

## **Trustees' Annual Report for Year: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

*Thanks go to everyone who has contributed to and supported the work of Dorchester Poverty Action (DPA).*

### ***Trustees of DPA during 2024 – 2025***

***Wendy Hilton (Chair), Dr Margaret Barker, Simon Booth  
Kath Joslin, Peter See (Treasurer), Susie Hosford and Jean Croot.***

DPA is a community charity and was set up by Churches Together in Dorchester in 1990, registered as a charitable trust with the Charity Commission in 1994. Its aim was, and remains, to serve those with inadequate income in the DT1 and DT2 area. On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023, DPA converted to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (No. 1198452), following a successful application to the Charity Commission.

### **Trustees**

Dr Margaret Barker, who had been Chair of Dorchester Poverty Action for many years, and a Trustee from its inception, retired in October 2024, and agreed to join the Advisory Group to ensure her valuable knowledge will still be accessible to the Charity. Susie Hosford was appointed as a new Trustee in October 2024.

### **Summary of the past year's work**

- There remain many local families and individuals who are struggling financially, aggravated by the continuing rising costs of food, fuel and essential household bills. DPA have continued to provide an important lifeline for these people and certainly the DPA grants are always greatly appreciated by both recipients and professionals working with them. However, it seems the reduction and turn-over of staff plus changes to the structures of statutory organisations are a cause for the slight reduction in referrals for grants and items. Trustees and the Advisory Group have publicised the work of DPA whenever an opportunity has arisen to address this.
- The number of grants given in 2024/25 (a total of 183, compared to 191 in 2023/24) had returned to pre-Covid levels, and was around 8% lower than 2023/24.
- The number of grants requested for fuel during the Winter months was noticeably lower during the Winter of 2024/25. Many such requests in previous years came from Social and Health Services, and it may well be that the changes these organisations have experienced, and the reduction in numbers of staff have resulted in this factor. It was also a mild Winter. The Trustees are monitoring this and also sending out publicity re DPA along with the Easter 2025 Co-Op food vouchers, plus having talked to a group of Social Prescribers and to Age UK.
- The Trustees completed the work to convert DPA to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which will enable DPA to gain benefits previously enjoyed by companies, without the burden of dual regulation by both the Charities Commission and Companies House. This involved opening a new bank account and significant other work particularly for the Treasurer and Chair.
- Applying for Gift Aid on personal donations, plus transferring part of the bank account to an interest-bearing account, has assisted DPA to maximise its income.
- The Advisory Group has been very helpful with various tasks, including the distribution of supermarket vouchers (crucial in providing emergency help to people), maintaining and improving the website and Facebook sites, and assisting with fund-raising events, plus the



annual Coffee Morning. The Advisory Group provides useful links to local churches, food banks and other voluntary organisations.

- As more people have had to rely on food banks, the need for a fridge or fridge/freezer has become important to enable people to avoid wasting fresh food given. DPA works closely with Dorset Reclaim to provide white goods at a reasonable price but it became necessary to increase such grants to £315 to cover these prices. It was also agreed at the end of the financial year to increase the general maximum grant to £300, in recognition of increasing general costs
- Due to the previous work of DPA Trustees and the Advisory Group almost all local schools now have school uniform swap facilities. This has shown results and the amount given out in grants for school uniforms was reduced to £1,770, mainly for footwear and warm coats.
- Grants for flooring continues to be requested and given to families with babies, toddlers or people with certain disabilities where flooring is required for health and safety reasons. Sadly the policy of local housing agencies is for the previous tenants to have to remove all carpets/flooring, and hence the new tenants have to provide flooring as well as the usual expenses required when moving. Although this has been previously noted in DPA Annual Reports, due to the financial hardship this causes to most new tenants, it is worth recording this again.
- DPA have continued to work with the local Food Bank to support Christians Against Poverty who several times a year run their Money Management Course to provide a £20 voucher to each person completing the Course.
- Fund raising appeals at the beginning of Winter and at Christmas 2024 (Give a Stranger a Gift) were successful and DPA was extremely pleased and grateful for individuals' donations.
- Through written applications to certain organisations, plus publicising the work of DPA, funds have been raised by the Trustees and Advisory Group.
- The DPA Policies and Procedures were reviewed, updated and agreed by the Trustees in July 2024.
- The Trustees continue to function efficiently, meeting at least quarterly, followed by a meeting including the Advisory Group to ensure everyone is kept informed of all work.

### **Financial Help Given**

- During 2024/25, £40,917 was given out in grants helping a total of 147 individuals/families.
- £14,000 was spent on Co-Op food vouchers (£10 each) given to 16 agencies to help people and families in dire and urgent need.
- A further amount of just over £1,000 was given out by Citizens Advice to be used as emergency funds in small amounts.
- As mentioned above, a small amount was used to provide £20 vouchers for those completing the Christians Against Poverty Money Management Courses.
- £2,400 was given out in fuel grants (usually £100 per grant).
- £1,770 was given out in school uniform grants (a maximum of £100 per student).
- Administrative expenses were £800 (which includes Insurance, bank fees, membership of Dorset Community Action and printing). This is just under 1.5% of total expenditure.

