Hall Accounts

User manual for version 3.0 (test)

> Hall Accounts works offline. Your records are kept in your web browser on your computer, so download a backup file from Settings regularly. In the app, the **Help** button at the top of every page opens an assistant you can ask questions in your own words.

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1. Getting started

Hall Accounts keeps a charity's cash book, makes numbered receipts, tracks the budget, checks each bank account against its statement and produces the Charity Commission's receipts and payments accounts at the year end. It runs in your web browser with no internet connection, and your records are saved in that browser on that computer.

How do I start using Hall Accounts?

Open the Hall Accounts file in Chrome, Edge or Firefox. On the start screen choose **Set up a new profile**, then fill in:

1. your charity's name and number, and your name and role;
2. the month your financial year starts and the first year to record;
3. your bank balances on the first day of that year, from your bank statements;
4. a starting list of categories and a colour scheme.

Choose **Create profile**. You can change any of this later in Settings.

Can I try it out without using real figures?

Yes. On the start screen choose **Explore with example data**. It creates an example hall with a year of entries, receipts and bank checks. Delete it in Settings when you've finished.

What is a profile?

A profile holds one charity's records. You can keep several profiles in the same browser, for example if you are treasurer of two charities. Use **Switch profile** at the top of the page to change between them.

Do I need the internet?

No. Hall Accounts works entirely offline, including this help assistant. Nothing is sent anywhere; your records stay in the browser on your computer.

What do the tabs along the top do?

- **Home**: balances, a monthly chart and anything that needs attention.
- **Cash book**: every entry, with a running balance.
- **Budget**: planned against actual for each category.
- **Receipts**: numbered receipts for money received.
- **Bank check**: monthly reconciliation with your statements.
- **Year end**: the Charity Commission accounts, and the charts.
- **Settings**: charity details, accounts, funds, categories, backups.

How do I change the year I am looking at?

Use the **Year** menu in the green band at the top of the page. Every page then shows that financial year.

2. Recording money in and out

Every payment in or out of the charity's accounts is one entry in the cash book. Entries feed everything else: receipts, the budget, the bank check and the year-end accounts.

How do I record money coming in?

Go to **Cash book** (or Home) and choose **Money in**. Enter the date, amount, category, who it was from and which bank account it went into, then **Save**. Tick *Make a receipt* if you want a numbered receipt straight away.

How do I record a payment or bill?

Go to **Cash book** and choose **Money out**. Enter the date, amount, category, who was paid, how it was paid (for example direct debit) and the bank account, then **Save**.

How do I move money between our own accounts?

Choose **Move between accounts** when you add an entry (it appears once you have more than one bank account). A move isn't income or spending, so it doesn't appear in the year-end receipts and payments.

How do I split one invoice across several categories?

In the entry form choose **Split into several items**. Give each item its own category, details and amount; the total adds itself up. The cash book shows it as one line with a tag for each item, and each item counts under its own category in the budget and accounts.

I entered one payment as several entries. Can I join them?

Yes. Open one of the entries and choose **Combine with other entries from this day**. Entries on the same day, account and fund can be merged into one entry with items. The total doesn't change.

How do I change or delete an entry?

Click the entry in the **Cash book** to open it, make your changes and choose **Save**, or choose **Delete**. If the entry is part of a saved bank check you'll be warned, because the saved check will be marked "Entries changed since".

How do I find an entry?

On the **Cash book** page, type in the search box or use the filters for type, category, month and account.

How do I record a hire deposit and give it back?

Record the deposit as money in under your deposits category (for example *Hire Deposits Received*). When you return it, record money out under *Hire Deposits Returned*. Deposits are kept out of gross income: they go to section A2 and A4 of the accounts, and the year-end page offers to list deposits still held as a liability. Check this treatment with your independent examiner.

What is a fund?

A fund tracks money that can only be spent on a set purpose, such as a grant for a new kitchen (a *restricted* fund). Everything else is in the general fund. Add funds in Settings, then choose the fund on each entry. Fund columns appear in the accounts only when you have restricted or endowment funds.

