

Directors' Report
for the Period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025
for
Transition Tynedale Limited
(A company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

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Legal and administrative information

The information below forms part of the Directors' Report.

Status	Transition Tynedale Limited is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 9 July 2012
Directors	Julie Barham Lowri Potts Sarah Hallberg also Treasurer Ira Hakim (Dec 2024 – June 2025)
Secretary	Stuart Page
Company number	08135495
Web address	https://transitiontynedale.co.uk
Bankers	Lloyds Bank, PO Box 1000, Andover BX1 1LT

Structure, governance and management

Transition Tynedale Limited is run entirely by volunteers. Members elect a Board of Directors who take overall responsibility for the organisation. Decision-making is often devolved to project teams or working groups, who are responsible for determining the best way to achieve the specific project or group objectives and performing risk assessments. All financial aspects are overseen by the Board of Directors.

Transition Tynedale Objects

For the period covered by this report and accounts, the Objects of Transition Tynedale Limited were:

To build resilience and sustainability into our local community by:

- a) creating, supporting and encouraging local solutions to the global problems of climate change and biodiversity emergencies
- b) raising awareness of the issues associated with the climate change and biodiversity emergencies and the need to develop a local low carbon, sustainable future through ethical, social, cultural, economic, environmental and community action
- c) supporting and working with other Transition Towns and similar community-led initiatives
- d) engaging with individuals and organisations, including statutory, voluntary, and business where appropriate.

Summary Report

When you look at the breadth of projects benefitting from the TT company structure, it's an impressive mix. The collective experience and expertise that our 70 or more volunteers and project leaders bring to our work is not to be taken for granted. The projects are achieved with skills, knowledge and experience. They address in practical ways, the many areas of the environmental concern we at TT all share.

For that reason, we hope to share this expertise more widely in the future.

By the end of our 2024/5, our new website was up to speed, populated with blogs about forthcoming events and related reports, adding to the overall visibility and promotional strength of the company. This was enhanced with Facebook and Instagram and timely press releases to the Hexham Courant as well as our own regular newsletters – from TT and from Hexham Space for Nature. Since his election, Joe Morris, our Labour MP for Hexham, has shown an attentive interest in

our work by attending our events and engaging with us and with the public who come along to them.

Finance and Membership

Increasing core costs for insurance, web hosting and other overheads have made a big dent in our finances. The current position is that donations and membership subscriptions do not cover the cost of keeping the company afloat. Project funding is restricted to individual projects and is time-based. So it is only thanks to a generous donation of £1000 from a TT well-wisher that crisis was averted. Paid up membership is still dropping, and the steering group has had serious discussions about how to deal with this which will be discussed at this year's AGM (2025)

Governance

At 2024 AGM we were delighted to welcome Ira Hakim and Julia Barham as new directors, joining Sarah Hallberg and Lowri Potts who both agreed to stand again. Penny Hewart offered to take over the role of Secretary. Unfortunately, Ira Hakim had to resign in June 2025. So our administrative challenges have not gone away. With only three directors, our capacity to delegate the various tasks to maintain governance responsibilities is compromised. Three is the absolute minimum for a quorum within the agreed Articles of the company. It also means there is no wiggle room left if a director experiences ill health, or personal commitments arise. We also need the services of a Membership secretary.

In November 2025 the existing board members were delighted to co-opt Helen Adamson as a new director, taking the place of L Potts who is resigning and is not standing for re-election. Helen has been involved with Hexham Space for Nature for two years and is a Senior Lecturer in Agriculture and Ecosystem Management at Newcastle University. She understands the need for an appropriate company structure to enable us all to run our projects safely, and her expertise will be a great asset to TT.

Two more directors would ensure smoother succession from one year to the next, better sharing of tasks, more representative discussions, and the opportunity for new directors to learn procedures during regular meetings. Whilst we enjoy our meetings and the opportunity to contribute to a worthwhile endeavour, more help is still needed.

Anyone interested is welcome to attend our steering group meetings in the interests of transparency and inclusion. It's been a pleasure to have regular reports from Jane Kysow, Co-ordinator of Prudhoe Space for Nature, with whom TT has a Memorandum of Understanding. We also have a Memorandum of Understanding with Sycamore Net Zero, and with Grow Hexham, currently managed by Bex Bradbury.

