at West Quarter and Redding Cricket Clubs, thanks to the Volunteers who facilitated this contact last year, and to Clients for their contributions to cricket in Falkirk.
- FOSS facilitated a community event which comprised an Eritrean Coffee Ceremony and a performance of 'Wheel of Fortune' by *World Spirit Theatre*, which highlighted the challenges and injustices of navigating the UK asylum system.
- Following a talk by our Volunteer and Partnership Manager Sarah at Falkirk Council's Refugee Week online event, organisation *Movement in Thyme* got in touch to invite FOSS Volunteers and people in asylum accommodation in Falkirk to visit their herb garden through the seasons. Visiting the herb garden proved a welcome relief for everyone who went along and we have high hopes for future visits, which we plan to take place monthly.
- Building on the relationships we formed during our New Scots project last year, we are working with Falkirk Council to enhance the support we provide to the settled refugee community. Specifically, we are piloting Volunteer-supported trips to Glasgow to access cultural food and clothing. We hope to arrange further outings to increase organisational and community engagement with Maryhill Integration Network and build on their experience to improve refugee support in Falkirk.
- We also organised a Refugee Week event in partnership with other organisations that support refugees in the local area (CSREC, Falkirk Council and others). Attendees had some time to socialise with each other, share their cultural foods as well as meet some of the people and organisations who provide support services in the Falkirk area.

#### **FOSS voices:**

The voice of FOSS, especially the people we support, has been consistently raised at parliamentary level. FOSS regularly contributes to the Cross Party Group on Migration at the Scottish Parliament, and has ensured that Clients have the opportunity to attend and have their voices heard at such meetings. FOSS Clients are a vital addition to these conversations.



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## **Valuing Volunteers:**

During the last year we have made progress towards being a 'Volunteer Friendly' organisation. This Award necessitates the completion of Volunteer Role Descriptions and a suite of updated policies. This will enable us to support our Volunteers better, and we are working with the support of CVS Falkirk and District to do this. In connection with this, our Trustees have attended a series of trainings on governance, recruitment, social media and other topics to enable them to increase FOSS' effectiveness; care for our Volunteers; recruit additional Trustees; and ensure our governance and compliance is in place in order to minimise risk. The Trustees have also established a new set of objectives this year in order to keep us focused on our core purpose as an organisation.

Finally, we have added to our wonderful Staff team! Finance and Administration Officer [REDACTED] joined us in April. She has been an invaluable addition to the Staff team, revolutionising our bookkeeping and other administrative systems and processes, preparing and managing accounts, and working with the whole Staff team to track and prepare forward-looking budgets. Thanks to valuable Staff appointments like [REDACTED] FOSS is successfully shifting from Trustees being involved in much of FOSS' operational work, to being able to concentrate more fully on governance (while Staff and Volunteers manage and carry out day to day activities).

## **Ongoing work**

### **Befriending and Support**

- FOSS currently has 22 active registered Volunteers, 5 of whom joined FOSS since the beginning of 2024.
- Volunteer-led Befriending activities fund (following on from the Scottish Refugee Council's New Scots partnership with Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC) in 2023): The New Scots project between June and November 2023 alone facilitated over 30 activities. With new funding from CVS Falkirk, FOSS re-started such befriending activities again in April 2024, including regular cinema and bowling, as well as trips like attending a concert, or visiting an herb garden. Small group befriending activities with FOSS Volunteers enable individuals to practise their English in informal social activities, address social isolation and improve mental health during difficult times.
- Settled Clients Befriending News: Currently, 9 FOSS Volunteers are befrienders to families from Syria, Sudan, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Iran (benefiting about 30 individuals). These befriending relationships are all very individual depending on the family and the Volunteer - ranging from weekly visits, to regular check ins, English-language focused meet ups, etc. Several other resettled refugee families have benefitted from FOSS outings via Befriending activities and visiting Glasgow in small groups.
- An asylum-seeking family has received dispersal accommodation in Falkirk - a first. This family received befriending support from FOSS, and FOSS has been in close exchange with the local school the children attend, to facilitate a wide range of support including help with doctor's appointments, form filling, relationship and confidence building, visiting places, and answering many questions. The family has since moved away, but received support from a FOSS befriender for 6 months.



