

Chairman's Report 2024-5

Overall, this has been a progressive year, and I apologise that owing to my enforced absences between May and October, information for that period is a bit thin, so I will mention only the highlights.

In July the Summer Fair was held here, under the efficient control of Maggie, to whom we offer our sincere thanks. This year, responsibility has been handed to the Collingwood Arms and our trustee Mark, so CCA is not involved in the organisation this time but, of course, we will give our support.

The major conversion of the old kitchen into our distillery in Unit 1 proceeded steadily, assisted by the grant of £5000 received from the Foyle Foundation late in 2023 and Cornhill Gin was available in time for Christmas. The final report went to the Foyle Foundation in February and they were impressed enough to suggest they might use our material for their promotions.

In October 2024 we repaid the first half-repayment of £2400 to the William Leech Charity and we expect to discharge the remainder in October this year.

Also in October 2024 we were able to get out of the electricity contract with Yu Energy. We were forced into that disadvantageous contract in 2022 when no other supplier wanted to know about charities. We are now with British Gas and the unit rate has gone down from 44 pence to 29 pence, which pleased our tenants.

At the end of 2024 we were able to make a donation of £400 to Cornhill Parish Council towards the upkeep of the grassed areas, which was graciously received.

The condition of the low retaining wall at the SE corner gives me increasing cause for concern due to movement over the winter. It now presents a safety hazard. In February an application for funding for reconstruction was made to the Community Foundation. We were awarded £3400, which is 100% of the cost quoted by Matthew Lee builders.

The quotation was accepted in April, but the contractors came back to say sorry, they cannot do the job until next year. This is not acceptable and we are urgently looking for an alternative. In January we received notice of termination from Lynda Hepburn in Unit 4, effective from 31st March. Rosie had already taken over Unit 5 when Charlie left and had replaced the floor but, after what appears to be an episode in the style of musical chairs, Rosie took over Unit 4. We now welcome Josie to Unit 5, which is to become her pottery studio. Our tenants form a little community of their own, which is pleasing.

Last March the trustees agreed changes to the tenant's lease regarding the review of rents. It became unreasonable to expect the Treasurer to change rental amount at random dates depending on anniversaries of tenancies and the Consumer Prices Index does not fully reflect our pattern of expenditure. Rent revisions now take place on 1st June annually and the trustees have authority to adjust the uplift within limits. I must apologise for my lack of proper communication. On 25th of this month I sent a copy of the revised clause 13 to all trustees and tenants.

Having asked the trustees individually their opinion as to the uplift in rents this year and spoken informally to several tenants, there appears to be a general consensus that an increase in the order of 10% would be acceptable. In order to avoid calculations of pence and decimals of pence, I intend to recommend to the trustees an uplift of 9.2% to a new figure of £4.80 per square foot which is still a long way below the comparable commercial rate of about £6.

At this point I offer our thanks to Linda, who as Treasurer has made an outstanding improvement to our book-keeping. And I also thank all those others who have made contributions large and small to our continued success.

Thank you also to those present who are not trustees and have come to support us. Trustees, be warned there is more to come.

Martin Devon
May 2025

Cornhill Community Action CIO
Summary of Accounts 19th May 2024 to 18th May 2025

Bank balance brought forward **£1,653.25 cr**

Receipts

rental income	£10,753.74	
tenants utility payments	£3,433.28	
other income from grants etc	£1,570.23	
Income total		£15,757.25 cr

Expenditure

utilities and heating	£5,779.59	
building and maintenance	£4,300.14	
village green donation	£400.00	
loan repayment	£2,400.00	
expenditure total		£12,879.73 dr

Bank balance carried forward **£4,530.77 cr**

Bank balance includes ring-fenced community fund	£1,551.30
Money held at Leeds Building Society	
to be transferred to bank	£636.25 cr