Darjeeling Children's Trust

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



*"WE CHANGE LIVES"*

Registered charity in England and Wales

Charity number 1143109

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# TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025.

## Brief history

Darjeeling Children's Trust (DCT) is a UK charity governed by UK law. It was originally constituted by Trust Deed in early 2008. This document was amended in June 2011 to comply with a suggested amendment from the Charity Commission to allow full registration to proceed. The current Trust Deed is dated 15 July 2011 and registration by the Charity Commission was confirmed on 27 July 2011.

## Registered charity

The registered number is 1143109.

## Registered address

21 Crummock Gardens, Kingsbury, London NW9 0DE

## Charitable Objectives and Activities

Our mission is to transform the lives of children and young people by improving access to quality education, ensuring that health and living conditions are of a standard that allows educational opportunities to be seized, and equipping young people with the skills they need to thrive. We work closely with local partners to create long-term, sustainable impact so children can grow with dignity and confidence.

## How the Trust works

The Trust has established strong, long-standing partnerships in Darjeeling. Trustees based in the UK, Switzerland and India meet quarterly to oversee the Trust's operations and projects; these meetings were held by video conference in 2025. A long-term strategy meeting was also convened in October 2025, using a hybrid format with some trustees attending in person in London.

The appointment of the Trust's first Project Manager in India, Aashwin Pradhan, in late 2021 enabled a significant expansion in the scale and effectiveness of project delivery. As activities increased, his role progressed from part-time to full-time, and in 2023 the Trust funded a part-time assistant position. Alok Rai was appointed to this role in July 2023 and became a full-time member of staff in May 2024, following further growth in the Trust's work and the closure of an administrative post in the UK. A Board sub-group, chaired by Jennifer Owen, continued to meet regularly with Aashwin throughout 2025 to support the development and delivery of projects in India.

The Trust also maintains effective working relationships with a range of educational organisations in Darjeeling, including head teachers at the schools attended by

supported children, local vocational training institutes, and the Head Monk of the Kripasaran Buddhist Mission Children's Home.

Funds are transferred to Darjeeling through use of the Trinity Foundation, an organisation based in Siliguri, India which can receive funds from the UK through an FCRA account; and by direct transfers to the FCRA account held by the Kripasaran Buddhist Mission Children's home, where funds are to be spent on that project. Although we fund their posts, both Aashwin Pradhan and Alok Rai continued in 2025 to be employed on behalf of DCT by the Trinity Foundation.
Europe-based Trustees visited Darjeeling a number of times during 2025. Jennifer Owen & Matthew Morpurgo visited in March 2025. Matthew Houghton, Tshering Huber and Sharan Patel visited in November 2025.

## Trustees

The following were trustees throughout 2025:

- Hugh Heron, Matthew Houghton, Jennifer Owen, Matthew Morpurgo and Sharan Patel, all of whom are resident in the UK.
- Tshering Huber, who is resident in Switzerland.

The following individuals stepped down from the Board during 2025:

- Graham Cory (Chairperson)
- Pasang Wangdi (Trustee)

The following individuals joined the Board as Trustees during 2025:

- Jenny Bentley and Rupesh Pradhan who are both resident in India

The minimum number of trustees is three. Trustees are appointed for three years by a resolution of trustees passed at a Special Meeting. New trustees are invited to join the Trust when either a vacancy arises due to the resignation of a current trustee or when a gap is identified in the skills available to trustees and which needs to be filled, while ensuring that the overall number of Trustees on the Board is appropriate to facilitate management of the charity.
The procedure followed is in accordance with the advice published by the Charity Commission. Prospective Trustees usually join initially as Associate Trustees for six months before becoming full Trustees.

