



## **Report of the Trustees**

**For the year ending 31 July 2024**

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the financial year 2023-24 and confirm that they comply with the Charities Act 2011 & 2022.

**Charity Name:** The Platelet Society

Charity Registration Number 1172202

**Registered Address:** Office 7 35-37 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7JN,

**UK Board of Trustees** (<https://plateletsociety.co.uk/trustees/>)

Professor Jeremy Pearson (Chair), Professor Alison Goodall, Dr Gillian Lowe, Maryam Samina, Crispian Strachan

### **Outgoing Trustees**

Professor Stephen Watson (stepped down March 2024).

### **Executive Committee**

Dr Amanda Unsworth (Chair), Dr Craig Hughes (Financial Officer/Treasurer), Dr Prachi Stafford, Dr Kalwant Authi, Dr Julia Sandrin Gauer, Dr Giordano Pula, Dr Paul Armstong, Dr Sarah Westbury (clinical), Dr Suthesh Sivapalaratnam (clinical), Dr Samantha Montague (ECR), Dr Joanne Mitchell (ECR), Dr Beth Webb (ECR)

### **Outgoing Committee Members**

Dr Steve Thomas (Outgoing Vice-Chair), Dr Alan Harper (Outgoing Treasurer), Dr Ilaria Canobbio, Dr Samantha Montague (will step down in Spring 2025)

### **Secretary/Governance Officer**

Dr Joy Wright

### **Bankers**

HSBC

## **UK Structure, Governance and Management**

The Platelet Society is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission in August 2017 under the charity number 1172202.

### **Organisational Structure**

The charity has a Board of Trustees which is responsible for the governance of the charity. The Trustees set up an Executive Committee that is responsible for enacting strategies that allow the charity to fulfil its key objectives.

**Trustees:** The charity has five Trustees (Gillian Lowe, Jeremy Pearson, Maryam Samina, Crispian Strachan and Alison Goodall). Stephen Watson stepped down in March 2024 and was replaced by Alison Goodall. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the accounts.

**Ambassador:** Lieutenant Colonel Crispin Black MBE MPhil

**Executive Committee** (<https://plateletsociety.co.uk/committee/>)

The Executive Committee currently has twelve members. Amanda Unsworth is the current Chair of the Executive Committee. Alan Harper has acted as treasurer for 2023/2024 and will formally handover to Craig Hughes in September/October 2024. Julia Sandrin Gauer and Joanne Mitchell (ECR) joined the committee in 2023. Steve Thomas, Ilaria Cannobbio and Alan Harper will all step down from the committee in Oct 2024. We thank them all for their hard work and support of the Society. Paul Armstong, Craig Hughes and Giordano Pula joined the committee in the summer of 2024. We also welcome Beth Webb as new ECR executive committee member, who will take over from Samantha Montague who will step down in Spring 2025, to allow for a six month handover period. All Committee members have research backgrounds relevant to the work of the Charity and were elected to represent different stages of the academic career track. The Committee remains inclusive and diverse, and represents our membership by inclusion of male and female researchers, and Early Career Researchers. The Committee meets quarterly, and is responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the Society. The Committee is focused on facilitating participation of the research community through the Society webpage, newsletters, social media and networking, supporting conference organisation and outreach activities.

### **Risk Management**

The Trustees and Executive Committee have reviewed the major risks to which the Charity may be exposed, and appropriate systems have been implemented to mitigate risk. In particular, risks to external funding have led to the development of a plan which allows ring fencing for funding for core activities. All medical-related information provided on our website is general and is covered by a specific medical disclaimer policy. Structures have been put in place to account for recent changes in General Data Protection Regulations. The Trustees are satisfied that arrangements are in place to manage risks that have been identified. The Board of Trustees will be reviewing the risk register in the coming year.

### **Our Aims**

Our Society's purpose is to promote excellence in research, education and public awareness of platelet biology in human health and disease. To ensure that we remain focussed on our key aims they are appraised on a yearly basis to review what we have achieved and evaluate

the outcome of our work. The review examines the success of each key activity to ensure that they benefit the groups that hope to serve.