Can I download the cash book?

Yes. On the **Cash book** page choose **Download CSV**. The year-end spreadsheet download also has a cash book sheet.

3. Receipts

Receipts are numbered automatically and can be printed or saved as a PDF.

How do I make a receipt?

Tick **Make a receipt** when you save money in, or go to **Receipts** and choose the payment from the list. The receipt has the next number, the amount in words and any items. Print it, or save it as a PDF from the print window.

How do I change the receipt numbering?

In **Settings**, under Receipts, change the letters before the number, the next number and the closing message. Numbers are never reused, even if an entry is deleted.

How do I save a receipt or accounts as a PDF?

Choose **Print**. In the print window, change the printer to **Save as PDF** (or Microsoft Print to PDF) and save the file.

4. Budget

The budget compares what you planned to spend and receive with what the cash book shows so far.

How do I set a budget?

Go to **Budget** and type an amount against each category for the year. “Actual so far” fills in from the cash book, and the page shows the surplus or deficit.

Where do last year’s figures come from?

From your records, if you used Hall Accounts last year. For the year before your records start, type last year’s totals on the **Budget** page; they also fill the “Last year” column in the year-end accounts.

5. Bank check (monthly reconciliation)

Once a month, check each bank account against its statement so that mistakes are caught early.

How do I check the bank account against the statement?

Go to **Bank check**, choose the account, and enter the statement date and closing balance. Tick each entry that appears on the statement. The page shows the workings and says **Balanced** or **Out by £x**. When it balances, choose **Save this reconciliation**.

The bank check says it is out. What should I do?

1. Check the statement date and closing balance you typed.
2. Check each tick against the statement; look for an amount entered twice or missed.
3. Look for an amount equal to the difference, or half of it (a payment entered as money in).
4. Check the opening balance in Settings matches the first statement.

How do I print a reconciliation for the trustees?

On **Bank check**, find the saved reconciliation in the list and choose **View**, then **Print**. The statement includes the cash book for the period, the reconciliation, the entries and signature lines.

6. Year end and the Charity Commission

At the end of the financial year the app turns your cash book into receipts and payments accounts in the layout the Charity Commission recommends.

How do I produce the year-end accounts?

Choose the year, then go to **Year end**. Work through the checklist: reconcile each account at the year end, fill in section B, add last year's figures and record the trustees' approval. Then choose **Print or save as PDF**, or download the spreadsheet.

How do I get the accounts in the Charity Commission CC16a layout?

On **Year end** choose **Download in CC16a layout (.xlsx)**. It copies the Commission's template: same sections, columns and whole pounds, with section B and the signature block. Open it in Excel to check it, then print it or save it as a PDF.

What is gross income?

Gross income is the total of section A1 (receipts). The Charity Commission uses it as your income on the annual return. Refundable deposits and transfers between your own accounts aren't included.

Do our accounts need an independent examination?

For financial years ending on or after 30 September 2026, an independent examination is needed when income is over £40,000, and accounts must be sent to the Commission when income is over £25,000. Your governing document may ask for more. Check gov.uk for the current rules.

What goes in section B?

Section B lists what the charity owns and owes at the year end. B1 cash comes from your cash book. Type the rest into the lists: other monetary assets, investments, assets kept for the charity's own use, and liabilities.

7. Where the money goes (charts)

A picture of the year's money in and money out, found under the Year end tab.

How do I see where our money comes from and goes?

Go to **Year end** and choose **Where the money goes**. Pick **Money in** or **Money out**. Each slice is one line of the accounts, such as Light and heating.

How do I see the categories inside a slice?

Hover the mouse over a slice: an outer ring appears showing the categories inside it, and the list on the right shows their amounts. Hover over the ring for each category's figure. Click a slice (or its name in the list) to keep it open; click again to close it.

What is "Everything else" in the pie chart?