Hexham Space for Nature also holds regular meetings and distributes its own dedicated newsletter alongside the Transition Tynedale newsletter.

Meetings of the TT steering group take place every six weeks in Hexham Library; Kathryn Agar (Chief Librarian) is an enthusiastic supporter of TT and the library is accessible. We usually meet half an hour earlier for informal chat with coffee before the meeting proper from 10 – 12 prompt. In line with our Articles, we would prefer it if project leads could attend occasionally, either in person, or via Zoom or equivalent.

Meanwhile, work on our existing projects continues and our year of activities to date is summarised below. The Directors' principal aim is to maintain support for the following projects that benefit from the overarching TT company structure, as follows:

Just Fix It – Lowri Potts

As promised, we held two more quarterly Just Fix It Repair Cafes, one on 15th March and then a Family Fix It event on 28th June this year. We now have over 18 repairers plus a 12 PAT-trained 'sparks' team. We are also grateful for the services of 13 hosts. All parties bring a heart-warming wealth of practical experience and 'can-do' attitudes. (Some of them would devote all day tackling a complicated repair if time allowed...) We were also happy to welcome Joe Morris MP at the Family Fix It June event enabling both fixers and public to have informal discussions with him. We were delighted to welcome some keen Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteers to help us, and hope there will be more opportunities for them in the future.

But Just Fix It has also been a learning curve for the organisers as well as those people who watched their items being mended. Most of our requests are for electrical repairs so without the Electricity Safety Fund contributions, we could never have trained the team in PAT testing, or bought a PAT tester, spare plugs and cables etc. PAT testing training continues as and when new volunteers come on board until the money runs out.

Big thanks must go to Dave Preston from AbilityNet for capturing all the data from our feedback forms and creating impressive spreadsheets and pie charts that show everything from the type of item, its age, whether mended or not and so on. This data will be very useful for future funding applications. The success rate is very high, and the comments from the public are encouragingly positive .

We also organised a capacity Jewellery Pop Up Fixit in Wentworth Café with the multi-skilled Gill Warren who barely had a moment to drink her coffee.

One challenge has been to raise enough from donations on the day to pay for the hiring of the hall; another has been the time-consuming promotion of individual events on all our marketing platforms including posters. After discussion, we agreed that the public would be better served, and the significant administration reduced, by finding a permanent 'home' and offering repairs more regularly,

So we're delighted that Kathryn Agar, a keen supporter of TT, and Chief Librarian at Hexham Library, responded to our request and has kindly offered the ground floor as a free venue for Fix It, which is gratefully accepted. This means Fix It in future will consist of fewer repairers but on a more frequent basis, enabling people to bring the right zip or replacement cable without having to search for the next event.

We are pleased that the notion of 'repair, not replace' will now be embedded in the community as it is in many other towns throughout the world where this movement is growing.

Hexham Space for Nature – Andy Lees

Hexham Space for Nature joined Transition Tynedale in 2020 and has been active in trying to change the way that we manage our parks, gardens and open spaces to benefit wildlife.

Sele, Abbey Grounds and Hexham House

Volunteers continue to tend to the 'woodland border' on the top wall of the Sele park by planting wildflower plugs and removing more competitive plants such as nettles and creeping buttercup.

In Hexham House grounds a group of volunteers continue to improve the once neglected long border, and a difficult-to-manage shady area known as the Glade, with new and donated planting. The work receives lots of compliments and has the support of NCC Neighbourhood Services staff.

In 2025 HS4N volunteers again took part in Hexham Hidden Gardens to promote our work, and wildlife friendly gardening.

The areas of long grass that were left uncut this season were much larger than in previous years – a good sign that NCC are now comfortable with this approach and are not getting complaints. We ran a few volunteer mornings to experiment with different methods of trying to establish wildflowers in these long grass areas (using seed or plug plants in the autumn and spring) and we plan to monitor the success or otherwise of these approaches in summer 2026.

Cemetery and meadow

The grassland opposite the cemetery continues to be managed as a meadow and species diversity is good. The meadow is alive with insects in spring and summer, and all the species we sowed have established. We keep an eye on this site to ensure the joint management between NCC and HTC continues. There has still been no progress towards the recommendations we made to the Town Council for the cemetery itself, but we haven't pressed this this year.

