

WELCOME CHURCHES
REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

CHARITY NO: 1177344

WELCOME CHURCHES
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

CHAIR'S REPORT

Helping to welcome refugees and people seeking asylum is a huge privilege, and I am amazed at how the UK Church has embraced the opportunities we've had this year to welcome 14543 refugees and people seeking asylum and 12,146 BN(O) Hong Kongers arriving on our doorsteps. As churches have welcomed people seeking refuge and safety - whether they come from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iran, Hong Kong, Central America, Eritrea, or elsewhere - our church communities have then been blessed by the people they have received.

For example, Amir had to leave his homeland of Iran after being wrongfully imprisoned. Thankfully, he found a warm welcome and support from our network church in Croydon. Amir is now an active and cherished part of the church community. He is now serving the church by helping other refugees who arrive in the area, guiding them through the process of settling in and finding their place in the community.

We find that there are two elements to welcoming refugees and people seeking asylum - being proactive and being reactive. Our 'proactive' work this year has enabled us to continue to grow the Welcome Network throughout the UK; to profile refugee-welcoming churches and connect refugees and people seeking asylum with them. Whilst we have intentionally built the Welcome Network in a strategic, proactive way for a number of years now, this also enables new churches who are responding 'reactively' to new accommodation being used near them, especially by people seeking asylum.

This year, we saw new churches in Weymouth, Dorset, quickly join our Welcome Network as the politically controversial Bibby Stockholm barge was opened to house asylum seekers in the summertime. Churches in the local area quickly joined the Welcome Network, and we were able to support and equip them with agility to welcome the people who had just arrived in their area. This has been a huge blessing to these local churches, who have really enjoyed meeting and including people seeking asylum in their church life.

We have continued to invest in a number of projects this year that will be able to help refugees and people seeking asylum settle in the UK for years to come. This year, we have been able to grow our refugee-facing work through the FindYourWelcome.org website, as well as through videos in different languages to help refugees process the trauma they may have been through. We have also been pleased to develop the Welcome Homes project, which connects socially-minded homeowners with refugees in need of accommodation. The foundational work we have done for these two projects will continue to be built upon in the future, as needs arise. For example, during the winter months, many people were evicted from their asylum properties at very short notice when they were granted leave to remain. This led us to add a Supported Lodgings element to the Welcome Homes project, providing information about renting out spare rooms to newly recognized refugees and teaching them about the rental market in the UK. As many churches in the Welcome Network were finding people they knew being made homeless during this time, these resources enabled them to respond quickly and practically to the needs in front of them.

People seeking asylum and refuge continues to be a 'hot button' political issue, and this issue continued to dominate the media headlines throughout the year. This gave us the opportunity to engage with the national media, including being featured on Radio 4 news, LBC radio, and the Jeremy Vine show on Radio 2 in February and March. We are also grateful for multiple requests throughout the year from Christian radio channels, which helps to educate people across the UK on who is coming to the UK as refugees and people seeking asylum, what their experiences are, and what a Christian response looks like.

In January, we said goodbye to Sue Butler, who stepped down as Joint-CEO. Sue has been instrumental in growing Welcome Churches, particularly developing our training and resources for local churches and establishing this area of our work. We are so grateful to Sue for all her dedication and commitment to Welcome Churches' vision and mission over the years. Emily continues to lead Welcome Churches as our CEO with a fantastic, multicultural team around her!

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 - CONTINUED

A true highlight of the year was our Welcome Conference, held in Bedford in March. Under the theme of 'The Road to Restoration,' we were privileged to have speakers from Ukraine, Sudan, and Iran join us, and to be able to provide translation for delegates in different languages. It was an honour to join together with people from many different nations and backgrounds, and everyone who came was hugely encouraged by this. We are demonstrating a powerful image of unity across the nations to the rest of the UK Church, and we look forward to building on this in the years to come.

Chair of Trustees

OUR PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

Our Vision

Welcome Churches' vision is for every refugee in the UK to be welcomed by a local church.

The long term change Welcome Churches wants to see is:

- Refugees thriving in the UK
- Refugees following Jesus
- Refugees fully involved in Churches

Strategy and Activities

Our strategy and activities focused on:

- Increasing the number of refugees welcomed across the UK
- Growing the Welcome Network in each region
- Growing our refugee-facing work
- Successfully delivering the UKHK projects for people from Hong Kong
- Developing projects that support Afghans arriving in the UK
- Developing the Welcome Homes project

How was this achieved?

Central to our mission is the **Welcome Network**, a nationwide coalition of churches dedicated to welcoming refugees. These churches actively seek ways to support refugees and people seeking asylum arriving in their communities. Our interactive map features these churches, making it easy for refugees, people seeking asylum, agencies, and individuals to locate a welcoming church in their area.

Through the **Welcome Plus** project, we support Welcome Plus Churches to offer a warm welcome to local refugees and people seeking asylum, regardless of their accommodation. We provide Coordinator Training and Welcomer Training on safeguarding and data protection, cross-cultural awareness, trauma awareness, and self-care to help them build up a team of trained volunteers.

The **UKHK Project** and **Find Your Welcome Project** are our refugee-facing initiatives, each designed to support different groups of refugees, asylum seekers, and new arrivals.

