



**LEWES DISTRICT CHURCHES HOMELINK**

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT  
&  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the year ended

**31st DECEMBER 2023**

Registered Charity Number 1174895

Office address: 208 High Street, School Hill, LEWES, East Sussex, BN7 2NS

The Board of Trustees of Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (registered charity number 1174895) presents its Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

#### 1 Charity objects

The object of the Charity is 'the relief of persons in housing need who are in financial hardship, elderly or sick, and are resident or seeking residence in the area of the Lewes District Council'.

#### 2 Governance

Lewes District Churches HOMELINK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), set up in 2017 to assume the role of an earlier unincorporated charity of the same name, founded in 1998. The CIO is governed in accordance with the Charity Commission's foundation model constitution.

The Board of Trustees meets four times a year and has delegated management responsibilities to a Management Committee between meetings. Up to twelve trustees are appointed by the Churches Together groups in Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford, and a further four trustees may be co-opted by the Board. An annual meeting open to all local supporters was held in Seaford on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

#### 3 Charitable activities

The principal charitable activity of HOMELINK is the provision of interest-free loans to people seeking private rented accommodation in the Lewes District area. Loans can cover the deposit and/or first month's rent and are generally repayable by monthly instalments over periods of 3-5 years.

In addition, a limited number of small non-repayable grants are available to help with some of the costs of setting up home in a new place or replacing white goods.

Demand for our small grants service has grown exponentially as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. In 2023, we provided 264 one-off grants to purchase essential items for the home or emergency support with start-up costs when moving to a new rental property, as well as energy saving grants for carpets and curtains.

Trustees note that there is an increasing shortage of private rented accommodation and that this has made it more difficult to help people; however, we remain committed to supporting those in need of permanent housing in the Lewes District via the private rented sector and to building strong partnerships across the local community, including the public sector, to help achieve that.

A total of 221 applications were received during the year for loans, substantially more than the 166 in 2022. We gave 47 loans in 2023 (*55 in 2022*) and helped a total of 99 people with loans.

#### 4 Finance

The accounts of the CIO for 2023 are set out on pages 4-9 below, together with comparisons with the previous year. New loans were funded by repayments from earlier loans. Staffing costs were covered in large part by charitable grants. We are grateful for all the very generous support received, and for advice and encouragement from the Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, The Enjoolata Foundation, Newhaven Town Council, Sussex Community Foundation, Lewes District Council, and other bodies which have provided financial assistance.

5 Reserves policy

The trustees need to hold reserves for cash flow reasons, i.e. to ensure they can pay salaries and other costs as they arise and can fund new tenant loans in advance of income from donations and grants. The Charity also sometimes needs to draw upon reserves when the demand for loans is particularly acute; and for this reason, the trustees have identified the former Caburn Trust fund as a backup source of funding.

In order to clarify the way in which HOMELINK activities are funded, separate reserve provision has been made for tenant loans and for operational expenses. To support future new tenant loans, a designated reserve of £195,000 is held (2022: £145,000) to maintain a level of funds available for loan; leaving an unrestricted 'free' reserve of £68,065 (2022: £69,086) available to help meet salaries and other operational expenses. This reserve is equivalent to some seven months' worth of the planned outlay.

The trustees consider this is an appropriate level and pattern of reserves for the foreseeable future, and accordingly they have pleasure in confirming formally that they consider the CIO to be a going concern for at least the next twelve months.

6 Public interest

The Charity has regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public interest. Our services are open and accessible to all groups of homeless people, irrespective of gender, race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, class, disability, age, marital status, HIV status, appearance, or size.

7 Risk management

The Board regularly reviews the major risks which the Charity faces and decides on any actions needed to reduce the likelihood or impact of such risks. HOMELINK is a relatively small charity and heavily dependent on a few key people. Consequently, it faces many of the risks associated with security of resources and loss of personnel. For these reasons, special attention is directed to financial controls and to maintaining sound and clear written operational procedures.

8 Strategy

Over the coming year the trustees will maintain the programme of loans and grants to tenants. The CIO has a longstanding working partnership with Lewes District Council's Housing staff, and many of our applicants come to HOMELINK through referrals from LDC.

In 2023, a garden party was organised in the Summer, an art exhibition in Autumn as well as the usual Christmas Concert at the beginning of December. All these events were well attended.

There was a much-increased incidence of those presenting or being referred who lack basic essentials to allow them to lead a normal life. Therefore, there was a consequent increase in demand for traditional small grants and wider provision supported by the Enjoolata Foundation in the form of Energy Saving Grants, Micro Emergency Grants and New Home Start Up Grants.

