



TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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CHARITY INFORMATION

Trustees	Sally Adams	Until 9 September
	Jaime Blake	From 9 September
	Lynne Hackett	
	Nicholas Hales	From 16 May
	Tricia Newton	Until 9 September
	Heather Farquhar	
	Graham Farquhar	
	Keith Scott	
	Saul Walker	
	Pamela Clark	
Chairman		
Vice Chairman	Vacancy	
Hon. Treasurer	Stuart Senior	
Hon. Secretary	Helen Curtis	
Hon. Secretary	Linda Hall	
(Trustees)		
Office Manager	Clare Powell	

Charity Registration No.	208080
VAT Registration No.	472-9285-14

Registered Office	3 Basepoint Business Centre, Crab Apple Way, EVESHAM, WR11 1GP
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Independent Examiner	Cooper Parry Saggar House, Princes Drive, WORCESTER, WR1 2PG
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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The Trustees present their Annual Report and the Financial Statements of the Society for the year ended 31 December 2023 in compliance with current statutory requirements and the charity's governing documents.

Status

The Society is registered by the Charity Commission as a charity (number 208080) and operates under the provisions of a constitution approved by AGM on 26/03/2011 and amended at AGMs on 30/03/2019 and 31/07/2020.

The objects for which the Society was established are to:

- advance the culture, study and improvement of hardy herbaceous plants;
- preserve the older, rarer and lesser-known hardy plants, cultivars and varieties from being forgotten and lost to cultivation;
- advance the knowledge of and foster public interest in hardy plants by the publication of information, by exhibitions or displays, by stimulating research and experiment and by awarding bursaries open to public competition;
- provide expositions of hardy plants at horticultural gardens and/or gardens open to the public, and to provide facilities for giving advice on the culture of hardy plants;
- organise visits to places of interest in connection with the study of hardy plants and to co-operate with other bodies having similar or sympathetic aims; and
- do such acts as shall further the active and corporate life of the Society and which may lawfully be done by a public body established only for purposes recognised by the laws of the United Kingdom as charitable.

Trustees

The Society is managed by a committee of Trustees comprising up to twelve members each elected for a period of four years, plus any co-opted members and, additionally, four officers who are elected annually.

Activities

Introduction

2023 was a year of change and development for The Hardy Plant Society (HPS).

Moving on from what, initially, seemed a straightforward website development mentioned in last year's Annual Report, opportunities presented themselves to consider many of the traditional activities of the Society without losing sight of its charitable objects, which underpin all its activities.

The Society continued to take advantage of new and improved technologies to maintain contact with members: local and special interest groups increased and improved contact through the use of email and the national Society used this method to communicate directly with members and provide news and other membership information. The result of direct member contact has enhanced the membership value for those members (over 50% of the current membership) who do not belong to either a local or special interest group.

The Office and Administration

The Office continues to be managed with great efficiency by Clare Powell, who maintains an excellent relationship with Trustees, postholders and members. Temporary help during the busy period of processing renewals and receiving seed orders was arranged, however, as the Society moves towards a new automated renewal process, 2023 will be the last year that renewals will be dealt with in the current way.

There was improved analysis of membership statistics; a monthly report is routinely sent to Officers and reported to Trustees; the membership numbers have remained stable.

Publications

The Society's three print publications and its range of booklets on specific plants are critical in sharing information about its activities, advancing knowledge on plants, and providing a way of connecting members to the Society, irrespective of their plant or gardening knowledge, their physical location, and ability to or interest in participating in group activities.

The Hardy Plant (*THP*) Journal

Looking back over last year, it feels as though much has been accomplished. We have had important contributions from high profile professionals (Rosy Hardy, York Gate), garden media (Jean Vernon on pollinators, Selwa Calderbank on coffee), our own superstars and stalwarts (Val Bourne, Judy Harry, Roy Lancaster, Ruth Baumberg, Kevin Line), and some real experts who are new or returning contributors (Mike Holcombe, Gill Heavens). For Souren, the epitome of an ideal article for *THP* was a contribution from our new Trustee Jaime Blake: relevant, real and most readable.

There have been a couple of bumps along the road: (1) some of the colours in some of the images came out a little bit lurid, and (2) our slightly formal style of numbering figures has come in for criticism. The team are addressing these.

The Society entered the GMG *Publication of the Year* competition again – again we were completely overlooked but, as in *Shawshank Redemption*, we will persist.

