

Trustees Annual Report

Aug 2021 - Jul 2022

Martha House Association (MHA) has been in operation since 2014 when it was established as an unincorporated voluntary association. In 2021 we received our status as a Charitable Incorporated Association.

Objectives & Activities

Our charitable objects are:

“to relieve poverty and financial hardship among refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers and their dependents living in London by providing housing, pastoral and practical support.”

We carry this out through our principle activities, outlined below:

The provision of accommodation in Martha House in Tottenham

Martha House the original project of MHA is a house of hospitality for destitute asylum seekers, refugees and other forced migrants. It is run by two hosts, the co-community leads Jo and Conor who are also trustees of the charity, who live in the house with the guests. It provides for basic needs of those who are destitute – food, accommodation, laundry facilities, internet access – relieving the hardship that this marginalised group faces.

Beyond accommodation, Martha House creates a safe, caring and supportive environment where residents can heal from the stress of homelessness and isolation. We support guests to be involved in the running of the house, to establish links and friendships with others and connect them to local opportunities. Much of the work is pastoral – listening to guests and helping them process information and advice from case-workers.

Guests are referred to us by advocacy and case-workers from organisations like Haringey Migrant Support Centre, Crisis and the Red Cross. If there are no issues with challenging behaviour or substance abuse, etc, their stay is open ended until another option of accommodation becomes available so we aim to work closely with guests’ case-workers to ensure move-on options and their immigration case are progressed.

The provision of accommodation in the Community House in Hackney:

At the end of 2019 we entered in to a new partnership with Clapton Park URC church and Mission Housing to offer their Community House to refugees. The freehold is owned by Mission Housing, a Housing Association that works with local churches to provide accommodation at affordable rent.

The aim of MHA’s work there is to provide affordable accommodation to refugees who want to move from benefits in to work, but for whom the market costs of rent makes this impossible and put them at risk of homelessness. With rents often set by landlords at the utmost a local authority will cover through housing benefit, it is too expensive for people on low wages, and impossible to move on from without saving for a month’s deposit – an impossible task on housing

benefit. This creates a poverty trap that many find difficult to escape from. Offering accommodation at affordable rent is a bridge from benefits to work and a way out of that poverty trap.

Advocacy Support

The Advocacy Support Project was a 3-month funded pilot project through a DLUHC grant jointly administered by two Third Sector agencies, Housing Justice and Homelessnesslink. In the three-month project Conor Cregan, a trustee of MHA, provided housing advice and practical support over 30 people. These include residents of the Community House Project, guests at LCW's Giuseppe Conlon House and others signposted by people who we have previously supported. Many of these were reluctant to approach or had already been let-down by the traditional homelessness sector agencies.

It is also worth noting that the current housing crisis in the United Kingdom has created a lot of competition to finding accommodation. Without the grant the ASP would have struggled to manage to support so many into accommodation. Several people we supported would be deemed as being hard to move-on various barriers including unemployment, limited access to public funds or lack of appropriate accommodation. Nearly all of those we supported were overwhelmed by their experience in finding accommodation and would have faced sleeping on the street without support in navigating the system.

Mulberry Tree Community Garden:

The Mulberry Tree Community Garden is a small community gardening project run jointly between MHS and Tottenham Quaker Meeting. It happens in Tottenham Quakers' former burial ground. Everyone is welcome but it is primarily aimed at those who are marginalised because of their immigration status, precarious housing situations and/or poverty.

Public benefit statement: The trustees ensure that the activities of the charity are consistent with its charitable objects and aims. In agreeing our annual plans, the trustees take into account public benefit as set out in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit in relation to the prevention and relief of poverty, the advancement of education and health and the relief of those in need. The trustees believe there is clear public benefit derived from the activities of the charity.

Performance and achievements

Martha House

In 2021, Martha House was open and continued to take in guests until October when we closed for over for refurbishments, which continued throughout this reporting period. In 2022 numerous setbacks were experienced with the contractors and this has frustrated the work of MHA.

