



**Ideas Matter
Annual Report
FY 2022-23**

**charity number 1178999
company number 11213433**

About Ideas Matter

The trustees present their report along with the financial statements of the charity for the financial year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Ideas Matter is a charity registered with the Charity Commission under registration number 1178999 and a company limited by guarantee with registration number 11213433.

Trustees:

- Ferenc Furedi (full year, chair)
- Philip Roy Mullan (full year)
- Luke Samuel Gittos (full year)
- Sheila Frances Lewis (full year, treasurer)

Advisors:

- Jane Sandeman (independent examiner, fellow member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)

Key employees:

- Geoff Kidder (chief executive)
- Alastair Donald (secretary)

Address and contact:

- Ideas Matter
5-8 The Sanctuary
Westminster
London
SW1P 3JS
- ideasmatter.org.uk
- 020 7269 9234

Structure, governance and management

- Ideas Matter is governed by a memorandum and articles of company association
- Ideas Matter is a company charity
- The company directors are also the charity Trustees
- The company is limited by guarantee
- Registered charity number: 1178999
- Company registration number: 11213433

Objects and activities

Ideas Matter was set up with two aims:

1. To advance education, in particular but not exclusively, by providing a forum for discussion and debate through the organisation of public debates, festivals and summer schools involving academics, thinkers and experts that deepen and enrich the knowledge and understanding of all participants.

2. To advance good citizenship, in particular but not exclusively, through the promotion of ideas of tolerance, open debate and participation in democracy through the organisation of live events, and in print and online.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects:

Ideas Matter charity's overriding ambition is to encourage a culture of learning and discussion, in order to enhance public debate of the many questions that face society and citizens today. To that end, the organisation pursues projects that encourage both self-education and a willingness to debate people with other viewpoints. Our work is not aimed specifically at any one section of society but at the broader culture of intellectual engagement and participation. To that end, we work with adults and soon-to-be adults wherever the opportunity for debate arises.

The major activities undertaken include organising education and citizenship projects, specifically the projects Debating Matters, Living Freedom and The Academy.



Debating Matters

An innovative and engaging approach to schools debating, emphasising substance over style, and the importance of taking ideas seriously.



Living Freedom

Our annual residential school that allows 18- to 30-year-olds to explore ideas around the past, present and future of freedom by engaging with 'the best that is known and thought' and the provocations of contemporary intellectuals.



The Academy

Our annual summer school for all ages interested in studying ideas. Organised each year around a specially chosen theme, lectures on philosophy, history and culture demonstrate the value of scholarship in itself over instrumental approaches to knowledge.



Our work this year



Chief Executive's comment



**Geoff Kidder,
Chief Executive**

'This was an exciting year for us as we adopted a new name for our charity which has clarified and extended our mission. Ideas Matter expresses what we fundamentally believe: that taking ideas seriously is key to equipping citizens and young people with the tools to change the world. This was reflected in the enormous success of the project Living Freedom this year, with a significant expansion in its work with university students. But it was also felt in the continued success of Debating Matters, which entered its 20th university year with a programme of 20 events to mark the occasion. This ambitious programme has seen us return to old friends of the competition and also expand our work with new ones. The Academy, our annual summer school, also captured the ethos of the charity with a weekend discussing the roots of the current disorder in politics and culture. In all, it has been a packed year.'

Debating Matters

**DEBATING
MATTERS**

Debating Matters began its 20th Anniversary year with a programme called 20 for 20: 20 events to mark the 20th year the competition has been running.

We are hugely proud of what the project has achieved over the years, but also very excited about the programme which has marked the occasion.

But before the programme kicked off, Debating Matters returned to Berlin for a championship event and an intellectually thrilling day of debate organised by Freiblickinstitut and hosted by University of Europe for Applied Sciences (UE) on its Berlin Campus. An enthusiastic and well-researched team from Nelson-Mandela-Schule saw off competition from seven other Berlin schools this year to emerge as victors.



We then began with the first seven of our 20th anniversary events. Things kicked off with a special Christmas lecture from longstanding Debating Matters friend Ali Miraj. At St George's German Lutheran Church in Aldgate, London on Monday 12 December Mr Miraj delivered a lecture titled 'Against conformity', in which he illustrated why the Debating Matters ethos of robust speech and open discussion is so vital for our democratic life.

We then had a chance to reflect on a project we had been working hard to restart after the setbacks related to Covid: Debating Matters Beyond Bars. Recording a special podcast, Mo Lovatt, DM's national coordinator, sat down with former Beyond Bars competitor Jon Floyd to discuss the impact the programme had on him when he took part in 2015 while he was serving his sentence.

