



THE CORPORATION OF WINCHELSEA

Registered Charity Number 1192506

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

Principal address:
The Court Hall
High Street
Winchelsea
East Sussex
TN36 4EA

Website: www.winchelsea.com

Introduction

1. The Corporation of Winchelsea was saved under s.14 of the 1883 Municipal Corporations Act and subsequent amendment to that Act under various Charity Acts. It was entered on the Charity Commission's Register of Charities on 24 November 2020.
2. Its objectives are:
 - a. To preserve the historic traditions associated with the role of Winchelsea as an Ancient Town of the Cinque Ports Confederation.
 - b. To promote the preservation and maintenance of the historic Court Hall and town gates of Winchelsea and any other land and properties therein, in its charge.
 - c. To hold the Court Hall and the three town gates, namely New, Ferry (Pipewell) and the Strand as designated land for the purposes of the Charity.
 - d. To oversee the state of the Court Hall, the three town gates and town well. Ensuring they are preserved for the public benefit, working with other agencies to maintain their appearance.
 - e. To maintain and manage a museum for the public benefit providing a record of the Town of Winchelsea and its people.

Governance

3. Its governance document is a Scheme approved by the Charity Commission. Led by a Mayor who fulfils its ceremonial functions. The governing council comprises of up to 12 additional Trustees. It meets 6 times per year and is supported by sub-committees dealing with the museum, fabric, strategy, insurance/assets, grant funding, finance and compliance. It has 3 officers, namely a Town Clerk, a Chamberlain and a Sergeant-at-Mace. Periods of office for all those covered by this paragraph span one year and are renewable.

4. The following formed the Executive Board of the Corporation in 2024, acting also as Trustees of the Charity and having the ancient title of Jurat:

Peter Cosstick (Mayor)
Michael Melvin
David Merrifield
John Rodley
David Page
Berenice Scott
Stephen King (Deputy Mayor & Treasurer)
Rosemarie Roberts
John Clarke
Ian Kingham
Alison Casey (from 1st April 2024)
Jonathan Murphy (from 1st April 2024)
Christopher Chappell (from 1st April 2024)

Meeting the Public Benefit

5. Both the Court Hall and Museum are valuable assets to the local community and visitors. The Court Hall is generally used for meetings, presentations, talks, exhibitions, and a number of other community events. During 2024 the Hall was used on 130 occasions and is available for use throughout the year.

The Museum now opens 6 days a week between April and October. It is a valuable source of education and information for both the local community and visitors. The Museum continues to go from strength to strength and during 2024 a further record was broken with over 2000 visitors benefiting from this facility.

6. Regarding the care of properties in the charge of the Corporation, our long-term agreement (to 2026) with Zurich Insurance was renewed for the current year on favourable terms. The Corporation has a rolling maintenance programme to ensure the upkeep of property and buildings.

7. On 1st April 2024 a number of priorities were announced for the year ahead during the Mayoring Ceremony. Against this the following has been achieved:

- Restoration of the West Gable wall commenced in September 2024 and was completed early November 2024, with a small amount of 'finishing' work to be undertaken in 2025.
- The Corporation was successful in applying for grants, currently resulting in three grants being granted towards renovation of the Court Hall toilet and renovation of the Court Hall doors.
- FOAM (Friends of the Ancient Monuments) have provided significant financial support to the Corporation in respect of the West Gable project, the ongoing project in relation to the Court Hall doors and the clearance of vegetation from all three gates which was completed in November 2024.
- The heating in the Court Hall and Museum has now been enhanced.
- The free 'Discover Winchelsea' visitor guide was again produced and circulated locally. In working with Icklesham Parish Council, two of the visitor information boards in North Street and the Beacon have been updated and replaced.
- The museum increased its opening times from five to six days a week between April and October, resulting in a record number of 2,033 visitors and increased revenue streams.
- Working closely with FOAM a trial commenced offering cellar tour visitors the opportunity to include a visit to the museum raising additional funds for the Museum. In addition, historical tours were also trialled to raise funds for FOAM. Both initiatives were very successful and will continue in 2025
- Users of the Court Hall and Museum now have access to the internet through wi-fi.

