



ESG
Gaming

Year One
Annual Review and Accounts



A very warm welcome to ESG Gaming:



I am immensely proud to share with you our year one annual review and accounts. ESG Gaming is incorporated as a not-for-profit and with no share capital Community Interest Company (CIC). We are independently regulated by the Community Interest Company Regulator, and we have a strong belief in reporting our activities in a thoroughly transparent manner, which goes far above the regulatory requirement. This annual review has been therefore written to capture our vision, mission and organisational values; how we are

being evidence led in our approach to gaming harm-minimisation and what we are doing to contribute to the evidence pool; the specific areas of work we will focus on and its public benefit and intended impact; what we have done in our first year and what we intend to do in our second year. Finally, there is also a complete summary of our finances and testimonials to illustrate how we are working with a wide range of stakeholders to achieve our mission.

In establishing ESG Gaming alongside our founding directors it has been important to us to focus on innovation and streams of work which are not already captured in the Gambling Commission's Action Map to reduce gambling related harms. We do see a lot of duplication in our sector and we have spent a considerable amount of time to really understand how we might contribute.

Year one, as with any start-up organisation has been focused on understanding our market; laying down our organisational foundations; securing our initial funding; scoping our products and taking the time to listen to stakeholders. Naturally, our directors and I are humble, gracious and thoughtful in our approach, but we do have big ambitions, passion and a strong sense of commitment to reducing gambling related harms. However, we intend to execute this through an incredibly streamlined organisation, employing no more than six employees to epitomise value for money in our sector. Going forward, every year, we will invite external scrutiny to understand the financial value ESG Gaming brings to the country in reducing harms (in addition to our impact on people). Our directors and I have agreed we will not take on any social or debt finance to establish ESG Gaming and we are embracing the challenge of establishing our organisation from a standing start. We feel there is nothing more rewarding than creating something from nothing.

I am fortunate to be working alongside some very caring directors and collectively we hope you enjoy reading our first annual review and the planned journey ahead of us. Our year one has only been made possible through the support of a great number of people and organisations. If you'd like to understand how you might support our journey and share our values, we'd love to chat with you. Please take a look at page 8 to get a feel for how you might become involved. Thank you enormously for your support.

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What we have done in year one

ESG Gaming was incorporated on 13 August 2021 as a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. On 05 November 2021 the legal structure was changed to a regulated not-for profit and with no share capital Community Interest Company (CIC). This change was made as we sought additional regulatory oversight and to underline our commitment to deliver our activities in a way where no profit (surplus) is distributed to any individuals (shareholders).

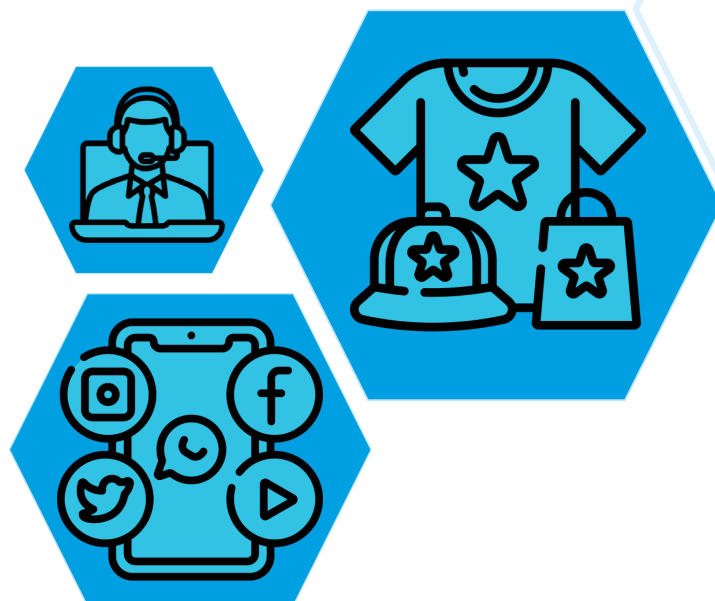
As from year two, and with approval from the CIC Regulator, we plan on donating 25% of our profit (surplus) to charities working in the harm-minimisation space annually. The remainder 75% of our profit (surplus) will be retained and reinvested into our mission.