We then saw the publication of the latest in our series of acclaimed debate Topic Guides, with one looking at whether 'Cancel culture is a threat to freedom of speech'. This topical issue was sure to be of interest to students around the country.

Next up was perhaps the highlight of the year. Sixth-form students from four DM schools came together to battle it out for the title of Debating Matters House of Lords Champions 2023. This flagship day of debate was hosted at the House of Lords on Friday 10 March and saw judges drawn from across the House of Lords benches as well as from a range of professions.



The Debating Matters team then returned to work on finalising the rest of the 20 for 20 programme, including stepping up our outreach and engagement to ensure the project would be prepared for, we hope, another 20 years!

Living Freedom



This year, Living Freedom continued and expanded its annual summer school, but at the same time moved into new territory and engaged young people in a variety of new settings. This significant expansion was a tremendous success and will be the bedrock of a much-expanded programme going forward.

The summer school this year was jam-packed with intellectual stimulation and was our best-attended yet, with a new venue allowing us to expand the capacity.

Young people from across the country, the continent, and indeed the world engaged in topics from the 'revenge of history' in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, to what sexual freedom means in an age of apps.

It was especially exciting that this year we attracted a broad range of young people committed to making freedom a reality – from those involved in religious freedom to those doing campus campaigns and involved in liberation activism to those campaigning for personal autonomy.



This year, Living Freedom also dramatically expanded the kind of events we offer. The first expansion was into universities, with the launch of our University Salons. This kicked off in Cambridge, with three events there – two in November and one in March. They asked, 'What can we learn?' from a

range of historical figures from John Locke to Richard Wagner, Hannah Arendt to John Milton. These events were well-attended and demonstrated an appetite for in-depth discussion that moves beyond the usual platitudes found on university campuses.

With an event at the online magazine *UnHerd*'s headquarters, we also launched our new series of 'London Freedom Forums' which is to be expanded in the coming year. The event was a 'balloon debate' style competition with the panellists arguing for their favourite representation of freedom from the arts and culture.



The year also saw Living Freedom make a range of improvements to our engagement with young people. We launched a new, dedicated website and also began an email newsletter. These improvements reflect how the project has come into its own over the past year – not just a one-off event but a proper network for young people and a comprehensive programme of events.

Finally, we should mention that Living Freedom has been lucky to cultivate a number of young advocates for freedom who are now involved in the running of the project as well. Around a dozen graduates of the summer school are engaged as volunteers and program co-ordinators.

After a successful programme, we decided along with our partners to bring the Free Speech Champions work to an end. Much of the work of the project has now found a more natural continuation in other areas, including Living Freedom and Debating Matters.

The Academy



After a long, Covid-enforced hiatus, we were thrilled to return to the regular format of The Academy for summer 2022.

Our previous home at Wyboston Lakes welcomed back over 150 people from all walks of life to get a longer, historical perspective on the challenges facing the modern world.

This year, we had as our theme 'The old roots of the new disorder'. Russia's invasion of Ukraine was said to mark a new era where long-buried historical disputes have come to the surface once again. Alongside the huge changes to our lives that came about as a result of lockdowns, we seem to be living in a new era of changed expectations, changed individuals and changed societies.

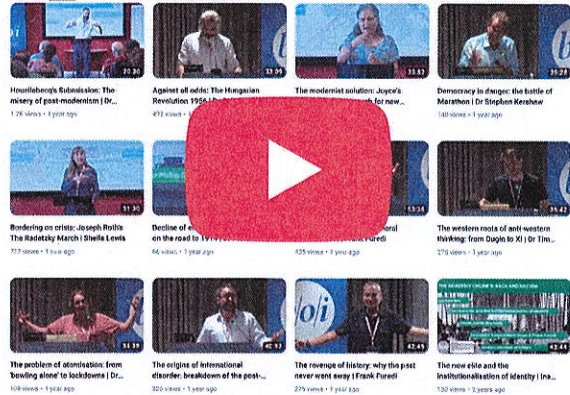
The event was a chance to ask: are we heading towards a new period of disorder? Are there deeper roots to the current turmoil? Are we to resign ourselves to trends that are presented as out of our control?



The event saw academics and experts give lectures and stimulate discussions on topics from the Western roots of anti-West thinking, the Battle of Marathon, the Hungarian revolution of 1956, on *Ulysses*, Houellebecq's *Submission*, and Joseph Roth's *Radetsky March*.

Responding to Russia's full-scale invasion

of Ukraine, we also had a range of discussions on geopolitics and of war and upheaval in history.



We are delighted that the content and spirit of the event returned to its normal setting and high standard.

We are also very grateful that we were able to record the lectures from the event, which feature on our YouTube channel as well as our podcast.