# Achievements and Performance in 2025

2025 marked a year of appreciable impact and progress for the Trust. Following the completion of the children's home construction in 2024, the focus shifted to ensuring its ongoing maintenance, directly benefiting the children's living conditions and stability. New projects launched and upgrades to existing initiatives further enhanced the quality of support provided, fostering greater opportunities for growth and well-being among beneficiaries. The Treasurer played a crucial role in the Board's financial planning, ensuring that expanded commitments are not only met but sustained, thereby securing the long-term future of all projects.
Activity was undertaken in 2025 under the following projects:

# Ongoing support for the Children's Home

The expanded programme of activities for children and young people continued throughout 2025, supporting both physical and emotional wellbeing and enabling beneficiaries to make effective use of the educational opportunities available to them. The male supervisor, Sangam Dewan, and female supervisor, Jigten Bhutia, both funded by DCT, continued to play a central role in the day-to-day management of the children's home. Their consistent record-keeping and reporting during the year supported effective oversight and enabled the identification of areas for improvement, as well as opportunities to extend and enhance provision for the children.
Activities delivered at the home during the year included the continuation of the nutrition programme, with increased variety and a balanced diet designed to meet the children's nutritional needs. This has contributed to improved health and development.
Educational support continued through computer training for older students delivered by the Darjeeling Institute of Computer Education, providing practical skills in Word, PowerPoint, Excel and design software, alongside guidance on responsible and ethical computer use. Tuition in Maths, Science and English also continued throughout the year, as did knitting and sewing classes for both girls and boys. A new choir project was introduced in 2025 and has had a positive impact on children's confidence and wellbeing.
The Trust funded additional equipment for the home, including wardrobes to improve the storage and organisation of clothing, mattresses to enhance comfort and warmth, and rain gear.
The Trustees identified the need for a dedicated space to support children's social interaction, recreational activity and emotional wellbeing. In response, a decision was taken to develop a Games Room at the children's home. This facility is intended to provide a safe and structured environment in which children can relax, build social skills and engage in positive leisure activities that support their overall development. Construction commenced during the year, and the Games Room, which will include facilities for table tennis and board games, is expected to be completed in 2026.
Visits from DCT supporters during the year provided further benefit to the children through organised activities and donations. These included additional English practice

and the provision of special meals to mark key events and occasions. The Trustees remain grateful to all supporters whose ongoing contributions of time, skills and resources continue to enhance the delivery of the Trust's charitable activities.

## Education and Vocational Training Programme

In February, four new children were inducted into the Trust's education support programme paying their school fees, and providing school uniforms, books and stationery. In addition to those already supported to attend good-quality schools, this brought the total number of children supported by the Trust to 51.

The Trust's education support programme has now been operating for eighteen years and continues to demonstrate sustained impact. In 2025, six supported young people continued onto further education at Southfield College and North Point, with some undertaking undergraduate degree courses. These outcomes reflect the long-term value of consistent educational support and would not have been achievable without the commitment of the Trust's supporters over many years.

Several sponsored children also achieved individual successes during the year, including winning prizes in extracurricular competitions such as badminton and taekwondo, demonstrating increased confidence, skill development and engagement beyond the classroom.

The Trust continued to fund places on vocational training courses for young people, with a total of 20 participants supported at the end of 2025. These programmes have proved effective in enabling young people to secure sustainable employment following completion of their studies.

During the year, a new partnership was established with Lakme Academy in Siliguri, with the first student enrolling on its cosmetology course. In June, ten students studying hotel management at the Food and Craft Institute in Darjeeling commenced their industrial placements and ten new students were enrolled on the course. Nursing training was funded for eight young people. One young person completed an auto mechanic course at Don Bosco College and secured full-time employment. Planning progressed to expand vocational training provision further, including discussions with the Industrial Training Institute in Tung regarding the enrolment of two students on technical courses in 2026.

The Trust's careers programme continued to expand in 2025 to support informed decision-making among young people. An introductory seminar was delivered to the young people, introducing concepts of career planning and future choices. This was followed by a careers symposium later in the year, at which DCT alumni and guest speakers presented a range of career pathways. Students in their penultimate year of school also received one-to-one careers guidance from a local teacher and children's home alumnus, providing both students and parents with structured support to consider future options.