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- FOSS supported a young man in the ex-hotel asylum facility identified as a minor to contact CSREC, Care4Calais' Age Dispute Team, Mears, and Falkirk Council. He has been moved to be supported in the local authority's care.
- In addition to establishing connections with local cricket clubs, a FOSS Volunteer has also helped set up matches at local cricket grounds in which the cricketers in Falkirk asylum accommodation compete against cricketers in Bathgate asylum accommodation. Other local connections include the Galaxy Foundation that has provided weekly football opportunities for people in the asylum system that FOSS Volunteers have helped to facilitate.
- Training for Volunteers and Staff, this has been supported by the Hugh Fraser Foundation and Ben & Jerry's Foundation. These have included online training on Refugee Integration by the Scottish Refugee Council, Right to Remain's Asylum Toolkit training, and a workshop on 'Communicating when there is a language barrier' delivered by experienced community worker and language teacher Marzanna Antoniak. FOSS has more trainings and learning opportunities programmed for the rest of the year including Boundaries Training, Working with Interpreters, and the first of our language and culture taster sessions.

## **Material Needs**

- Welcome packs for new arrivals in the asylum system in need of clothes have been provided by FOSS, funded by our generous supporters, as well as the National Lottery Community Fund's Awards for All, the People's Postcode Trust, and Falkirk Council.
- We have also been able to facilitate basic mobile phones where required and SIM cards, along with shoes, coats, clothing, some sports equipment, and games. A big thank you to our outstanding Material Needs Team Volunteers who are now running the bulk of our material needs support.
- FOSS registered with the National Data Bank via Good Things Foundation's Online Centres' Network that will secure an ongoing supply of SIM cards to Clients.

## **Building strategic partnership structures & networks:**

- FOSS plays an active role in the Falkirk Asylum Partnership group convened by Falkirk Council with relevant stakeholders such as CVS Falkirk, CSREC, Mears, NHS, etc. We delivered a presentation on our work to current and prospective partners for Refugee Week 2024. This group will soon expand to address issues faced by all refugees (as well as people in the asylum system) in Falkirk District.
- We have collaborated to establish signposting structures with CSREC as well as CSREC casework sessions at the ex-hotel to support solicitor access to progress asylum claims and other casework outwith FOSS' remit
- We have presented our learning in the regular Forth Valley Integration Network Meetings convened by the Scottish Refugee Council.
- FOSS regularly contributes to the Cross Party Group on Migration at the Scottish Parliament, ensuring Clients have the opportunity to attend and have their voices heard in these meetings. FOSS Clients and Volunteers are an important addition to these conversations, providing a perspective on the asylum system outside the large cities.



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- FOSS has been part of the free bus pass working group to pilot a scheme for people in the asylum system across Scotland. Access to transport was one of the recommendations from the Scottish Parliament's Equalities Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee's report that FOSS Clients, Volunteers and Staff fed into in 2023. Sadly this initiative was part of the Scottish Government's recent budget sacrifices. The campaign will continue and a [motion](#) passed in October that affirmed the Scottish Parliament's commitment to this.
- FOSS supports the Falkirk Library services in setting up a project to improve and increase asylum seeker and refugee access to their services. FOSS also continues to support the registration of asylum seekers for library services on an ongoing basis.
- FOSS supported the connection of 4 asylum seekers to JustRight Scotland, one of whom is a regular member of their Rights Reps Programme.
- FOSS Staff met new MP Euan Stainbank and acquainted him with FOSS activities in the community. We continue to work with the MP to engage local community with good information and learning opportunities
- The Moment in Thyme partnership has begun - these trips will be monthly.

### **Paths for All Transport scheme**

Since January 2023, FOSS has been able to provide all residents at the ex-hotel with vouchers that allow the men to access trains via funding by Paths For All. This year, we have enabled access to transport for 138 individuals. The scheme has been a huge success and allows people in the asylum system in Falkirk to take part in community activities, faith groups, language learning, volunteering, sports groups, socialising, attending solicitors' appointments, etc. This supports more positive mental health, and integration into the community. Now in the 2nd year of the scheme, FOSS had to reduce the amount allocated to each individual in response to a Home Office decision that saw the number of residents at the ex-hotel asylum accommodation double without funding increases. This assistance was extended in the form of bus passes for an asylum seeking family in dispersal accommodation in Falkirk.

The scheme, managed by [REDACTED], has also included Signposting to other relevant services in the cities as well as within the District, e.g. community shops in Glasgow providing free second hand clothing.

The funding scheme ends in January 2025 and, given that the Scottish Government will now not proceed with the free bus pilot, we are surveying Clients and considering options for what FOSS transport will look like from next year.

### **Present and Future Challenges**

- Building policy and structures for Volunteers and Clients to act on their own initiative and in line with organisational safeguards and policies takes an immense amount of work, planning and time to implement. However, these structures are crucial to enabling Clients and Volunteers to build relationships of solidarity and learning, so that a very part time Staff Team is a safeguarding facilitator and not a bottleneck to enacting solutions.
- A precarious funding environment and the labour required to obtain and administer grants remain an ongoing concern as adequate funding is crucial to FOSS' development.