Highford Park

The County Council have now managed to cut and collect long grass from the flatter parts of the site for two years in a row. This should really help these areas to maintain some of their floral diversity. We will continue to monitor this work, and we undertake an annual botanical survey of the site in June every year. Elsewhere oak seedlings are appearing and scrub is spreading. These areas of scrub and coarse vegetation are an important part of the mix, but with no management they will become dominant and uniform. The group intends to run some volunteer events on site in early 2026 to remove some of the shrubs and trees which are encroaching into the species-rich grassland in the lower meadow. This will maintain more of a

balance between scrubby areas with trees and more open areas with grassland species.

Shaws Park

The meadow sown at Shaws Park in autumn 2023 has not been quite as successful as the site further west opposite the cemetery, despite the same ground preparation and seed. Most of the species sown can be seen somewhere, but not in large numbers yet. Despite this, the species already present are providing great habitat for insects throughout the spring and summer. It is possible that with continued management the species diversity will now start to increase. We continue to monitor management of this site, as both years to date NCC has forgotten that it had agreed to cut and collect the grass at the end of summer.

Cockshaw Wood

In the spring we undertook a condition assessment of the woodland along with some concerned neighbours as a way of starting a conversation about what the woodland needed in terms of management work. We subsequently arranged a meeting with NCC and there has since been some important maintenance work done on the path and fencing. Some further work is planned on the trees and hopefully this will also prevent further damage by blocking some of the wide 'slides' that have been created by children.

Other sites in Hexham

Two other long grass areas are being managed (cut and collected) by NCC – at Tyne Green and at Priestlands. We have not had capacity or funds to do any work to enhance these areas recently, or to engage with residents. However, in a sign that this kind of work is now not just acceptable to NCC, but favoured by it, NCC staff have suggested new sites for this treatment to us. Unfortunately, we have not had the capacity to support them to take these any further.

On Burswell Avenue, where residents were assisted to plant ground cover plants in 2022 in recently established tree pits around the lime trees growing on the road, about half of the planting was successful initially, and some replanting took place in 2024 which now seems to have established.

Tyne Green Community Orchard has a new volunteer overseeing its maintenance. Pruning will take place in February 2026, and a permanent sign for the orchard is being planned.

Hexham Hoedown

This project to reduce glyphosate use on our streets is being wound down because the group cannot manage it without support from the Town or County Councils.

Hexham Swift Heaven – James Swabey

The swifts that nested in Hexham have now been in their African wintering grounds for about 3 months. The general feeling from our Hexham Swift Heaven supporters and surveyors (and elsewhere in the country) is that whilst overall populations are still in a steep decline, the finer weather this year means that 2025 may have been a much better year for swift breeding than the last couple of years.

Our last recorded sighting in Hexham for 2025 was 11th August (2024 - 5th, 2023 - 11th, 2022 - 4th) and these last sightings were birds which had been nesting at a new site IN ONE OF OUR BOXES! This is only the second record we have of box use but it gives us great encouragement that patience pays off.

(Thank you to Graham Turner for some lovely swift shots, not easy to capture)



This year our survey concentrated on checking known nesting sites from previous years to see if we can build up a picture of occupancy rates year on year.

Here are the headline results.

- Sites with previous nesting records we targeted for 2025 survey – **36**
- Of those sites surveyed, evidence of nesting activity this year – **21**
- Sites with activity in the vicinity but nesting not confirmed – **3**
- Sites with no obvious activity or evidence of nesting - **7** (no activity doesn't necessarily mean no nesting, just we didn't detect any!)
- Sites not surveyed – **3**
- Sites removed due to duplication or incorrect details – **2**
- New nesting sites added – **3**

This has been a very successful process with only 3 out of 36 sites not surveyed; very impressive and a sign of the commitment and enthusiasm of our surveyors. It was also helpful to clarify some records which were incorrect. Over time we hope that repeat surveys of our known nesting sites, and extending the number of sites surveyed, will give us a better idea of how our swifts are doing in Hexham.

We continue to provide nest boxes (at an attractive price) and we have supplied more this year so that we now have over 75 boxes put up as part of the project. We are available to visit homes in Hexham to advise on suitability and potential location for nest boxes.