### **The Focus of our Work**

Our main objectives for the year were focussed on further establishing the Society within the research community and creating activities and structures that would help promote our key aims in the future.

The strategies we used to meet these objectives were:

- To facilitate greater communication and representation within the research community
- To facilitate and promote research into platelets and platelet-related disorders
- To provide the public with accessible information on platelet-related diseases
- To improve public understanding of platelet biology

### **Activities and Achievements**

#### **How our activities deliver public benefit**

The Society carries out a number of activities in pursuance of its aims. These activities, summarised below, provide benefit to members of the Society and wider society.

#### **To facilitate greater communication within the research community**

##### **1. *Communication channels.***

A key element of the creation of the Platelet Society was to create a stronger network of biomedical researchers and clinicians with interests in platelet biology. Provision of communications channels has been an important part of bringing the research community together

- **Website.** The Society website continues to provide key information for both for the research community and the wider public. <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/> Amongst other items, the website is kept up-to-date with information of upcoming conferences, key research findings from around the world, information on available PhD studentships, funding opportunities and research positions. Reports from platelet research conferences are uploaded onto the website
- **Social Media.** The Society has a dedicated social media team, made up of Early Career Researchers and Executive committee members; the team look after all of the social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) and regularly post new content to engage the public and researchers.
- **Newsletter.** The newsletter to members updates the membership with short reports on recent research meetings, funding opportunities, public engagement/STEM activities, and shares the successes of platelet researchers.

##### **2. *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.***

The Society believes that everybody's contribution matters, regardless of their identity, background, experiences or beliefs. The Society aims to develop a culture in which everyone feels welcome, heard and free to fully express themselves. The Society has a dedicated EDI webpage which includes a code of conduct for members and activities of the Society, a series of EDI statements to help us continue on our journey, and a mechanism for reporting concerns. Further information can be found on our EDI webpage. <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/edi/>

### 3. **Early Career Researchers' Initiatives.**

Building a strong sense of collaboration and community amongst the ECRs is important for the future growth and activity of The Society. In 2023/2024 the Working Group membership was refreshed, and we welcome Alex Slater, Beth Webb, Xenia Sawkulczyk, Nicola Dark and Rachel Lamerton to the group, supported by Executive ECR committee members Sam Montague and Jo Mitchell. The Society thanks all previous Working Group and ECR representatives for their hard work in establishing the group. The ECR Working Group has continued to develop career development, wellbeing, public engagement and social media content to support and promote our members and activities led by the Society. This can all be found on the ECR space on the Platelet Society website (<https://plateletsociety.co.uk/early-career-researchers>).

- **Probably Platelets:** The Society podcast is now in its second season and is available on all major streaming platforms (e.g. Apple Music and Spotify). To date 2 episodes have been released with several more planned for the coming year (>2 pre-recorded, ready for editing/release). This project is currently being led by Beth Webb (Leeds), Alex Slater (Birmingham).  
See <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/probably-platelets/> for more details.
- **Wellbeing Resources:** Wellbeing is a new focus for the ECR working group this year. Rachel Lamerton (formally Birmingham, but recently moved to Dublin) has been driving this section. We have a list of wellbeing resources including, apps, podcasts, websites and books, that are all available of the ECR space. We are hoping to expand these resources in the future through other social media channels.
- **Mentoring:** We have re-established our mentor-mentee programme. This now includes a list of potential mentor profiles on the website that mentees can ask to be matched with. We have a mentee and mentor forms that individuals can fill out to become involved and will encourage more people to sign up in the next few months.
- **Career Development:** As part of the International Society of Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH ) London 2022 Congress legacy funds available, ECRs successfully applied for Platelet Society/ISTH ECR wider skills and development funds, so that we could have an invited interaction session with Dr Marc Reid (a life-coach/professional speaker) on how to deal with imposter syndrome at our ECR day at the annual Platelet Society meeting in Aberdeen (April 2024). This was very well received. We also successfully applied for a Biochemical Society grant to help fund invited speakers to run our breakout discussion groups at the ECR day, to let ECRs hear about alternative career paths.
- **ECR day at the Platelet Society:** One of the big focuses at the start of 2024 was in the planning of the ECR day at the Platelet Society annual conference. The working group were all involved in the planning and organising before the event and Jo Mitchell and Sam Montague ran the day in Aberdeen. The day was a good mix of flash talks, marked and selected by our working group and other ECR volunteers and a poster session, where ECRs could have practise in presenting their work, before the main meeting. We also had a generic afternoon session of career development talks and breakout rooms (mentioned above), to allow other local ECRs to attend. Overall, there was a very good attendance to the ECR day (>50 ECRs) and the feedback on the day was very positive.
- **Social media content and engagement:** Many of the ECR working group members are also involved in maintaining the social media content for the society

