



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

*Celebrating 28 Years of
Helping to prevent homelessness*

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Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation - No. 1171222

1 Objectives and Activities

The Wycombe Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (WRDGS) is a charity set up for the relief of poverty amongst people who are homeless or inadequately housed in the Wycombe area. The Scheme provides guarantees for rent deposits, and other assistance on behalf of said persons who are in need of accommodation and who would otherwise be unable to secure accommodation in the Wycombe area.

The actions taken by the Scheme to meet its objectives include:

1. Providing a guarantee as an alternative to the cash deposit normally required by a landlord to secure a tenancy. The landlords can claim against the guarantee if they would be entitled to make deductions from a pre-paid deposit. This can help those who are able to pay rent, for example if they qualify for Universal Credit Housing Costs, but who cannot afford a deposit.
2. Maintaining and sustaining existing tenancies by liaising with tenants, landlords, benefits agencies and other support bodies to pre-empt and address issues threatening a tenancy.
3. Giving free, confidential advice on housing-related matters.

2 Background

The early planning stages of the Scheme were started in 1995 by a partnership between the members of The Wycombe District Council Housing Forum and The Source Group - a lay ecumenical Christian covenant community based in High Wycombe.

The Charity was registered in 1996 as a charitable trust but converted to being a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the year 2017-18. The charitable objects, staff and trustees remained the same, but a CIO is the recommended legal structure for a small charity like WRDGS.

At WRDGS' inception it was agreed that Wycombe District Council (WDC) would provide an annual grant to pay for on-costs (the costs of employing staff), the churches of High Wycombe would contribute towards running costs and The Guinness Partnership Limited would set aside £30,000 to cover the guarantees.

WRDGS applies for an annual grant from the Council (which is now Buckinghamshire Council (BC)). The Council grant no longer fully covers on-costs, so the Scheme has to raise money from other grants, donations and fund-raising activities.

3 Achievements and Performance in 2023-24

In our area, the last 3 years have seen a rise in private rental prices of 31%. As Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have been frozen for 3 years, the gap between LHA rates and private sector market rents has grown even wider.

This, together with the rise in the cost of living, has meant that our clients have really struggled to source affordable accommodation. Although we still managed to house 52 households, we have seen a large increase in our tenancy sustainment and rescue work.

We are helping Buckinghamshire Council implement their Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. Our Operations' Manager is Chair of the Rough Sleepers Core Group, which is a multi-agency group that meets fortnightly and assists rough sleepers to access suitable and

appropriate housing. Using funds from the Rough Sleepers Initiative (a grant provided to BC by the Government), we assisted rough sleepers on their homelessness journey by either paying a month's rent in advance or repaying previous arrears so they can access our local hostels. After a period of stability, we can then help them to find an affordable property in the private sector and can pay their first month's rent and deposit. We also offer ongoing support to help them maintain their tenancy.

We also continued to provide specialist advice at Wycombe Homeless Connection's weekly Legal Housing Clinic.

4 People helped by the Scheme in 2023-24

By the end of 2023-2024, the Scheme had HOUSED 1792 households, a total of 1965 adults and 759 children housed. Of these, 38 households (38 Adults and 2 children) were new to the Scheme and 12 households (12 Adults and 0 children) renewed their tenancies with the help of the Scheme.

By the end 2023-2024, the Scheme had RESCUED 706 clients' tenancies. Of these 23 were new in 2023-2024. We have also helped to SUSTAIN 62 tenancies in order to keep clients in their accommodation who would have been at risk of becoming homeless.

The following case studies are based on real people, although names and details have been changed to preserve anonymity. Much of the work that we do is more complicated than simply housing someone:

Housed

A client was verified as sleeping rough due to a relationship breakdown. He was placed in emergency accommodation where he managed his tenancy really well. He was referred to us as he had a bad credit rating and was in receipt of benefits. He had proved that he was ready to live independently but kept failing referencing checks. We persuaded a landlord to give him a chance and, using funds from the Rough Sleepers Initiative, paid his first month's rent in advance, covered his deposit and bought him some furniture. The landlord is very pleased with him and has just renewed his tenancy.

Housed Twice

We housed a client from a local hostel into a studio flat. Unfortunately, her Universal Credit claim was unfairly restricted which led to substantial rent arrears. We reassured her landlord that we would resolve the situation, so he postponed her eviction. After 9 months of negotiations, the DWP finally reassessed her claim and backdated her housing costs, which cleared her arrears. She then had a child and as the studio was now unsuitable, we helped her successfully apply for social housing. The landlord then re-let the property to another of our homeless clients.

