



Caring for God's Acre

Annual Report 1st May 2023 – 31st April 2024



Cover photo: Andrew Fusek Peters

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

For centuries, our burial grounds and cemeteries have served their local communities at time of death and in the bereavement which follows. Over the years, rich reservoirs of regional biodiversity have been established alongside a powerful heritage of built and social history. This report shows Caring for God's Acre's developing role as the go-to charity for those who treasure these precious resources and want to maintain and enhance them.

To highlight just a few examples, our strength combines the popular Churches Count on Nature and annual Love your Burial Ground week with local and national initiatives. Our volunteers have over 20 years of grass-roots experience working in local churchyards. This year we launched a project working in a cemetery in Shrewsbury (Heritage to Inspire, p.18). The practical nature of this work endorses our credibility and validates our appointment as environmental advisers to the Church of England. Its General Synod named us as a key party in the delivery of their commitment on biodiversity. As well as providing that service, we are working alongside partners in the digital mapping of churchyards throughout England. Our role will be to support the community to link into the project through training volunteers to contribute to this unique, digital resource (Our Digital Ancestors p.19).

This year we have been developing an exciting project in conjunction with the Church in Wales to support communities across Wales in understanding and caring for the breadth of heritage in their local burial ground.

Much of our work is project-based, which attracts charitable funding on a full-cost recovery basis. We are particularly grateful to the support of our members and a very generous donation from the John Ellerman Foundation, which, over three years, will help meet core costs, enabling us to plan the future development of CFGA as well as grow our communications through social media, web-based and printed resources. Our staff team is nimble at adapting to new opportunities. We are grateful for their dedicated service, exemplified by Andrea Gilpin, a conservation specialist, and our most long standing colleague who is retiring after 20 years of service and who we hope will continue to provide occasional consultancy.

It is nearly a year since I and David Primrose became Chair and Vice Chair of Caring for God's Acre. Throughout 2024 the excellent work, profile and reach of the charity has continued to grow and

influence the knowledge and care of our burial grounds across the country and we look forward to 2025.



Catherine MacCarthy

Chair, Caring for God's Acre



David Primrose

Vice-Chair, Caring for God's Acre

GENERAL INFORMATION

PRESIDENT

HRH The Former Prince of Wales

unfortunately the King is not able to continue with this role and ceased to be our President in May 2024

PATRONS

Sir Roy Strong, CH

The Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith, The Bishop of St Albans

Dr George Peterken OBE

Prof Chris Baines

Prof Stefan Buczacki

Brigit Strawbridge Howard

TRUSTEES

Oliver Goode Chair until the 2023 AGM

Catherine MacCarthy Chair following the 2023 AGM in November

Gillian Binks Vice Chair until the 2023 AGM in November

David Primrose Vice Chair following the 2023 AGM in November

Tony Graham Treasurer

Anni Holden

Judith Leigh

Alex Glanville

Simon Cooter

STAFF

Harriet Carty Director

Andrea Gilpin Conservation & Communications Manager

Prue Dakin Office Manager

Anna Wilde Digital Manager

Alex Logan Conservation Volunteer Manager

Liam Taylor Beautiful Burial Ground Data Manager

Mick Clifton Fund Raiser and Project Manager

Kirsty Stevens

Project Manager for Opening the Ark until July 2023
and Heritage to Inspire from January 2024.

BANKERS

HSBC, 6 High Street, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire, SY9 5BJ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

S.E. Hardwick, Armstrong Rogers & Co., 45 Etnam Street, Leominster
Herefordshire, HR6 8AE

CONTACT

11 Drover's House, The Auction Yard, Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 9BZ
01588 673041 - enquiries@cfga.org.uk - www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

Charity Registration Number 1155536.

**CfGA commenced operations as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 1st May 2014 -
CIO Number CE000722.**

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARITY

The charity's objectives are to promote, for the benefit of the public and for the advancement of education, the conservation, enhancement and interpretation of the natural, built and social history features of burial grounds of all types and denominations.

ACTIVITIES

- To carry out projects as they arise in the furtherance of the objectives stated above
- To encourage the public to investigate, research and record within burial grounds thus adding to the body of information and records made
- To assist those with responsibility for burial ground maintenance with advice and support
- To promote public awareness of burial ground importance and conservation
- The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to guidance published by the Commission concerning public benefit.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPACTS

Communication developments are led by Andrea Gilpin and Anna Wilde

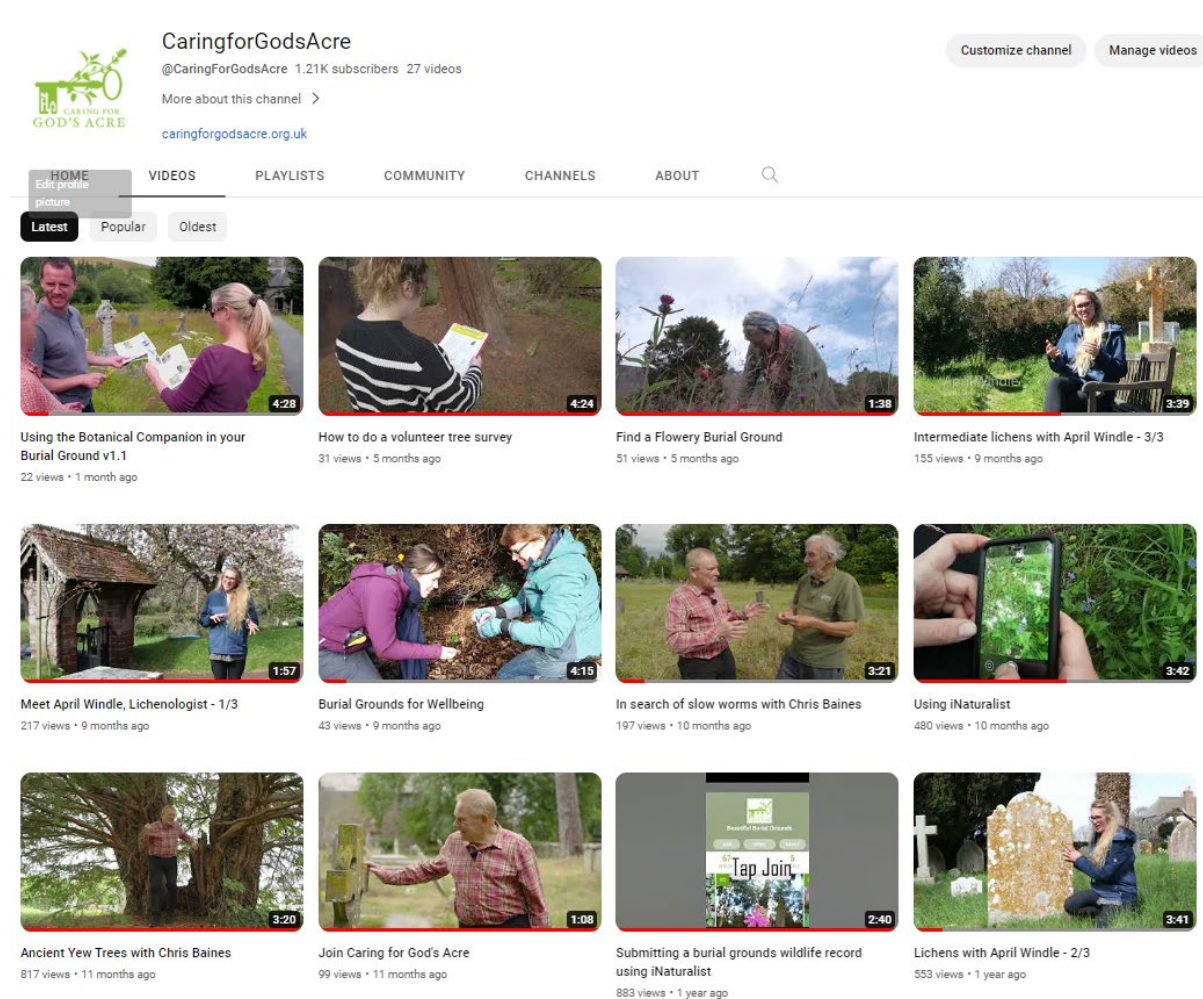
All of our project and core work relies on excellent communications and we have focused on this over the year. This has resulted in a marked increase in our reach via digital platforms including our own website and social media.

The **website** continues to be well used. **23,145** users viewed **33,923** pages over the period 1st May 2023 – 30th April 2024. The majority of visitors are finding us via Google search or by directly typing the address into a search engine. Social media continues to send traffic to the site, with Facebook sending the highest number and engagement via X (Twitter) was also good. **11,000** files have been downloaded from the resources section of the website in the twelve months 1st May 23 – 30th April 24. The online shop has brought in **£2,500** in sales, mainly of the Action Pack plus a few scythe kits.

As part of individual and diocesan membership we continue with the online members area at <https://members.caringforgodsacre.org.uk>. This site can be logged into by members to access content such as **webinar recordings, downloads and links** specific to certain topics which were covered in talks. There is also a **forum chat feature** for members to leave questions and to interact with each other. We have begun to develop an online surgery as part of the area.

Publicity and communication via social media continues:

1. 4,515 subscribers to our e-newsletters
2. 3,883 followers on X (was Twitter)
3. 1,900 followers on Facebook
4. 1,290 subscribers on YouTube
5. 585 followers on Instagram



Caring for God's Acre YouTube videos

BIOLOGICAL DATA IMPACTS

Over the past year we have been monitoring and measuring numbers of biological records in burial grounds, numbers of people making records, numbers of sites mapped and relative changes in all of these. We will be reporting separately on this so please have a look at the Biological Data report on our website.

To summarise this Biological Data report:

The numbers of records reaching the NBN portal has increased by approximately 20,000 since 2022.

When species are recorded they need to be verified as accurate by an expert which can take time. We are monitoring the rate of verification for iRecord and iNaturalist, both of which are going up.

We continue to map new sites in Wales (mostly cemeteries) and Scotland and are measuring the cumulative areas of churchyards and cemeteries. The total area of burial grounds that have been mapped on the NBN portal is 168km² which is approximately three times the size of Guernsey.

We are measuring the rate of changes that can be observed through biological recording. This includes numbers of records, numbers of species and the numbers of sites with records compared to those without any.

Burial grounds can be important refuges for rare species and habitats and we are analysing both. There are now 581 burial grounds which are Local Wildlife Sites that we know of and 2,927 species have been recorded within burial grounds that are on the Red Data list.

PROGRESS in PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Working in partnership is crucial to delivery of our aims, we can greatly increase the scope of our work and scale of reach in this way. Whilst we have constructive relationships with many charities and other organisations, during this period we are working directly in partnership with the following:

A Rocha

Ancient Yew Group

Atlantic Geomatics International

Bat Conservation Trust

Church of England

Church in Wales

Churches Conservation Trust
Coventry Diocese
Friends of Shrewsbury Cemeteries
Harper Adams University
Historic England
National Biodiversity Network
Natural England
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
Shropshire Council
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

PROJECT ACTION MAY 2023 to APRIL 2024

Project activity undertaken this year:

- 1 Church of England Environmental Support role including Churches Count on Nature 2023
- 2 God's Acre Volunteers
- 3 Opening the Ark
- 4 Heritage to Inspire
- 5 Our Digital Ancestors

1a. CHURCH of ENGLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT ROLE

Delivered by Harriet Carty, Andrea Gilpin and Liam Taylor

This 18-month contract started 1st June 2023 with the delivery of the CofE lunchtime webinar series and of Churches Count on Nature 2023. Over the next 9 months we delivered an autumn webinar series comprising of the following talks:

Managing Ancient Trees	Russell Ball, Ancient Yew Group
Seeking Sanctuary - Conserving Amphibians & Reptiles	Angela Julian, ARG-UK
Burial Ground Mapping, More than just a Map	Tim Viney, Atlantic Geomatics
Fungi and e-DNA	Gareth Griffith, University of Aberystwyth

Time to Restore & Rebuild

Chris Baines, CfGA AGM

Publicising, Planning and Running Guided Walks
Cemetery

Janine Marriott, Arnos Vale

Finding Folklore in Burial Grounds

Clare Slack, Friends of Tower
Hamlets Cemetery

926 people booked onto this webinar series.

In January 2024 we launched 2 new e-newsletters as part of this contract, both bi-monthly, aimed at Diocesan Environmental Officers and Diocesan Advisory Committee secretaries and members.

