



LEWES DISTRICT CHURCHES HOMELINK

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
&
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

for the year ended

31st DECEMBER 2024

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 31st December 2024.

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 Lewes on 18th May 2024.

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. During the year, we received 237 applications for loans, a slight increase from 221 received in 2023. Of these, we provided 61 loans in 2024, compared to 47 in the previous year, helping a total of 146 individuals.

In addition, a limited number of small non-repayable grants were made to assist with the cost of setting up a new home or replacing essential white goods. Throughout the year, we observed a notable rise in the number of individuals being referred who lacked the basic essentials necessary for a stable life. This led to a surge in demand for our traditional small grants and a growing dependence on Micro Emergency Grants, such as food vouchers, generously funded by the Enjoolata Foundation.

In 2024, we marked our 25th Anniversary with a gala concert, in addition to our beloved annual Christmas Concert held at the beginning of December. Both events were met with great success and enthusiasm.

4 Finance

The accounts of the CIO for 2024 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 Albert Hunt Trust, The Enjoolata Foundation, the Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation, Lewes District Council, the Sussex Community Foundation and other bodies which have provided financial assistance. We also receive regular support from local churches. Fam Jam Films worked with Homelink staff, on a pro bono basis, to produce a short film demonstrating the work of the charity.

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 (2023: £195,000) to maintain a level of funds available for loan; leaving an unrestricted 'free' reserve of £81,601 (2023: £68,065) available to help meet salaries and other operational expenses. This reserve is equivalent to some eight 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 clients. 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.

The cost-of-living crisis has driven a sharp rise in the demand for our Small Grants service. In 2024, we gave 177 one-off grants to provide essential household goods and energy-saving solutions such as carpets and curtains.

Trustees acknowledge the growing challenges posed by a dwindling supply of private rented accommodation, which has made it increasingly difficult to assist those in need. Despite this, we remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting individuals seeking permanent housing within the Lewes District private rental sector. We continue to focus on fostering strong partnerships across the local community, including collaboration with public sector entities, to address these pressing issues and deliver meaningful solutions.

9 Trustees

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

Ms Rosalind Toomey (*Chair*)

Mrs Linda Fisher *

Mr Richard Jayawant (*from March 25*)

Mr Graham Maunders * (*from April 24*)

Rev Jacqueline Parson (*to February 24*)

Mrs Joanna Slaughter (*to June 25*)

Mr Christopher Whittick (*from April 24*)

Mr Hugh Jones (*Finance*)

Mr Terence Howell

Mrs Jane Lee *

Mr Malcolm Mazey (*to September 24*)

Ms Gill Short * (*from April 24*)

Mrs Christine Tutt *

Mrs Joan Wignall

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 and Mrs Linda Cripps.

Signed on behalf of the trustees on 31st July 2025

Rosalind TOOMEY

Chair

Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (CIO)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Year ended 31st December 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 ** £
Income from:					
Voluntary donations (note 2)	48,709	-	-	48,709	41,240
Charitable grants (note 3)	-	-	50,731	50,731	46,619
Local authority grants (note 4)	-	-	18,000	18,000	39,200
Fund-raising events	12,103	-	-	12,103	7,308
Investment income	5,212	-	-	5,212	1,859
Tax refunds	4,979	-	-	4,979	6,891
	71,003	-	68,731	139,734	143,117
Expenditure (note 5) on:					
Employee expenses	88,589	-	-	88,589	82,588
Office expenses	9,827	-	1,497	11,324	10,317
Tenant expenses	754	-	-	754	6,309
Non-repayable grants	9,993	-	20,581	30,574	48,627
Communications & events	2,336	-	-	2,336	2,170
Examiner's fees	600	-	-	600	1,260
	112,099	-	22,078	134,177	151,271
Transfers between funds (to fund expenses)	48,150	-	-48,150	-	-
Net income for the year	7,054	-	-1,497	5,557	-8,154
Transfers to fund tenant loans	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	7,054	-	-1,497	5,557	-8,154
Fund balances at 1 st January (note 8)	255,572	224,336	5,947	485,855	494,000
Fund balances at 31st December	262,626	224,336	4,450	491,412	485,855