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- With the Home Office's abrupt room sharing policy, numbers of people in the asylum system in the Falkirk facility began to double from December 2023 onwards. FOSS responded quickly with provision of essential material needs to support even more Clients who are not allowed to work, cannot receive benefits and, beyond a bed and a roof, must get by on £8.86 per week Home Office allowance.
- Granting refugee status to many people in sudden waves has put pressure on local authorities to provide move-on support for people who receive their refugee status, to give advice and support regarding housing, benefits, employment, etc.
- The Hostile Environment continues to impact negatively on the people FOSS supports, and the propaganda-fueled riots in the summer both underscored how important our work is, but also the reality of the threats people in our communities face. FOSS Volunteers carry their knowledge into the wider community in their own networks, friendships, families, and conversations. Clients building relationships aids wider community learning and understanding; fostering more positive relationships.
- Sudden developments like stages of the previous government's Rwanda Plan had an immediate impact on people in the asylum system - Staff and Volunteers have had to come to grips with implications quickly, provide robust signposting and work out how best to stand in solidarity with our neighbours facing the threat of arbitrary removal to detention centres. During this time, asylum befriending activities lamentably included ensuring people in the asylum system knew by heart the name of their solicitor in case they were detained, as well as accompanying a person to their routine immigration appointment in order to alert advocacy organisations should they be removed to a detention centre without notice. Other Clients received troubling communications from the Home Office and FOSS signposted them to good information and organisations who could help.
- Our work with people in the asylum system dominates our expenditure and, to a degree, our activities. The cessation in early 2025 of the Paths For All train voucher fund will certainly and dramatically reduce our total spend and impair our support for people in the asylum system. We cannot predict the effect of the new Government's policies, and this unpredictability makes our planning and financial forecasting very difficult, as does the overall uncertainty of world affairs. This report gives us the opportunity to highlight our ongoing, but less costly and lower profile, work which goes on in supporting people with refugee status and all other new arrivals in Falkirk, work to which we may well be able to devote more resources if the Government adopts more humane policies towards people navigating the asylum system in our communities.

## A Timeline

**November 2023** - UK Supreme Court rules Rwanda plan unlawful

**February 2024**

- Commencement of Year 2 of Paths for All project
- Recruitment process for Finance Administration Officer begins

**March 2024**

- Eritrean Coffee Ceremony with UNESCO RILA and World Spirit Theatre



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- New FOSS Website goes live - many thanks to digital media Volunteer [REDACTED]

## **April 2024 - Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024**

- FOSS Staff team expanded: [REDACTED] Finance Administration Officer
- Training for Volunteers around processes for Volunteer-led Befriending Activities fund CVS funding activities project following on from New Scots
- Cinema Club and other regular activities start

## **May 2024 - Rwanda Plan detentions**

- FOSS is part of the free bus pass working group to pilot a scheme for people in the asylum system across Scotland.

## **June 2024 -**

- Cricket project began for the season - New Afghan arrivals are now valuable players at Falkirk Cricket clubs

## **July 2024 - new UK Government**

**August 2024 - Riots, Sweeping border enforcement announcement from UK government, Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill announced, Scottish Government cancels free bus pass pilot**

## **Thanks to our funders for their support in the following areas:**

- Awards for All - material needs
- Falkirk Council - material needs
- People's Postcode Trust - material needs
- Ben & Jerry's Foundation - Solidarity Team set-up, training and Scottish Parliament CPG attendance
- Hugh Fraser Foundation - training budget
- Robertson Trust - running costs
- Allan Lane Foundation - asylum support
- Falkirk Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults from CVS Falkirk - befriending activities
- Agnes Watt Trust - core costs
- Health and Social Care Partnership - core costs
- Paths for All - transportation for people in the asylum system

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The attached accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 have been Reviewed by [REDACTED], to whom the Trustees wish to express their thanks, and they will be submitted to OSCR (the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator).



**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS**

1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	total 2024 £
<b>Receipts</b>					
Grants	4	113	115,250	115,363	164,775
Donations & Fundraising	5	4,161	0	4,161	5,838
Bank Interest & rebates	5	1,522	130	1,652	745
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>5,796</b>	<b>115,380</b>	<b>121,176</b>	<b>171,358</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Cost of Charitable Activities	6	1,259	112,923	114,182	115,299
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>1,259</b>	<b>112,923</b>	<b>114,182</b>	<b>115,299</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>		<b>4,537</b>	<b>2,457</b>	<b>£6,994</b>	<b>56,059</b>

**STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 31ST JULY 2025**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £
Balances at 1st August 2024	30,326	60,629	90,955
Surplus/(deficit) for period	4,537	2,457	6,994
<b>Bank Balance as at 31st July 2025</b>	<b>34,863</b>	<b>63,086</b>	<b>97,949</b>

The Notes 1-7 form an integral part of these accounts.