Through publicising our supporting role, we have seen an increase in enquiries via phone, email and through the website of over 80%.

We have produced 3 new Spotter's Guides, Fungi, Corvids and Swifts, Swallows & Martins, all of which are on our website.



1b. CHURCHES COUNT ON NATURE 2023

Delivered by Harriet Carty, Andrea Gilpin, Liam Taylor and Anna Wilde

This initiative is a partnership between **Caring for God's Acre, the Church of England, the Church in Wales and A Rocha UK** (a Christian charity who run the Ecochurch award). **Churches of all denominations** were encouraged to take part in Churches Count on Nature and to run **biological recording events**. People are encouraged to organise events during **Love Your Burial Ground Week** in early June. This year's Love your Burial Ground Week and Churches Count on Nature activities in

June were a great success with an estimated **8,200** people taking part across England and Wales in 400 events in total of which 357 were registered through Churches Count on Nature 2023. **Over 10,200 records were submitted** either via the iNaturalist app, by post, iRecord or e-mail. Records came in from 335 sites so the message that it is both important and easy to submit records seems to be getting across to people.

To help people submit records we made 2 minifilms on how to record and produced a flowchart helping people get started on iNaturalist which is the platform we want people to use as it is both user-friendly and also makes records easier to verify as photography is central.



The top 3 flowers recorded were common daisy, herb Robert and ribwort plantain. The top 3 bird records were blackbird, wood pigeon and robin. Bumblebees and ladybirds were the top two most frequently recorded invertebrates.

und Week & Churches Count on Nature Events Gallery

if you have been kind enough to send in photos of your Love Your Burial Ground Week/Churches Count on Nature events taking place. Looks like a great time was had by all! your mouse cursor over the photo to see where it was taken, or click to see a bigger photo.



2. THE GOD'S ACRE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

Delivered by Alex Logan

This project is on-going, and the team have been active now for over two decades. We continue to build our conservation volunteers and to seek funding for their work. Volunteers go out two or three times a week led by Alex Logan, our Volunteer Co-ordinator, supported and welcomed by local PCCs and members of the community. The volunteers carry out a range of conservation tasks, aimed at enhancing and increasing biodiversity in special places whilst keeping them accessible and welcoming for people to enjoy. Typical tasks include:

- Scything and raking to improve wildflower meadows
- Pruning
- Removing ivy from yew trees
- Making deadwood piles
- Building compost bins
- Making and installing bird and bat boxes



- Planting and laying hedges
- Repairing dry stone walls

The work follows agreed management plans drawn up by CfGA.

This has been a good year with more communities embracing our ethos, largely due to Opening the Ark project staff having capacity to link closely with local communities and inform them about our practical conservation work. We ran 104 task days in this year (up on last year) with some record attendances of volunteers with up to 16-18 volunteers present on several days, this was made up of nearly 50% locals turning up to help, learn and take 'green hay' away to create more meadows using seeds from the churchyard which will be of local provenance. This equates to 1,289 volunteer days or 6,445 volunteer hours. We have taken on another couple of new sites, and we now visit 42 sites regularly. We've given advice, support or practical assistance to burial grounds in Shropshire, North Herefordshire and Powys, soon to add South Herefordshire and Worcestershire too.

The support of our enthusiastic volunteers was vital in enabling this to happen and thanks go to them for their fantastic efforts and continued support. We have 75 volunteers registered we have gained three new volunteers and 40 of the volunteers come out on tasks regularly. There are usually up to 18 of our regular volunteers on a task, often joined by local people.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING by the God's Acre volunteer group

This year saw the God's Acre Conservation Volunteers working with several partners to deliver conservation management to as many burial grounds as possible. Partnerships included:

- **Friends of Shrewsbury Cemeteries**
- **Friends of Cressage Churchyard**
- **Shropshire Dormouse Group**
- **The Earl of Plymouth Estate**
- **The National Trust**
- **The Friends of Castle View Terrace Meadow (Ludlow).**
- **Bridgnorth Town Council**
- **Ludlow Town Council**
- **Presteigne Town Council**
- **RSPB**
- **Burwarton Show**

The volunteer team have always been interested in the biodiversity of the sites they visit and this year they continued recording species systematically and making biological records after each task. These records are submitted to SEDN, the local record centre and to NBN.

We have more swift boxes going up in our churches (thanks to the Opening the Ark project), more dormouse boxes have gone up in Bromfield where signs of dormice have been found by the Dormouse Group including particularly large animals and litters of young. This indicates that the Hazel Dormouse cannot just survive but thrive in a churchyard which has a river on two sides and busy road on the other. We have a new volunteer making habitat boxes for us, he has made around 25 tit and open fronted bird boxes to be put up in our sites.



A group of scything and raking volunteers at St Giles, Ludford 2024

The volunteers have collected several kilos of yellow rattle seed from local meadows owned by the National Trust. This seed is used to enhance our churchyard sites and is also sold for use in gardens or public spaces. One of our enterprising volunteers is helping with sales of seed and also scythe kits. We are now managing a roundabout in Presteigne. This has responded well to management and is now full of flowers and insects including yellow rattle and field scabious. Alex continues to teach scything, delivering courses for the RSPB and for Wildlife Trusts. We are now selling scythes via our website as well as at scything courses. The Opening the Ark project has also proved an invaluable link for the volunteers as we now have local people getting more involved with us and planning to collect green hay from some sites in the summer.

3. OPENING THE ARK

This project continued for 2 months into this reporting period. The time was spent in completing management plans, making 'event hampers' of resources to be kept in churches to help in running wildlife focussed events and in final reporting.

4. HERITAGE TO INSPIRE



In January 2024 a new project was launched at Longden Road Cemetery in Shrewsbury as the result of a successful National Lottery Heritage Fund grant. This was awarded to the 'Friends of Shrewsbury Cemeteries' (a longstanding group of volunteers who help to manage the site for wildlife) in conjunction with Shrewsbury Council and Caring for God's Acre. The project, 'Heritage to Inspire' will run for three years with the aims of restoring, interpreting and celebrating the rich social heritage and biodiversity of Longden Road.