If you would like to be involved in our work, especially in joining our band of surveyors (it's not onerous and what better way to spend a summer evening than a gentle walk watching these amazing birds) then please get in touch at hexhamnature@transitiontyndale.co.uk

Public events and signage

We have experimented with some small signs with QR codes this year which have been successful in helping us recruit new people to the group. However, the materials used have not proved very robust and so we are reviewing signage with the help of a local designer.

Volunteer events have accompanied the activities described above and have been promoted through the HS4N newsletter, which has over 200 subscribers, and through Instagram posts. Events have sometimes been advertised at short notice or

only sent to committee members, which might deny opportunities to those who might wish to be involved in some way. So next year we are planning a calendar of events which will help with advance notice for volunteers and hopefully lead wider engagement, and new ideas coming into the project.

The Border - Lesley Duke

HS4N Volunteers working in the long formal border in the Sele Park have continued to care for this wide sheltered border with the aim of creating habitat for wildlife while gardening sustainably. The long dry spring and summer of 2025 presented challenges but all our mulching and digging in of organic matter paid off. The border has remained amazingly floriferous throughout the year and remains so right into November with one brave delphinium putting a second show.

We have had some good sightings this year. Yellow brimstone butterfly in April, Mullein moth caterpillars in June, and a continuous succession of colour which has been much appreciated by visitors to the park. Our cyclical compost making and leaf mould production is so rewarding. And we always get compliments, queries, and plant exchanges while we are working.

We would like to thank the Hexham In Bloom committee for their generous donation early this summer, which has allowed us to purchase several new shrubs and perennials, carefully chosen to suit our conditions.

And our recent recruitment of several new volunteers is very welcome. Thanks to our our most recent recruit, Colette, for this quote:

"I have my own garden and you might wonder why I felt the need to join the Border volunteers to do yet more. But, while solo gardening is satisfying, working with a team of such experienced, committed and friendly volunteers from whom one can learn so much, particularly about sustainable gardening methods, is even more so."

If you would like to join us, get in touch via the TT/HS4N links on the website. No experience required.

Prudhoe Space for Nature (PS4N) – Jane Kysow

It's been a great year for Prudhoe Space for Nature's projects!

The construction of the Nature Hub in spring has given the Wildlife Garden a sheltered space where small groups can meet. New habitats have been created throughout the year and wildlife of all kinds has thrived. The official opening of the garden in September was well-attended with visitors commenting on the beauty and tranquillity of the space.

Our volunteers were also delighted to be awarded a Level 5 - Outstanding - certificate from Northumbria in Bloom and the RHS with the Wildlife Garden being described as a haven. With the permission of Northumberland County Council,

PS4N are also now managing an area of grassland and woodland adjacent to the garden. Watch this space!

Edible Hexham - Rosemary Theobalds

It has been our best year to date for the planters in the two locations, (Sele Gate, and the Garden Coffee House) and the beds near the Wentworth Café in the Wentworth Car Park. Three/four of us have a regular slot at 2pm each Monday afternoon, and we were able to sustain this from Spring right through the Summer. However, there are still volunteering opportunities:

1. Adam could do with a regular volunteer for the Wentworth beds.
2. At Sele Gate, we would welcome a volunteer to do a little strimming as needed.
3. Also at Sele Gate, we would appreciate 3 volunteers, one for each of the 3 planters to do watering especially during the summer. They would have to bring their own water because there is no easily accessible water on that site. This would not be every week except in very dry periods. Please get in touch with Rosemary via info@transitiontynedale.co.uk if you could offer that help.

We also manage the station planters which are funded by Northern Rail, and we are responsible for the Edible planters on the Railway Station forecourt - three big ones and two smaller square ones. Despite continuing water problems, we have had a good summer and have certainly enhanced the station. The platform planters and the three - tiered planter are all flowers managed by the talented volunteer, Jane Torday.

We have already done some topping up of soil and now look forward to Spring planting. And don't forget to come out with scissors in your pocket to help yourselves to herbs and lettuce leaves etc during the summer months.

Rosemary Theobalds
Veronica, Jane, and Karen.