In December, the Trust again funded places for five young people to attend a 15-day adventure course at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute. This was the fourth year the Trust has supported participation in this programme. The course provided opportunities for personal development through activities including mountaineering, rock climbing, kayaking and leadership training. The Trustees intend to offer this experience to a further cohort of older children in the coming year.

## Health and Welfare

Following the departure of Dr Shreya Chettri, the Trust appointed Dr Sangam Gurung, a Resident Medical Officer at Planters Hospital in Darjeeling, who continued in post throughout the year, visiting the home every two weeks. With the support of the nursing team, he oversaw the physical and mental wellbeing of children resident at the children's home, sponsored children living with their parents or guardians, young people engaged in vocational training, and members of staff whose salaries are funded by the Trust. In addition, a new care assistant, Mrs Abina Sunuwar, was employed at the home to strengthen day-to-day care provision.

A range of health, welfare and safeguarding activities were delivered during the year, supporting the Trust's objectives to promote health, safety and wellbeing. Safeguarding remained a priority, with bi-annual safeguarding training delivered to all staff. In addition, staff attended specialist training on adolescent mental health delivered by the TeaLeaf Foundation, strengthening their capacity to identify and respond appropriately to emerging needs.

Preventative healthcare continued to be delivered through targeted interventions. The fourth annual dental camp was held in July, delivered by a team of dental surgeons from West Sikkim. This provided dental checks and treatment to children living at the children's home and to all children supported by the Trust through its education programmes. The Trustees noted a reduction in the number of tooth extractions required in 2025, indicating the positive impact of sustained dental education delivered over the previous four years. The fourth annual eye camp was delivered in December, resulting in 19 of the 105 children and adults tested being provided with corrective glasses.

Health and wellbeing awareness provision was expanded during the year, with additional seminars covering the prevention of snake bites and rabies, natural disaster preparedness, and alcohol and drug use prevention. An awareness programme on human trafficking and child exploitation was delivered by MARG (Mankind in Action for Rural Growth), a leading NGO in Darjeeling. This programme included an educational session supported by a Nepali-language film, raising awareness of risks and protective measures.

Further targeted interventions included a health and hygiene session delivered by DLR Prerna, focusing on menstruation education for girls, and the fourth annual visit from the local fire officer in October. This visit included fire and earthquake drills for children and staff.

Activities to support ongoing physical and mental wellbeing continued throughout the year. Weekend yoga classes remained well attended, supporting physical fitness and relaxation. Regular haircuts were provided, in some cases by young people whose beautician training was funded by the Trust, reinforcing skills development alongside practical support. The Trust also continued to provide essential health supplies, including toothpaste, soap and sanitary items.

Many of these interventions were delivered free of charge by local healthcare professionals, NGOs and community organisations. The Trustees acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of these partners, whose expertise and generosity significantly enhance the welfare provision available to children and young people supported by the Trust.

## Fundraising

The Trust continued to deliver a range of fundraising activities during the year. The annual Darjeeling Golf Cup took place in Yorkshire in June and supported by favourable weather, raised over £4,000. Additional fundraising events were held during the year, including a trustee-led series of culinary events in August, which raised over £4,500, and a further event in Yorkshire in November, raising over £800. The Trust also benefited from donations made in lieu of wedding gifts, which together raised over £1,500.

In addition, the Games Room Appeal was launched during the year and proved highly successful, raising over £25,000 to support the development of new facilities at the children's home.

## Financial Review

Total receipts for 2025 were £116,240 with payments of £95,530. The balance held in the UK at the end of the year was £146,690 which reflects the significant fundraising efforts during the past few years and will enable the Trust to continue to deliver its projects into the foreseeable future.

Supporters of DCT donated local funds in Indian rupees directly to KBM and via Trinity Foundation. These significant funds amounted to over £12,500. We are enormously grateful for these local Indian donations and hope to build even stronger links with the local communities in Darjeeling.

Statements of the Receipts and Payments, and Assets and Liabilities, come with this Report and are part of the formal statement for 2025.