The 30-acre site is something of a hidden gem. It was originally laid out in 1856 as a 'garden of remembrance' and is now designated as a Local wildlife Site on account of the wildflowers and fungi. However, the site is little visited by the public, so this project aims to invite local people to step inside the cemetery to discover more about this treasure on their doorstep.

So far, the project has achieved:

- Regular events including: bat walks, a moth release, a 'Wildlife Tracking and Signs' walk, wildflower folklore and strolls to enjoy bird song with approx. 150 people engaged and a mailing list of 50 people. Walks relating to fungi and biofluorescence are planned for later in the year.
- Restarting the monument recording, begun as part of the Beautiful Burial Grounds project. We held a welcome event for existing and new volunteers to demonstrate how the project has progressed and issue new plots with 35 people currently involved.
- A feasibility study has been commissioned to look at the reintroduction of slow worms and common lizards, species found local to the site.

- Tender documents have been issued to local, specialist contractors for the restoration of the most prominent and visually striking memorial, the Saxton-Girdler Monument with the work scheduled to take place in autumn 2024.
- Started a 'Lives at Longden' project, recruiting local artists, schools and community groups to illustrate some of the 370+ different species that make Longden Road cemetery their home.
- Developing interpretive signage for the site, with a focus on the biodiversity and social history as well as providing waymarking for people trying to locate an individual plot.
- The project has been publicised through local and national media.



5 OUR DIGITAL ANCESTORS



This project started in March 2024 and so there was little activity during this reporting period. Over the next decade the Church of England is working with AG Intl to map all Church of England burial grounds which give permission. These maps are useful for church wardens and incumbents and also anybody interested in social history or family history. AG Intl has received commercial funding to carry this out, but there are no funds for training, awareness raising or celebration of this amazing endeavour. CfGA will be delivering the people-focussed element of the initiative.

DELIVERING OUR CORE AIMS

Caring for God's Acre is constantly revisiting our core aims to ensure that we are delivering them across the board, through our project work and also the work of our core staff

Core staff are Andrea Gilpin, Mick Clifton and Harriet Carty with office and digital support from Prue Dakin and Anna Wilde. This team have been working to:

- 1 **Support local communities, groups and individuals who manage burial grounds**
- 2 **Charity and project development plus general fundraising**
- 3 **General management of the charity, its staff, governance, office**
- 4 **Organising Love Your Burial Ground Week**
- 5 **Supporting and increasing membership including Diocesan membership**

1. SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES, GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS WHO MANAGE BURIAL GROUNDS

We offer **support and guidance** to anybody involved in **managing a burial ground**. We encourage them to consider the full range of features within their site; **biodiversity, built heritage and social history** plus the opportunities to involve their local communities and inform their visitors. We advocate **investigation, recording and research** within burial grounds, to increase the body of knowledge about these fascinating places.

This is achieved through a combination of **phone calls, emails, webinars, public speaking and visits**, and through the **provision of resources** including written material, video, website content and social media. We have three paid-for services to help people plan management; **virtual visits** which involves a Zoom meeting and sharing photos, a **site visit** with bullet points and a **management brief** which follows our 5 Steps to burial ground management. These are promoted via our website.

CfGA also supports burial ground managers through the resources that we provide: our **Action Pack, Education Pack, Field Studies Council Fold-out Chart, Botanical Companion, Key to Unlock poster** and **Starter Guide**. All of these are available to download and/or buy via our website (N.B the FSC chart is only available to buy, not to unload). The **Starter Guide** is currently sent out in hard copy to anybody who requests it as part of Love Your Burial Ground week. We have **Spotters Guides** covering butterflies, wildflowers, fungi, corvids and swifts, swallows and martins on our website. For

those who want further information we have **in-depth guides** covering veteran and ancient churchyard trees, lichens, burial ground meadow and amphibians and reptiles. These guides are on our website along with **21 mini-films available** which are also on our YouTube channel.

2. CHARITY & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLUS GENERAL FUNDRAISING

This year has seen little project work taking place in the first half of the year, with two projects starting in 2024:

Our Digital Ancestors: CfGA initially applied in 2021 for funding to run a training project that would run in parallel to the mapping work taking place across all CofE churchyards, so that these maps can be used by local communities. We were asked to withdraw and amend our application with regards to digital accessibility. This was resubmitted in 2022 but without secure match funding in place. Our match funding is coming from Historic England who confirmed that they will fund this project in autumn 2023. We received permission to start from the Heritage Fund in March 2024 and the project got underway immediately after that.

Heritage to Inspire: This project, which takes place in a Shrewsbury cemetery, was applied for in summer 2023 and received a grant from the Heritage Fund in the autumn of 2023, ready to start January 2024.

John Ellerman Foundation: In July 2023, we were successful in receiving three-year core support funding from The John Ellerman Foundation. Over the next three years, this core support will enable us to expand our growth and increase our impact in a number of areas which includes; design of a major national project (net worth of over £1m lasting 4 or 5 years) in partnership with other organisations; enhance our position as the 'Go To' organisation for burial ground conservation, spanning built heritage, social history and biodiversity; increase our membership base; expand our income from non-grant sources; increase our activities and events for volunteers; increase biological records within burial grounds; and expand our delivery of smaller projects.

Wales-wide project: We have been building a project, in partnership with the Church in Wales during this accounting period. This will focus on generating community engagement and finding management solutions for Church in Wales churchyards. An Expression of Interest went to the Heritage Fund Welsh office just after the end of this reporting period and we expect an initial reply in the summer of 2024.

LEGACY

We have a legacy pack and dedicated staff member dealing with legacy enquiries – Anna Wilde. The legacy pack can be found here <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/support-us/leave-a-legacy/>

GEOGRAPHICAL REACH OF THE CHARITY

Following the decision in March 2023 the trustees decided that Caring for God's Acre should **extend its reach** in principle, to cover the **four nations** of the UK. We are not intending to actively work in either Scotland or Northern Ireland at present but will now be open to opportunities should they arise. We have been receiving some biological records from Scotland and Northern Ireland and, as these are received, the burial grounds in question are added to the Beautiful Burial Grounds NBN portal. So far we have 103 sites in Scotland and 1 in Northern Ireland.