It is never clear whether we will have enough material for the next issue, and scouting around for future writing is a task that never ends. Souren Ala (*THP* editor) notes that the Office is now able to send emails directly to our members - perhaps such a direct appeal, suitably worded, would bring in some useful contributions?

In Spring, 2024, we will have Matthias Dejaegher's last(?) photo competition, and Souren is so grateful to him for the solid support *THP* has received from the HPS Image Library over the last five years.

The *THP*'s team of editor, proof-reader, fact-checker and typesetter is intact so far – also something to be very grateful for.

Newsletter

One of the main focuses of the Society's three-times-a-year newsletter in 2023 has been the communications strategy review. Coverage has been given to all aspects of that project, including the new website, the visual design, the switch from cheques and paper forms and the online presence of special interest local groups.

Production throughout the year has proceeded on schedule - and members continue to compliment the publication in emails to the editor. Competitions have continued to feature too - with £700 worth of prizes being on offer across the year, thanks to the generosity of Farmer

Gracy online nursery, Whichford Pottery in Warwickshire and Ashworth Nurseries in the West Midlands.

Booklets

Sales of booklets have been variable this year. Our newest booklet, *Galanthus*, has sold 98 copies in the year since it was published which is pleasing. Other popular titles have been *Geraniums*, *Ferns* and *Hardy Garden Chrysanthemums* and we are looking at reprinting these as stocks are now low.

Sales of some of the other titles have been less good which is a disappointing as they are interesting and informative. One or two, such as the excellent *Penstemons*, are beginning to look a little dated and will need an update before long.

Ordering booklets is now easy via the website and we hope this will boost sales.

Group Liaison

In October we held the annual Group Secretaries meeting at Solihull. It was a productive day with all attending group representatives making good contributions. There was a session about the new website which stimulated much debate. The question of funding speakers was a lively session with groups sharing information about how they raised their funds. A serious concern is the cost of travel for speakers which is making it more difficult to fund quality speakers who need to travel.

It is good to know that most groups are, post-pandemic, getting back to face-to-face meetings.

The new method for checking membership by membership secretaries is proving very beneficial, especially following one-to-one conversations with our Office Manager.

Seed Distribution

There was a slight increase in types of seed donated, 1702 as opposed to 1675 the season before. There were 321 new types of seed an increase of 34 from the previous year. The number of orders was reduced to 1041, around 21% of the total number of members.

Costs for courier prices, fuel (volunteer expenses) and consumables, increase year upon year. The price of the seed remains the same, which is a good selling point, but seed distribution runs at a loss. Therefore, it would be advisable for the Trustees to review the viability of the scheme in 2024.

Conservation

Through the work of the Conservation Group the Society works to advance the culture, study, and improvement of hardy herbaceous plants and to preserve older, rarer, and lesser-known hardy plant cultivars.

The Annual Exchange meeting in September was well attended, with numbers up slightly from last year. This is always a good chance for participants to discuss the plants in the scheme, ask questions and compare notes as to what works and what doesn't. It was clear that although many plants were brought to the meeting for exchange, some highly desirable ones were missing. It was agreed to have a focus on propagation in 2024, with the aim of bulking up the rarer species.

Three new plants were added to the scheme, and one archived plant brought back to bulk up numbers again. An informal review last year of past successful plants showed that some of these were no longer readily available. We will continue to review our past successes this year to determine if other plants need to be reinstated in the scheme to increase their availability again.

Image Library

The Society has increased its reputation and work in becoming a knowledge hub for plants through the development of its library of plant images, plant seeds, and plant information, such information gleaned from material provided by members submitting photographs, by writing articles on specific plants, and by contributions to the annual Seed Distribution Scheme. Through a major co-operation with The Royal Horticultural Society, HPS has a licence to access the former's information bank: this has particular importance in ensuring that the plant nomenclature used in the website is up-to-date and accurate. It is intended that, in the course of 2024, a project will be undertaken by Society members, who are expert horticulturalists, to review the current naming protocols used by the Society.

Shows & Events

For many members of the public their first experience of HPS is at the local level. This may be by attending a talk by a distinguished gardener or by coming across the Society at the many horticultural shows where groups have created floral displays. Visitors to such shows can get advice on plants and how to grow them, particularly relevant as the group creating the display is growing plants in the same conditions as the show visitors.

