

godfreywilson



consultants | chartered accountants | registered auditors

Our Firm

Godfrey Wilson provides audit, accountancy, tax and consultancy services to charities and the not-for-profit sector.

The firm was set up in 2002 after identifying a need for specialised yet affordable professional services for charities.

We are based in the Paintworks in Bristol. Most of our clients are charities located in Bristol and the West Country, however we work with clients from a variety of sectors throughout the UK.

The firm has two partners – Alison Godfrey and Rob Wilson. Both are qualified chartered accountants and registered auditors with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

As a small firm of charity-specialist accountants, we strike the right balance between value for money and quality. We are able to charge much lower fees than the larger firms as we simply do not have a large cost base to maintain. We believe in transparency and will always be clear about how our fees are made up. But lower fees do not mean compromised quality. Rob and Alison have a combined total of 20 years' experience of working with charities. All our professional staff are fully qualified accountants so you will always be working with a skilled and experienced professional.

We are very down to earth and pride ourselves on our user-friendly approach. We never use accounting jargon and always speak in plain English. We excel at making the principles of good financial management easy to understand and implement.

We are committed to being available and accessible throughout the year - not just during the audit. We take a proactive approach and see it as our responsibility to make recommendations and offer support when appropriate, as well as keeping you abreast of regulatory developments affecting your organisation.

Our Philosophy

Our business is built on a firm commitment to the not-for-profit sector and a wealth of experience in finance, accounting and governance.

We believe in:

- Being experts in our field
- Working in a sector about which we are passionate
- Empowering those we work with
- Providing tools and building blocks by sharing our knowledge and expertise
- Creating networks for sharing good practice
- Offering value for money, professionalism and quality
- Doing far more than just an audit
- Working ethically and responsibly
- Supporting local businesses where possible

Overall we believe that charities and social enterprise really do make a difference.

Our Staff

Alison Godfrey

Alison Godfrey has 10 years experience in the charity and not-for-profit sector. She trained with Sayer Vincent, a London-based, charity-specialist firm where she gained extensive experience of audit, accounts preparation, taxation and consultancy. She progressed to the position of Audit Manager, looking after a portfolio of 30 charity clients. During her time at Sayer Vincent she spent 4 months on secondment at Oxfam, conducting internal audits and training staff on projects throughout Africa and Asia.

On moving to Gloucestershire, Alison worked as Head of Finance & Administration for The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), a national conservation charity. She managed a team of 7 staff to run the finance function for the charity which had a turnover of £12m, 9 branches and 400 staff.

Since setting up Godfrey Wilson, Alison has continued to specialise in the charity sector. As well as auditing and accounting, recent work assignments have included risk management, VAT advice, writing course material for an online course (Financial Management in the Voluntary Sector), and a financial investigation for an international charity in West Africa.

This blend of experience puts Alison in an excellent position to provide advice on a range of strategic issues (such as SORP compliance, charity VAT and governance issues) as well as some of the more hands-on, operational issues (such as budgeting, management accounts and Sage).

Rob Wilson

Rob Wilson trained as a chartered accountant with Sproull & Co in Harrow, moving to Bright Graham Murray in West London when he qualified in 2002. During this time he worked with a variety of clients including charities, private limited companies and larger listed companies.

At Godfrey Wilson, Rob's work includes consultancy, management accounting, budgeting, payroll, company formations, installation of accounting software, and year end accounts. His strengths lie in helping organisations through periods of growth and change by building a sound financial and technological infrastructure to support expansion.

Recent work assignments have included: chairing a management committee strategy day, developing a financial procedures manual, advising on the content and format of management accounts and leading Sage training sessions.

Our Services

Audit & Assurance

A charity could require an audit for a number of reasons: it might be a statutory requirement (under the Companies Act or Charities Act), it might be a constitutional requirement set out in the charity's trust deed, it might be a funder's requirement, or it might simply be that the trustees would like the extra peace of mind that an audit provides.

Whatever the reason, Godfrey Wilson provides a comprehensive audit service specifically tailored to charities. We have extensive experience of charity accounts and legislation, and are familiar with SORP requirements. We are committed to best practice in charity financial reporting. We believe that a charity's annual report and accounts are a useful fundraising tool and are committed to helping our clients improve the presentation of this information to maximise fundraising potential.

We see the audit as a process that can really add value to an organisation. So instead of simply meeting our statutory requirements as auditors, we endeavour to identify areas within your systems, controls and governance where improvements and efficiencies can be implemented.