3 GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF THE CHARITY

Core staff are charged with management of the charity including:

- **Managing the finances of the charity to ensure best value for all expenditure**
- **Maintaining and improving office systems to maximise effectiveness of human resources**
- **Reducing our carbon footprint and increasing sustainability**
- **Following CfGA policies and updating and checking those policies**
- **Organising meetings and reporting to trustees to allow robust governance**
- **Keeping up to date with changes in charity policies and systems.**
- **Organising the AGM which took place digitally**

CARBON FOOTPRINT

Our carbon footprint is now a standing agenda item at trustees meeting. During this year we have made the following carbon reductions:

- Seeking suppliers of office materials that are sustainable and carbon neutral. So far we have been able to switch to carbon neutral packaging for sending out sales such as Action Packs.
- Using only brown, unbleached envelopes.
- Encouraging our volunteers to lift share whenever possible.
- Prue Dakin, our Office Manager completed a carbon audit in December 2023 which can now be repeated annually.
- We have replaced the folder used for hard copies of our Action Pack with a cardboard one. It was previously plastic.

- We have investigated the carbon footprint of Foamex which we use for outdoor signs such as Meadow signs. This was found to be of low impact.
- It has proved difficult to fully assess the carbon footprint of our website but our hosting company claims to be powered by '100% certified carbon dioxide-free green hydropower'.
- We have been in the process of moving our current account and savings account from HSBC to the Co-operative Bank.

4 ORGANISING LOVE YOUR BURIAL GROUND WEEK

This national event takes place in the second week of June, spanning two weekends. People are encouraged to run **an event of their choice to encourage the public to visit their burial ground**, learn something about it and have an enjoyable time. Events are logged on the CfGA website. During 2023 there were 400 events during Love Your Burial Ground Week involving an estimated 8,200 people.

5 SUPPORTING & INCREASING MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING DIOCESAN or UNION MEMBERSHIP

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP MEMBERSHIP

During 2023/2024 our membership forum continued to provide support to members, with all new members receiving an individual log in. We have created a library of resources including the recordings of our webinars.

The paying membership of CfGA stood at 292 members at the end of April 2024.



Two editions of the members' magazine were produced and distributed. In the spring of 2023 we changed the name and look of the magazine which is now called **Beautiful Burial Grounds**.

This year we ran a **virtual AGM on Zoom**, the speaker was our patron Professor Chris Baines who spoke about Time to Restore & Rebuild. **79** people attended the AGM.

DIOCESAN MEMBERSHIPS

We have three rolling memberships with the Church of England dioceses of, **Lichfield, Hereford** and Church in Wales diocese of, **St David's** through which CfGA supply a range of services including **advice, support, communications** and our **printed resources**. These dioceses commit to **monthly financial support** of the charity. This membership is open to dioceses and unions from other denominations.

STAFF AND GOVERNANCE

TRUSTEES

The trustees who held office during the financial year and at the date of this report are:

Oliver Goode	Chair until AGM in November 2023
Gillian Binks	Vice Chair until AGM in November 2023 when Gill resigned from the trustees
Tony Graham	Treasurer
Lisette Davies	Secretary until AGM in November 2023 when Lisette resigned from the trustees
Catherine MacCarthy	Chair following AGM in November 2023
David Primrose	Vice Chair following AGM in November 2023
Anni Holden	
Judith Leigh	
Alex Glanville	
Simon Cooter	
Colin Fenn	

New trustees are recruited as needed, either by appointment at the AGM or by co-option. In 2015 we carried out an initial **skills audit of trustees** which is updated annually. One new trustee was recruited this year, Colin Fenn. The charity is governed by its constitution.

TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

CfGA Director or existing trustees suggest potential new trustees and identify the skills and experience which they would bring to the group. This is then considered by the Director and Chair of Trustees, assessing whether the new individual will fit with the existing skills of the trustees and whether a balance is being maintained regarding skills and experience and the objectives of the charity. If the potential new trustee is deemed to be suitable then either the Director or Chair of Trustees will approach them to see if they will be willing to stand and the other trustees are informed of this by email or post. If interested, the individual is invited to the next trustees meeting to learn more about the charity and the role of trustees. They are then invited to join.

New trustees meet with the Director prior to their first trustees meeting, who explains the work and objectives of the charity. They are given a full set of our publications and also a copy of the Roles of Trustees and generic guidelines on being a trustee from the Charity Commission.

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to its operations and finances, and are satisfied that systems are in place to minimise exposure to those risks.

GOVERNANCE ACTIVITY

During the year trustees held four trustees' meetings in June, September, December and March. Our **Finance & Risk Committee** meets a few weeks in advance of each of these meetings and then reports to full trustees. Trustees are also sent the minutes of the Finance & Risk Committee meetings. Two of the trustees' meetings took place digitally. Our December and March meetings were hybrids, with several trustees there in person and others online.

The Finance and Risk Committee oversees the **management of the finance**, monitoring expenditure against budget over the financial year. This includes the **preparation of the charity's annual accounts** and the routine financial management. This committee also considers **the risks to the charity** and the **projects being delivered** by the charity. The risk log is considered and updated at each meeting.

This committee reports to the **full board of trustees** which is responsible for approval of the budget and **the annual accounts**. This committee met four times this year with all meetings taking place on line.

Members: Oliver Goode, Tony Graham, Alex Glanville, Revd David Primrose. Also attending: Harriet Carty, Prue Dakin and Anna Wilde.

2023/2024 marked the first full year under the new **Business Plan**. This is used to report to quarterly trustee meetings by the Director.

The **Project Champions** meet or speak to the member of staff responsible for a project prior to the full board of trustees' meetings. They then **present the report** written by staff on their particular project and **add their views and information**. They take a lead in the governance of the projects for which they are champion.