In the 9 months of operation, although operating at a lower capacity due to Covid, we continued to host five people at a time. In total we had seven guests in

the house; three long term guests and four short term guests. At the time of closing, the remaining guests were found alternative accommodation.

We continued to support a network of other people – ex-residents and people who attended our community meal that ran every Monday prior to Covid restrictions. With the suspension of our community meal there has been less involvement from volunteers but were able to have some limited social gatherings in summer when people could reconnect.

Community House:

The Community House opened in January 2021 and we envisaged the length of stay for each guest to be around 1 year to 18 months. Initially Bro. Johannes Maertens was a live-in host supporting the residents but he committed to another project after a year and moved out.

We had some difficulty receiving rent from two residents from the first cohort. One did not wish to take the support offered to him to find alternative accommodation and left in May 2022. He was replaced by a young couple who were refugees but also interested in taking on a community-building role in the house. The other individual who struggling was encouraged and supported to pursue a diagnosis for some of his issues and (through the Advocacy Support project) Conor worked with him to make this happen. He and the other three men completed the 18-month stay.

When it came to securing accommodation for the other three men, this was more difficult than envisaged. Renting in London is difficult – both due to cost and availability. The men all found accommodation but were not able to find secure tenancies. In the eighteen months they were Community House residents however, they all learnt how to navigate the Universal Credit system and subsequently moved in to work. The period in the Community House has helped them get in to a rhythm of being responsible for monthly rent payments and a service charge.

Advocacy Support Project:

Although a short-term pilot project the Advocacy Support Project achieved substantial results.

We facilitated a private psychiatric assessment for one of the residents to The Community House Project who was subsequently accommodated by the local Housing Association. One man who had been sofa surfing was accepted into supported accommodation with a local Housing Association. Another. Two people who had recently arrived in the UK to apply for asylum were denied accommodation by the Home Office because they needed immigration advice and support to find accommodation. One of our partners provided accommodation and we were able to find a solicitor to assist them to apply for asylum. They were then accommodated by the Home Office until their application is processed.

Two of the people who we moved on, a British woman and her Brazilian husband, have been experiencing homelessness on and on for years for over a decade, secured a river boat and we assisted by providing the security of a “Continuous Mooring License” and marine insurance for one year.

Another two men (an EEA national with pre-settled status and a recent refugee unable to speak English) were assisted into the Private Rental Sector. The final client, a Eritrean man, who is gathering evidence to make a fresh claim for asylum, was supported to reconnect with his family and travel to another part of the United Kingdom.

Luckily, we were able to provide the hard accommodation outcomes that we projected but we thought we could have done more. In fact, we still have four clients we are struggling to move on. One barrier we often struggle with is our clients' expectations. Often, wanting to hold out for somewhere with cheap rent, or expecting somewhere that is affordable. We have struggled with the juxtaposing of housing providers (both the 3rd sector and private rental sector) charging the LHA rent and what our clients can afford to pay when in full time employment.

Mulberry Tree Community Garden

The gardening project was able to continue through various lock-down phases in 2021 because it is classed as a support group.

As an outside activity, the project ran safely and proved to be a lifeline for many people whose usual drop-ins and day centres remained closed. In the summer months' we had a weekly average of 10-12 participants, the highest consistent number so far and the maximum the project can cater for.

Funding success from Awards for All allowed us to buy in sessions from different people such as a herbalist, a forest gardener and a mosaic makers.

Financial Review

Financial position

There are no current financial risks to the charity and no material deficits.

Reserves statement & amount

We try to keep a reserve fund of around £5,000. This is to cover any emergency needs associated with the projects or for any serious dips in operating costs.

Principal sources of funding

Regular donations of on average £350 per month allow us to handle operating costs for Martha House. The rent and service charge at the Community House cover costs associated with that project.

Grants from trust funds and our annual partnership funding from the Passionists allow us to offer some hardship money to those we support, cover maintenance costs and invest in projects such as the Mulberry Tree Community Garden and Advocacy Support Project.