How you can help

At ESG Gaming we collaborate with corporate businesses who share our values. This collaboration is focused on corporate volunteering opportunities and corporate donations. We want to develop ESG Gaming in an incredibly streamlined, high impact and cost conscious manner. Corporate volunteering helps this hugely as it enables volunteers to provide direct support in areas of work such as legal support, strategy, branding and marketing or more longer term projects that we would ordinarily have to pay for. This provides an unique developmental or ESG opportunities for businesses to support your people and our work through collective goals. Businesses who hold UK Gambling Licenses can donate part of their annual RET payments to ESG Gaming. We also seek mutually beneficial collaborations with non-gambling businesses too where we can accept donations or help you to organise a purposeful employee-led fundraising activity.

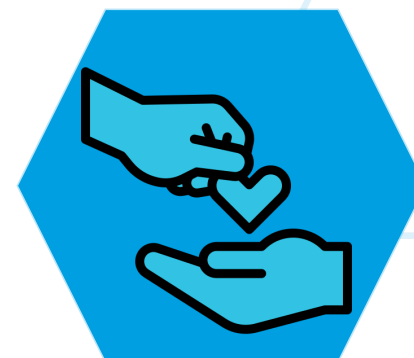
Looking at 2023, we are specifically seeking support as follows

- Legal support
- Creation of digital assets
- Influencer marketing
- Merchandise
- Esport Tournaments
- IT Hardware
- Celebrity engagement
- Media
- RET contributions or donations



We have achieved the following in year one:

- Secured and banked £95,964 in donations
- Secured £18,437 pro-bono support
- Secured £150,500 of pledged income in year two
- Commissioned our first academic research study
- Commissioned our initial Theory of Change
- Commenced accreditation with Investors in People
- Commenced accreditation for ISO:9001
- Commissioned product feasibility study
- Recruited founding board members
- Secured Trade Mark and IP protection
- Consulted on initial Enabling Plan and facilitated customer insights workshops, reaching 200 people
- Met with 94 stakeholders from different sectors
- Listed as an organisation which can receive RET donations.



What we plan to do in year two:

- Launch esports community Web2 platform, reaching 25,000 people
- Pilot igaming careers training course, reaching 250 apprentices with a guaranteed job interview
- Develop, pilot and evaluation Team Excellence with six esports team and strategic stakeholders
- Raise £250k in donations
- Raise £35k in pro-bono support
- Publish our first academic research paper and Theory of Change at a Parliamentary Reception
- Achieve Investors in People and ISO:9001 accreditation
- Commence Awarding Body Assured status & develop a qualification for apprentices in safer gaming
- Commence External Quality Assurance (EQA) status
- Recruit Gaming Advisory Group members
- Work with streaming platforms to produce a Gaming Code of Conduct
- Donate 25% of our surplus to charities working in the harm-minimisation space



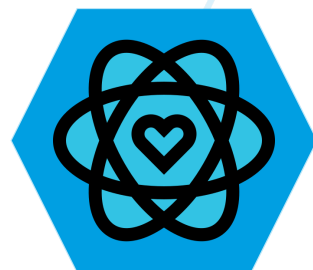
We live our Values

We are creative, confident and kind

We believe in the power of partnerships and collaboration

As a team we focus on delivering outcomes that exceed expectations

We challenge conventional thinking and embrace different



We deliver our Mission

ESG Gaming is a proud advocate of the video gaming sector and is committed to working alongside the video game ecosystem to ensure the experience is open, inclusive, positive and fun for players and spectators alike.



We aspire to achieve our Vision

The igaming sector is a leader in the post pandemic recovery and epitomises social responsibility, sustainability and harm-minimisation globally'



Championing Lived Experience through different lenses

ESG Gaming will champion lived-experience in the delivery of its mission. We believe in taking a board approach to lived-experience by working with those who have experienced harms and those who enjoy gaming, esports and gambling with no harms. Insight from such varied lived-experience will contribute to our understanding, research, product development and evaluation.



Donating our surplus to enable others to act

With approval from our board and the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies, we anticipate donating up to 25% of our surplus annually to charities in this space. The remainder of our surplus will be reinvested back in to our products, helping us to broaden our reach and further evaluate our impact.



Recognising our supporters

The work of ESG Gaming is only possible thanks to those who believe in our vision and are supporting our organisation on its journey. That you enormously to a selection of our supporters as below.