Approved by the Trustees on *22<sup>nd</sup> September 2025*  
 Original signed on their behalf by [REDACTED]  
 on [REDACTED]

**NOTES to the ACCOUNTS for the YEAR 1ST AUGUST 2024 to 31ST JULY 2025**

**1 Basis of Accounting**

These accounts have been prepared on the Receipts basis in accordance with the Charities & Trustee Investments (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations (as amended)

**2 Nature and Purpose of Funds**

Unrestricted Funds are those that may be used at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objects of the Charity. Restricted Funds may only be used for specific purposes. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for specific purposes.

**3 Related Party Transactions**

No remuneration was paid to the Trustees or to any connected persons during the year.

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	total 2024 £
<b>4 Grants</b>				
Agnes Watt	0	0	0	450
Allen Lane Foundation	0	0	0	4,000
Awards For All	0	0	0	10,000
CSREC (New Scots Project)	0	0	0	10,902
Falkirk Council	113	0	113	2,423
Falkirk Council Community Empowerment Grant	0	0	0	8,000
Falkirk Council Community Integration Grant	0	20,000	20,000	0
Falkirk Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund For Adults	0	25,000	25,000	10,000

Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership	0	0	0	25,000
Garfield Weston	0	15,000	15,000	0
Hugh Fraser Foundation	0	0	0	4,000
Path for All	0	17,500	17,500	50,000
People's Postcode Trust	0	25,000	25,000	25,000
Robertson Trust	0	12,000	12,000	12,000
Scottish Refugee Council	0	750	750	0
Tide Foundation (Ben & Jerry's Foundation Fund)	0	0	0	3,000

	<u>113</u>	<u>115,250</u>	<u>115,363</u>	<u>164,775</u>
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**5 Other Charitable Receipts**

Fundraising Activities	0	0	0	1,608
Donations	4,161	0	4,161	4,230
Bank Interest / Rebates	1,522	130	1,652	0
	<u>5,684</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>5,814</u>	<u>5,838</u>

**6 Cost of Charitable Activities**

Bank Charges	90	30	120	120
Insurance	0	0	0	1,256
Administration	72	1,100	1,172	1,615
Staff, Community and Volunteer Training	15	4,136	4,152	410
Office Equipment	496	552	1,048	33
Payroll & Contract staff	0	54,368	54,368	43,008
Services	7 585	52,737	53,322	68,858
	<u>1,259</u>	<u>112,923</u>	<u>114,182</u>	<u>115,299</u>

**7 Cost of Services Provided**

Material Needs	585	12,086	12,671	9,799
Befriending	0	11,427	11,427	9,299
Solidarity	0	1,384	1,384	150
Public Transport Tickets	0	27,840	27,840	49,610
	<u>585</u>	<u>52,737</u>	<u>53,322</u>	<u>68,858</u>



Friends of Scotland Settlers



26 September 2025

Dear ,

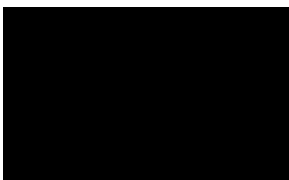
Thank you for sending through soft copies of all the documentation relating to the 2024/2025 Financial Year including a copy of the 'FOSS Finance Summary Aug 24 – July 25' and 'DRAFT FOSS Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025' in excel format and providing the PDF soft copy bank statements and documents covering the year 01 August 2024 through to 31 July 2025 for independent review.

I can confirm that upon review of the above-mentioned soft copy files sent to me these have been found to be in order for the purposes of recording your financial year ending 31 July 2025 with the observations and additional information provided as discussed via email communications with yourself on 24 September 2025.

To that end I have included the standard form independent examiners report as per OSCR guidance.

Should you require any further information, discussion, or assistance from me, please do not hesitate to contact by any means listed.

Yours Sincerely



## **Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of 'Friends of Scotland Settlers (FOSS)' Trust**

Reporting on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 July 2025.

### **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 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the 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 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of Page 21 OSCR I Independent Examination: A Guide for Charity Trustees 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 the course of my examination, no matter has come 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 Accounts Regulations
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have 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.

Name: [REDACTED]

Relevant Professional qualification/professional body: BA (Hons), DipSP CIWFM MIH

Address: [REDACTED]

Date: 26 September 2025

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]