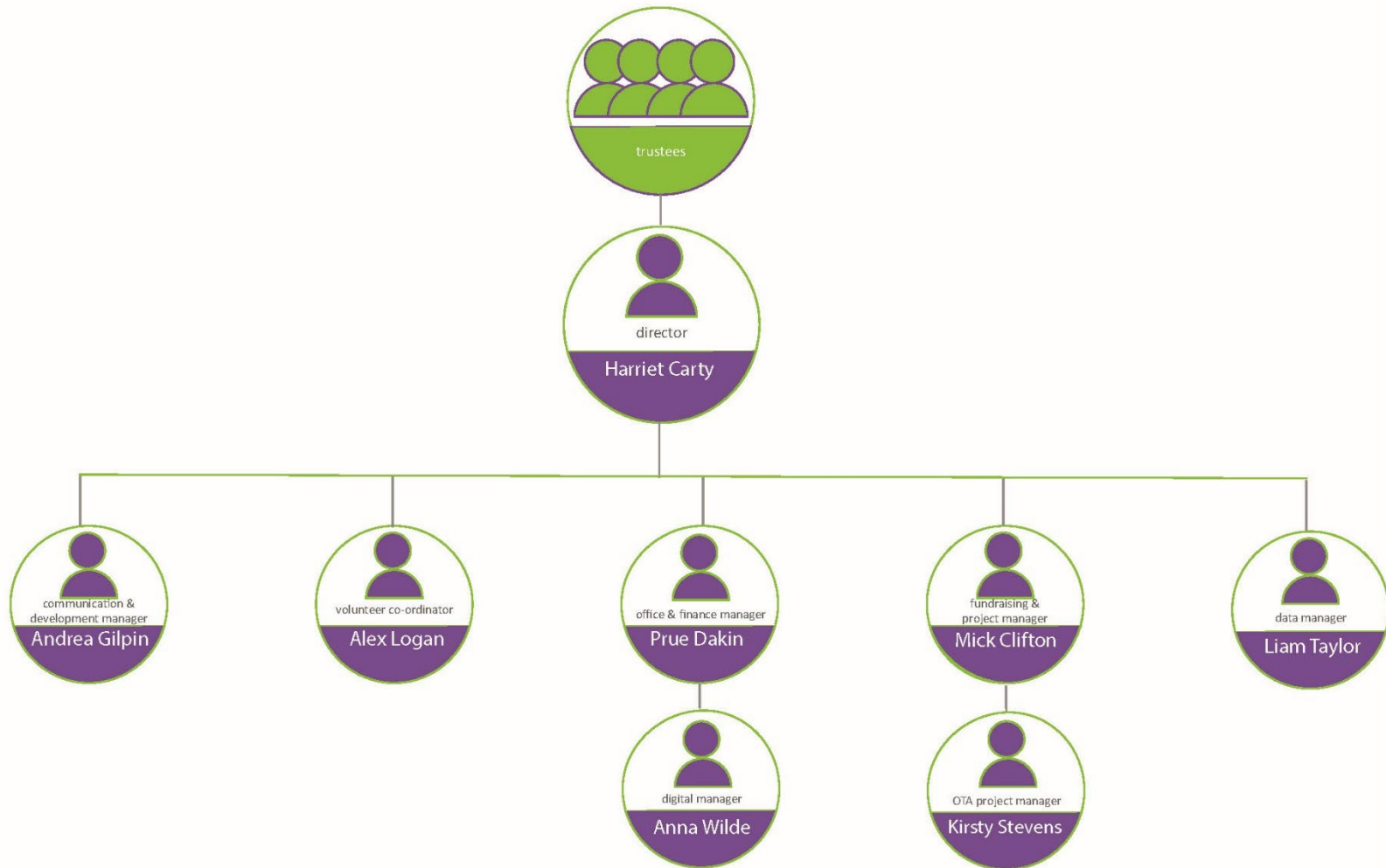
- **The CfGA Conservation Volunteers champion is Anni Holden**
- **Opening the Ark champion is Oliver Goode**
- **Our Digital Ancestors champion is Judith Leigh**
- **Heritage to Inspire champion (pending)**

Governance and support for the Director is given via the full board of trustees and also through monthly informal meetings between the **Chair of Trustees Catherine MacCarthy** and the **Director Harriet Carty**.

STAFF

During this reporting period we seen some staff changes:

Harriet Carty	Director, 3 days per week.
Andrea Gilpin	Conservation & Communications Manager, 2 days per week.
Prue Dakin	Office Manager, 3 days per week.
Anna Wilde	Digital Manager, 2 days per week.
Mick Clifton	Fund Raiser and Project Manager, 1.5 days per week.
Alex Logan	Volunteer Coordinator, 4 days per week.
Liam Taylor	Beautiful Burial Ground Data Manager, 2 days a week.
Kirsty Stevens	Opening the Ark Project Manager, 4 days per week, then 3 days per week working as office support and Heritage to Inspire Manager from January 2024.



Caring for God's Acre Organisational Chart
at April 2024

TREASURER'S REPORT 2023 - 2024

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees believe that the Charity should hold financial reserves because:

It is promoted as best practice by the Charity Commission

It has no endowment funding for its various projects and is dependent upon income from donor funding, which is inevitably subject to fluctuation.

It requires protection against and the ability to continue operating in the event of any possible future damaging events

The Trustees believe that the minimum level of balance on reserves should be the equivalent of at least three months operating costs for the Charity as a whole. This will be calculated, reviewed and approved annually. The reserves should be built up to the desired level in stages consistent with the Charity's overall financial position and its need to maintain and develop its objectives. Based on the latest financial statements, three months operating costs amount to approximately £43,500 and this is covered by the reserves held.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1ST MAY 2023 – 30TH APRIL 2024

This was a year of transition for Caring for God's Acre. Overall, the accounts show a deficit of £8,800 for the year. Although not ideal, this was not unexpected. Total income for the year was £165,397 compared to £314,914 in 2022–23. With the completion of delivery of two projects – Beautiful Burial Grounds and Opening the Ark – restricted income from grants was down by over £198,000. This reduction was partly offset by an unrestricted grant for core costs from the John Ellermann Foundation. Over the year there was a substantial increase in subscriptions from members, up by nearly 50% to £12,837, a consequence of an increased annual fee alongside a growth in membership.

Expenditure for the year was £174,198, a reduction of nearly £105,000 compared to the previous financial year, which also highlights this was a period of transition for the charity. Staff costs were down £57,445 to £132,155, 84% of which goes towards direct charitable expenditure and the remainder on management and administration. This proportion remains the same as the previous year. There were some costs incurred on Our Digital Ancestors which accrued at the end of the

financial year and will be claimed from the National Heritage Lottery Fund in September 2024. Over the course of the year, enough unrestricted income was received to cover Caring for God's Acre's core costs.