## Policy on reserves

The Trust's policy on reserves is to maintain a minimum balance of £7,500 for general activities. Reserves were well above this level throughout 2025. This figure will be reviewed in 2026, in recognition of the expanded programme of activity the Trust now delivers.

None of the funds held by the Trust are in deficit. The Trust does not act as the Custodian Trustee for any assets.
The report was approved by trustees as a fair and true account of the Trust's activities on 25 July 2026.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Signed | | |
| Name | Jennifer Owen | |
| Position | Chair of Trustees | |
| Date | 25 July 2026 | |

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

| Darjeeling Children's Trust | 1143109 | CC16a |
|---|---|---|

## Receipts and payments accounts

| For the period from | 01/01/2025 | To | 31/12/2025 |
|---|---|---|---|

**Section A Receipts and payments**

| | Unrestricted funds to the nearest £ | Restricted funds to the nearest £ | Endowment funds to the nearest £ | Total funds to the nearest £ | Last year to the nearest £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A1 Receipts** | | | | | |
| Regular donations | 8,479 | 1,588 | - | 10,067 | 9,138 |
| Ad hoc donations | 21,072 | 1,862 | - | 22,934 | 42,033 |
| Fund raising events (incl Nov 2024 Ball) | 48,472 | - | - | 48,472 | 60,110 |
| London2Singapore Land Rover Challenge | - | - | | - | 54,905 |
| Child sponsorship and vocational training | 24,943 | - | - | 24,943 | 21,131 |
| Gift aid | 235 | - | - | 235 | 7,497 |
| Grants | 2,039 | - | | 2,039 | - |
| Trustee expenses (donated back to Trust) | 7,551 | - | - | 7,551 | 5,526 |
| ***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)* | 112,790 | 3,450 | - | 116,240 | 200,341 |
| **A2 Asset and investment sales** | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| ***Sub total*** | - | - | - | - | - |
| ***Total receipts*** | 112,790 | 3,450 | - | 116,240 | 200,341 |
| **A3 Payments** | | | | | |
| Kripasaran Children's Home | 31,367 | 3,450 | - | 34,817 | 56,254 |
| Child sponsorship | 20,865 | 2,750 | - | 23,615 | 19,231 |
| Vocational training | 13,445 | - | - | 13,445 | 13,628 |
| Costs of major fundraising | 1,741 | - | - | 1,741 | 18,305 |
| Commissions, fees, and bank charges | 3,863 | - | - | 3,863 | 3,317 |
| Trust running costs | 10,498 | - | - | 10,498 | 16,805 |
| Trustee expenses (donated back to Trust) | 7,551 | - | - | 7,551 | 5,526 |
| ***Sub total*** | 89,330 | 6,200 | - | 95,530 | 133,066 |
| **A4 Asset and investment purchases** | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| ***Sub total*** | - | - | - | - | - |
| ***Total payments*** | 89,330 | 6,200 | - | 95,530 | 133,066 |
| ***Net of receipts/(payments)*** | 23,460 | -2,750 | - | 20,710 | 67,275 |
| **A5 Transfers between funds** | - | - | - | - | - |
| **A6 Cash funds last year end** | 148,011 | 5,374 | - | 153,385 | 86,110 |
| ***Cash funds this year end*** | 171,471 | 2,624 | - | 174,096 | 153,385 |

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

| Categories | Details | Unrestricted funds to nearest £ | Restricted funds to nearest £ | Endowment funds to nearest £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B1 Cash funds** | **Cash at Co-operative bank** | **144,066** | **2,624** | **-** |
| | **Cash in Darjeeling** | **27,405** | | **-** |
| | | **-** | **-** | **-** |
| | ***Total cash funds*** | **171,471** | **2,624** | **-** |
| (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s)) | | OK | OK | OK |

| | Details | Unrestricted funds to nearest £ | Restricted funds to nearest £ | Endowment funds to nearest £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B2 Other monetary assets** | | **-** | **-** | **-** |
| | | **-** | **-** | **-** |
| | | **-** | **-** | **-** |