Having taken over as postholders, Saul Walker and Helen Brown have started to assess our Shows and Events output within the main Society. Both the logistical and financial outlay required to have major show representation can be quite restrictive for local groups, so it is hoped in 2024 to establish a more centralised organisation for attending some of the higher profile shows to increase the profile of the HPS. Local groups continue to organise or involve themselves in their local area using events as fund raisers and recruitment opportunities for both the National and Local groups, and support will continue for these on a case-by-case basis.

The Society was represented at both the RHS Malvern Spring show by the National Group and Harrogate Flower Show by the West Yorkshire, obtaining a Silver and Premier Gold respectively for their wonderful floral displays. We also had a wonderful, a well-attended Annual Lecture Day, expertly implemented by the Western Counties group, with keynote talks by John Grimshaw, Bob Brown and Steven Edney.'

The Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme

The provision of bursaries through the Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme has enabled the Society to support the work and education of, particularly, younger and newer entrants to plants and gardens. Many of the recipients are students in formal horticultural education but, increasingly, the Society has sought to provide support to those who may be in the early stages of their working life or who are undertaking a career change. Support is provided for travel to study plants in their natural habitats, for those working or volunteering in community garden projects, and for those undertaking courses of study to improve their horticultural knowledge or obtain formal qualifications.

The Scheme has returned to a pre-Covid number of applications, there being 41 made this year, two of which were declined due to them not fulfilling the criteria required. A total of £28,458 has been awarded.

Changes made this year:

- bursaries of between £100 and £1,000 are now offered;
- there is only one all-purpose application form;
- the information on the website and in the leaflet is more succinct and has been updated.

Publicity and PR activity

We continue to underpin the Hardy Plant Society's charitable objects through the communication work of the Society. During 2023 this has included working with the Shows and Events team to promote the HPS stand at the Malvern Show. We continue to build our links with the Media through press releases and responding to requests for information. The Hardy Plant Society has joined the Garden Media Guild, and our Chair attended The GMG Awards Lunch, this activity helps us to raise our profile with publishers, producers, and writers.

The HPS we will have a stand at the National Press Event in February 2024 to promote our new web page and our refreshed message. This will raise awareness of the wide range of work undertaken by the society and enable that knowledge to be shared by others.

Currently we are working on The HPS Social Media Policy in line with the Charity Commissions guidance and to reflect our increased activity on a wider range of social media platforms.

HPS Archive

The HPS archive continues to grow within the Dropbox online storage facility.

It has two principal functions:

- to provide a record store for the activities of the HPS, thus providing continuity for Officers and postholders of the Society. Important documents would otherwise be lost in an age where most items are held locally in electronic format.
- to retain an historical record of the people and activities of the Society. Since many of these people have played a significant role in horticulture since the mid-twentieth century, the records are of interest to those inside and outside the HPS who are researching such topics.

Governance

Lastly, in 2023, the Society began a review of its governance and operations. One outcome, that will continue in 2024, is the potential for the Society to become a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). The Society is working in conjunction with the law firm, Birketts LLP, who are providing invaluable support and advice in this process. The proposal to change the status of the Society to CIO will be laid before the membership in late 2024.

Finance

Financial outcome 2023

In terms of income, 2023 showed a modest increase in subscriptions and, therefore, Gift Aid. More significantly, the year witnessed the recovery of equity markets (reversing our losses of 2022) and also saw improved interest rates on our savings accounts.

From an expenditure perspective the year was dominated by the Communications Strategy which delivered the new website and its more contemporary branding. Elsewhere it was particularly satisfying to see the return of Kenneth Black Bursary funding to pre-pandemic levels.

Over the past few years, we have been gradually eating into our reserves and Trustees will be reviewing subscriptions and the seed distribution scheme in 2024. Nonetheless, we remain in very good financial shape with total funds of £496,271.

Investment policy

The Society's approach to financial matters, and investments in particular, is one of extreme prudence given the current (and likely future) volatility of equity markets, the very modest

interest rates on deposit accounts and low returns on bonds. For this reason, the Society chooses to keep approximately half of its funds as cash (in current and deposit accounts). The remainder is in fixed interest bonds and equities.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have decided that it should set a level of reserves to cover unforeseeable expenditure such as might be incurred in the very unlikely event of the Society closing down or membership declining very rapidly, or an uninsured claim being made against the Society. A level of £50,000 has been set.