Wentworth beds – Adam Wyman

Most of the work down the Wentworth has involved the top plot where I've been trying to introduce larger edible planting that doesn't require too much looking after. Hence the two fruit trees, an apple and cherry that have both grown well in their first season. I have relocated two rhubarb and planted two globe artichokes both with limited success but will see how they go next year. The large potted bay tree has recovered and has started growing again.

Down on the bottom plot I've reinstated the flagstone path allowing for paved access round the plot. I've continued to reduce some of the older gooseberry bushes, which had become rather overgrown and will perhaps replace some with new fruit bushes next year.

General tidying, weeding and cutting back of canes is an autumn and spring task. Watering in the summer is always necessary and made much easier after receiving permission from Michael, the manager of Wentworth cafe, so big thanks to him.

I've no plans to stop next year although if help were available for heavier tasks e.g. Spring weeding or digging when necessary, I'd be happy to share with volunteers.

Contact via the links on www.transitiontyndale.co.uk

Hexham Community Garden – Bex Bradbury (Grow Hexham)

It has been a busy year in Hexham Community Garden!

We opened the year Wassailing the fruit trees, which seems to have been a roaring success as we had an excellent apple harvest! This was part of the Hexham Library's Wintertide Project, which we worked on through the remaining cold months.

Regular volunteer numbers allowed us to clear land for our BUPA funded polytunnel which went up in April. The polytunnel made for a wonderful and varied amount of growing, which allowed us to donate produce to Hexham Community Grocery every week from April to the end of October.

We held over 20 events this year attended by between 8 and over 80 people and have worked with and entertained our friends from Hexham Family Hub, Hexham Youthy, Hexham Library, Hexham Beavers, Living Woods, as well as several of our schools and nurseries and lots of lovely members of our community!

Looking forward, Grow Hexham and Hexham Library have just launched a fabulous new Project "Stories from Our Patch." This is part of the library's Europe Challenge funded by the ECF, in which we will use food stories and memories from the community to create a from scratch gardening course, with cooking and food sharing events throughout the year. A legacy will be memory slates for Hexham Community Garden, amongst other wonderful things. We invite everyone to get involved and share their food memories, so we can preserve them in the year ahead.

Contact: growhexham@hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Plant Swap - Megan Payne

The annual Plant Swap and Share was held on Saturday 26th April at the Farmers Market in Hexham. It proved a good chance to pick up seedling vegetable or salad plants, source a perennial to fill a space in the borders, or to try something new. We always encourage people to grow some of their own produce at home, or plant pollinator-friendly flowers to support bees. There was an excellent response to our request for people to bring along excess seedlings or plants to swap for something else or take away plants. As always everyone donated generously to TT funds (£258.79) As ever, please plan ahead with your sowing and splitting for next year's event.

Apple Pressing – Katie O'Connor

After a whistle-stop tutorial of how to use the apple press, myself, friends, family and a small team of TT volunteers embarked on the 2025 Apple Pressing Event. Despite the market being behind the Abbey this year, we had consistent ebbs and flows of activity, including lots of little helpers and some adult ones - and of course plenty of interest in tasting our apple juice!

Though the donations weren't as significant this year (£79.22), it was great fun and hopefully brought some joy and interest in TT to the community - as well as being a great way to use and share our bumper apple crop, which aligns with TT's goal of building a more sustainable community. We also managed to utilise our new connections within the high school, resulting in some great photos, taken by a volunteer student. Overall, the apple pressing was a success this year, thanks in huge part to Lowri, for talking me into it; Megan & Chris, for lending me the press, teaching me how to use it - and storing it again for future use; Stuart for his effort and legwork on the day; Jane for her expertise in the organising/execution; and Bex and co. for all the motivation and muscle we needed to get the job done! And of course, the friends/family I talked into helping and transporting me.

ORCHARDS – Matilda Bevan

The fruit trees planted on Acomb First School field in Winter 2016 are tall and healthy, they received annual winter pruning in their first years to ensure a compact shape. This winter 2025/2026 Matilda will prune them.

The apple orchard planted in 2022 in 'The Gaps' field in Acomb (thanks to Karbon Homes) is growing well. The trees are healthy, producing a few apples. Matilda will prune them this winter.