### **Examples of what the DPA Grants were for**

- Urgent basic furniture, baby items and white goods for families rehoused having escaped domestic violence, or being rehoused after a period of homelessness
- Fridges/freezers and cookers to families using food banks



- Floor covering for families or individuals being newly housed in housing association properties where there is a baby/toddler or person with a relevant disability
- Winter fuel costs, especially heating oil in villages with no mains gas supply
- Warm coats and shoes for school children
- Costs arising because of serious physical/mental ill health of a family member
- Assistance to clear rent, council tax or fuel arrears.
- Vehicle repairs to enable main earner to get to work or get a family member to appointments
- Travel costs to visit a sick and vulnerable family member in hospital
- Nursery equipment or equipment for a person with a disability
- Deep clean of property for disabled person

## **Income**

- From individuals with many kind and generous friends donating by standing order: £13,788 in 2024/25.
- DPA is always very grateful and impressed by all the individual donations: £17,526 in 2024/25
- Gift Aid on donations from people who kindly completed Gift Aid forms, provided (at no extra cost to the person) a total of £13,126, some being backdated to previous years.
- From agencies providing grants and donations to enable the work of DPA. Given in no specific order, these include: the Town Council, Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charity, Roberts Trust, Valentine Trust, Lions, Round Table, Bunbury Trust, Martinstown Supper Club, the Occasional Singers concert, the New Hardy Players, Mayor's Charity, the Batten Trust, the Grocers Charity, Dorchester and the Frampton Film Club.
- From local churches in Dorchester and the surrounding villages offering spaces for fund raising events, or fund raising through various ways: £4,918.
- From other community organisations' events and from our own fund-raising events: £3,666

## **Public Benefit**

The Trustees reviewed the sources of income and categories of expenditure against the Aims and Objectives of the Charity. It considered that the expenditure reflected the Aims and Objectives and was to the benefit of the public.

## **Accounts**

As the activity of Dorchester Poverty Action (Unincorporated Association 1041397) transferred to Dorchester Poverty Action CIO (1198452) during the 2023/24 financial year, two sets of accounts were submitted to The Charities Commission, both having been independently examined and verified. The Unincorporated Association has had no activity in 2024/25, but remains open for possible transactions such as Gift Aid claims.

## **Thanks**

We thank our Volunteer Book Keeper, Irene Stanko who works closely with our Treasurer; we are grateful for her work and efficiency.

We thank our Independent Examiner (Alec Bailey) for his meticulous examination of our accounts. We thank those involved in grant applications, both received and given. We also thank those involved in referrals and grant applications and the efficient and fast processing of these, which can make such a difference to those we work for.

We thank Jon Sloper at Alacrify (a local website and IT company) for the back-up and support given.

## **Reserves Policy**

With no long term commitments, DPA does not target a specific level of reserves. The DPA is fortunate to receive a number of generous regular donations during the year. The Trustees aim to keep around a year's expenditure in an appropriate bank account.

## **Partnerships**

DPA's work benefits greatly from partnerships with local organisations:

- DPA's work with **Citizens' Advice** benefits both agencies, as well as the many local people who are helped through their work
- **Dorset Reclaim, Dorchester Carpets, Domestic Appliances Centre and similar local stores.** Payments are made direct to these stores if they are able to supply items needed by the families or individuals.
- **Dorchester Family Support** for their work to support over 230 families with children, in the school holidays, who are eligible for free school meals.
- **Dorchester Town Council** keeps in contact with DPA through their community officer (Emma Scott), who is a great support to all community agencies.
- **Parish Magazines and local radio** throughout the DT1 and DT2 area who willingly publish articles and appeals for help.
- **Food and Practical Relief** offered by local churches, including the Dorchester Food Bank (Dorford Baptist Church), Food Share (Dorchester Community Church), and the Carers' Support (Storehouse Church).

**Approved by the Trustees on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**Signed on behalf of the Trustees**



**Peter See**  
**Treasurer**





Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Dorchester Poverty Action CIO

On accounts for the year  
ended

31-03-2025

Charity no  
(if any)

1198452

Set out on pages

Annual Account 2024-25

1+2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31-03-2025.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

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.

Signed:

Date:

13-05-2025

Name:

Alec Bailey

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body

F.C.A.

Address:

9 Nonesuch Cl

Dorchester

DT1 2SW

# Dorchester Poverty Action CIO Annual Account 2024-25

Registered Charity Number 1198452

Brought forward (1/04/2024)

|                  |           |                  |
|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| CAF Cash         | 57,428.80 |                  |
| Shawbrook 60 day | 30,468.50 |                  |
|                  |           | <b>87,897.30</b> |

|           |  |                  |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| Income    |  | <b>69,271.48</b> |
| Outgoings |  | <b>56,724.89</b> |

Carried forward (31/03/2025)

|          |           |                   |
|----------|-----------|-------------------|
| CAF Cash | 21,429.77 |                   |
| CAF Gold | 79,014.12 |                   |
|          |           | <b>100,443.89</b> |

**Income**

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| STRIPE             | 13,126.62 |
| Stewardship/CAF    | 330.00    |
| Individual one-off | 17,526.35 |
| Individual regular | 13,788.04 |
| Groups             | 14,769.37 |
| Churches           | 4,917.86  |
| Fundraising        | 3,666.02  |
| Interest           |           |
| CAF Cash           | 70.12     |
| Shawbrook          | 62.98     |
| CAF Gold           | 1014.12   |
| Total interest     | 1,147.22  |

**Total Income** **69,271.48**

**Outgoing**

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| DPA general grants | 36,747.00 |
| Fuel grants        | 2,400.00  |
| School uniform     | 1,770.00  |
| Co-op vouchers     | 14,000.00 |
| CAB                | 1,107.00  |
| Admin              | 208.64    |
| Bank charges       | 65.00     |
| Insurance          | 427.25    |

**Total outgoings** **56,724.89**

**Notes**

1. The Shawbrook 60-day notice account was closed on 12/07/2024 and the CAF Gold Instant Access deposit account opened on 22/07/2024.
2. Historic restrictions and designations of certain funds were considered to have been discharged by expenditure prior to 1/04/2025 and are no longer reported.