Our **UKHK** project is dedicated to welcoming British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa holders from Hong Kong who have recently moved to the UK. The project connects Hongkongers with local churches, creates informative materials about life and culture in the UK, and trains local churches to understand and meet the needs of the new arrivals from Hong Kong.

The **FindYourWelcome.org** website was launched to consolidate information previously available under the Afghan Welcome and Ukraine Welcome initiatives. This refugee-facing site is translated into multiple languages, providing new arrivals with essential information about life in the UK and facilitating connections with local people through church referrals.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 - CONTINUED

Welcome Homes aims to address the significant need for accommodation for those seeking refuge in the UK. The program offers two types of support: connecting refugees with hosts for short-term stays in spare rooms and linking refugees with socially minded landlords to secure long-term and affordable housing solutions.

Project Updates

The Welcome Network

Our Welcome Network identifies churches around the UK who are committed to welcoming refugees. As part of the Welcome Network, churches are:

- Visible on the Network map to other churches, organisations and refugees who want to find a welcoming church and community.
- Able to receive a log-in to access the Network – to view and manage any referrals of refugees who want to connect with their local church.
- Able to access the Resources Hubs in the Network which includes training, videos and resources for their church to be better equipped to welcome refugees.
- Able to receive regular emails about our latest news, training and new additions to the resources.
- Able to contact a Church Engagement Officer about developing their church's work with refugees.

Year's achievements for the Welcome Network:

- This past financial year saw over 70 new churches join the Welcome Network, with the total number of churches in the network reaching 1,386.
- We launched an updated referral system, with a new sign-in system for churches, resulting in improved oversight of churches. This new system has allowed churches more easy access information about referrals made to them and to our Resource Hubs.
- We reduced the number of days on average that it takes for a church to action a referral to 6 days from 25 days in the previous year.
- We appointed a new Northern Ireland Church Engagement Officer in March 2023, to continue and embed the growing work across Northern Ireland.
- We employed a 'Time to Shine leader' who researched challenges facing refugees and people seeking asylum specifically related to housing, as well as translation support for various resources.
- We held an event in Liverpool to generate awareness of Welcome Churches, resulting in a growth in numbers of churches in the network, and better connecting with Liverpool churches.
- We partnered with the UKHK Team in running 5 Friendship Festivals for new arrivals from Hong Kong across the UK.
- We trained 199 new Welcomer volunteers to help welcome refugees in their local communities.
- We wrote and delivered three new pieces of training: Cross Cultural Awareness, Housing Challenges for Refugees, and The Refugee Journey.
- We produced short, recorded training videos in areas such as GDPR and Safeguarding for churches to access via the Resource Hub
- We have held 7 connect meetings for churches to gather and discuss a specific issue e.g. working in hotels.
- We partnered with external specialists to provide training in Interpreting in Church and Looking After Yourself training for Ukrainian refugees (with live translation) and their hosts.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 - CONTINUED

Welcome Plus

- We developed our Welcome Boxes project into the Welcome Plus project. Welcome Plus indicates a church is proactive in welcoming refugees and people seeking asylum in their local community and caters for different accommodation types – both houses and hotels. A church of any size can be Welcome Plus, with a new price-per-trainee payment structure. A Welcome Plus church can have up to 2 coordinators trained, plus a team of Welcomers. We work with each Welcome Plus Church to support them in developing their work with refugees in whatever way best suits their local community.
- All 45 former Welcome Boxes churches automatically became Welcome Plus churches, with an additional 30 churches by March 2024, totalling 75 churches.

Work in hotels accommodating people seeking asylum

- We added a Hotels referral system to our Network Map, whereby a church or other organisation could refer a hotel housing people seeking asylum to Welcome Churches, requesting connection with a church. 97 hotels were connected with Network churches.
- A new Hotels Hub was added to the Resources Hubs, with resources written to support churches working in hotels.
- We have worked with churches facing protests and extremist views in the local community to ensure their safety as they work in hotels.
- We have provided support and advice as hotels were closed at short notice in December 2023, including reminding churches to use the referral system, resulting in the number of referrals doubling in the previous month, and remaining higher than previously into the start of 2024.

UKHK

UKHK is our program to welcome people arriving from Hong Kong. This initiative includes training, information, and support for both people from Hong Kong and local churches, facilitating connections between them, and encouraging broader government and civil society efforts to welcome new arrivals.

Similar to the Welcome Network, UKHK offers a web platform to connect Hongkongers with UK churches. Through the UKHK National Map, new arrivals can easily find a 'Hong Kong Ready Church' in their neighbourhood.

Friendship Festivals

From May 2023 to June 2023, UKHK organised Friendship Festivals in five cities, building on the success of other Friendship Festivals in the previous year. These events aimed to bring together local communities to celebrate both Hong Kong and UK cultures, fostering new friendships and connections. We held Friendship Festivals in Watford, Newcastle, Guildford, Southampton and Sheffield.

Each festival collaborated with various churches, national and regional charities, Hongkonger civic groups, strategic migration partnerships, and local councils. Additionally, we partnered with essential local services such as the police, NHS, and fire service to ensure a comprehensive and supportive community event.