(driven majorly by Beth Webb and Jo Mitchell). This is something we wish to continue and expand with for the upcoming year.

#### **4. Awards.**

The Society has two awards for members to recognise excellence in platelet research and in achieving the aims of The Society. Named in honour of two internationally well-respected UK platelet researchers, (Gustav Born and Alison Goodall) they provide an annual way for the Society to rewarded excellence. Further details of the awards can be found at <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/platelet-society-awards/>. The recipients of the 2024 awards are Professor Steve Watson (Gustav Born Award) and Dr Samantha Montague (Alison Goodall Award).

### **To facilitate and promote research into platelets and platelet-related disorders**

#### **5. Fundraising.**

The Society was awarded \$37,500 (£28,874) from the London 2022 ISTH legacy funds to support its work. Funds from this award have been used to establish/support the following opportunities, over a 3 year period (until 2026):

- **Summer studentships:** funded two in 2024
- **Outreach and education grants:** rolling call, open for applications
- **ECR wider skills training:** available to the Platelet Society Meeting ECR day organising committee to run wider skills sessions.
- **Skills transfer grants:** rolling call, open for applications
- **Clinical audits:** call to open in 2025
- **Travel awards** – awarded to speakers at the 2024 Aberdeen Meeting.

More details are provided in section 9.

Together, we believe that using the funds in this way helps the Platelet Society achieve its remit in terms of research and education and provides a healthy portfolio of activities for the next 3 years. The Society is grateful to the ISTH for this support.

We are currently seeking assistance with our fundraising efforts to help us ensure we can continue to offer similar awards and grants beyond 2026.

To cover Society running costs, following open review, the decision was made to increase the annual membership fees from £15 per annum to £25 per annum, which took effect on 1st August 2024 for all new membership applications or membership renewals. £25 per annum brings the Society in line with other similar charities.

#### **6. Summer studentships.**

Thanks to the ISTH legacy funds, the Society offered two students the opportunity to work in a platelet lab during the summer of 2024. Following a competitive call, and independent review, 2 students and projects at the University of Manchester and Leeds Beckett University were selected and funded during July and August 2024. Further details of the studentships awarded can be found at <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/studentships/>

#### **7. Scientific meetings.**

Scientific conferences facilitate valuable exchange of new ideas and methods.

#### *2024 Platelet Society Meeting - Aberdeen.*

This year our annual meeting was held in Aberdeen (24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024). Thanks to Steve Thomas, Nikki Mutch, Sam Montague, Jo Mitchell and Claire Whyte for organising the meeting. Reports on all Platelet Society meetings, and meetings where Platelet Society researchers have presented, can be found on the Platelet Society webpage, under “News”.

The 2025 Platelet Society Meeting will be held at Manchester Metropolitan University and hosted by Dr Sarah Jones, supported by an organising committee consisting of academics and ECRs from Manchester, Leeds and Keele.

### **8. Research Strategy.**

The Society wishes to build on the opportunities made possible with the ISTH legacy funds to support platelet research and education. The Executive Committee has written a research strategy document and plans to become a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, which can provide advice and support to grant awarding societies. The research strategy document is reviewed annually, and the latest version is available on our website - <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/research-strategy>

### **9. Funding and grant opportunities**

<https://plateletsociety.co.uk/funding/> Thanks to the ISTH legacy funds, the Society currently offers the following funding and grant opportunities to its membership:

- **Summer studentships:** The aim of these studentships is provide opportunities for high calibre undergraduate students to experience working in a research lab within the area of platelet biology. This opportunity would be a great way for students considering doing a PhD to experience working on a research project and for ECRs to experience managing and supervising a project. In 2024 the Society funded 2 studentships (Manchester and Leeds) each with a stipend of £1500 for the student and up to £500 consumables.
- **Outreach and education grants:** The aim of the Outreach and Education grant scheme is to provide members with support to create and run innovative public/patient outreach and education sessions. These run as a rolling call, with applications accepted year round. Funds of up to £300 are available. Since their release in early 2024, 1 application has been awarded.
- **ECR wider skills training:** these annual grants are offered to the organising committee of the ECR day of the Society meeting, and are available to be used to support wider skills training or development. For the Aberdeen 2024 meeting, these awards funded Dr Marc Reid (a life-coach/professional speaker) who ran a session on how to deal with imposter syndrome.
- **Skills transfer grants:** The aim of these grants is to promote exchange, training and/or transfer of skills and technologies from one group to another or for the development of a platelet scientist. These run as a rolling call, with applications accepted year round. Funds of up to £300 are available. Since their release in early 2024, no applications have yet to been received.
- **Clinical audits:** We will welcome applications for clinical audits with a focus on identifying areas of clinical/patient need to improve diagnosis and treatment strategies for patients with platelet related diseases. The applications focused on women’s health inequalities will be encouraged. Call to open in 2025, with more details to follow..

To facilitate an open and fair assessment of applications for the above awards, the Executive Committee has established a sub-committee to review applications for small grants for research. More information about this committee and membership can be found at: <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/funding/>

### **10. *Clinical perspectives and direction.***

The Society aims to increase its activities in patient focused and clinical activities. To ensure that future activities are relevant and do not replicate what is provided by other charities (especially those with more patient focussed remits), we have initiated a clinical focus working group, which includes Dr Gill Lowe, Dr Sarah Westbury and Dr Suthesh Sivapalaratnam. This group aims to ensure that activities of the Society have a clinical perspective and to identify appropriate patient-focused activities. Following the success of patient focussed clinical sessions at the Hull and Bristol meeting, similar patient/clinical sessions will now be included at future Platelet Society annual meetings. The allocation of ISTH funds to clinical audits to highlight clinical areas of focus will also be important in driving this forward: these clinical audit opportunities will launch in 2025.

#### **To provide the public with accessible information on platelet related diseases**

The Society does not provide medical advice and when contacted by individuals seeking such advice directs them to the clinician(s) involved in their care pathway. However, the Society does provide a number of fact sheets on the role of platelets in health and disease and platelet related diseases; these are reviewed by the Executive Committee's clinical members. We also provide a number of personal perspectives from patients who live with platelet-related diseases to raise awareness of how individual sufferers cope with their particular disorders. Our two clinical Committee members have been in discussions with other relevant societies to help support these organisations, so the Society can undertake more patient-focused interactions.

#### **To improve public understanding of platelet biology**

As part of our mission to improve the public understanding of blood platelets and their roles in health and disease our members engage in a number of outreach activities. These activities are undertaken by our members at a local level often in collaboration with their host university and other outside bodies. The Society now has Outreach and Education grants available on a rolling basis to support members who wish to create and organise such activities.

The Society also has an outreach working group chaired by Julia Sandrin-Gauer (Leeds) which has developed a range of suggestions for increasing our public profile and activities.

#### **Plans for Future Period**

The Society plans to continue the activities outlined above in the coming years subject to a satisfactory funding position, but also expand the activities into other areas.

- We will continue to enhance our scientific conferences, facilitate workshops and training opportunities.
- Implementation of outreach and education activities following on from the recommendations of the Outreach Working Group.
- Continuing to develop the clinical working group to help determine future directions and opportunities in this area.
- Continued development of the Research Strategy and completion of an application to join the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).
- Widening our fundraising profile to ensure growth.

- Continue to ensure that we embed EDI across all Society activities.

