

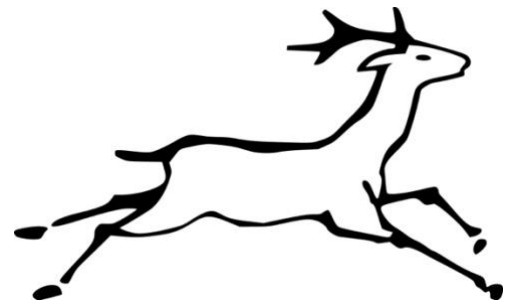


Our Mission is to empower young people and adults through a unique, nature-inspired educational approach.

# Running Deer C.I.C

Impact Report and Strategic  
Plan 2025-2028





# Running Deer C.I.C Strategic Plan 2025-2028

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## Our Mission

To empower young people and adults through a unique, nature-inspired educational approach.

## Our Vision

Running Deer have a unique perspective in our approach to challenges and projects. We are determined to help make a difference to people and communities who are often marginalised in society.

We offer educational and alternative provisions for children and young people, focusing on outdoor learning in traditional and rural skills, bushcraft, survival skills, animal-assisted interventions, land conservation, and training opportunities for adults.

## Our Values

- Be ethical in everything we do.
- Be user led and transparent at all times.
- Promote inclusiveness and support social enterprise.
- Make a positive difference to people's lives.
- Provide opportunities with a difference.
- Advocate for the environment at a local level.

## Current position

Running Deer C.I.C have two sustainable income streams with our school and interventions services. After two difficult years, in September 2025 has seen an upturn in referrals to our interventions service, and our school is now full, with a waiting list.

We currently have 35 members of staff:

Running Deer School: 16

Running Deer Interventions Service: 12

Head office including Finance, Operations and Health and Safety: 6

## Changes to the Board of Directors:

Annie Pomeroy-King resigned as a volunteer Director on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024 after 13 years of service. The Board thanked Annie for her commitment and support to the organisation over that period.

Christian Hales was appointed to the Board of Directors on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024 as Director of Communications.

## Finances

The Ofsted inspection of our school, alongside the establishment of a new site for our Intervention Services, had a notable impact on the organisation's finances during the 2024–25 financial year. The Ofsted process resulted in a temporary freeze on new student admissions, while the leasing of a new property – better suited to the growing needs of the Intervention Service – increased operational expenditure.

The relocation also required time to rebuild and strengthen relationships with local authorities, leading to a slower-than-anticipated start for the Intervention Service during the autumn term of 2024. Combined with increased lease and staffing costs, these factors placed short-term pressure on cashflow.