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2023 (continued)

9 Trustees

The trustees who held office during the year and up to the date of this report were:

Ms Rosalind Toomey (*Chair from January 23*)  
Mrs Christine Tutt (*Secretary to March 23*) \*  
Mr Hugh Jones (*Finance*)  
Mr John Cornish (*to May 2023*)  
Mrs Linda Fisher \*  
Mr Terence Howell

Mrs Joan Wignall (*Chair to January 23*) \*  
Mrs Jane Lee \*  
Mr Malcolm Mazey  
Rev Jacqueline Parson (*to February 24*)  
Mrs Joanna Slaughter

The Management Committee comprised those trustees marked \* above, together with Mr Neil Fisher, Mrs Gabrielle Hill, Mrs Wendy Hogg, Mr Gary Brettle, Mr Shaun Gilbert, Mrs Linda Cripps and Mrs Gill Short.

**Signed on behalf of the trustees on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

Rosalind TOOMEY  
Chair

## Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (CIO)

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 ** £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Voluntary donations (note 2)	41,240	-	-	41,240	35,915
Charitable grants (note 3)	-	-	46,619	46,619	45,184
Local authority grants (note 4)	-	-	39,200	39,200	25,150
Fund-raising events	7,308	-	-	7,308	10,414
Investment income	1,859	-	-	1,859	419
Tax refunds	6,891	-	-	6,891	3,773
	57,298	-	85,819	143,117	120,855
<b>Expenditure (note 5) on:</b>					
Employee expenses	82,588	-	-	82,588	59,825
Office expenses	9,877	-	440	10,317	8,688
Tenant expenses	6,309	-	-	6,309	50,675
Non-repayable grants	20,008	-	28,619	48,627	46,941
Communications & events	2,170	-	-	2,170	4,334
Audit fees (2 years)	1,260	-	-	1,260	600
	122,212	-	29,059	151,271	171,063
Transfers between funds (to fund expenses)	54,435	-	-54,435	-	-
<b>Net income for the year</b>	<b>-10,479</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,325</b>	<b>-8,154</b>	<b>-50,208</b>
Transfers to fund tenant loans	-36,800	50,000	-13,200	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>-47,279</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>-10,875</b>	<b>-8,154</b>	<b>-50,208</b>
Fund balances at 1 <sup>st</sup> January (note 8)	302,851	174,336	16,822	494,009	544,217
<b>Fund balances at 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<b>255,572</b>	<b>224,336</b>	<b>5,947</b>	<b>485,855</b>	<b>494,009</b>

\*\* An analysis of the 2022 figures between fund types is given on page 6

## Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (CIO)

### BALANCE SHEET

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

	<b>2023</b> <b>£</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>£</b>
<b>Social investments</b>		
Concessionary loans to tenants <i>(note 6)</i>	187,507	233,765
<b>Current assets</b> <i>(note 7)</i>		
Sundry debtors	2,800	2,346
Cash at bank and on deposit	321,905	284,213
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Grant received in advance	-25,697	-26,315
Sundry creditors	-660	-
	<b>485,855</b>	<b>494,009</b>
<b>The Funds of the Charity</b> <i>(note 8)</i>		
Restricted funds ***	5,947	16,822
Unrestricted funds		
Designated funds ***	224,336	174,336
General Fund	255,572	302,851
<b>Fund balances at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 (2022)</b>	<b>485,855</b>	<b>494,009</b>

\*\*\* restricted and designated funds are held entirely in bank current and savings accounts

Signed on behalf of the trustees on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Rosalind TOOMEY

Chair

Hugh JONES

Lead Trustee for Finance

## Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (CIO)

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES – 2022 COMPARATIVES

Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £
<b>Income from:</b>				
Voluntary donations	35,915	-	-	35,915
Charitable grants	5,000	-	40,184	45,184
Local authority grants	-	-	25,150	25,150
Fund-raising events	10,414	-	-	10,414
Investment income	419	-	-	419
Tax refunds	3,773	-	-	3,773
	55,521	-	65,334	120,855
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Employee expenses	59,825	-	-	59,825
Office expenses	7,932	-	756	8,688
Tenant expenses	50,675	-	-	50,675
Non-repayable grants	28,257	-	18,684	46,941
Communications & events	2,116	-	2,218	4,334
Audit fees	600	-	-	600
	149,405	-	21,658	171,063
Transfers between funds (to fund expenses)	43,638	-806	-42,832	-
<b>Net income for the year</b>	<b>-50,246</b>	<b>-806</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>-50,208</b>
Transfers to fund tenant loans	-24,850	50,000	-25,150	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>-75,096</b>	<b>49,194</b>	<b>-24,306</b>	<b>-50,208</b>
Fund balances at 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2022	377,947	125,142	41,128	544,217
<b>Fund balances at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022</b>	<b>302,851</b>	<b>174,336</b>	<b>16,822</b>	<b>494,009</b>

## Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (CIO)

### NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

- 1 These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Acts and Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).
- 2 Voluntary donations  
Donations are gifts received from individuals, churches, charities and other groups.
- 3 Charitable grants  
This line includes major charitable grants towards our future-proofing project to enhance the staffing of the Charity. The trustees would like to thank Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, The Enjoolata Foundation and Sussex Community Foundation for their generous assistance.
- 4 Local authority grants  
A grant of £12,000 was received from Lewes District Council to help fund operational costs. And an additional special grant of £13,200 was received in December under the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS): the purpose of the grant is to facilitate loans for homeless people who might otherwise fall outside our usual criteria. We also received £10,000 from Newhaven Town Council to help fund operational costs.
- 5 Expenditure  
The Charity employed two part-time Client Managers on a job-share basis, and three other part-time staff. The total employee remuneration for the year was £82,542 (*£59,304 in 2022*). No employees received over £60k. Other expenses included the hire of office accommodation (£4,500), insurance (£577), Telephones (£1,543) and IT support (£344).
- 6 Concessionary loans to tenants  
Interest-free loans are made to people with little or no savings, able to live independently and seeking accommodation in the private sector in the Lewes District area. A total of 47 new loans were made this year (*55 in 2022*); and at the end of 2023, 346 individuals, couples and families were recorded as holding loans from HOMELINK (*389 in 2022*).

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Balances at 1 <sup>st</sup> January (start of year)	318,765	368,681
New loans advanced during the year	67,989	79,797
Repayments during the year	-107,938	-114,038
Write-offs and adjustments	-14,309	-15,675
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balances at 31 <sup>st</sup> December (year-end)	264,507	318,765
Provision in case of non-repayment	-77,000	-85,000
To Balance Sheet	<hr/>	<hr/>
	187,507	233,765



**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)**

Loans can cover the deposit and/or first month's rent and are generally repayable by monthly instalments over periods of 3-5 years.

**7 Current assets and liabilities**

Cash at bank is held in designated bank accounts according to use or need, with available funds placed on deposit.

## Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (CIO)

### NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

#### 8 Statement of funds

	Balance at 1.1.2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31.12.2023 £
<i>Restricted funds</i>					
Grants for salary costs	10,435	44,000		-54,435	-
Grants towards tenant loans	-	13,200	-	-13,200	-
Other restricted gifts	6,387	28,619	-29,059	-	5,947
	16,822	85,819	-29,059	-67,635	5,947
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
Designated					
- Tenant Loans reserve	145,000	-	-	50,000	195,000
- Former Caburn Trust	29,336	-	-	-	29,336
General Fund	302,851	57,298	-122,212	17,635	255,572
	494,009	143,117	-151,271	-	485,855

- 8.1 Restricted funds are monies which have been given to the Charity for specific purposes:
- *Grants for salary costs* are those described in note 3 above together with local authority grants towards operational costs. Grants received during the year will continue to be drawn down up to the first few months of 2024.
  - *Grants towards tenant loans* are those received under the DESSS scheme described in note 4 above.
  - The *Enjoolata grant* for £23,315 is restricted to help our clients with the disbursement of food and electricity vouchers mostly via the Huggg platform. This grant was fully used in 2023 and none was carried forward in reserves.
- 8.2 Unrestricted funds are all other funds and available for use at the trustees' discretion:
- The *Tenant Loans* reserve is designated to ensure there is an adequate cash flow pool for advancing new loans to tenants who would otherwise face homelessness.
  - The *Former Caburn Housing Trust* grant is designated to be used for future development of the Charity's work with tenants.
  - The *General Fund* is the Charity's core account for all operational income and expenses.
- 8.3 The 'free' reserve of £68,065 (2022: £69,086) comprises cash and any other net current assets held in the General Fund. Trustees aim to keep this equivalent to between 4-8 months' expenditure.

#### 9 Trustees' emoluments

In addition to the paid staff, much of the work of the Charity is carried out on a voluntary basis by the trustees and other volunteers. No emoluments were paid to trustees for this work. Routine expenses (£238) were reimbursed to a related party acting as a volunteer and other cost items incurred on behalf of the Charity were reimbursed to a trustee (£122).

Identifiable donations totalling £9,160 were received from trustees and related parties.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, which are set out on pages 4 to 9 above.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the CIO, 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 CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act;  
or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the accounts do 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.

Signed: Caroline Clarke

Name: Caroline Clarke ACA

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024

Clarke & Wells Accountancy  
Ground Floor  
66, High Street  
LEWES  
BN7 1XG