The Friendship Festivals welcomed approximately 2,370 visitors from Hong Kong and other countries. Many new arrivals from Hong Kong volunteered to provide games, activities, snacks, drinks, and performances.

The Friendship Festivals were incredibly successful in helping new arrivals forge new connections within and beyond their immediate communities. They guided attendees to relevant support services and resources and connected them with local churches. We distributed over 2,000 copies of our bilingual Welcome Magazine. Most importantly, everyone had a wonderful time!

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One attendee at the Southampton Friendship Festival said that she had a fantastic time! She particularly liked the Hong Kong food stall and the cultural performances by the guest artists. Most importantly, the event provided a wonderful platform for everyone to gather and make new friends. It was heartwarming to see so many people come together, connect, and celebrate their community.

The Welcome Course

Over the past year, the Welcome Course has been conducted 36 times across the UK, attracting 621 attendees. This course is designed to bridge the relational gap between new arrivals and the local community. Hosted by churches, it helps participants develop English conversational skills and confidence, build friendships, learn about British culture, access relevant services, and share knowledge of their own cultures. Six short, professionally produced videos serve as light-hearted and inspirational conversation starters. The course is available in various translations.

The Welcome Magazine

The Welcome Magazine was created as a bilingual resource to help primary-aged children arriving in the UK from Hong Kong feel welcome and learn more about British culture. It includes fun facts about life in the UK and provides information on local services and groups to aid in the children's integration. In October 2022, we published the second edition of the Welcome Magazine, featuring more information on the devolved nations and an update on the British Monarchy with King Charles' accession to the throne. Over the past year, we have distributed 6,415 copies to newly arrived Hong Kong families and in total we have distributed more than 40,000 magazines since the magazine was first published.

Wellbeing Videos

The Wellbeing Project 'Looking after myself' consists of a series of three videos. It assists BN(O) visa holders in identifying stresses that may arise during their migration to the UK, understanding the impact of these stresses on their daily lives and ongoing wellbeing, and provides practical steps to promote mental health self-care. Over the past year, these videos have collectively garnered over 1,500 views. The videos are designed to be watched individually or with family and friends, encouraging open conversations about personal challenges. Additionally, we have included a guide on incorporating these videos into Session 4: Wellbeing of the Welcome Course, enhancing their utility as a resource for mental health discussions and support.

Youth Videos and Group Resources

The "Welcome to the UK: Youth" program offers resources at two levels: an online platform featuring three engaging videos with tips on understanding British culture, school life, and making friends from diverse backgrounds, aimed at engaging young people individually. Additionally, there are youth group resources designed to facilitate integration and interaction among young people of various backgrounds. These resources encourage Hong Kong youths to forge friendships in the UK, explore their communities, and embrace the UK as their new home. They have proven highly popular and beneficial, with the videos being viewed over 960 times and the youth group resources benefiting 280 youths over the past year.

Welcome Homes

Welcome Homes seeks to practically respond to the huge need of refugee accommodation in the UK. Welcome Homes consists of two lines of support: connecting refugees with hosts for short-term accommodation in spare rooms and connecting refugees with socially minded landlords to provide long-term and affordable housing solutions.

Welcome Homes has continued to provide an online platform to direct compassionate homeowners to local hosting organisations all across the UK. Our online platform enables users to connect with a local hosting program, who will provide training and organise a guest placement. Welcome Homes connects hosts with a hosting scheme based on what they are able to offer and the need in their area.

Welcome Homes is responding to the crisis of homelessness amongst newly granted refugees by developing resources that will enable people to provide supported lodging to refugee tenants. We are connecting with local housing charities that specialise in supported lodging schemes and aim to connect compassionate landlords with these charities.

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Find Your Welcome

Find Your Welcome is a refugee-facing online hub designed to provide refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants with essential information about life in the UK. The website also enables them to connect with local churches directly, eliminating the need to wait for a caseworker referral. This project includes a comprehensive guide to living in the UK, a referral service, a newsletter, and social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram. The website is currently available in Arabic, Farsi, French, Pashto, Spanish, Tigrinya, and Ukrainian while the newsletter is available in Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Pashto, Spanish, and Ukrainian. In the past year, the website has attracted over 21,500 visitors.

We have observed an increase in referrals via Find Your Welcome this year, with 153 cases involving almost 200 adults and 130 children seeking welcome through local churches. By building platforms for self-referrals like Find Your Welcome, individuals can take the initiative to connect with supportive communities without relying on caseworker referrals.

Afghan Project

Our Afghan Project aims to provide relevant and up-to-date resources to enable Afghan refugees to settle and integrate into the UK. People from Afghanistan are arriving in the UK through the government 'ARAP' and 'ACRS' resettlement schemes, as well as through making their own way to the UK and seeking asylum upon arrival. We have developed several key resources in the past year and seek to develop further resources in the near future.

In July 2023, we released a series of videos titled 'Looking After Yourself' in Dari, after the success of similar videos previously released in Cantonese. The videos were filmed with Dari speaking actors and were rewritten to make them more relevant to Afghans arriving in the UK.

We also released the Welcome Course with Dari, Pashto, and Farsi voiceovers. The Welcome Course is a six-part series on life in the UK that explains large parts of UK culture.