## Financial Review

During the year the Trustees agreed to change the end date for financial accounting to 31<sup>st</sup> July rather than 30<sup>th</sup> June and notified the relevant authorities. At the end of the financial year on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, the Platelet Society held £49682.32, which is a decrease from £81,429 held at the end of the last financial year (30<sup>th</sup> June 2023). A significant proportion of our income and expenditure arises from meetings. The accounts provide a snapshot at a given time in the financial cycle. Income is maximal in the run-up to annual meetings and expenditure is maximal afterwards. This financial year unusually includes the bulk of costs for both the 2023 EUPLAN meeting (autumn 2023) and the spring 2024 Aberdeen meeting, while the majority of the income from the EUPLAN meeting, which made a net profit of over £5000, was accounted for in the 2022-23 financial year.

The summary of accounts for the financial year in the format required for submission to the Charity Commission is appended at the end of this report.

## Income

**Donations** are increased this year versus the previous year, as 23/24 included income from registration fees for both the EUPLAN meeting, and Aberdeen meetings.

**Membership income** remains steady (£3533; £3803 in 22/23). To keep up with rising running costs, and to allow the Society to provide different opportunities for our members, following review the decision was made to increase the membership fees from £15 to £25 per annum. The membership fee increase came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

**Events and Courses** income has decreased from 22/23, but this is due to the one-off award in that year of £28,874 of legacy funds from the 2022 London ISTH congress.

Our sponsorship is down, with no charitable fundraising activity in this cycle. The Society needs to develop a strategy to look at increasing this in future years.

Interest Rate rises and the holding of greater financial reserves has increased our bank interest payments this year.

## Expenditure

Meeting costs are substantially higher in 23/24 than the previous year, as payments for both the EUPLAN and Aberdeen meetings fell in this period.

The basic running costs for the society have increased slightly this year with increases in the cost of website maintenance, accountancy reports, and additional fees associated with the submission of a corporate tax return to HMRC. Other basic running costs including Governance Officer (now Secretary) remuneration, and registration payments for the Fundraising Regulator and Company House ('Legal fees') remain largely the same.

Our Banking charges have risen this year as we now have facilities to make international payments and international transactions incur small additional fees, which have increased as the society increases our international activities particularly supporting the hosting of the EUPLAN meeting which attracted more international attendees.

The Other charges category reflects society expenditure on our Summer Studentship scheme.



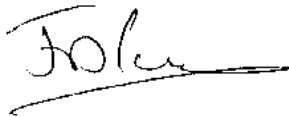
## **Current Financial Position**

The Society currently holds reserves of £49682 (as of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024) of which £24743 is committed to ISTH legacy fund initiatives. This leaves the society with reserves of £24939 uncommitted funds. This is lower than last year, due to the Aberdeen meeting running at a loss, and increases in expenditure listed above. Our current financial position indicates that the society remains sustainable in the short-medium term, although in the face of rising costs further diversification of income will likely be required to maintain this in the longer term.

## **Declaration**

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Pearson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Jeremy Pearson

Chair of Trustees, The Platelet Society

10 October 2024



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name  
**THE PLATELET SOCIETY**

No (if any)  
1172202

CC16a

**Receipts and payments accounts**

For the period from	Period start date	Period end date
	01/07/2023	31/07/2024

**Section A Receipts and payments**

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations	37,074	-	-	37,074	24,616
Events and courses	13,560	-	-	13,560	36,962
Bank interest	1,043	-	-	1,043	316
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>51,677</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>51,677</b>	<b>61,894</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>51,677</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>51,677</b>	<b>61,894</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Website development	1,998	-	-	1,998	841.00
Accountancy fees	540	-	-	540	240.00
Legal Fees	4,191	-	-	4,191	4,566.00
Events and Prize costs	9,599	-	-	9,599	30,744.00
Meeting cost	61,819	-	-	61,819	8,248.12
Subscription	125	-	-	125	-
Business Entertainment	495	-	-	495	-
Bank Charges	293	-	-	293	90.44
Donation	1,614	-	-	1,614	131.11
Other expense	2,750	-	-	2,750	3,550.00
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>83,424</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>83,424</b>	<b>48,410.67</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>83,424</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>83,424</b>	<b>48,411</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>(31,747)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(31,747)</b>	<b>13,483</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>81,429</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>81,429</b>	<b>67,946</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>49,682</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>49,682</b>	<b>81,429</b>