Future Plans

The Society's priorities for the year ahead are to:

- continue to offer members a high quality and value-for-money range of products and services;
- encourage and support local groups in their promotion of the Society through their programme of shows and events, for the benefit of local members;
- seek ways of encouraging potential applicants for bursaries and similar grants.

Trustees' Responsibilities

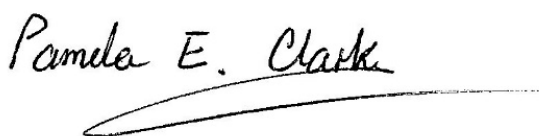
Under charity law the Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities FRS102 SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. The Trustees are also required to act in accordance with the Constitution of the Society and to take such steps as are reasonable to safeguard the assets of the Society and to prevent and to detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



Pamela Clark, Chair

Date: 07 May 2024

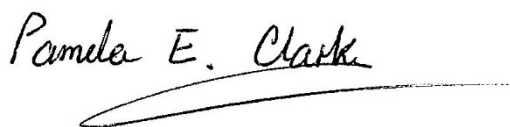
Statement of Financial Activities

			2023	2022
	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Total Funds £
INCOME				
Income from generated funds:				
- Voluntary income	2	91,523	-	91,523
- Activities for generating funds	3	5,451	-	5,451
Income from charitable activities	4	13,447	-	13,447
Investment income		6,739	3,356	10,095
TOTAL		117,160	3,356	120,516
EXPENDITURE				
Costs of generating voluntary income	5	61,253	-	61,253
Charitable activities	6	70,969	-	70,969
Governance costs	7	4,097	-	4,097
Other resources expended	8	34,531	-	34,531
Bursaries etc.	9	-	28,558	28,558
TOTAL		170,850	28,558	199,408
Net Gain on investment		18,945	9,434	28,379
Net Income for the year		(34,745)	(15,768)	(50,513)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(34,745)	(15,768)	(50,513)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Funds B/F at 1 January 2023		365,021	181,763	546,784
TOTAL FUNDS C/F at 31 December 2023		330,276	165,995	496,271

Balance Sheet

		2023	2022
Fixed assets	Note 11	1,158	791
Current assets			
Bank balances		191,757	275,620
Investments at cost	12	314,147	285,770
Debtors & prepayments	13	9,699	9,162
Stock (booklets)		<u>8,364</u>	<u>7,618</u>
		523,967	578,170
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year			
	14	<u>(28,854)</u>	<u>(32,177)</u>
Net current assets		495,113	545,993
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>496,271</u>	<u>546,784</u>
Financed by:			
General fund	15	330,277	365,022
Bursary fund	15	165,994	181,762
		<u>496,271</u>	<u>546,784</u>

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 07 May 2024.



Pamela Clark
Chairman



Stuart Senior
Treasurer

The notes on pages 11 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Accounts

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation:

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS102.

The accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis as they have been in previous years.

1.2 Incoming resources

Subscriptions are accounted for net of VAT and are accounted for in the year to which they relate.

Donations are accounted for gross when received.

Investment income is based on the interest receivable for the year.

Sundry sales are accounted for net of VAT and are recognised when they are invoiced.

Advertising income is accounted for net of VAT and is recognised when invoiced.

1.3 Resources expended

Costs are allocated between costs of generating funds and charitable expenditure according to the nature of the cost.

1.4 Fixed Assets and depreciation

Fixed assets for charity use are capitalised at cost, they are stated in the accounts at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of the fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on an individual basis.

Office equipment:	25% Reducing balance
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Computer equipment:	3 years straight line
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1.5 Investments

Investments are included in the accounts at their market value.

1.6 Stock

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

	2023 £ Unrestricted Funds	2022 £ Total Funds
2 Voluntary income		
Subscriptions	79,342	77,820
Donations	1,586	1,106
Gift Aid	10,595	10,349
	<u>91,523</u>	<u>89,275</u>
3 Activities for generating funds		
Advertising	3,480	3,015
Booklets	1,971	2,139
	<u>5,451</u>	<u>5,154</u>
4 Incoming resources from charitable activities		
Seed distribution	4,802	5,767
Cornucopia	3,867	3,412
Enamel badges	70	50
AGM/ALD	4,708	2,536
	<u>13,447</u>	<u>11,765</u>
5 Costs of generating voluntary income		
Administration services	25,193	23,000
Bookkeeping	4,385	1,664
Legal & professional	384	349
Office rent, heat & light	10,128	9,041
Printing, postage & telephone	5,347	4,394
Meetings	0	197
Insurance	4,183	4,062
Publicity	1,120	0
Depreciation of equipment	198	65
Bank charges	1,767	1,564
Software & IT support	8,548	5,015
	<u>61,253</u>	<u>49,351</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 1.