We are currently writing a book aimed at Afghan young people aged 11-15 about adjusting to life in the UK. This book will enable young people to celebrate their home culture and understand the culture of the UK. It will provide an overview of UK culture and focus in on life at school and life at home. It is titled 'Finding My Way: Living in the UK' and will be published and ready for distribution by the end of August 2024.

The Welcome Conference

In March 2024, Welcome Churches hosted our second two-day 'Welcome Conference'. This unique event provided a safe space for refugee and non-refugee Christians to worship together, attend talks and workshops, build connections, share stories, and learn from one another. Of the 168 attendees, 70 were delegates from refugee backgrounds. We were thrilled to offer free places, covering all costs including an overnight hotel stay, to these delegates. Attendees came from countries such as Afghanistan, Colombia, El Salvador, Hong Kong, Iran, Sudan, Turkey, and Ukraine. We are deeply grateful for the partnership with the Bible Society that made this possible.

Our main sessions and workshops were led by experienced speakers with expertise in forced displacement, migration, conflict resolution, intercultural communities, and trauma. We covered topics such as promoting cultural reconciliation, restoring the Church, integrating refugees into church communities, worshipping across cultures, developing leadership skills, and mental wellbeing and trauma awareness. All seminars were designed to be accessible to delegates from all backgrounds. Interpretation services via a smartphone app were provided to everyone who requested it, and many refugee delegates also volunteered to assist with interpreting.

We treasure the voices of refugees, and we invited them to share their personal stories of coming to the UK and finding a new home in their welcoming churches. For example, Yvonne initially felt lost when she moved to England without her family, but, she soon found a sense of home in her local church:

"Home is not a place, but I think it's where your family is. In my local church, I felt like I was home. Because the Lord said: "Your Christian brothers and sisters are your home". Even though it took me a long time to get reconnected to my own family, just having those Christian brothers and sisters, it felt like I was home."

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Achievements: Our Year in Review

May 2023

- Prayer meeting for Sudan
- Launched Farsi, Dari and Pashto versions of the Welcome Course
- Launched Welcome Plus
- UKHK Friendship Festivals in Watford and Newcastle

June 2023

- Refugee Sunday
- UKHK Friendship Festivals in Guildford, Southampton, and Sheffield
- Introduced new Northern Ireland Resource Hub

August 2023

- Launched Hotel Referrals

September 2023

- Launched Find Your Welcome Facebook and Instagram
- Equipped to Welcome Conference in Northern Ireland

November 2023

- Launched Welcome Churches Podcast: Love the Strangers
- Conducted Welcoming Afghans Survey

December 2023

- Released the Dari version of the Wellbeing video series
- Released the 'Journey to Christmas with Refugees' Advent devotional journey
- Released Christmas resources 'One Bible, Many Nations' video and the stories of Arefeh, Amir, and Georgina

March 2024

- The Welcome Conference: Road to Restoration

Public Benefit

These activities extend the social inclusion of refugees and people seeking asylum. Thus, the trustees confirm that they have complied with their duties under Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 with regard to public benefit.

Financial Review

Income for the year to 31 March 2024 was £388,464 (2023: £472,558). Net expenditure for the year was £213,422 (2023: Net expenditure £450,280). Total funds carried forward at 31 March 2024 were £266,958 (2023: £480,380) of which £198,589 were restricted funds (2023: £321,557).

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Reserves Policy

Brief Statement of the Charity's Policy on Reserves

The trustees of Welcome Churches recognise the importance of a reserves policy to help demonstrate good stewardship and financial management and to manage its reputation.

Our policy is to retain sufficient reserves:

- To ensure that the Welcome Churches has sufficient funds to meet its financial commitments;
- To demonstrate that the Welcome Churches is sustainable into the future;
- To ensure that the Welcome Churches is able to manage future unforeseen financial difficulties;
- To ensure that excessive funds are not held without any identifiable reason or for any identifiable purpose.

Welcome Churches aims to always maintain a minimum of 3 months' reserves for unrestricted expenditure. This is reviewed by the trustees on a quarterly basis, and in accordance with our reserves policy.

Amount held in reserves

At the end of the reporting period the charity held £68,369 (2023: £158,823), or approximately 4 months' worth of reserves based on average unrestricted expenditure over the year. The trustees consider that this is a reasonable level of reserves.

Investment Policy

There is very little fixed investment in the charity at the current stage of the charity's growth. The charity uses the Flagstone platform to spread risk across different banks and generate higher interest on funds held.

Fundraising

Our fundraising plans are approved by trustees and monitored by the leadership team. The majority of our income is generated through charitable donations that we receive from individuals, churches and trusts.

We are committed to the highest standards of fundraising and follow the Code of Fundraising Practice. We are regulated by the Fundraising Regulator. There were no failures to comply with this Code of Practice. We do not sell, trade or swap data with other charities or organisations. We do not make cold telephone calls to the general public or use SMS as part of our fundraising portfolio. This year, we received no complaints related to our fundraising.

During this financial year Welcome Churches engaged the services of professional fundraisers as defined by section 58 of the Charities Act 1992. Services were provided at a total cost of £43,308 (2023: £14,436).

