

**Somerset Churches Trust**  
**Trustees Report and**  
**Unaudited Accounts**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2023**

**Registered Charity number: 1055840**

## **Somerset Churches Trust**

### **Reference and Administrative Information**

**NAME:** Somerset Churches Trust

**REGISTERED CHARITY No.** 1055840

**ADDRESS:** c/o Flourish House  
Cathedral Park  
Wells  
Somerset  
BA5 1FD

**WEBSITE:** [www.somersetchurchestrust.org](http://www.somersetchurchestrust.org)

**BANKERS:** National Westminster Bank plc  
The Commons  
Shaftesbury  
Dorset  
SP7 8JY

CCLA Investment Management Ltd  
80 Cheapside  
London  
EC2V 6DZ

CAF Bank Limited  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
West Malling  
Kent  
ME19 4TA

United Trust Bank Limited  
One Ropemaker Street  
London  
EC2Y 9AW

**TRUSTEES:** The Trustees are listed in the appended Trustees' Report

**SECRETARY:** (Vacancy)

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:** Roland J. Adamson BA FCA

**OBJECTS:** The Trust is an independent non-denominational body to raise money and make grants for the preservation and repair of churches and chapels in the historic county of Somerset. It also exists to encourage greater interest and involvement by all members of the community, whether churchgoing or not, in the magnificent heritage of religious buildings in the county.

### **Acting Chairman's statement on the activities, achievements and future plans of the Trust**

Somerset Churches Trust – 'keeping Somerset's churches and chapels alive'. This is the Trust's 'strapline' and is a clear statement of our *raison d'être*. In this 'post-lockdown' era, there is a sense of things starting to return to 'normality'. The general feeling is that parishes (predominantly rural) in Somerset are concentrating on actively building engagement with parishioners in their own communities.

Local people being actively engaged with their own parish communities has been the bedrock of parish life for centuries. This is as it should be but assumes greater significance in the current challenging economic environment where churches and chapels face increasing costs and paying their share of clergy costs is, in a number of cases, proving very difficult.

Meanwhile, there is real interest in churches and chapels and their history: 'church tourism' is a popular area and where Somerset Churches Trust has had much success in the past with our programme of 'crawls'. This activity can make a real difference to churches and chapels by raising the profile and encouraging engagement in the community – much better than witnessing decline, closure and sale. And visitors should make donations and purchase guidebooks!

Against that backdrop, I wish to pay tribute to the fortitude of members, churches and our Trustees in rising to the challenges. We have a very good website as our principal communication channel with members. I would encourage everyone to use this resource. Newsletters are also very important but, as editor, I know that providing 'content' is not at the top of everyone's priorities (this is a plea for information / articles).

We know that fundraising is a challenge: some grant-giving organisations are redefining their priorities, making the pump-priming grants from the Somerset Churches Trust even more important. As a Trust, we are conscious of this and are looking at other funding models but what is important to us is a steady stream of new members. Membership is the lifeblood of the Trust. Membership income is the principal source of funding for grants – as the following pages show, Trust overheads are low and I pay tribute to our Treasurer Tony Davies for keeping us on the 'straight and narrow'.

An historic source of funds for the Trust has been the annual 'Ride+Stride' fundraiser. However, in recent years this activity has produced diminishing returns, notwithstanding the sterling efforts of Trustee Philip Skelhorn in managing the campaigns. We have tried a number of different approaches, including employing a professional fundraiser (with his fees covered by a generous benefactor) but after several years, the funds raised were less than the cost! Trustees therefore decided to pause this activity for the time being until the climate changes for sponsored walks/cycle rides improves! Materials will be made available online for parishes wishing to continue. Clearly this is disappointing as we note some other county trusts raise over £100,000 pa.

As part of 'keeping Somerset's Churches and Chapels alive, we use our small resources to 'pump prime' fundraising efforts to facilitate works to churches and chapels - the Trust uses its resources of committed volunteer assessors to appraise projects. This is of especial value because, armed with our assessment and a tangible grant, project managers can approach major sources of finance (who look at applications on paper/online) with real evidence and verification to support their requests. In 2022/23, the Trust awarded 13 grants totalling £24,500.

Our newest Trustee, Emma Brown, is currently on maternity leave (surely a first for the Trust) and we congratulate her on the birth of a daughter. In other changes in Trustees, we saw the retirements of Jim Allwood, Marion Jeffrey and Bob Key: they all made significant contributions to the Trust: Jim was our Membership Secretary and then, in addition, Trust Secretary while Marion, together with Chris Hawkings, developed our very fine website and Bob, of course gave us great guidance and the benefit of his wide experience. In recognising that trustees are busy people, we wanted to find a way to improve our responsiveness to member questions and enquiries. So, we now have a PA! Her name is Claire and she is a "virtual PA", taking advantage of modern technology (email and video etc). This is a timely reminder of the immense value of volunteers to our charity. We are most appreciative of all the work of trustees and helpers alike.