To keep the chart readable it shows up to eight slices. The smallest lines are grouped as "Everything else"; hover over it to see them.

8. Categories and starter lists

Categories are the headings you file money under, such as Kitchen Hire or Electricity. Each one adds into a line of the year-end accounts.

How do I add a new category?

In **Settings**, under Categories, choose money in or money out, type the name, pick the line of the accounts it adds into, and choose **Add category**.

What are the starter lists?

Ready-made category lists to build on: *Village or community hall*, *Small charity, club or society*, a *Basic short list*, and the *Littleport list* from version 2. You choose one when you set up a profile. Later, in **Settings**, choose **Add categories from a starter list** to add any you're missing; categories you already have are left alone.

How do I rename, hide or delete a category?

In **Settings**, under Categories, type a new name over the old one, or choose **Hide** or **Delete**. Hidden categories stay on past entries but leave the menus. A category can only be deleted if no entries use it.

What does "Line in the accounts" mean?

Each category adds into one line of the Charity Commission accounts; for example Gas and Electricity both add into "Light and heating". Change the line in Settings if your independent examiner prefers a different grouping.

9. Settings

Settings holds your charity's details, bank accounts, funds, categories, colours and receipt options.

How do I add a bank account or petty cash?

In **Settings**, under Bank accounts, type the name and opening balance and choose **Add account**.

How do I change the colours?

In **Settings**, under Colours, choose one of the six schemes. Each profile keeps its own. Printing is always black and white.

How do I change our charity details?

In **Settings**, under Charity details. They appear on receipts and accounts.

How do I delete a profile?

In **Settings**, at the bottom, choose **Delete profile**. Download a backup first if you might need it again.

Can I password protect my accounts?

Not in this version: anyone using this browser on this computer can open the profiles. Keep the computer locked when you're away, and keep backup files somewhere secure, as they contain the charity's records. Password protection is planned for the desktop version.

10. Backups and moving computers

Your records are saved in the browser, not in the app file, so backup files are how you keep them safe and move them between computers.

How do I back up my records?

In **Settings** choose **Download backup file**. Keep the .json file somewhere safe, such as a USB stick or cloud storage. Do this regularly; the Home page reminds you.

How do I restore a backup?

On the start screen choose **Open a backup file**. If the profile is already there, choose **Replace** or **Keep both**. Inside a profile, Settings also has **Replace with a backup file**.

How do I move my records to another computer?

1. Download a backup file from Settings.
2. Copy the Hall Accounts file and the backup to the new computer.
3. Open Hall Accounts there and choose **Open a backup file**.
4. Check the carried-forward balance matches.

The computers don’t sync. If you swap back and forth, take a fresh backup each time and choose Replace.

Where is my data saved?

In your web browser on this computer, not inside the Hall Accounts file. Copying the file alone gives an empty app; use a backup file to move records. Clearing your browsing data deletes them, so keep backups.

Will this test version change my version 2 records?

No. The test version copies your version 2 profiles the first time it opens and works on its own copy. Version 2 is left exactly as it was, so you can keep using it.

11. Troubleshooting

What to do when something doesn’t look right.

My records have disappeared

Check you opened the file in the **same browser** as before (for example Edge rather than Chrome): each browser keeps its own records. If browsing data was cleared, open your latest backup file from the start screen.

It says it isn’t saving

Download a backup file from Settings straight away. Then save the Hall Accounts file to your computer (not a preview window or email attachment) and open it in Chrome, Edge or Firefox. If the browser is out of room, delete old example profiles.

The figures on the year end look wrong

Check the year selected at the top. Then check each category’s line in Settings, any entries with the wrong category (filter the cash book by category), and that every bank account has been reconciled to the year-end statement.

How do I get more help?

Download or print the user manual from this panel or from Settings. It has every answer here, in order. For accounting questions, ask your independent examiner.

Charity Commission rules change from time to time. Check gov.uk for the current guidance before relying on any figures in this manual.