Funding Sources

We are incredibly grateful for the generous donations of all our supporters and for the work that they do in bringing our shared vision to fruition.

Each of these individuals, churches and grant making trusts plays a valuable role in offering a welcome to refugees and people seeking asylum in the UK. Welcome Churches could not exist without their generosity.

WELCOME CHURCHES
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 - CONTINUED

Future Plans - The Year Ahead

Our strategic priorities for 2024-25 are:

To increase the number of refugees welcomed in the UK

We will increase referrals through the Welcome Network (including Welcome Plus) and ensure churches are actively welcoming those referred. Our goal is to achieve 1,080 referrals, with 540 referrals through the Welcome Network and 540 self-referrals via the FindYourWelcome.org website, ultimately welcoming a total of 2,500 people to local churches.

We will actively cultivate partnerships with Home Office-commissioned housing providers to boost referrals to Welcome Churches by local accommodation managers and enhance our direct messaging to asylum seekers.

We will inspire, train, and introduce churches to hotels and other accommodation for people seeking asylum, empowering them to build and sustain relationships with housing providers and other local NGOs.

To continue to grow the Welcome Network in each region

Our goal is to expand the Welcome Network to 1,700 churches, with 170 churches trained as Welcome Plus churches by March 2025. All original Welcome Boxes churches have agreed to become Welcome Plus churches. We will continue to invite other churches that proactively welcome refugees and people seeking asylum in their local communities, across various types of accommodation, to join Welcome Plus.

To achieve this, we will communicate the ongoing need to welcome and support all refugees to churches via networks, denominations, and local events in key towns and cities.

We will develop the opportunity that churches have to enable Refugee Integration, Discipleship and Leadership by providing cross cultural resources and promoting best practice in church communities.

We aim to develop Network News emails to support and engage meaningfully with churches in the Network. Additionally, we will enhance the Welcome Plus model to make it accessible for churches to use in hotels and other types of accommodation, and to ensure it is sustainable for all churches.

To grow our refugee-facing work

We will continue to develop our refugee-facing website, findyourwelcome.org, by adding more resources. We will also encourage refugees and people seeking asylum to self-refer to our Network churches through the website and sign up for our monthly newsletter, which provides useful information for refugees.

We will promote Find Your Welcome widely among churches, encouraging them to help refugees engage with resources and opportunities available in their language and understand how to refer others to the Network.

We will ensure that Find Your Welcome is widely utilised, not just by refugees in our Network churches, but also by refugees and asylum seekers in hotels and other accommodations, as well as by other service providers.

To improve our communications and storytelling

We will enhance communication about the impact Welcome Churches is having across the UK with our supporters. We will share more stories of welcomes and the positive differences they make to refugees and church communities through our social media channels, media interviews, podcasts, newsletters, and reports.

To continue to successfully support and administer the UKHK projects

We will continue to support Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders through a range of resources, including the Wellbeing and Youth videos, the Welcome Course, the Welcome Magazine, and the Skills-to-Work projects. Our commitment to maintaining and expanding our Hong Kong network and referral system ensures that HongKongers can connect with their local communities, providing them with the best possible opportunity for successful integration into life in the UK.

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To grow the Welcome Homes programme, continuing to connect compassionate homeowners with refugees in need

We will establish a steady stream of host referrals through our website by attracting compassionate landlords and connecting them with tenants. We will enhance our role as ‘connectors’ by refining the landlord-tenant relationship process. To increase awareness of Welcome Homes, we will host regular webinars and create engaging social media content. Additionally, we will expand our partnerships with housing organisations and councils across the UK. We will also develop the Welcome Homes Property Associate initiative, encouraging landlords to contribute some of their rental revenue toward our mission.

To grow our partnerships

We will continue to cultivate and expand our partnerships with a diverse range of organisations to fulfil our mission of supporting the UK Church and those seeking refuge and safety in the UK. By working together, we aim to strengthen our efforts, fostering a more compassionate and informed approach to welcoming and integrating those in need.

Funding and Sustainability

As the number of churches that we support through the Welcome Network continues to grow, so does the demand for resources and direct connections with refugees, particularly in their native languages. To meet these increasing needs and to expand the Welcome Churches team, we will focus on diversifying and strengthening our income streams. This includes securing trust funding, government grants, and revenue from paid training programs. We will also work to expand our base of regular financial support from individuals through the Story Changers campaign and from churches through the Mission Partners Programme.

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS:

Charity Number: 1177344

Registered Office: Bridge House
Riverside Court
Pride Park
Derby
DE24 8HY

Our Advisors

Independent Examiner: James Liptrott FCA
Haines Watts Chartered Accountants
Cliffe Hill House
22-26 Nottingham Road
Stapleford
Nottingham
NG9 8AA

Bankers: The Co-operative Bank
Service Team
PO Box 250
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

TRUSTEES

The trustees who served during the year were as follows:-

Trustees: Mark Mumford
Marion Knell (Chair of Trustees from 23.4.23)
Patrick Johnstone
Alex Jones
Andrew Reed (Resigned 23.4.23)
Hendrika Cooke
Jonathan Dyson
George Haddad
Nathaniel Jennings (Appointed 4.10.23)
Ali Saeed (Appointed 4.10.23)

Responsible for day to day running of the Charity: Emily Shepherd (nee Holden) CEO
Sue Butler (Joint CEO until 12.1.24)

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Governing Document

The Charity was set up by a Trust Deed as a charitable organisation registered with the Charity Commission on 27 February 2018.