During the year, Sarah Ellison stepped down as Treasurer. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sarah for her diligent oversight of the charity's finances in recent years. Over the course of the year, I have been working with Prue Dakin to help the charity move to a new bookkeeping system. I thank Prue for her helpful insights as I've learnt about the various activities the charity undertakes. It seemed a natural step for me to take on the Treasurer's role after Sarah decided to step down.

Despite the current challenging economic environment, Caring for God's Acre's finances remain in a healthy state. We are at the start of a new, major project, Our Digital Ancestors, which will run for the next four years and is funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England, with some additional financial support from the Church of England and AG Intl. With other exciting projects in development, the future looks bright.

Tony Graham, Treasurer

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

I report on the Accounts of the Charities for the year ended 30 April 2024, which are set out on pages 3 to 19.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The Charities' Trustees are responsible for the preparation of Accounts. The Charities' 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,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charities and a comparison of the Accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosure in the Accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all 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 EXAMINERS' 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 to comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act;

have 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.

S. E Hardwick
Accountant

45 Etnam Street
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 8AE

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

The Financial Statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of investments and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting by Charities.

INCOMING RESOURCES

All incoming resources are recognised when the charity becomes entitled to them, virtually certain of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Investment income is recorded when receivable.

RESOURCES EXPENDED

Expenditure is included in the accounts on an accruals basis. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as incurred.

FUND ACCOUNTING

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds set aside at the discretion of the trustees for specific purposes.

Restricted funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for a specific purpose, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS AND DEPRECIATION

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Where tangible assets have been donated they are stated at their market value at the date of the donation.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following basis:

Equipment	15%	Reducing Balance Basis
Computer Equipment	33%	Reducing Balance Basis
Website	3 Years	Straight Line Basis

INVESTMENTS

These are stated at the market value at the Balance Sheet date. Realised and unrealised gains and losses on investments are taken to the Income and Expenditure Account.

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

	Notes	Un- Restricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income and Endowments					
Grants and Donations		63,813	41,037	104,850	275,343
Other Income:					
Investment Income		3,478	-	3,478	1,036
Other Income		32,800	-	32,800	3,155
Members Subscriptions		12,837	-	12,837	8,646
Charitable Activities					
Operational Programmes		11,432	-	11,432	26,734
Total Income		£124,360	£41,037	£165,397	£314,914
Expenditure:					
Expenditure on Charitable Activities	7	68,607	64,958	133,565	240,944
Support Costs	8	40,510	123	40,633	37,969
Total Expenditure		£109,117	£65,081	£174,198	£278,913
Net Expenditure before Gains on Investments		15,243	(24,044)	(8,801)	36,001
Gains on Investment Assets					
Realised		-	-	-	-
Unrealised		-	-	-	-
Transfers between Funds		(25,789)	25,789	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(10,546)	1,745	(8,801)	36,001
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		164,484	39,549	204,033	£168,032
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	9	£153,938	£41,294	£195,232	£204,033

The Accounting Policies and Notes on pages 14 and 17 to 19 form an integral part of these Accounts.

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

BALANCE SHEET 30 APRIL 2024

	NOTES	2024	2023
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	1	7,756	12,287
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	2	8,226	784
Cash at Bank and In Hand		182,255	193,763
		<u>190,481</u>	<u>194,547</u>
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	3	(3,005)	(2,801)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>187,476</u>	<u>191,746</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>195,232</u>	<u>204,033</u>
FUNDS			
Unrestricted Funds	9	153,938	168,032
Restricted Funds	9	41,294	36,001
		<u>195,232</u>	<u>204,033</u>

Approved by the Trustees on
and signed on their behalf

Catherine MacCarthy

Chair

The Accounting Policies and Notes on pages 14 and 17 to 19 form an integral part of these Accounts.

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS 30 APRIL 2024

1. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Equipment	Total
COST	£	£
Brought Forward	34,267	34,267
Additions	1,414	1,414
Disposals	(6,569)	(6,569)
As at 30 April 2024	<u>29,112</u>	<u>29,112</u>
DEPRECIATION		
Brought Forward	(24,469)	(24,469)
Charge for Year	(2,621)	(2,621)
On Disposals	5,734	5,734
As at 30 April 2024	<u>(21,356)</u>	<u>(21,356)</u>
NET BOOK VALUE		
As at 30 April 2024	<u>7,756</u>	<u>7,756</u>
As at 30 April 2023	<u>12,287</u>	<u>12,287</u>

2. DEBTORS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Debtors	7,017	-
Prepayments	1,209	784
	<u>8,226</u>	<u>784</u>

3. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accruals	2,002	1,864
Other Creditors	1,003	937
	<u>3,005</u>	<u>2,801</u>

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS 30 APRIL 2024

4. STAFF COSTS	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and Salaries	132,155	189,600
	132,155	189,600
The average number of employees was 8, in respect of which expenditure was in the following ratios:-		
	%	%
Direct Charitable Expenditure	84	84
Management and Administration	16	16
	100	100

5. TRUSTEES REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

None of the Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their activities as Trustees.

6. NET EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR

This is stated after charging:

	£	£
Depreciation	2,621	3,581
Loss on Disposal	85	-
Independent Examiners Fees	1,957	1,864

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	£	£
Salaries	111,010	163,056
Project Costs	972	-
Consumables	2,387	4,493
Volunteer Costs	775	3,390
Training & Events	-	8,235
Travel Expenses	4,430	7,511
Publicity & Information	2,728	14,514
Professional Fees	8,557	35,894
Depreciation	2,621	3,851
Loss on Disposal	85	-
	133,565	240,944

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS 30 APRIL 2024

8. SUPPORT COSTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries	21,145	26,544
Membership Costs	1,639	-
Rent & Office Expenses	14,288	8,802
Accountancy Fees	2,577	2,513
Treasurer Expenses	900	-
Sundry Expenses	84	110
	<u>40,633</u>	<u>37,969</u>

9. MOVEMENT ON FUNDS

Restricted	Fund Balance B/F	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfer Funds	Fund Balance C/F
Beautiful Burial Ground	20,972	-	(6,678)	-	14,294
Opening The Ark	18,577	12,070	(11,813)	(18,834)	-
Our Digital Ancestors	-	27,000	-	-	27,000
	<u>39,549</u>	<u>39,070</u>	<u>(18,491)</u>	<u>(18,834)</u>	<u>41,294</u>
Unrestricted	Fund Balance B/F	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfer Funds	Fund Balance C/F
General	152,197	126,327	(155,707)	23,365	146,182
Designated Funds: Fixed Assets	12,287	-	-	(4,531)	7,756
	<u>164,484</u>	<u>126,327</u>	<u>(155,707)</u>	<u>18,834</u>	<u>153,938</u>