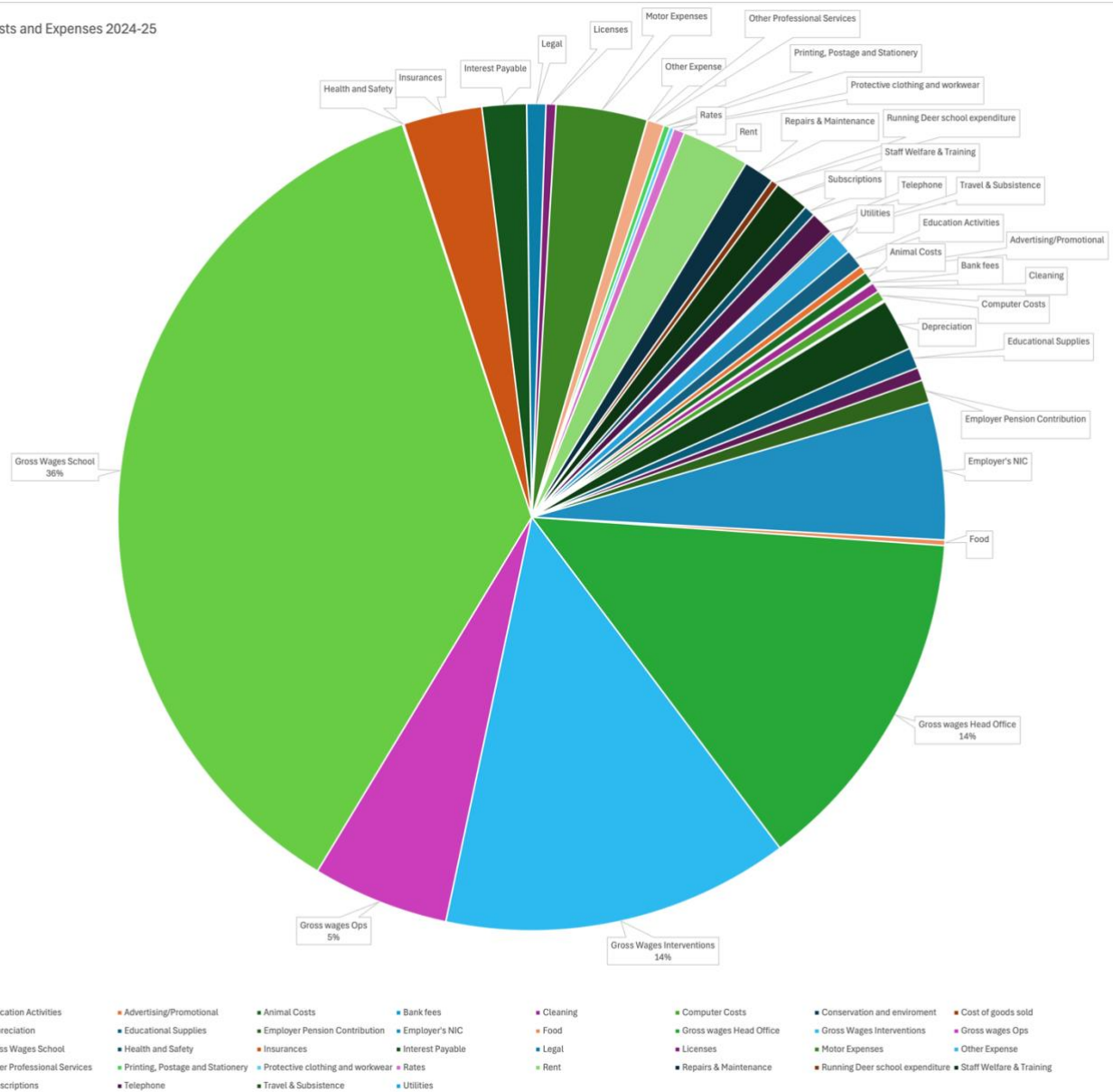
However, the situation began to stabilise in early 2025, with new contracts secured and a clear upward trend in revenue from January onwards. Despite this recovery, the Intervention Service recorded a year-end loss, contributing to an overall organisational deficit of £26,000 for the 2024–25 financial year.

Wages continue to be our biggest expense with 69% gross wages across the organisation excluding pensions, tax and NI contributions. Insurances have increased substantially along with other bills as the cost of living still impacts the UK.

**Running Deer C.I.C.  
Income and Expenditure Account  
For The Year Ended 31 March 2025**

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
<b>TURNOVER</b>		1,093,704	1,064,058
Cost of sales		(21,790)	(30,906)
<b>GROSS SURPLUS</b>		1,071,914	1,033,152
Administrative expenses		(1,075,408)	(984,135)
<b>OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS</b>		(3,494)	49,017
Deficit on disposal of fixed assets		(4,694)	-
Other interest receivable and similar income		336	-
Interest payable and similar charges		(22,020)	(17,229)
<b>(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION</b>		(29,872)	31,788
Tax on (Deficit)/surplus		3,791	(8,721)
<b>(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS AFTER TAXATION BEING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR</b>		(26,081)	23,067

# Running Deer Costs and Expenses 2024-25



## Strategic Vision 2025-2028

The Board of Directors has identified diversification as a strategic priority. This includes expanding our current service provision into adjacent local authorities within Devon, further growth planned into Plymouth, Cornwall and Dorset.