Appointment of Trustees and Training

Andrew Reed stepped down as Chair of Trustees and Marion Knell was appointed as Chair of Trustees on 23rd April 2023. All trustees are given a clear role description upon appointment, and we discuss the roles and responsibilities of a trustee as outlined on the charity commission website. We will ensure ongoing training for trustees is carried out during the year.

Organisation / Running of the Charity

The Board of Trustees convenes at least four times per year. At these meetings, the directors agree the strategy, policies and areas of activity and monitor performance and risk. The management of day-to-day activities is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer(s). The Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits.

Related Parties and Cooperation with Other Organisations

Coalitions:

Welcome Churches is grateful to the partnerships that have helped to shape and deliver key projects this year. These include:
UKHK Coalition - OMF, COCM

Memberships:

Welcome Churches is a member of the following groups:
Evangelical
Alliance,
NACCOM,
Global Connections and MAP

We are committed to working in partnership with others and have also been part of a number of working groups to respond to different issues such as the UK government's Nationality and Borders Bill and new refugee crises.

Risk Management

The trustees periodically review important areas of financial risk. Other areas are regularly reviewed, such as skills, policies and financial procedures.

Trustees' Responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 - CONTINUED

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provision of the Trust Deed require the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the Charity for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the appropriate charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures that must be disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining the proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Account and Reporting by Charities.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on11/10/2024..... and signed on its behalf by

ChairMaurice D. Kelly.....

WELCOME CHURCHES

Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees of Welcome Churches

I report on the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

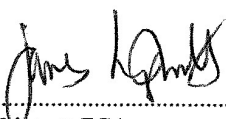
As the charity's trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act'). I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:-

- 1) Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2) The accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3) The accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirements 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.


..... Dated 1/11/24
James Dptrott FCA

Haines Watts
Chartered Accountants
Cliffe Hill House
22-26 Nottingham Road
Stapleford
Nottingham
NG9 8AA

WELCOME CHURCHES

Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account) for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income							
Grants, Donations & Legacies	2	99,122	259,139	358,261	90,503	356,213	446,716
Income from charitable activities:	3	16,656	13,508	30,164	20,674	3,997	24,671
Fundraising		39	-	39	1,171	-	1,171
Total Incoming Resources		115,817	272,647	388,464	112,348	360,210	472,558
Expenditure							
Raising Funds Charitable	4	78,791	314	79,105	39,127	7,322	46,449
Activities	4	84,415	332,719	417,134	113,062	667,250	780,313
Support Costs	4	36,611	69,036	105,647	10,036	86,041	96,077
Total Expenditure		199,817	402,069	601,885	162,226	760,612	922,839
Net Income/Expenditure and Net Movement in Fund		(84,000)	(129,422)	(213,422)	(49,879)	(400,402)	(450,280)
Reconciliation of Funds							
Transfer between funds		(6,454)	6,454	-	-	-	-
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2023		158,823	321,557	480,380	208,702	721,959	930,661
Total Fund Balances Carried Forward 31 March 2024	10	68,369	198,589	266,958	158,823	321,557	480,380

WELCOME CHURCHES

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

		2024	2023
	Notes	£	£
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	8	2,461	4,473
Current Assets			
Debtors	16	16,944	10,724
Cash at bank and in hand	17	269,614	496,723
Stock		5,054	-
		<u>291,612</u>	<u>507,447</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	18	<u>27,115</u>	<u>31,540</u>
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)		264,497	475,907
Net Assets		<u>266,958</u>	<u>480,380</u>
Unrestricted funds			
General Funds - General Purposes		68,369	158,823
Restricted Funds	11	198,589	321,557
Total Charity Funds	10	<u>266,958</u>	<u>480,380</u>

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 11.10.2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Trustee: 

Chair of Trustees: 

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the period.

a) Basis of Preparation, in accordance with applicable charity law

The financial statements have been in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)). Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Welcome Churches meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

GOING CONCERN

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The financial statements are presented in sterling (£).

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- Voluntary income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.
- Donated services, goods and facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. On receipt, donated services and facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.
- Incoming resources from charitable trading activity are accounted for when earned.
- Incoming resources from grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.
- Debtors are included to represent amounts recognised as outstanding to the charity at the year end date.
- Cash and bank balances are stated as the amounts held at the Charity year-end date.

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 – Continued

Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates:-

- Costs of generating funds comprise the costs associated with attracting grants income and donations.
- Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.
- Governance & support costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the Independent Examination fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.
- All costs are allocated between the expenditure categories of the SOFA on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly; others are apportioned on an appropriate basis.
- Allocation of Support Costs – Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charity. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The basis on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 4.

Tangible Fixed Assets

All fixed assets are capitalised at cost, where considered appropriate to capitalise. Those purchased by specific gifts and grants have been written off fully in the year of gift.

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life:

Office Equipment	-	25% on cost
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Fund Balances

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the Charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Designated funds

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the management committee for particular purposes.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor and are subjected to restrictions of their expenditure imposed by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

Pensions

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in independently administrated funds. Contributions payable for the year are shown in the statement of financial activities.