At the Ambassadeurs Group, we believe in building better futures and we are driven by an ambition to give back to society. We support our WorkFamily through charitable, sustainable and educational initiatives. Our ambition ranges from big gestures – such as our industry-leading commitment to voluntarily donate 1% of our annual Gross Gaming Yield (GGY) to Research, Education and Treatment (RET), to smaller ones such as our corporate volunteering support at the London centre of a gardening for health charity. Everything we do is united by our core purpose: to raise standards and give back. We are proud to have supported ESG Gaming to establish its foundations in year-one. We have made two donations and some of our WorkFamily have helped the team find their feet to develop niche educational products that we believe will make a huge difference, particularly around mental health, resilience and safeguarding.

Krishna Hathi, Ambassadeurs Group, Head of Charity Initiatives



Our Merkur UK brands are setting new standards of player protection through our award winning 360 Programme, where among many things, we are making grants to community organisations, nominated by our colleagues, across the United Kingdom. Additionally we are making strategic RET investments and we have been able to commit to a multi-year investment to enable them to develop their academic research and evidence base as they bring new educational products to the market. What the team at ESG Gaming are delivering is new, innovative and with our support will be evidence-led and we are delighted to support them on their journey

Tony Boulton, Merkur UK, Director of Public Affairs

At Play'n GO we believe suppliers absolutely have a duty of care for the players, and we choose to focus on entertainment, safe play and quality. These values are aligned perfectly with the team from ESG Gaming and so we are proud to support them as they establish what has the potential to be a force for good in our sector. The really interesting thing about the ESG Gaming team is their ability to look forward and re-imagine the safer gambling space. We are impressed by the foundations they have established and look forward to supporting them further as they move to the delivery phase of their plan.

Johan Törnqvist, Play'n GO, CEO



As a world leader in sports, betting gaming and interactive entertainment, we have a clear strategy to deliver sustainability and growth. People leadership is a key part of what drives our sustainability and we know the value that well trained people bring to an organisation. Therefore when ESG Gaming approached us to ask if we would support the professional development of its Founder through our apprenticeship levy we were keen to help. We look forward to seeing how ESG Gaming establishes itself through its niche education products.

Martin Lejeune, Entain PLC, Head of Safer Gambling

As the single industry body for UK betting and gaming, the Betting & Gaming Council are always looking at future trends in order to uphold the highest standards. ESG Gaming are looking at some very interesting themes of work, particularly around gaming in Web3 and social influencer-led gaming. We are looking forward to supporting their work in these areas in order to build knowledge and an evidence base on how best to further raise standards.

Wes Himes, Standards & Innovation Director, Betting & Gaming Council





Our approach to developing the EVIDENCE BASE

ESG Gaming will work collaboratively with Bournemouth University to extend the current emerging literature around gambling, gaming and esports. We will together deliver these two reach projects in 2023:

ESG Gaming has commissioned the two following research projects, which will be published at a Parliamentary Reception in 2023



Project One

Influencer-led gambling in gaming on streaming channels. Report Published Q4 2023

The aim of this research is to explore the behavioural (e.g. gambling activity) and environmental/ technological (e.g. group and platform factors) characteristics of influencer-led gambling in gaming on streaming channels through both academic & lived-experience research. This research would be extending the current emerging literature on the role of gambling type behaviours in gaming and streaming.

A mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods would be applied to understand the following characteristics of influencer-led gambling in gaming on streaming channels: i) Behavioural (e.g. gambling activity); ii) Environmental (e.g. social/group factors); and iii) Technological (e.g. platform factors). To explore these characteristics three research themes are proposed:



Explore how these characteristics are currently manifested in the content and across the different streaming platforms. The qualitative content analysis of current influencers who include gambling in streaming channels would be analysed with the three characteristics listed above.



The quantitative approach would explore consumers experiences through online questionnaires. The questions would include gaming, gambling, and streaming behaviour.



A number of focus groups will explore students and consumer perceptions of influence led gambling and gaming streaming. These focus groups would be used to explore their experiences related to the content analysis with characteristics listed above. The questions in the focus groups also include how the consumers feel about gambling content and any recommendations for supporting them in terms of harm reduction, awareness and signposting.

Project Two

The transition of gaming and gambling to Web3 Report Published: Q3 2023



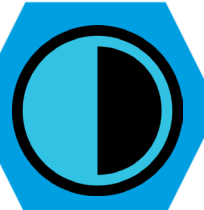
The aim of this research is to understand: The differences between Web2 and Web3 gambling, including some of the specific risks and challenges for Web3 as well as opportunities for customers, in the context of gaming and gambling



An analysis of the specific Web3 gambling features, platforms, activities and experiences which relate to risks, challenges, and opportunities for customers, in the context of gaming and gambling.