Furthermore, the Board intends to harness the organisation's internal expertise to establish a new consultation service for external partners, businesses and agencies, including not-for-profit organisations, educational institutions, and alternative provisions. Beyond this, the Board aims to broaden our portfolio with new specialist services in:

- Data Security & systems
- Health and Safety & systems
- Child Protection, and Special Educational Needs consultancy.
- Family services
- Independent school services

## Expansion of existing services

Running Deer currently operates across multiple income streams, with our principal sources derived from our school provision – representing the largest proportion of income – and our Intervention Services. Strategic growth remains a priority, with a focus on expanding both our school capacity and diversifying income through the development of complementary service areas. The Intervention Services, in particular, present significant opportunities for expansion and increased market reach.

Our client base comprises local authorities including Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Somerset Council, Dorset Council, and Cornwall County Council.

We support young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who hold Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Referrals are received directly from local authorities, and when we are named on an EHCP, we are required to offer a placement. On average, our school receives around three new consultations or enquiries each week, while the Intervention Services also receive regular weekly referrals. This consistent level of engagement reflects the sustained demand for our high-quality, individualised provision.

While there are several alternative providers within the sector, Running Deer differentiates itself through the highly individualised nature of its services. Each young person benefits from a bespoke learning plan and timetable designed to meet their specific needs, goals, and aspirations, reinforcing our reputation for delivering tailored, high-quality educational and therapeutic support.

What makes us different?

- We provide a bespoke education and learning package to each individual student.
- Our school students are supported in small groups (or 1:1 if required) throughout the day
- Our Intervention clients are supported 1:1 throughout the day
- We adapt to their needs rather than expecting them to fit in with us
- Staff wear the uniform - students don't!

- Our provision at Butterdon Wood is outdoors which reflects the sensory needs of our students.
- We have a good reputation based on building a strong and resilient service

## Running Deer School

It has always been our intention to expand the school, and we have looked at several properties without success. Due to the nature of our offer, it has proved very difficult to find a suitable site, without losing the essence of what we do.

Our school site at Butterdon Wood now has allocation for up to 15 students.

Our OFSTED inspection in October 2023 temporarily suspended our search for new property, however in May 2024 we met the Independent School Standards.

In October 2024 we had a further OFSTED Material Change inspection to increase our number of students from 10 to 15.

We had a full 3-day OFSTED inspection in June 2025 and received a 'Requires Improvement', for the curriculum, leading to this being the inspectors rating overall. Safeguarding and student behaviour were all 'Good'.

Following the June inspection, as well as previous Quality Assurance reviews from both Devon County Council and Plymouth City Council, we were advised to re-evaluate our approach to providing 1:1 support. Recent research indicates that the "Velcro TA" model – where a teaching assistant is constantly attached to a student – can limit the development of independence and readiness for post-16 education. In response, we are now implementing a revised support model that focuses on small group interventions, while still providing 1:1 support where it is genuinely needed.

### Our plans for Running Deer Schools:

- Introduce and embed our Beyond 21 programme to prepare students for adulthood Autumn 2025 onwards.
- Continue to develop our unique offer, including our heavy horses, access to biophilia, and vocational opportunities.
- Resume our search for small properties to purchase or lease which will enable us to replicate the success of the school in other areas of Devon.
- Establish 2<sup>nd</sup> School in either West Devon or North Devon by academic year starting 2027 resulting in:
  - **15 new school places available to children with SEN**
  - **Creation of at least 15 new jobs to the area**
- Establish small Running Deer Schools in counties, including Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset 2028 onwards.
  - **Replication of school places offered**
  - **Replication of job creation for local area**

## Running Deer Intervention Services

In September 2025, following successful tender process with Torbay Council we moved our Intervention Services from Moretonhampstead to Berry Pomeroy, Totnes. The site is spacious with outdoor space and access to a 5-acre orchard and has capacity for up to 15 students.