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year 31 March 2024 – Continued

Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount owed to the Charity or prepaid.

Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the Charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party, and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount.

Financial Instruments

The Charity has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Judgement and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The preparation of accounts using generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the accounts and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period.

The key estimates and assumptions used in the Financial Statements are detailed in the accounting policies.

2. Grants, Donations and Legacies

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Government Grant	-	75,886	75,886	252,000
Consortium Funding	-	-	-	200
Grant Funding	36,900	166,791	203,691	116,682
Church Donations	8,945	9,289	18,234	14,994
General Donations	53,277	7,173	60,450	62,840
	<u>99,122</u>	<u>259,139</u>	<u>358,261</u>	<u>446,716</u>

3. Income from Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Other Income	49	-	49	440
Partner Churches	3,165	-	3,165	15,789
Events Income	152	13,508	13,660	8,442
Product Sales Income	952	-	952	-
Investment Income	12,338	-	12,338	-
	<u>16,656</u>	<u>13,508</u>	<u>30,164</u>	<u>24,671</u>

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year 31 March 2024 - Continued

4. Expenditure

	Unrestricted Expenditure £	Restricted Expenditure £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Fundraising Costs				
Fundraising Activities	47,819	314	48,133	22,095
Staff Costs	30,972	-	30,972	24,354
	78,791	314	79,105	46,449
Costs directly allocated to activities				
Staff Development and Recruitment Costs	1,138	1,299	2,437	5,106
Website and Systems Costs	155	7,108	7,263	23,706
Film, PR and Media	12	29,971	29,983	73,089
Other Project Expenditure	405	46,491	46,896	260,085
Travel and Refreshments	5,654	21,814	27,468	47,594
Staff Costs	72,704	226,036	298,740	336,708
Contractor Costs	4,347	-	4,347	34,024
	84,415	332,719	417,134	780,313
Support costs				
Office Space	1,970	5,539	7,509	8,650
Design Costs	25	275	300	388
Office and phone Costs	933	652	1,585	2,580
Insurance	1,233	-	1,233	1,302
Bank and Card Charges	2,113	22	2,135	1,867
Trustees' Expenses (meeting costs)	767	-	767	571
Staff Costs	70,618	-	70,618	60,271
IT and Software Costs	6,844	6,711	13,555	9,854
Payroll and Professional Fees	920	-	920	830
Audit and Accounting Fee	2,388	630	3,018	4,818
Miscellaneous Expenditure	1,466	529	1,995	2,727
Depreciation for the Period	2,012	-	2,012	2,219
Reallocation of support costs	(54,678)	54,678	-	-
	36,611	69,036	105,647	96,077

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 - Continued

5. Staff Costs and Numbers

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries	357,611	378,015
Pension Costs	17,226	18,650
Employer's National Insurance	25,493	23,326
	<u>400,330</u>	<u>419,991</u>
 Average number of paid full and part time employees in the year	 13	 14
 Average number within pension scheme	 12	 13
 Total remuneration of key management personnel in the period	 <u>£136,687</u>	 <u>£137,754</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 in the year.

6. Trustee Remuneration and Related Party Transactions

No emoluments were received by the Trustees either in their capacities as Trustees or as members of the Board of Trustees. There were expenses paid to Charity trustees from the funds of the Charity totalling £767 (2023: £379). Gifts were paid to all trustees in the period totalling £100 (2023: £nil). Trustee giving in the financial year totalled £505 (2023: £410). There are no other related party transactions other than those disclosed in Note 13.

7. Taxation

As a Charity, Welcome Churches is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or s256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the Charity.

8. Tangible Fixed Assets

Cost	Office Equipment £
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April 2023	9,232
Additions	-
At 31 March 2024	<u>9,232</u>
 Depreciation	
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April 2023	4,759
Charge for the year	2,012
At 31 March 2024	<u>6,771</u>
 Net Book Value	
At 31 March 2024	<u>2,461</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>4,473</u>

There were no tangible assets donated during the year that were capitalised and all assets are held for the furtherance of the Charity's objectives.

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 - Continued

9. Negligence Insurance

The Charity hold Trustee Indemnity Insurance and paid a premium of £901 in the year. The insurance cover is included within the whole policy for the charity which provides cover of up to £250,000.

10. Analysis of Net Assets between funds

<u>Year Ended 31 March 2024</u>	General Fund	Restricted Fund	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	2,461	-	2,461	4,473
Current Assets	93,023	198,588	291,612	507,447
Current Liabilities	(27,115)	-	(27,115)	(31,540)
Net Assets at 31 March 2024	<u>68,369</u>	<u>198,588</u>	<u>266,958</u>	<u>480,380</u>

<u>Year Ended 31 March 2023</u>	General Fund	Restricted Fund	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	4,473	-	4,473	3,394
Current Assets	174,575	332,872	507,447	990,751
Current Liabilities	(20,225)	(11,315)	(31,540)	(63,484)
Net Assets at 31 March 2023	<u>158,823</u>	<u>321,557</u>	<u>480,380</u>	<u>930,661</u>