Rescued Housed and Employed

A recently unemployed client was referred to us from the local Job Club as it appeared that her landlord was trying to illegally evict her. We supported her to claim Universal Credit and negotiated with her landlord to stop the illegal eviction. This gave us time to help her find a new property. We also heard of a local job vacancy that may suit her. She successfully applied for the job and is now no longer claiming benefits.

5 Organisations who referred Clients to WRDGS during 2023-24

Buckinghamshire Council Housing Options Team
 Buckinghamshire Council Customer Services Centre
 Buckinghamshire Social Care
 Citizens Advice Bureau
 Connection Floating Support and RESET Services
 Chiltern Adult Mental Health Team GP Surgeries - Social Prescribers
 H.M. Prison
 Job Centre Plus
 Oasis Partnership
 Old Tea Warehouse
 One YMCA
 Padstones Probation
 Private Sector Landlords
 P3 Housing Support Service
 Saunderton Lodge Hostel
 Thames Valley Police
 Wycombe Homeless Connection
 Wycombe Women's Aid
 Youth Enquiry Service

6 Organisations to whom WRDGS referred clients to during 2023-24

Buckinghamshire Council (buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
 Central Aid Society (central-aid.org.uk)
 Wycombe Homeless Connection (www.wyhoc.org.uk)
 P3 - Changing lives every day (p3charity.org) Connection Support
 (connectionsupport.org.uk)
 Vicars Relief Fund - St Martin-in-the-Fields | Supporting people away from
 homelessness (smitfc.org)
 One YMCA High Wycombe Hostel (oneymca.org.uk)
 Old Tea Warehouse (riverside.org.uk)

7 Financial Review

In the 2023-24 financial year the total value of new guarantees written by the scheme was £8,333.44. By the end of 2023-24 the total value of Guarantees written by the Scheme since its inception was £ 440,594.48 with a total claim pay out of £4,863.26. This makes the Scheme's average claim rate 1.10%

Review of the Charity's Financial Position at the end of the Period

During 2023-24 the Scheme's operation was financed by grants from:

- Buckinghamshire Council
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Albert Hunt Trust
- Rothschild Foundation (£10,000 per year for 3 years)
- Leathersellers Foundation
- Squared Up – matched funding
- Downley Parish Council
- local churches
- private donors
- fund-raising events.

We are very grateful to all of our donors and the effort people put in to raising funds for us. One lady made glass angels and sold them at craft fayres, others helped with our Tombola at a local fair (Downley Day) and many people kindly gave us extra donations around Christmas.

Apart from the funding which we needed in order to keep running, Buckinghamshire Council passed on to us money from a restricted grant which they had received from the Government to help to house those who are particularly difficult to house (the Move on Prevention Fund). We already received a restricted fund in 22-23 from the Council from the Rough Sleepers' Initiative fund and we spent £19,315 of this during the year. Amongst other things, this has enabled us to pay off people's rent arrears, give them money for their first month's rent in advance, pay cash deposits if required and to buy essential furniture (eg. beds).

WRDGS has the following funds ear-marked for specific uses. These are documented on the Balance Sheet of the annual accounts.

- a) Restricted fund from the Deposit Protection Service for rent in advance payments and other expenses needed to help people into housing.
- b) Restricted fund from the Move on Prevention Scheme to be used to house those who are particularly difficult to house.
- c) Restricted fund from the Rough Sleepers Initiative to be used to house people.
- d) Fund to cover our statutory redundancy liabilities if our staff had to be made redundant.
- e) Fund to cover 26 weeks statutory sick pay.
- f) £2,000 given to the Scheme by Guinness Partnership Ltd in the early days to alleviate cash flow problems. It is kept aside to enable a quick payout of a claim on a deposit guarantee while the Scheme waits for Guinness to pay the claim. It is not restricted.

Funding for the Future

It is estimated that WRDGS will need £88,500 to run during the year 2024-25 (including money required to top-up its statutory liabilities for possible redundancy and sick pay).

Before the end of 2023-24, WRDGS had secured a grant from Buckinghamshire Council of £62,500 for 2024–25. This grant has remained the same since 2014 so a request for an increase will again be made during the next financial year.

Our fundraising was very successful towards the end of 23-24 and we secured some large grants as well as receiving much support from our local community which was very heartening. This means that we had £41,932 undesignated reserves at the end of 23-24 which meant that we could start 2024 in a more comfortable position than we started 2023.

WRDGS was noted as a key partner in Wycombe District Council's Homelessness Strategy and has continued to collaborate with Buckinghamshire Council as it did with Wycombe District Council.