** An analysis of the 2023 figures between fund types is given on page 6

Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (CIO)

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31st December 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Social investments		
Concessionary loans to tenants <i>(note 6)</i>	181,024	187,507
Current assets <i>(note 7)</i>		
Sundry debtors	600	2,800
Cash at bank and on deposit	358,413	321,905
Current liabilities		
Grant received in advance	-47,965	-25,697
Sundry creditors	-660	-660
	491,412	485,855
The Funds of the Charity <i>(note 8)</i>		
Restricted funds ***	4,450	5,947
Unrestricted funds		
Designated funds ***	224,336	224,336
General Fund	262,626	255,572
Fund balances at 31st December 2024 (2023)	491,412	485,855

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

Signed on behalf of the trustees on 31st July 2025

Rosalind TOOMEY

Chair

Hugh JONES

Lead Trustee for Finance

Lewes District Churches HOMELINK (CIO)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES – 2023 COMPARATIVES

Year ended 31st December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £
Income from:				
Voluntary donations	41,240	-	-	41,240
Charitable grants	-	-	46,619	46,619
Local authority grants	-	-	39,200	39,200
Fund-raising events	7,308	-	-	7,308
Investment income	1,859	-	-	1,859
Tax refunds	6,891	-	-	6,891
	57,298	-	85,819	143,117
Expenditure on:				
Employee expenses	82,588	-	-	82,588
Office expenses	9,877	-	440	10,317
Tenant expenses	6,309	-	-	6,309
Non-repayable grants	20,008	-	28,619	48,627
Communications & events	2,170	-	-	2,170
Examiner's fees	1,260	-	-	1,260
	122,212	-	29,059	151,271
Transfers between funds (to fund expenses)	54,435	-	-54,435	-
Net income for the year	-10,479	-	2,325	-8,154
Transfers to fund tenant loans	-36,800	50,000	-13,200	-
Net movement in funds	-47,279	50,000	-10,875	-8,154
Fund balances at 1 st January 2023	302,851	174,336	16,822	494,009
Fund balances at 31st December 2023	255,572	224,336	5,947	485,855

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 the Albert Hunt Trust, the Enjoolata Foundation, the Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation and the 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.
- 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 £88,368 (*£82,542 in 2023*). No employees received over £60k. Other expenses included the hire of office accommodation (£4,500), insurance (£617), Telephones (£1,597) and IT support (£1,319). £1,020 was spent on our IT project.
- 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 61 new loans were made this year (*47 in 2023*); and at the end of 2024, 314 individuals, couples and families were recorded as holding loans from HOMELINK (*346 in 2023*).

	2024	2023
	£	£
Balances at 1 st January (start of year)	264,507	318,765
New loans advanced during the year	98,119	67,989
Repayments during the year	-103,848	-107,938
Write-offs and adjustments	-5,354	-14,309
Balances at 31 st December (year-end)	253,424	264,507
Provision in case of non-repayment	-72,400	-77,000
To Balance Sheet	181,024	187,507

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 1.1.2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31.12.2024 £
<i>Restricted funds</i>					
Grants for salary costs	-	48,150		-48,150	-
Grants towards tenant loans	-	-	-	-	-
Other restricted gifts	5,947	20,581	-22,078	-	4,450
	5,947	68,731	-22,078	-48,150	4,450
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
Designated					
- Tenant Loans reserve	195,000	-	-	-	195,000
- Former Caburn Trust	29,336	-	-	-	29,336
General Fund	255,572	71,003	-112,099	48,150	262,626
	485,855	139,734	-134,177	-	491,412

- 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 2025.
 - The Enjoolata grant for £5,000 was used partly for food vouchers to help our clients in need and partly to fund our Small Grants service. £1,065 will be carried over to 2025. The grants from The Silver Lady Trust and Lewes Cliffe Feoffees were also used to fund our Small Grants service.
- 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 £81,601 (2023: £68,065) 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 (£72) 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 (£163).

Identifiable donations totalling £6,830 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 31st December 2024, 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: 15/08/2025

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