| | Details | Fund to which asset belongs | Cost (optional) | Current value (optional) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B3 Investment assets** | | - | **-** | **-** |
| | | - | **-** | **-** |
| | | - | **-** | **-** |

| | Details | Fund to which asset belongs | Cost (optional) | Current value (optional) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use** | | - | **-** | **-** |
| | | - | **-** | **-** |
| | | - | **-** | **-** |

| | Details | Fund to which liability relates | Amount due (optional) | When due (optional) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B5 Liabilities** | | - | **-** | - |
| | | - | **-** | - |
| | | - | **-** | - |

| Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees | Signature | Print Name | Date of approval |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Matthew Houghton (Treasurer) | 25 July 2026 |

# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**Basis of preparation**

The accounting year covers the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025.

The Charities Act 2011 allows charities that are not companies to use the receipts and payments format provided they have not recorded more than £250,000 in the year.

The trust has three restricted funds:

(a) for the redevelopment of the Kripasaran Children's Home - this is a project that has been part-funded by the trust since 2013;

(b) some vocational courses at accredited institutes;

(c) Eye camp and Child sponsorship (funds received from registered charity 1120007 Rajaram & Laxmibai Shinde Charitable Trust on 20 February 2024)

**Gift Aid**

The HMRC gift aid claim for the tax year 2024/2025 of £8,600 will be made in 2026. The 2023/2024 claim was settled in 2024.

**Fundraising events**

During 2025 there were some notable fundraising events which are mentioned in the Annual Report.

The significant funds that were received in the year were:

| | 2025 |
|---|---|
| | £ |
| Games Room Appeal (a further £9,900 has been received in 2026) | 16,215 |
| November 2024 Ball at The May Fair Hotel (on top of the £47,162 which was received in 2024) | 19,556 |
| Momo, Fondue and BBQ events in Switzerland | 4,704 |
| The Darjeeling Cup Golf Tournament in Pontefract | 4,465 |
| Donations made in lieu of wedding gifts from Steffi & Erich's wedding guests | 1,618 |
| Yorkshire Gourmet events | 830 |

**Trust running costs**

The following costs have been classified as Trust running costs:

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ |
| Project delivery costs | 9,917 | 11,088 |
| Administrative support costs | - | 4,187 |
| Independent examination fees | - | - |
| Trustee travel expenses | - | 770 |
| IT and software costs | 230 | 471 |
| Insurance | 316 | 289 |
| Meeting room hire | 34 | - |
| | 10,497 | 16,805 |

# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**(CONTINUED)**

### Staff costs

In Darjeeling, the Trust pays the salaries of the Project Lead and Deputy Project Lead, without whom the Trust would not be able to function as professionally as it does. In the UK, the part-time Administrative Officer role was made redundant in April 2024.

In 2025 the total salary cost of these roles was £8,870 (2024: £12,568).

### Commissions, fees, and bank charges

The following costs have been classified as commissions, fees and bank charges:

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| | £ | £ |
| Trinity Foundation administrative fees | 3,045 | 2,701 |
| Just Giving fees | 596 | 226 |
| Bank fees | 222 | 390 |
| | 3,863 | 3,317 |

### Trustees and other related party transactions

No Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their responsibilities as Trustees.

Several Trustees travelled to Darjeeling during the year claiming £7,551 travel expenses which they donated back to the Trust.

### Fees for examination of the accounts

These financial statements include fees for independent examinations of £nil relating to the 2024 annual report (2024: £nil relating to the 2023 annual report).

### Commitments and Guarantees

The Trust did not have any material commitments, nor did it provide any guarantees to third parties at 31 December 2025.

# INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

## TO THE TRUSTEES OF DARJEELING CHILDREN'S TRUST

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2025.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Kausor Amin-Ali FCCT FRSA
15 St Marys Paddock
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 1HJ

Date: 25 July 2026