Policy for holding reserves and amounts at end of 2023–24

WRDGS has the following reserves:

- Liability for Statutory Redundancy Pay if staff had to be made redundant: £35,728
- Liability for 26 weeks' Statutory Sick Pay for one member of staff: £2,844
- Money from Guinness Partnership - reserved for guarantees: £2,000. (Guinness Partnership Ltd holds a further £28,000 for guarantees in its bank account)

8 Structure, Governance and Management

WRDGS is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) whose governing document is a constitution. As well as individual people applying to be trustees, the following organisations can nominate trustees for the charity:

- Buckinghamshire Council,
- Guinness Partnership Ltd.,
- Churches Together High Wycombe,
- The Youth Enquiry Service,
- The Citizen's Advice Bureau.

The Scheme is managed by a steering committee comprising the trustees and its two members of staff.

The Scheme's Steering Committee during 2023-24

Catriona Plummer	Trustee nominated by Churches Together High Wycombe (Chair of trustees)
Cllr. Paul Turner	Trustee nominated by Buckinghamshire Council
Nancy Bradshaw	Trustee (Fundraising)
Clive Bradshaw	Trustee (Secretary)
Eddie Maguire	Trustee (Treasurer)
Phil Thomas	Operations Manager (paid member of staff)
Tracey Thomas	Client Servicing Officer (paid member of staff).

The trustees would like to thank the following people who donated their services free of charge:

Anthony Pearmain – Web site design and IT Consultant @ StratMetrix

Sharon Marshall - Keeping Books 4 U (Payroll)

Steven Potts – Independent Examiner of End of Year Accounts

We are very grateful to our many donors during 2023-24 who continued to support us in spite of the cost-of-living crisis.

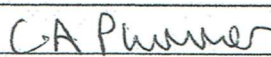
9 Future Aims of the Scheme

- To recruit more accommodation providers.
- To secure permanent long-term funding to ensure a more secure financial position; to increase our general unrestricted reserves.
- To improve the conditions in private rented accommodation, especially Houses of Multiple Occupation, by ensuring that reasonable standards are met.
- To recognise that, when seeking accommodation, certain groups and individuals are discriminated against and to oppose such discrimination.
- Through good management to maintain our low claim rate.
- To strive to improve our service.

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Catriona Plummer	Eddie Maguire
Position	Chair	Treasurer

Date 27 Jan 2025

THE WYCOMBE RENT DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2024

		Total 31-Mar-24	Total 31-Mar-23
<u>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE</u>			
	Note		
<u>INCOME</u>			
Donations inc Lotto	2	9,321	2,380
Gift Aid Tax Refund		80	782
BC Grant	3	62,500	62,500
Other Income & Grants	4	42,000	0
COIF Deposit Interest		476	176
Bank Interest		533	135
TOTAL INCOME (To Run The Organisation)		114,910	65,973
Restricted Funds for Housing People	7	31623	53590
TOTAL OVERALL INCOME		146,533	119,564
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
Salaries & On-costs		75,683	71,563
Printing, Postage & Stationery		96	87
Telephone / IT		1,057	884
Travel & Parking		129	127
Subscriptions		295	295
Bank Charges		120	121
Rent		3,960	3,810
Insurance		684	860
PPE Equipment		0	0
Other		46	66
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (RUNNING COSTS)		82,070	77,813
Payments from Restricted Funds for Housing People		19,315	16,359
TOTAL OVERALL EXPENDITURE		101,385	94,172
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR (RUNNING COSTS)		32,840	(11,840)
OVERALL NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		45,148	25,392

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 30.11.2024

and signed on its behalf by C.A.Plummer - Chairman

THE WYCOMBE RENT DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2024

BALANCE SHEET		Note	31-Mar-24		31-Mar-23	
			£	£	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS						
Current Account			73,388		30,019	
COIF Deposit			10,000		10,000	
RIA Account			46,116		45,803	
Debtors & Prepayments	5		0		280	
			129,504		86,102	
CURRENT LIABILITIES						
Creditors & Accruals	6		124		1,869	
			124		1,869	
NET CURRENT ASSETS				129,380	84,233	
NET ASSETS				129,380	84,233	
FUNDS						
Guinness Fund				2,000	2,000	
Redundancy Reserve	7(a)			35,728	31,700	
SSP Reserve				2,844	2,583	
Other restricted funds (Move on Prevention)	7(b) & 8			31,547		
(Rough Sleepers Initiative)	7(b) & 8			14,351	33,591	
(BGS)	7(b) & 8			0	11,235	
DPS fund	7(b) & 8			978	978	
Undesignated Reserves				41,932	2,146	
				129,380	84,233	