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

CHARITY NO: 1155536

DETAILED MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

ARMSTRONG ROGERS & CO
Accountants
LEOMINSTER

**CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE
FUNDING INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024**

	Total	General	God's Acre Volunteers	Beautiful Burial Ground	Opening The Ark	Our Digital Ancestors	Church of England	Heritage to Inspire	Churches Count on Nature	Small Projects
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME										
Grants & Donations	104,850	63,813	1,967	-	12,070	27,000	-	-	-	-
Interest Received	3,478	3,478	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Members Subscriptions	12,837	12,837	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Income	32,800	32,800	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Operational Programmes	11,432	11,432	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Income	165,397	124,360	1,967	-	12,070	27,000	-	-	-	-
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES										
Salaries	111,010	60,590	19,799	5,079	6,087	-	14,257	5,198	-	-
Project Costs	972	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	972	-
Consumables	2,387	228	1,669	-	480	-	-	10	-	-
Volunteer Costs	775	-	733	-	42	-	-	-	-	-
Travel Expenses	4,430	1,958	1,685	99	571	-	-	111	-	6
Publicity & Information	2,728	2,728	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional Fees	8,557	397	-	1,500	4,633	-	-	800	-	1,227
Depreciation	2,621	2,621	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loss on Disposal	85	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	133,565	68,607	23,886	6,678	11,813	-	14,257	6,119	972	1,233
MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION										
Salaries	21,145	21,145	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Membership Costs	1,639	1,639	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rent & Office Expenses	14,288	14,165	123	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accountancy Fees	2,577	2,577	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Treasurer Expenses	900	900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry Expenses	84	84	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	40,633	40,510	123	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure	174,198	109,117	24,009	6,678	11,813	-	14,257	6,119	972	1,233
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	(8,801)	15,243	(22,042)	(6,678)	257	27,000	(14,257)	(6,119)	(972)	(1,233)
FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	204,033	164,484	-	20,972	18,577	-	-	-	-	-
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS	-	(25,789)	22,042	-	(18,834)	-	14,257	6,119	972	1,233
FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	195,232	153,938	-	14,294	-	27,000	-	-	-	-

CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Un-restricted - Grants & Donations	63,813		16,310	
- Interest Received	3,478		1,036	
- Members Subscriptions	12,837		8,646	
- Other Income	32,800		3,155	
- Operational Programmes	11,432		23,564	
		124,360		52,711
Restricted - Grants & Donations	41,037		259,033	
- Operational Programmes	-		3,170	
		41,037		262,203
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
Salaries	111,010		163,056	
Project Expenses	972		-	
Consumables	2,387		4,493	
Volunteer Costs	775		3,390	
Training & Events	-		8,235	
Travel Expenses	4,430		7,511	
Publicity & Information	2,728		14,514	
Professional Fees	8,557		35,894	
Depreciation	2,621		3,851	
Loss on Disposals	85		-	
		(133,565)		(240,944)
MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION				
Salaries	21,145		26,544	
Membership Costs	1,639		-	
Rent & Office Expenses	14,288		8,802	
Accountancy Fees	2,577		2,513	
Treasurer Fees	900		-	
Sundry Expenses	84		110	
		(40,633)		(37,969)
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME		(£8,801)		£36,001

**SCHEDULE OF FIXED ASSETS
YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2024**

	C O S T				D E P R E C I A T I O N				NET BOOK VALUE 30.4.2024 £
	As at 1.5.2023 £	Additions £	Disposals £	As at 30.4.2024 £	As at 1.5.2023 £	On Disposals £	Rate	This Year £	As at 30.4.2024 £
EQUIPMENT									
Scythes	7,301			7,301	(3,060)		15	(636)	(3,696)
Garden Tools	449			449	(403)		15	(7)	(410)
Wheeled Trimmer	839		(839)		(832)	832			
Hand Hay Baler	220		(220)		(218)	218			
Wheeled Trimmer	839		(839)		(832)	832			
Hand Hay Baler	350		(350)		(347)	347			
19" TFT Monitor	129		(129)		(124)	124			
Olympus Camera	430		(430)		(428)	428			
Computer Equipment	800		(800)		(794)	794			
2 Book cases	336		(336)		(332)	332			
3 Tables and Chairs	586		(586)		(579)	579			
Perch Office Stool	150		(150)		(141)	141			
Website	6,600			6,600	(6,600)		3yrs		(6,600)
Filming Equipment	1,379			1,379	(1,101)		33	(92)	(1,193)
Dell Laptop	2,442			2,442	(1,950)		33	(162)	(2,112)
Samsung Tablet	433			433	(346)		33	(29)	(375)
IT Equipment	475			475	(379)		33	(32)	(411)
Laptop	555			555	(443)		33	(37)	(480)
Office Chair	351			351	(168)		15	(27)	(195)
Microsoft Surface	649		(649)		(518)	518			
Zoom Recorder	213			213	(170)		33	(14)	(184)
Dell Laptop	485		(485)		(339)	339			
Asus ExpertBook	1,079			1,079	(755)		33	(107)	(862)
Printer	204			204	(112)		33	(30)	(142)
Office Chair	410			410	(226)		33	(61)	(287)
Asus Laptop	526			526	(290)		33	(78)	(368)
Dell Laptop & Monitor	759			759	(418)		33	(113)	(531)
Vostro 3515 Laptop	809			809	(446)		33	(120)	(566)
Cycle	2,907			2,907	(1,602)		33	(431)	(2,033)
Gazebos (2)	561		(187)	374	(185)	62	33	(83)	(206)
Swift Boxes	569		(569)		(188)	188			
Lenovo Laptop	432			432	(143)		33	(95)	(238)
Lenovo Laptop V15		630		630			33	(208)	(208)
Lenovo Thinkbook Laptop		784		784			33	(259)	(259)
TOTAL	£34,267	£1,414	(£6,569)	£29,112	(£24,469)	£5,734		(£2,621)	(£21,356)
									£7,756