The Interventions Service has been Quality Assured. It is not OFSTED registered.

Clients include Torbay District Council, Devon County Council, Dorset Council, Cornwall council local schools, and private clients.

- We provide a bespoke intervention and support package to each individual student.
- Our students are supported 1:1 throughout the day
- We adapt to their needs rather than expecting them to fit in with us
- Staff wear the uniform - students don't!
- Our provision supports young people with sensory needs.
- We have a good reputation based on building a strong and resilient service

The Interventions Service experienced a slow start in September 2024 due to changes in local authority tender processes and delays in contract finalisation. Despite these challenges, performance began to improve from January 2025, although the service operated at a financial loss during the 2024–25 academic year.

As of September 2025, the Interventions Service has secured both long-term and short-term contracts and is now operating at a financially stable, break-even position.

### Our plans for the Intervention Services:

- Grow Waterside, Berry Pomeroy so that it is working at full /near full capacity as soon as possible.
- Expand into other areas of Devon including, North Devon, West Devon by 2028
- Establish sites in Cornwall by 2027.
- Dorset: Although a contract is in place, we have been unable to deliver on it due to financial constraints and staffing pressures. The current plan is to establish operational sites in Dorset by the end of 2026 to enable full-service delivery.
  - **Replication of young people supported through our Intervention Services**
  - **Replication of job creation for local area.**
- Create new partnerships with organisations including the Wildlife Trusts.



## New services

As identified Running Deer C.I.C intends to develop new consultancy services specialising in education and not for profit. These services will include:

- Data Security & systems
  - Data security health checks
  - SAR requests
- Health and Safety & systems
  - Health and safety health checks
- Child Protection, and Special Educational Needs consultancy.
  - Independent consultancy on SEND
  - Work with schools and families provide support and independent reviews of needs
  - Rolling out of the Running Deer Emotional Curriculum
- Family services
  - Our Trauma-Informed Parent support sessions skills parents with effective relational interventions that bring consistently contactful connections, it aims to support both parent and child mental health.
    - Sessions can develop the art of PACE, mental state talk, social joy and relational repair.
    - Understand transactional analysis including being able to cross transactions and avoid psychological games.
    - Use DDP interventions effectively e.g., speaking about the child/speaking for the child.
    - Mentalize, attune to and engage with children at different developmental stages: infancy, middle childhood, the teenage years.
    - Engage in conversations on delicate issues with children and teenagers, inspiring interactions rather than family members in separate rooms/on their own devices.
    - Stay regulated and contactful in the face of behaviours that challenge.
    - Support with boundaries.  
Address own mental health and unprocessed trauma, recognising triggers.

## Climate Change

Environmental stewardship is central to our mission, and we are committed to reducing our carbon footprint across all operations.

### Current Actions

We are already taking meaningful steps to promote sustainability, including:

- Encouraging staff to car-share
- Providing electric and hybrid pool vehicles for the school and Interventions Service
- Limiting the number of cars permitted at our Butterdon Wood site
- Tree planting initiatives and the conservation/regeneration of wet woodland and pastureland
- Transitioning commercial non-native woodland into native woodland and wildlife havens
- Procuring electricity exclusively from 100% renewable-energy suppliers
- Encouraging non-school-based staff to work from home where feasible
- Offer a “Bike to Work” scheme

### Future Commitments

For new sites and properties, we will:

- Increase the number of electric and hybrid pool vehicles by 2026
- Encourage use of public transport and explore shared-minibus solutions for students (in collaboration with local authorities) to reduce reliance on taxi/transit trips
- Install electric-vehicle charging points at all school and service locations by end of 2026 where possible
- Maintain our electricity supply contract with 100% renewable energy and explore on-site generation for sites that are off grid.
- Develop a Biodiversity Action Plan for our landholdings (woodland & pastures) that targets at least one new habitat-creation project per year and monitors species diversity improvements



Middlecott, July 2025

## Contact Us

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