THE WYCOMBE RENT DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31/03/2024

1) ACCOUNTING POLICIES

General

These accounts have been prepared under the historic cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting by Charities

2) DONATIONS (Incl Lotto)

	£
Total Donations	9277
Lotto	44
	<u>9321</u>
Donors	
S.Connolly	150
Anon	100
N Hanbury	120
St Peter's Church Loudwater	450
W&C Plummer	1490
Anon	20
M Sylvester	20
P Neale	100
K Russell	10
Union Baptist Church	1000
St Augustine's Church	556
St Anne's Church	500
Downley Day	385
St Wulstan	236
Our Lady of Grace	203
C&W Bunting	240
P.Hogwood	240
J.Briggs	180
M.Bull	100
Downley Parish	100
Anon	100
P.Priestley	120
Collection at Wycombe Swan Theatre	75
Anon	50
V.Brewster	50
Anon	50
E.Ball	70
G&H Dodgson	60
EASY FUNDRAISING	84
Amazon	28
Gallagher	700
P.Crotty	20
Giveasyoulive	17
Online Giving (Kanadoo & Goodhub)	1653 *
TOTAL	9277

* Breakdown of online giving

Squared Up match funding	1350
E. Maguire	100
V. Barkaway	90
Anon	50
Anon	60
P. Priestley	30
B. Daly	20
D. Harvey	15
M. Patterson	12
J.Moore	10
Platform charges	-84

Actual Received 1653

THE WYCOMBE RENT DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31/03/2024

3)	BC GRANT	
	Used towards staff salaries and on costs.	<u><u>62500</u></u>
4)	OTHER INCOME & GRANTS	£
	The Albert Hunt Trust	7000
	Rothschild Foundation	10000
	The National Lottery Community Fund	20000
	The Leathersellers Foundation	5000
	Total	<u><u>42000</u></u>
5)	DEBTORS	£
		0
		<u><u>0</u></u>
6)	CREDITORS	£
	P Thomas Expenses	124
		<u><u>124</u></u>

THE WYCOMBE RENT DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH 2024
Notes

7) MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS AND RESERVES

7(a) Designated Reserves	SSP	Redundancy	Guinness	Total
O/Bal 1 April 2023	2,583	31,700	2,000	36,283
Movement in reserves / designated funds in the year	261	4,028	0	4,289
C/Bal 31 Mar 24	2,844	35,728	2,000	40,572

7(b) Restricted Funds	BGS	DPS	MOP	RSI	Total
Presented combined in 22/23 accountsO/Bal 1 April 2023	11,235	978		33,590	45,804
Receipts 23/24			31,547	76	31,623
Payments 23/24				(19,315)	(19,315)
Movement in reserves / designated funds in the year Note 8(a)	(11,235)				(11,235)
C/Bal 31 Mar 24	0	978	31,547	14,351	46,876

7(c) Undesignated Funds	O/Bal 1 April 2023	2,146
Net surplus for year	32,840	
Movement to Statutory Redundancy and SSP reserves	(4,289)	
Movement to undesignated reserve from BC Grant Scheme	11,235	
	41,932	

8) RESTRICTED FUNDS - GRANTS, PURPOSES & HISTORY

Grants to relieve homelessness, for specific actions or with specific constraints (i.e. not for running the charity)

		Years					
		2018-21/22		2022/23		2023/24	
		Receipts	Spend	Receipts	Spend	Receipts	Spend
							Remaining
8(a)	BC Grant Scheme: restricted fund received from Buckinghamshire Council, primarily to pay rent in advance. Restrictions removed by the Council in 23-24 and fund transferred to undesignated reserves.	50,000	(45,551)	23,147	(16,360)		11,235
8(b)	DPS - Restricted fund donated by the Deposit Protection Service to assist with housing homeless people.	10,000	(9,022)				978
8(c)	BC MOP - Move on Prevention fund with restrictions defined by the Government and has to be used to house people who are particularly difficult to house.					31,547	31,547
8(d)	RSI – Rough Sleepers Initiative funding allocated to WRDGS by Buckinghamshire Council from a restricted grant which they received from the Government to be used to house people who are homeless.			33,590		76	(19,315)
		81 Payments		47 Payments		42 Payments	



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Wycombe Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1171222

Set out on pages

1 - 5

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2024.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

SR Potts

Date:

30/11/2024

Name:

Steven Robert Potts

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCCA

Address:

15 Hylton Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 4BZ