Considerations of the different types of customers, the customer awareness, and how this might influence the challenges, risks and opportunities, in the context of gaming and gambling



A contrast between the context of gaming and gambling with other Web3 activities and platforms (i.e. does gambling pose specific, similar or different risks and opportunities).

The Research report will make suggestions about future developments including risks, challenges, and opportunities, in the context of gaming and gambling. Such as looking back and looking forward to technological development, platform participation and customer & platform behaviour.

A synthesis would be created, with potential recommendations around safeguarding customers based on customer behaviours and trends. Finally we would undertake a literature review and content analysis to collate information about:



Web2 and Web3 gambling – future trends



The specific challenges risks and opportunities for customers, operators and regulators.



Context and examples of gaming and gambling on emerging platforms.



Other activities in Web3 to compare to gaming and gambling.



Our approach to IMPACTFUL PRODUCTS

ESG Gaming will work collaboratively to develop, deliver, evaluate and share learnings from our emerging products. This will enable us to maintain absolute focus in our start-up phase, understand and learn from our impact.

Product One

Esports Team Excellence: an accredited quality standard for esports teams

We want to recognise, celebrate and showcase the esports teams that are championing and epitomising outstanding leadership in player welfare, equality & diversity, and safeguarding. Our vision is to create an externally accredited quality standard for esports team leadership. We will do this by working collaboratively with Esports Insider, Bournemouth University, City & Guilds and six initial pilot esports teams to develop, deliver and evaluate a meaningful quality standard.

The proposed quality standard will be collaboratively co-created by the esports pilot teams and partners. Similar to quality standards in other sectors, it is proposed Team Excellence will list relevant criteria that esports teams should be able to demonstrate they meet. For example, taking player welfare; assessment criteria will list minimum standards (such as player integrity; mental stress; resilience; diet & nutrition and personal fitness). It is then proposed that Esports teams evidence how they meet this criteria, which is reviewed and supplemented with supportive and motivational player interviews to test the evidence. The quality standard will be created in a way whereby teams either (i) achieve with distinction; (ii) achieve in full; or (iii) part-achieve. Teams achieving a part-achievement will be offered support so they can schedule a further assessment. It is not our intention to negatively judge teams, but to celebrate and disseminate best practise across the sector.

Esports teams involved in the pilot will receive a donation of £5,000 for their participation to help to develop and pilot these standards over a five month period. As soon as the pilots are completed and a formal evaluation has been concluded of the proposed standard itself; the full evaluation findings will be disseminated for input. It is our intention to seek to corporate sponsors to support this quality standard, so the product itself can be offered at no cost to esports teams in the United Kingdom.

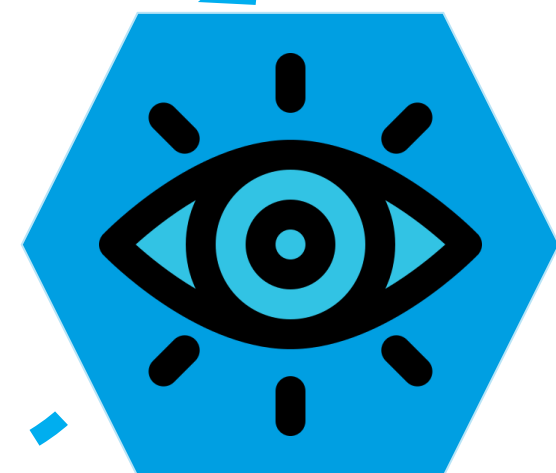


Validation & Context

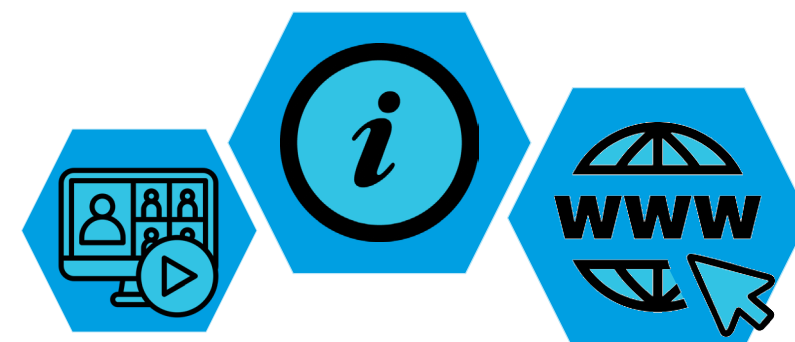


We want to help the esports industry to prosper and to continue to develop, and in turn support, recognise and share learnings from the good teams in the space in regards to safeguarding, player & employee welfare, and EDI initiatives.