There are no employees who received total employee benefits of more than £60,000.

	2023	2022
6 Charitable activities		
Journal costs	24,578	22,175
Newsletter costs	13,673	13,517
Cornucopia costs	2,734	2,827
Booklet costs	1,328	1,446
Seed distribution expenses	8,891	7,840
AGM/ALD expenses	10,294	4,314
Conservation	1,510	1,171
Group support	4,165	3,656
Shows & Events	648	1,208
Banners	0	156
Website	3,148	544
	<u>70,969</u>	<u>58,854</u>
7 Governance costs		
Trustees' meetings	1,785	1,289
Chair's expenses	1,347	0
Independent examination	965	875
	<u>4,097</u>	<u>2,164</u>
8 Other resources expended - unrestricted		
Communications Strategy	34,426	2,500
Sundry expenses	105	205
	<u>34,531</u>	<u>2,705</u>
9 Other resources expended - designated		
Bursaries awarded	28,458	14,249
Photo competition prizes	300	300
	<u>28,758</u>	<u>14,549</u>

10 Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration during the year but eight of them were reimbursed a total of £1,265 for travelling expenses (2022 £1,109).

11 Tangible fixed assets

	Office Equipment	Computers	Total
Cost b/f	7,717	11,964	19,681
Additions	565	0	565
Cost c/f	<u>8,282</u>	<u>11,964</u>	<u>20,246</u>
Depreciation b/f	6,926	11,964	18,890
Charge for the year	198	0	198
Depreciation c/f	<u>7,124</u>	<u>11,964</u>	<u>19,088</u>
Net book value 31.12.23	<u>1,158</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,158</u>
Net book value 31.12.22	<u>791</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>791</u>

12 Investments

		2023	2022
Skipton Building Society	1 yr bond	71,868	70,598
St James Place	Equities	95,791	86,496
CCLA COIF Charities Global Equity Income Fund		146,488	128,676
		<u>314,147</u>	<u>285,770</u>

Investment income during the year was made up of:

Interest (unrestricted, general)	6,739
Interest (unrestricted, designated)	<u>3,356</u>
	<u>10,095</u>

13 Debtors

	2023	2022
Prepayments and accrued income	8,977	8,455
Other debtors	722	707
	<u>9,699</u>	<u>9,162</u>

15 Creditors

	2023	2022
VAT	(387)	(1,262)
Trade creditors	2,282	3,474
Other creditors	1,725	5,660
Subscriptions & seed in advance	25,234	24,305
	<u>28,854</u>	<u>32,177</u>

16	Reserves	01.01.23 B/F	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Gains	31.12.23 C/F
	Fund Movements					
	Unrestricted general	365,022	117,160	170,850	18,945	330,277
	Unrestricted designated	181,762	3,356	28,558	9,434	165,994
		<u>546,784</u>	<u>120,516</u>	<u>199,408</u>	<u>28,379</u>	<u>496,271</u>

The unrestricted designated fund relates to the Society's Bursary and Project Support Fund. This fund arose as a generous legacy from the estate of Mr Kenneth Black who was a gardener with Enfield Council in North London.

The trustees decided that this fund should not be used for the administration of the Society but that it should be invested and the interest used to support special projects. There are two types of Bursary: one for college or university students and one for people in horticultural employment.

Funding may be awarded to projects of any sort which fit within the charitable objects of the Society and may be made to individuals or groups. More information is available on the Society's web site <http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/> and applications are made via the Bursary co-ordinator.

Reserves are represented by:	Unrestricted General	Unrestricted Designated	Total
Fixed assets	1,158	-	1,158
Current assets	357,973	165,994	523,967
Current liabilities	<u>(28,854)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(28,854)</u>
	<u>330,277</u>	<u>165,994</u>	<u>496,271</u>

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Hardy Plant Society

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 9 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



James Howard FCCA ACA
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01 May 2024