Our public benefit



Assessing our public benefit

Ideas Matter has suggested using the following criteria to judge the effectiveness of its projects

The quality of debates: are the speakers well-informed, do they present their arguments well and have the topics and presentations engaged the audience?

This year, with a range of debates in all our projects, we can confidently say that we met our expectations in this area. In the three project areas, we saw a very high level of intellectual engagement. In Debating Matters, the lectures, podcasts and interviews broke new ground delivering the message of the competition to new audiences. In Living Freedom, our presence on university campuses saw us tackle a wide range of important thinkers from across history. And The Academy drew together subject-matter experts for a range of intellectually thrilling lectures and discussions.

The size and mix of audiences: have the debates and other events attracted sizeable audiences that include a reasonable cross-section of society?

Debating Matters engaged a good range of people this year, with our 20th anniversary year providing the perfect setting to engage friends old and new.

Living Freedom also had great attendance from the very important age range of 16-30, with a summer school bigger than ever before (60+ individuals) and a good attendance in the salon and forum formats.

The Academy managed to widen participation in this reporting period with the establishment of a new scholarship for younger or financially challenged individuals.

Geographical spread: can the organisation successfully produce events beyond London, both in the UK regions and across Europe, broadening the experiences that inform the discussions?

Our growing presence online – on YouTube, on social media, and in newsletters and updates from the projects – means we now engage a wide range of people from different areas. This was also true of in-person events. For example, Living Freedom now has a presence in Cambridge, which widens opportunities for those outside of London.

Our year in brief

25

Schools from around the UK and Europe

500+

Individuals participated in online debates, talks, seminars and more



Online events joined up people from across the UK, Europe, India and America



25 high-quality lectures and discussions, many of which were released as podcasts or YouTube videos

Our year in quotes

The Academy

- 'As a student on a scholarship place, the Academy 2023 helped to expose me to new ideas and ways of thinking about the future I had not considered and I thank everyone for that.'
- 'If you really want to gain an understanding of contemporary society, politics and culture then attendance at the Academy is a must.'
- 'I think the Academy makes you think about the world in a new way - which is what you want a serious exploration of ideas to achieve.'
- 'The most sobering, challenging and therefore uplifting intellectual event in my calendar.'
- 'Insightful lectures and discussions had amongst free-thinking individuals.'
- 'Fabulous event. Food for thought and wonderful to have the opportunity to mingle with people from all sorts of backgrounds who are all united in their interest in the world around them and the events that are shaping the future.'
- 'A real mental workout amongst genuinely original thinkers.'
- 'I really enjoyed and valued attending The Academy. I love the idea of a multi-day residential exploring ideas with smart and engaged people. I thought the speakers, lecturers and discussions were all really impressive. I left with loads of new ideas, friends and energy. I would jump at the chance to get involved with The Academy again!'

Living Freedom

- 'A massive thank you once again for organising Living Freedom. The talks and speakers were fascinating and I was really pleased at the variety of opinions and contributions.'
Noah Keate, trainee journalist; attendee, Living Freedom 2022
- 'Living Freedom gave me the rare opportunity to meet people from across Europe who share a passion for free intellectual inquiry, and discuss controversial topics openly.'
Caitlin Murphy, attendee, Living Freedom 2022
- 'This was such an uplifting and intellectually stimulating event. It was encouraging to see so many people with different views united by their desire for open debate.'
Monica Schroeder, attendee, Living Freedom 2022
- 'Refreshing to meet so many people with incisive and constructive questions about what a brighter future might look like.'
Neil Thin, University of Edinburgh Academics for Academic Freedom
- 'Living Freedom goes from strength to strength each year. Anyone interested in freedom from any perspective should get themselves a ticket. They are guaranteed top-level, open and thought-provoking debate and discussion.'
Paddy Hannam, researcher, House of Commons; writer and commentator
- 'I hugely admire what you do. We would have half the problems we discussed on Saturday if there were 10 organisations doing what you do so well!'
Ryan Christopher, director, ADF UK

Our year in quotes

Debating Matters

- 'It was an honour to be invited to the final of Debating Matters Beyond Bars at HMP Bronzefield, and an inspiration to see the prisoners debating. They set a standard of reasonable disagreement and rational argument to which many in public life should aspire. Also – congratulations to the kitchen trainees for an excellent lunch!'
Timandra Harkness, Debating Matters judge
- 'This is an important competition and the skills you have learnt will be invaluable during your time in prison and beyond.'
Ivan Mulinder, education manager, HMP Bronzefield
- 'Debating Matters provided me with an opportunity to dive deep into issues relevant to the world we live in today. Through high-quality debate, we were able to explore these issues from lots of different viewpoints.'
Finn, Year 12 student
- 'On a day when oracy was top of the national news agenda, it was great to see students debating with such passion, depth of understanding and respect for one another. If we want our students to reach adulthood capable of making informed decisions about where they stand on the most important issues of the day, then there's a good case for making every school a 'Debating Matters' school!'
Peter Shears, senior teacher, CNCS