This initial focus will be on esports teams as we work with our partners to develop a standard accreditation which will include a set of criteria which teams must evidence they meet in order to receive the accreditation.



We want to work collaboratively to celebrate and recognise teams that are succeeding in these areas. It is absolutely not our intention to judge, criticise or cast a shadow on any that do not meet the criteria. In consultation with teams, we intend to showcase those whom meet the standard, as appose to those 'working towards' the standard. We also want to ensure parity and remove any financial barriers to participation by offering the opportunity to achieve the accreditation standard at no cost.





Product Two Careers1Up: a training and careers hub for the esports and gaming space

Esports suffers from some unique accessibility related challenges. For example the base level of equipment needed to participate in esports is generally much higher than many physical sports. There's also limited opportunities for a keen gamer to go from enthusiast to pro, or indeed pursue a career more widely in gaming.

By working with Esports Insider, Esports Teams, Publishers, Community organisations, the Department of Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus we want to make these opportunities available by unleashing the hidden and often unseen talent of young people living in some of our most deprived communities across England.



Apprenticeships provide an achievable and alternative to university for many young people. We believe pursuing a career in gaming/esports should be within reach of everybody and we believe it should be free and accessible.

Therefore we plan to provide a high-impact, in-depth, initial pre-apprenticeship training course. This initial training will last up to six weeks and provide a purposeful introduction to the gaming and esports sectors and the careers available; job readiness training; a City & Guilds recognised safer gaming award; personal resilience training, CV building & job interview coaching and a work taster / placement. At the end of the course, we would broker a guaranteed job interview to commence an apprenticeship with a gaming or esports company. We would specifically focus on the 18 – 24yrs cohort from under-represented groups of the most deprived 10% of neighbours in England who wish to enter the sector via a full-time apprenticeship. Candidates would be remunerated at the level of the Living Wage during their period of training, allowing them the option to purchase a powerful PC. All training will be fully funded and delivered at the right number of hours to ensure their benefits are not compromised.

Additionally ESG Gaming will work to achieve Ofqual recognition to become an External Quality Assurance (EQA) provider of apprenticeship End-Point Assessments (EPAs). The surplus from EQA work would fund the pre-apprenticeship courses and Living Wage for delegates.



Finally ESG Gaming will work with the sector to determine future CPD needs and collaboratively develop City & Guilds Assured courses or recognised qualifications.



Validation & Context



Employers within the esports / gaming space, like many sectors are not utilising fully the apprenticeship Levy. In the two years to 2022, over £2bn went unclaimed in the UK as many employers did not how to deliver such a programme.

Apprenticeship 'drop out rates' can be quiet high; as much as 56% in some sectors. Therefore a pre-apprenticeship course and work-taster will enable the prospective apprentice and employer to test the chemistry before making a firm apprenticeship offer of employment to the apprentice.



Product Three Safer Gambling & Esports: an emerging Web 3 platform for players, fans, parents

Our vision is to create a dedicated Safer Gambling in Gaming & Esports Web3 based platform for gaming fans and players aged 18yrs – 30yrs; as well as the parents of younger fans/players.

To achieve our vision, we will first create a Web2 platform, to enable us to pilot and externally evaluate the relevance of our educational content and its impact on the thinking, attitudes and behaviours of gaming & esports players, fans and their parents. Using this knowledge, evaluation and insight we will then start to develop an immersive Web3 platform in 2024.

Our Web2 platform will be web-based and feature a wealth of information through the lens of a holistic & wider public health approach to Safer Gambling in Gaming & Esports. Therefore, our Web2 platform will contain information on mental & physical health; diet & nutrition; financial capability and in game microtransactions; Non-Fungible Tokens and emerging tech; mindfulness; safer gambling, and links to the NTS. This information will be created in different formats (i.e. podcasts, real-life & animated videos, quizzes, information sheets etc) to ensure it is relevant and engaging to our audience. The platform will also feature bi-weekly live-webinars on different topics and opportunities for members to interact in a safe & supportive environment. We will work with esports and gaming tournament organisers to ensure our platform is the Safer Gambling partner for esports events.