- All Corporation revenue streams were up on 2023. Court Hall hire charges were not increased, yet revenue doubled.
- Several fund-raising events took place during 2024, including a Race Night, Pub Quiz, and presentations resulting in £1,270 being raised for the Corporation.
- Presentations of the Cinque Ports and Winchelsea Corporation were held, resulting in over sixty residents attending. Including the exclusive showing of a new edited version of a film featuring David Starkey, edited by Winchelsea Corporation. It is hoped our local school will be commencing a student project in 2025 which is Cinque Ports related and supported by the Corporation.
- A 2-day exhibition held in the Court Hall enabled residents to learn more about the plans and restoration work required to property under the Corporations care.

8. On 1st April it was announced that the Mayoress's chosen charity for the year would be Demelza children's charity. During the past nine months many members of the Winchelsea community have been working very hard to raise funds for this worthy and local charity. On 14th December funds of £3,211.00 were presented to the Charity. An amazing achievement and demonstrates how much can be achieved by a community working together for a common cause.

9. Mayoral activities both inside the Town and throughout the wider Cinque Ports community continue at a steady pace. For the third year running, the Mayoring Ceremony was conducted in two locations with the Mayor being sworn in at the Court Hall and continuing in the Church attended by approximately 200 people. We are very grateful to the Church for allowing us to use this wonderful facility. Winchelsea has been working closely with the Confederation in relation to improve the marketing of the Cinque Ports, and wider issues.

10. In May, Admiral Sir George Zambellas was appointed as the new Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. He was installed at Dover in October. A memorable event with many members of the Winchelsea Corporation attending. In early November, he and his wife visited Winchelsea, hosted by the Corporation.

Finance

11. The Accounts attached to this report show the existing investments and reserves. The Corporation is grateful for the support of the Friends of the Ancient Monuments and Museum and the Millennium Artefacts Committee and to many members of the community for their support this year. With no regular revenue raising powers, Corporation reserves are vested in a Bond designed to cover one year of expenditure, plus that required to meet arising capital projects when necessary. Reserve funds also exist to cover unexpected commitments for the Museum. You will see in the accounts during 2024 we called on some reserves to pay towards the West Gable Wall project.

Looking Ahead

12. The Corporation's priorities for 2025 will be to :

- Continue with the restoration and renovation of the Court Hall with a particular focus on the toilet and Court Hall entrance doors together with any essential maintenance identified and agreed.
- Continue our close relationship with the Confederation of the Cinque Ports. Working with members and our community to ensure ongoing promotion, education and visibility of the unique role played by the Confederation in respect of our Maritime and Naval history.
- Continue to forge our relationship with our local community, partners and school and where possible/appropriate assist and support identified projects
- Support local business, attractions and events through on-going promotion of Winchelsea through the production and circulation of the free visitor guide 'Discover Winchelsea' together with our website, winchelsea.com and other suitable media platforms.
- Maintain and enhance the visitor experience to the Museum and Court Hall.
- Continue to raise the profile and transparency of the Corporation to members of the local community.
- Build on increasing the Corporations revenue streams.

13. I would like to express my thanks to all those who have supported and assisted the Corporation during 2024. This includes the Freeman, Jurats, Officers and those who have helped as volunteers in the Museum. My thanks to those who have helped clean the Court Hall and Museum and maintained the garden.

14. In addition, our grateful thanks are extended to our local community for all the additional help given to the Corporation, in relation to time, provision of facilities, and financial support. FOAM have been outstanding in relation to their various fundraising events providing the Corporation with much needed funds to meet our objectives in relation to the maintenance of the Court Hall and the Town Gates

15. We also acknowledge the help of the Local Authorities, namely East Sussex County Council, Rother District Council, Icklesham Parish Council and our local Ward Councillors for their support. We are very grateful to all concerned.

Peter R Cosstick
Mayor of Winchelsea
For and on behalf of the Corporation of Winchelsea

Statement of Independent Inspection of Accounts
For the Year Ended 31 December 2024

Dear Stephen

You asked me to undertake an independent review of the accounts for the Winchelsea Corporation for the year 1st January to 31st December 2024.

I have been given the excel spreadsheet, titled 311224 Corporation Accounts _ Master (Draft1), plus the Word document containing YEAR END ACCOUNTS 31122024 DRAFT which replicates the year ending accounts tab in the master document .

Following my review last year I understand that the Corporation has bought into the Sage cloud computing accounts package which should help in the day to day allocation of funds and expenses, enable a more standardised presentation and speed up the annual accounts process.