11. Movements in Funds

<u>Year Ended 31 March 2024</u>	Balance b/fwd 1.4.23	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers	At 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Restricted funds</u>					
DL UHC Government Grant	29,933	75,886	99,146	(6,673)	-
Hospitality Pledge	17,275	88	50,861	35,000	1,502
Afghan Emergency Appeal	231,738	38	120,735	(35,000)	76,041
Network Operations	-	22,500	19,229	-	3,271
Time to Shine	9,960	10,528	19,972	(516)	-
UK HK Consortium	5,658	200	5,858	6,673	6,673
Welcome Conference	-	10,812	18,364	7,552	-
Church Engagement	26,993	25,000	26,994	-	24,999
Church Engagement 2	-	58,888	-	-	58,888
Cost of living support	-	24,874	24,874	-	-
Cost of living support 2	-	5,000	5,000	-	-
NI Conference	-	3,743	3,161	(582)	-
NI Worker	-	7,800	7,205	-	595
Benefact Trust	-	20,000	-	-	20,000
Midlands Worker	-	7,290	670	-	6,620
	<u>321,557</u>	<u>272,647</u>	<u>402,069</u>	<u>6,454</u>	<u>198,589</u>

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 - Continued

11. Movements in Funds - continued

<u>Year Ended 31 March 2023</u>	Balance b/fwd 1.4.22	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers	At 31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Restricted funds</u>					
DL UHC Government Grant	256,927	252,000	478,994	-	29,933
Hospitality Pledge	82,645	-	65,370	-	17,275
Afghan Emergency Appeal	367,740	3,781	139,783	-	231,738
Network Operations	-	14,500	14,500	-	-
Structural Growth	9,189	-	9,189	-	-
Trauma Training	-	-	-	-	-
Time to Shine	-	15,732	5,772	-	9,960
Communications	-	-	-	-	-
Welcome to Church	-	-	-	-	-
Refugees Online	-	-	-	-	-
UK HK Consortium	5,458	200	-	-	5,658
Welcome Conference	-	23,997	23,997	-	-
Church Engagement	-	50,000	23,007	-	26,993
	721,959	360,210	760,612	-	321,557

DL UHC Government Grant – A government grant from DLUHC for helping new arrivals from Hong Kong integrate socially, educationally and into workplaces.

Hospitality Pledge – A grant for promoting radical hospitality in the UK church.

Afghan Emergency Appeal – An Emergency Appeal for support of Afghan refugees fleeing from Kabul in the evacuation. This included practical logistical support and providing wrap around care for Afghans in hotels, promoting integration and social cohesion.

Network Operations – A grant for promoting the operation of the Welcome Network and the systems supporting it.

Time to Shine Project – A grant to provide an opportunity for an intern from a refugee background to gain valuable experience in the charity sector.

UKHK Consortium – A grant for providing a website and mobilising churches to welcome new arrivals from Hong Kong.

Welcome Conference – A grant for running a Welcome Conference for refugees and churches plus ticket sales for the event.

Church Engagement – A grant for funding the Head of National Development and developing the Church Engagement Team.

Church Engagement 2 – A grant for funding and expanding the Church Engagement team and associated support.

Cost of living support – A grant supporting admin staff and running costs during the cost of living crisis.

Cost of living support 2 – A grant to cover expenses and training of Church Engagement staff during the cost of living crisis.

NI Conference – Funds raised for a conference in Northern Ireland.

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 - Continued

NI Worker – Funds raised to support a Church Engagement team member in Northern Ireland.

Benefact Trust – A grant towards the expansion of the Church Engagement team.

Midlands Worker – Funds raised to support a Church Engagement team member in the Midlands.

12. Donated Assets

Office space was donated for the use of; Kerry Fee by Windsor Baptist Church, Belfast (£40); Samuel Luak by Woodside Church, Bedford (£480); Patrick Purdy by Bethany Church, Finaghy (£440); and London meetings by Evangelical Alliance (£100).

This gave a total of donated assets over the year of £1,060.

13. Related Party

A £100 honorarium was given to Nathaniel Jennings who is one of the Trustees for speaking at the Equipped to Welcome conference in Northern Ireland.

There were no other related party transactions other than those disclosed in Note 6.

14. Pension Commitments

The charity operates a defined contributions pension scheme. The assets are held separately from those of the charity in independently administered funds.

The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the charity to the funds and amounts to £32,308 (2023: £34,525). At the year end date an amount of £1,741 (2023: £3,158) was outstanding, payable to the company scheme after the year end date.

15. Financial Commitments

The charity previously entered into a three year service contract with Sales Force. At the year end the charity has a further £5,263 committed spend over the next year.

WELCOME CHURCHES

Notes forming part of the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 - Continued

16. Debtors

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Trade debtors	58	1,221
Prepayments	12,533	9,503
Other debtors	4,353	-
	<u>16,944</u>	<u>10,724</u>

17. Cash at bank and in hand

Included within cash at bank and in hand are the following balances held in fixed term deposit accounts.

£36,000 in Santander 3 month notice account.

18. Creditors

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Trade creditors	13,283	9,972
Accruals	6,247	11,302
Other creditors	7,585	10,266
	<u>27,115</u>	<u>31,540</u>