Financial Summary



ESG Gaming have appointed Crowe UK LLP as our accountants for a period of three years to 31 July 2025. Crowe UK LLP are a top 10 accounting networks in the world, Crowe Global has over 250 independent accounting and advisory firms in 130 countries. Crowe UK LLP will undertake our accountancy work and the preparation and filing of year end accounts.



ESG Gaming has a strong system of financial control and governance which is evidenced in our Governance Handbook, which has been written using best practise from the Community Interest Company Regulator and Charities Commission. Our handbook outlines how Governance is managed within ESG Gaming, the role of the board, governance priorities and various policies. ESG Gaming has an organisational risk assessment in place, delegation of authority and financial processes. The board meet on a monthly bases, with minutes being taken. It is our intention to start and publish these meeting minutes in a transparent manner once our website is updated 2023



ESG Gaming banks with National Westminster Bank and we have a Community Business Account which has a minimum of two signatories. Our accounting system is XERO and all transactions are approved by two people prior to any payments being made. Payments up to £5,000 can be approved by our Founder and one board member; payments over £5,000 need the wider board to approve collectively. The board also approve any new direct debits or standing orders. Our Founder uses a PLEO Payment Card for day-to-day expenses (such as travel, parking, hotels or refreshments). The transactions on this card are reviewed monthly and the card has a limit of £1,000. Our XERO system produces our monthly management accounts, which are shared with the board at each board meeting. Our accountants undertake bi-monthly spot checks on our accounts to ensure we are following our own internal financial process and to validate our use of XERO.

ESG Gaming Details

- DIRECTORS:**
P L Willows / C J Jones / P R Franco / S D Try
- REGISTERED OFFICE:**
124 City Road, London, EC1V 2NX
- REGISTERED NUMBER:**
13566221 (England and Wales)
- ACCOUNTANTS:**
Crowe U.K. LLP, Riverside House, 40-46 High Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1JH
- BANKERS:**
National Westminster Bank Plc, Barbican, 134 Alersgate Street, London, EC1A 4JA
- LAWYERS:**
TrustLaw, Thomson Reuters Foundation, 5 Canada Square, London, E14 5AQ
- REGULATOR:**
The Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies, Crown Way, Cardiff, CF14 3UZ

Remuneration

One Director (Founder) received a remuneration of £900 for the period 14 August 2021 – 31 July 2022, who was the highest paid employee.

Going Concern

Accounting standards require the directors to consider the appropriateness of the going concern basis when preparing the financial statements. The directors confirm that they consider that the going concern basis remains appropriate. The directors believe that the company has sufficient resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The directors believe this to be the case based upon current forecasts whereby £150,500 is pledged for 2022/23 and the company's existing cash position of unrestricted reserves, totalling £42,241 at year-end.

Donating Surplus

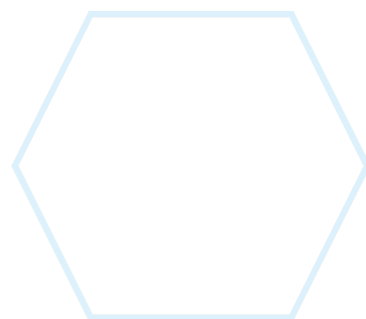
With approval from board members and of The Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies, ESG Gaming anticipates donating up to 25% of its surplus from year-two to charities operating within the safer gaming sector.

Financial Summary

Income	£	£
Donations	95,964	
Pro-bono support	18,437	
		114,401
	114,401	

Income	£	£
Directors' salaries	900	
Equipment storage	421	
Insurance	685	
Volunteer expenses	455	
Telephone and communications	1,380	
Post and stationery	2,814	
Advertising and marketing	4,015	
Hotel, travel and subsistence	12,685	
Conference fees	2,056	
Meeting room hire	2,317	
Computer costs	2,075	
Sundry expenses	755	
Training	519	
Clothing/workwear	377	
Accountancy	2,000	
Subscriptions	1,529	
Legal fees	17,705	
Formation costs	96	
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		
Computer equipment	1,089	
Entertainment	315	
		54,188
	60,213	

Financial costs	£	£
Bank charges	17	
NET SURPLUS		60,196





ESG
Gaming



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ESG Gaming is a trading name of ESG Corporate Community Interest Company
Registered Trade Mark: UK00003764602

Regulated by the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies

Company Registration number: 13566221 | VAT registration number: 391 4171 96
Corporation Tax reference number: 75315 26940 | Apprenticeship Gateway, account ID: JNK6NK
UK Register of Learning Providers: UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN): 10091637