We like to keep in touch with our clients throughout the year – not just during the audit. We will keep you up to date with changes in legislation affecting your organisation, as well as being on hand to help with anything from minor queries to big projects.

We can perform independent examinations or accountants' reports for charities below the audit threshold. We also regularly carry out grant audits for funders.

We have specific experience of auditing overseas operations for charities which operate abroad. Please call us for more information.

Accounts Preparation

For charities who manage their own bookkeeping during the year but just need a bit of help at the year end, we can prepare annual accounts from your trial balance or bookkeeping records. We will prepare all the necessary year end adjustments, such as depreciation, accruals and prepayments, and convert your figures into a format that complies with Charity Commission, SORP and Companies Act requirements.

Management Accounts

Small charities inevitably have small finance departments — often made up of just one person. Whilst they can perform the bookkeeping and day-to-day accounting functions, they often do not have the time or the expertise to produce regular management accounts or budgets. We can help you to overcome this by preparing your monthly management accounts and/or budgets and, if required, presenting them to the trustees.

Payroll

A charity may decide to outsource its payroll function for a number of reasons. Often charities do not want the burden of keeping up to date with changing legislation and tax rates, or they don't have the expertise or capacity in-house to manage the payroll. Sometimes it is simply more cost effective to outsource.

We provide outsourced payroll services to a number of charities. This involves calculating the monthly wages, tax and other deductions for your staff, producing payslips and payroll reports, and completing your annual payroll returns.

Training & Mentoring

We strongly believe in empowering those we work with so that they can build their own skill-set and become less reliant on outside support.

We offer a variety of services to develop the skills of charity staff and trustees. We offer bespoke training to groups or individuals including: trustee workshops on risk management, reserves policies, trustee responsibilities; one-to-one training with finance staff covering issues such as SORP compliance, preparing charity accounts, developing robust systems and controls. We also offer finance training to non-finance staff to develop their understanding of financial issues and increase their confidence in dealing with numbers.

We can also be commissioned to deliver training at external seminars or workshops.

Our mentoring scheme has been particularly effective. This scheme is designed for finance staff who are new to the charity sector or finance staff who are taking on new areas of responsibility (such as financial strategy or management accounting). The process starts by identifying the individual's training and development needs and setting objectives and timescales. The training and development objectives are achieved through a series of regular sessions. Throughout the process we are also available by phone or email to troubleshoot on specific issues.

Software Installation & Support

The right accounting software can save lots of time when it comes to bookkeeping and reporting financial information. There are many products on the market and choosing one that is suitable for the size and nature of your organisation is not always easy.

We are affiliated with Sage and QuickBooks, which means we are licensed to sell their software and updates, and provide expert training and support.

We can help you to select an appropriate software package and install it for you, ensuring it is configured to your specific needs. We can also train your staff to use the software and offer support on an ongoing basis.

Tax & Gift Aid

We can provide advice and consultancy services for all aspects of tax, including VAT, gift aid, corporation tax, PAYE and national insurance. We can also help you to complete your VAT and corporation tax returns and gift aid claims.

We have supported several charities through VAT inspections and gift aid audits. In the event of a visit from HMRC we can help you to prepare the necessary information, ensure you understand the implications of HMRC findings, and if necessary negotiate on your behalf. We have an established track record of reducing financial penalties in VAT inspections and gift aid audits.

We also specialise in providing advice on meeting gift aid requirements, such as record-keeping, donor benefits, and maximising gift aid potential.

Consultancy

We are happy to undertake ad hoc consultancy projects across a variety of disciplines. Here are some examples of projects we have done recently: writing course material for a qualification in Effective Voluntary Sector Management, a fraud investigation for a charity in West Africa, recruitment of finance personnel, acting as interim Finance Director, a review of financial systems and controls, and writing a financial procedures manual.

If you have a project that you would like some help with, please call us to arrange an initial consultation to discuss the scope of the work.

Internal Audit

Internal audit can help you to assess whether your current systems and procedures are adequate and whether they are being properly implemented. Regular internal audits can help charities to operate more efficiently and mitigate the risk of fraud and error. We offer a variety of internal audit services. We can work with you to help you develop your own internal audit programme. Alternatively, we can conduct the audit on your behalf, reporting our findings and recommendations to you.

Our Contact Details

For more information please visit our website or contact us for a chat.

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