It has clearly been a year of expenditure with several projects undertaken. The Corporation has set up a funding committee which has been busy in applying for grants available. I understand that there is still a sum of around £2,000 still to come onto the balance sheet for one of the projects outstanding.

In terms of the documents presented, and the meeting you and I had today, I can confirm that I am happy for the accounts to be published for the calendar year 2024.

Kind regards

Jeremy Naylor

CORPORATION OF WINCHELSEA

Registered charity number 1192506

Accounts**Receipts and Payments Account for the year ending 31st December 2024**

Current Accounts	HSBC Account	Santander Account	Total Funds	2023 Total Funds
Receipts				
Grants Received	2250	600	2850	600
FOAM contributions	15660		15660	4200
Court Hall Hire	860		860	420
Sale of Town Guides	615		615	600
KINGS DUES	435		435	350
Donations/Gift Aid (see note 1)	1568	323	1891	1853
Charity Donation (see note 5)	1500		1500	0
Fundraising	265	1230	1495	3950
Museum Apportionments	3443		3443	3995
Electricity Recovery	148		148	126
Museum Sales		2073	2073	1681
Museum Admissions		5856	5856	5685
Discover Winchelsea	1000		1000	1250
Other (see note 6)	1521		1521	101
Total Receipts	29265	10082	39347	24811
Payments	HSBC Account	Santander Account	Total Funds	2023 Total Funds
Repairs & Maintenance	6779		6779	649
IT	1417		1298	0
Utilities	1166		1166	1947
Projects (note 4)	18551		18551	4200
Discover Winchelsea	861		861	1069
Insurance	2949		2949	2814
Donations (note 5)	1550		1550	1550
Fundraising	0		0	950
Subscriptions	382		382	368
Staff & Admin	1300		1300	1499
Regalia Costs	210		210	1521
Professional fees (note 7)	5411		5411	0
Museum Stock	157	769	926	1067
Cleaning	348		348	0
Bank Charges	80		162	136
Marketing	391		258	0
Support Costs		454	624	0
Alarm & Fire	587		587	200
Fixtures & Fittings	0		0	1091
Museum Apportionments	0	3443	3443	3992
Total Payments	42139	4666	46805	23053

Movement of Funds	HSBC account	Santander account	Notice Account	Capital Account	Total Funds	Total funds 2023
Funds 1st January 2024	14261	3792	15587	57764	91404	
Net Receipts	-12874	5416			-7458	
Transfers	10681			-10681		
Interest			765	2918	3683	
Funds 31st December 2024	12068	9208	16352	50000	87628	91404

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2024

Current Assets (note 3)	2024 £	2023 £
Bank Balances		
Current Accounts - HSBC and Santander	21,276	18,053
Deposit Accounts – United Trust Bank	66,352	73,351
Total	87,628	91,404
Unrestricted Funds (2)		
Current Account HSBC	12,068	14,261
Current Account Santander	9,208	3,792
Notice Fund (40 Day) - UTB	16,352	15,587
Capital Fund 1 Year Fixed- UTB	50,000	57,764
Total	87,628	91,404

Notes to Financial Statements:

- 1. Basis of Preparation:** The accounts are presented on a receipts and payments basis, as permitted by s.133 of the 2011 Charities Act. This is the fourth year in which the Corporation has operated as a charity registered with the Charity Commission. It has also been recognised as being eligible for Gift Aid by HMRC and has enrolled in that scheme. Gift Aid reclaimed for this year is £368.
- 2. Funds:** All funds are unrestricted but have been designated by the Trustees for the purposes described. The Trustees may designate the funds for other purposes at their discretion. Interest is earned on the funds held at the United Trust Bank.
- 3. Corporation Property:** No value is included in the balance sheet in respect of property and land owned by, or in, the Corporation's charge, exhibits in the Museum, stock, or regalia owned by the Corporation.
- 4. Projects, R&M.** Includes works undertaken in the Museum, Court Hall and Gates in accordance with the objects of the charity.

5. Donations: Includes a donation of £1500 accepted for and subsequently forwarded to Demelza Children's Charity.

6. Includes Lord Warden event, insurance claim and wifi contributions.

7. Includes payments to Architects & Cinque Ports Confederation Lord Warden event.

The Financial Statements were approved by the Trustees:

Signed:_____

Date: _____