In keeping with our *raison d'être*, we have hosted a series of excellent Church Crawls and Annual Talks. At the 2022 Annual Meeting, we were treated to William Newsom's 'Somerset Churches – forgotten little gems' and in 2023, 'Somerset Churches: more than just mighty towers – a celebration of Somerset church towers, spires and bellcotes in all their wide variety.' Building on this, we are preparing a full programme for 2024.

We have ready a packed programme of visits, organised by a dedicated team to provide a balance of opportunities to learn more about our historic churches and chapels. The Trustees' objective for the next 25 years is to continue to keep Somerset's churches and chapels alive. I am most grateful to them, and all involved, for their support and commitment.

**Axel Palmer, Chairman**

**9<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

## **TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

The Trustees are pleased to present their report and accounts for the year ended 30 June 2023. The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty under the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard for guidance published by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

### **TRUSTEES as at 30 June 2023 (in alphabetical order of surname)**

**Emma Brown**  
**Bob Croft**  
**Ven. Simon Hill**  
**Dr Axel Palmer (Acting Chairman)**  
**Philip Skelhorn**  
**Anthony Sutcliffe**

Very Rev Bob Key ceased to be a trustee on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2022, Marion Jeffrey ceased to be a trustee on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and Jim Allwood ceased to be a trustee on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **GOVERNING DOCUMENT**

The Trust is governed by Trust Deed dated 9 May, 1996. On 1 January 2014 the name of the Trust was changed from "Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels" to "Somerset Churches Trust".

### **RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES**

The Trustees are appointed for an initial term of five years which is then renewable for up to two further terms of three years each. Power of appointment is vested in the Trustees having regard to the different skills and backgrounds that inform the activities of the Trust. Trustees are offered training in their responsibilities as a Trustee.

### **ORGANISATION**

The Trust has no paid employees. Day-to-day operations are conducted by the Trustees, and by officers who are appointed by the Trustees.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Trustees keep under review administrative procedures and the risks to which the Trust may be subject and take such steps as is necessary in those respects. A risk assessment has been developed which is periodically reviewed by the Trustees.

## **RESERVES, GRANT-MAKING AND INVESTMENT POLICIES**

The policy of the trust is to apply the whole of its funds, apart from the Endowment Fund, in grants for the preservation and repair of, and the provision of community facilities in, churches and chapels in the historic county of Somerset. The Unrestricted Funds are held to meet needs as they arise and the Trustees aim to hold a reserve of funds to ensure that any urgent requests can be accommodated and that a consistent policy can be adopted for the making of grants. Unrestricted Funds are where possible held in interest bearing deposits, except for funds for immediate needs which are maintained in a current account. Designated Funds are where possible held in interest bearing deposits.

The Endowment Fund reflects money specifically donated to create a capital fund on which income arising will be used for the purpose set out in note 4 on page 7. These monies are invested in the Charities Official Investment Fund.

### **On behalf of the Trustees**

**Axel Palmer**  
**Chairman**

**9<sup>th</sup> November 2023**



## **SOMERSET CHURCHES TRUST**

### **Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Somerset Churches Trust**

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 30 June 2023, which are set out on pages 5 to 8.

#### **Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

#### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a true and fair view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

#### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - to prepare accounts, which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Acthave not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



**Roland J. Adamson BA FCA**  
**Chartered Accountant**  
**45 Shakespeare Avenue**  
**Bath**  
**BA2 4RG**

**20<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Somerset Churches Trust**  
**Receipts and Payments Account**  
**for the Year Ended 30 June 2023**

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £	2022 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
Subscriptions including tax relief on subscriptions	17,568			17,568	17,788
Donations					
Legacies (see note 3)	45,651			45,651	0
General (inc tax relief)	2,501			2,501	595
Interest and dividends					
Deposit interest	1,314			1,314	707
Investment income			969	969	956
Events					
2021 Ride+Stride (inc tax relief)	2,376			2,376	6,751
Church visits and other events	376			376	664
Publications and advertising	0			0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>69,786</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>70,755</b>	<b>27,461</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
Postage and general expenses	(29)	-	-	(29)	(52)
Subscriptions	(46)	-	-	(46)	(43)
Membership administration	(300)	-	-	(300)	
Website development (note 4)	0	-	-	0	(3,390)
Website maintenance and software	(320)	-	-	(320)	(29)
Insurance	(271)	-	-	(271)	(271)
Marketing	0	-	-	0	(557)
Events	(53)	-	-	(53)	(145)
Trustee expenses (note 5)	0	-	-	0	(149)
Bank charges	(63)	-	-	(63)	(96)
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>(1,082)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,082)</b>	<b>(4,732)</b>
<b>SURPLUS BEFORE GRANTS PAID</b>	<b>68,704</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>69,673</b>	<b>22,729</b>
<b>GRANTS PAID (note 7)</b>	<b>(22,575)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,925)</b>	<b>(24,500)</b>	<b>(10,500)</b>
<b>EXCESS/(DEFICIT) OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS</b>	<b>46,129</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(956)</b>	<b>45,173</b>	<b>12,229</b>