Accounts



Accounts - summary

The Ideas Matter policy on reserves

We have a Reserves Policy that has been agreed by the trustees. In short, it states that:

- We will hold reserves to protect itself against major risks identified in the Reserves Policy
- Ideas Matter will aim to accrue reserves of one-year operating expenditure
- Trustees will monitor progress in accruing reserves

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds	Prior year funds
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Donations and legacies	48,409	2,517	50,926	108,755
Charitable activities	28,449	42,382	70,831	43,555
Other	447	-	447	17
Total	77,305	44,899	122,204	152,327
Expenditure				
Raising funds	13,050	-	13,050	16,708
Charitable activities	45,332	36,462	81,794	87,567
Other	19,145	-	19,145	18,747
Total	77,527	36,462	113,989	123,022
Net income/(expenditure) before tax for the reporting period	-222	8,437	8,215	29,305
Net income/(expenditure) after tax before investment gains/(losses)	-222	8,437	8,215	29,305
Net income/(expenditure)	-222	8,437	8,215	29,305
Net movement in funds	-222	8,437	8,215	29,305
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	159,225	18,565	177,790	148,485
Total funds carried forward	159,003	27,002	186,005	177,790

Accounts – income

Analysis of income	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds	Prior year
	£	£	£	£
Donations and legacies				
Donations and gifts	32,051	2,517	34,568	85,734
Gift Aid	6,358	-	6,358	13,021
General grants provided by government/other charities	10,000	-	10,000	10,000
Total	48,409	2,517	50,926	108,755
Charitable activities				
Debating Matters	312	17,160	17,472	17,405
The Academy	24,252	-	24,252	6,874
Living Freedom	3,885	25,222	29,107	19,276
	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	28,449	42,382	70,831	43,555
Other				
Other	447	-	447	17
Total	447	-	447	17
TOTAL INCOME	77,305	44,899	122,204	152,327

Accounts – expenditure

Analysis of expenditure	This year			Last year		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Expenditure on raising funds						
Incurred seeking donations	2,087	-	2,087	3,000	-	3,000
Incurred seeking grants	9,000	-	9,000	12,695	-	12,695
Staging fundraising events	-	-	-	-	-	-
Advertising, marketing, direct mail and publicity	1,963	-	1,963	1,013	-	1,013
Total expenditure on raising funds	13,050	-	13,050	16,708	-	16,708
Expenditure on charitable activities						
Debating Matters	7,838	8,580	16,418	881	1,500	20,755
The Academy	36,391	-	36,391	1,000	-	1,000
Living Freedom	1,103	25,222	26,325	9,760	-	27,293
Free Speech	-	-	-	-	-	-
Champions/Other	-	2,660	2,660	5,305	75,700	38,519
Total expenditure on charitable activities	45,332	36,462	81,794	16,946	77,200	87,567
Other						
Support costs	14,999	-	14,999	14,590	-	14,590
Legal costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other office costs	4,146	-	4,146	4,157	-	4,157
Total other expenditure	19,145	-	19,145	18,747	-	18,747
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	77,527	36,462	113,989	52,401	77,200	123,022

Accounts – restricted funds

Restricted funds	Balance at 1 Apr 2022	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance 31 Mar 2023
	£	£	£	£
FSC Donations			2,517	2,517
FSC Charitable Activities		1,743	42,382	35,545
Barbour Foundation		1,000	-	1,000
Oakdale Trust		750	-	750
Thomas Howell Trust		1,500	-	1,500
Total		10,430	78,756	70,621

The nature and the purpose of the restricted funds can be summarised as follows:

During the course of the year we received funding from Free Speech Champions to help with Living Freedom and Debating Matters..

Declaration

- The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.
- Signed on behalf of Ideas Matter trustees:

- Full name:

PHILIP ROY MULLAN

- Signature:

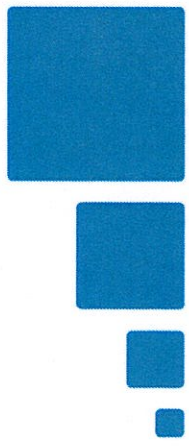
PR Mullan

- Position:

Trustee

- Date:

19 December 2023



Ideas Matter

**educate
debate
renewal**