Governance

MHA is a CIO foundation trust, governed by a constitution. Originally we incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee but will wind this down over 2023 as it is no longer necessary. Trustees were selected for history with project and their expertise in homelessness support, migrant issues and fundraising.

Throughout 2021, we drafted the necessary policies, such as safeguarding and data protection, and adopted safeguarding procedures. Trustees also underwent safeguarding training and were inducted through the information from the Charity Commission and NCVO.

MHA has strong working relationships with other local migrant support groups such as the London Catholic Worker and Haringey Migrant Support Centre. We are also partnered with the Order of the Passion of Jesus Christ (the Passionists) who own the house that Martha House operates in.

We have developed a partnership with Mission Housing and Clapton Park URC for the Community House project. We also use Clapton Park URC as our registered address.

Reference and Admin details

Martha House Association, CPURC, Old School Rooms, 2 Powerscroft Road, E5 0PU.

All trustees were appointed when MHA registered in Oct 2021: Mary Fagan, Jamie Rae, Conor Cregan, Eleanor Smith, Joanna Frew, Karolina Marozsek.

We have no corporate or custodian trustees, or other assets.

Declaration of trustees that they approve



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name

Martha House Association

Receipts and pay

For the period
from

Period start date

08/01/2021

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts		
Donations	6,330	3,608
Grants	3,000	12,300
Fundraising Activities	-	-
Community House rental income	-	27,888
Food Coop	809	-
Other Incoming Resources	735	-
	-	-
	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	10,874	43,796
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).		
	-	-
	-	-
Sub total	-	-
Total receipts	10,874	43,796

A3 Payments

Fundraising Activities	-	-
Charitable Activities	-	-
Community House Project Rent & Council Tax	-	21,001
Advocacy Support Project	-	7,295
Mulberry Tree Community Garden	-	6,773
Community Activities	989	-
Hardship assistance	583	-
Operational Costs	3,600	4,955
Building maintenance	-	-
Management and Administration	5,382	289
Personnel expenses	360	4,857
Sub total	10,914	45,170

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)

	-	-
	-	-
Sub total	-	-

Total payments	10,914	45,170
Net of receipts/(payments)	-40	-1,374
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	34,372	20,624
Cash funds this year end	34,332	19,250

Categories	Details
B1 Cash funds	Cash/Undeposited Funds
	Martha House Bank Account
	Unity Account
	Daily account (Smile)

B2 Other monetary assets	Details

[illegible]

B5 Liabilities

Details

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

joanna frew

	No (if any) 1196328	CC16a
ments accounts		
To	Period end date 07/31/2022	

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Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £

-	9,938	-
-	15,300	-
-	-	-
-	27,888	-
-	809	-
-	735	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	54,669	-

restricted donations w
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Rent and service char

-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

-	54,669	-
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-	-	-
-	-	-
-	21,001	-
-	7,295	-
-	6,773	-
-	989	-
-	583	-
-	8,555	-
-	-	-
-	5,671	-
-	5,217	-
-	56,083	-

-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

-	56,083	-
-	-1,414	-
-	-	-
-	54,996	-
-	53,582	-

End of the period

Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
357	250	-
9,679	4,000	-
24,199	15,000	-
97	-	-
34,332	19,250	-
OK	OK	OK

[illegible]

Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-

[illegible]

Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	-	
	-	
	-	
	-	
	-	

Print Name	Date of approval
Joanna Frew	05/08/2023

were given as gifts specifically to support the pastoral work of Brother Johannes Maertens for the Advocacy Support Project, from Housing Justice (£12,000) and Caritas (£3,000). The money was used to help cover the costs of the project, including the rent, council tax and utilities.

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CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name

Martha House Association

On accounts for the year ended

31 July 2022

Charity no
(if any)

1196328

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/7/2022.

As the charity's trustees, 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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

C. J. Utley

Date:

30/5/2023

Name:

Catherine Julia Utley

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Member of Institute of Chartered Accountants England and Wales no:
764379

Address:

108 Priory Gardens London N6 5QT