**Somerset Churches Trust**  
**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**  
**as at 30 June 2023**

**ASSETS**

	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Designated Funds</b>	<b>Endowment Fund (note 6)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2023</b>	<b>Total Funds 2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Investment (at market value)</b>					
Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF):					
1,779.3 Income Units (note 6)	-	-	33,464	33,464	32,449
<b>Bank Balances</b>	<b>165,627</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>165,627</b>	<b>120,454</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>165,627</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33,464</b>	<b>199,091</b>	<b>152,903</b>
<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>					
<b>Funds Brought Forward</b>	<b>119,498</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33,405</b>	<b>152,903</b>	<b>142,465</b>
Investment gain in year			1,015	1,015	(1,791)
Surplus for the year	68,704	0	969	69,673	22,729
Grants paid (note 7)	(22,575)	0	(1,925)	(24,500)	(10,500)
<b>Funds carried forward</b>	<b>165,627</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33,464</b>	<b>199,091</b>	<b>152,903</b>
<b>Grants approved but not paid at 30 June 2023 (note 7)</b>	<b>(15,000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(15,000)</b>	<b>(28,500)</b>

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Anthony L Davies MA MBA FIC CMC (Hon Treasurer)

**Somerset Churches Trust**  
**Notes to the Accounts**  
**for the Year Ended 30 June 2023**

**1** The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and with applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice.  
All transactions are accounted for on a receipts and payments basis.

**2** Bank balances, except funds for immediate needs, are all in potentially interest bearing accounts.

**3** During the period, three legacies were received from the estates of:

Mrs S Courtney	£41,097.80
Prof D T Donovan	£3,030.00
Mr A Mitcham	£1,523.36
	<u>£45,651.16</u>

**4** During 2022, a specialist firm was engaged to rebuild the Trust website.

**5** No Trustee received any remuneration or other benefits during the current or previous year.  
Routine out of pocket expenses such as postage, stationery and approved travel expenses would be reimbursed.

**6** Endowment Fund at market value (permanent fund)

This represents a legacy of £20,000 from the late Robert Hill. The income to be used for grants to churches in the Axbridge deanery of the diocese of Bath and Wells .

	£
Balance at 30 June 2022	32,449
Income accrued by 30 June 2022	956
Investment gain/(loss)	1,015
Investment income	969
Grants paid to Axbridge Deanery churches	(1,925)
Balance at 30 June 2023	<u><u>33,464</u></u>



**Somerset Churches Trust**  
**Notes to the Accounts**  
**for the Year Ended 30 June 2023**

<b>7</b>	<b>Grants paid in the year 2022-23</b>	<b>£</b>
	St James the Less, Halse	£2,000
	St Laurence, East Harptree	£2,000
	St Peter, West Huntspill	£2,000*
	All Saints, Rockwell Green	£3,000
	BVM, Nettlecombe	£1,500
	St Peter & St Paul, Bishops Hull	£2,000
	All Saints, Woolley	£2,500
	Nexus Methodist Church, Bath	£2,000
	St Michael, Othery	£2,000
	Holy Trinity, Nailsea	£1,000
	St Andrew, Curry Rivel	£1,000
	All Saints, East Pennard	£2,500
	St Peter & St Paul, North Curry	£1,000
		<hr/>
		£24,500

\*of which £1,925 was paid from income generated by the Endowment Fund - see note 6

	<b>Grants outstanding at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>£</b>
	St Andrew, High Ham	£1,500
	St Peter & St Paul, Muchelney	£3,000
	St Mary, Bridgwater	£500
	St Peter & St Paul, Wincanton	£2,000
	St Peter & St Paul, Chiselborough	£3,000
	St Mary the Virgin, Chedzoy	£1,500
	Emmanuel Church, Weston super Mare	£1,500
	St John the Baptist, Pawlett	£2,000
		<hr/>
		£15,000