Tyne Green Community Orchard

The Tyne Green Community Orchard planted in 2018 comprises eight apple trees and one plum tree adjacent to the car park opposite Enna's Cafe. The trees did not produce any significant fruit this year, but they are mature, and it is hoped that a pruning event planned for February will encourage them to fruit in 2026. A new volunteer has taken on responsibility for monitoring the orchard along with support from a second who will advise on care for the trees.

As the trees are somewhat hidden it is hoped that a new sign can be placed by them in the coming months to identify them to park users and, should they bear fruit, encourage them to enjoy some apples or plums.

Energy Report – Jan Ashdown

The Heating Hexham project, led by Sycamore Net Zero CIC, grew out of facilitated workshop days organised with Transition Tynedale and others early in 2024, for representatives of the many local interest groups.

From an emergent proposal for a district heating scheme, which then became focused on the development of the old Middle School site, it has since become a much larger project for Hexham which Transition Tynedale fully supports.

The project aims to provide an affordable alternative to fossil fuel-based heating solutions, and it has now explored the feasibility of this as a community-owned, district heating scheme to bring low-carbon energy to local homes and businesses.

The project started with this feasibility assessment to understand whether the heating network could be economically and technically viable. Funded by the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub, the study looked at the many benefits, such as reducing CO₂ emissions and reducing consumer costs, that a low-carbon energy centre could offer Hexham.

The project team connected early with potential funders, such as the National Wealth Fund, the Green Heat Network Fund and the Combined Authority, to identify sustainable funding strategies. By March 2025 the project was moving forward, with feasibility work nearly completed. 'Anchor loads' had been identified across the town and letters of support for the scheme had been provided by EGGER, Northumbria Healthcare and the Green New Deal Fund.

The focus now is on securing Phase 1 (2025 -2028) funding. This would have a budget of around £30 million. Multiple funding discussions have been taking place and are still proceeding; a response from Eggar is awaited.

For further updates, please see <https://www.sycamorenetzero.com/blog> Or email projects@snz.org.uk

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Autumn Gathering

One of the consequences of so many different projects sheltering under the TT 'umbrella' is that the participants and leaders don't necessarily meet each other in a relaxed manner or are aware of the full breadth of TT's reach. To address this, we held our first Autumn Gathering in October, an informal tea party with various intriguing side shows that included an impressive production line of green bunting-making from the Just Fix It team. (Many metres of high-class green bunting now available for use at TT events)

As this was a first, we limited invitations to those volunteers and sponsors, funders and superfans who had helped us over the past year. Whilst fewer people turned up than we had baked for, those that came were seen to have long conversations and enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere. A big thank you to all our volunteers working

behind the scenes to assemble a fun afternoon which we hope will become an annual event.

Hexham Wintertide Festival Jan 2025

TT took part in this festival organised by Hexham Library including a talk on swifts by James Swabey and Matthew Greening of Swift Heaven.

The Future is Now

TT and HS4N also had a stall at this festival held in the library and Queens Hall.

Joe Morris' Environmental Round Table

Representatives from TT steering group attend the occasional environmental round table event hosted by Joe Morris – a chance to network with other like-minded organisations in the area and raise local and national environmental issues with our MP. Let a TT director know if there's something you would like us to raise on your behalf with him at this on-going forum.

Queen Elizabeth High School: Freshers Day

TT was invited to take part in this morning event at the high school in October during which 400 students passed by our stall and conversations with interested younger folk were had. As a result, we have a small group of interested newcomers, for whom we hope to develop some more targeted events in the future.

Photography Project

TT approached the Hexham and District Photographic Society for volunteers to take some photographs of TT's various activities over the year to enhance TT's visual archive. Better images were much needed as it's difficult to take good photographs with one hand holding a trowel and the other a plant plug, or with a phone when your hands are freezing and covered with mud.

So a big thank you to Bob Turner, Graham Turner, Stephen Smith, Dave Best and Rob Halliburton who rose to the challenge with the result that we now have a more professional selection of images to use in our publicity. Once we have refreshed the website content, you will be able to see the results.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE

We are grateful to all organisations who have funded specific projects over the year, and we thank our members for their annual membership fees and our supporters and volunteers for their donations. Special thanks are due to all those on the Steering Group, project leaders, communication helpers and volunteers for their continuing time, their skills and their dedication. We cannot deliver local solutions without you!

On behalf of the Directors

December 1st 2025