

Annual Report of Red House, Stepney (Incorporated) (The)

April 2024 until March 2025

This has been a good year with Hoppers coming close to full weekend capacity. This is reassuring for trustees, confirming the relevance of our facilities to small groups, especially those linked with London churches. In the forthcoming year we will repeat an analysis of bookings to ensure we continue to meet our charitable purpose: According to the Charity Commission -

What we do:

- Education/training
- The Prevention or Relief of Poverty
- Religious Activities

Who we help:

- Other Charities or Voluntary Bodies

How we help:

- Provides Buildings/facilities/open space

Where we operate:

- Kent
- Throughout London

Governance

During the year we maintained the number of trustees at eight, two of whom are drawn from nearby to Hoppers. It was agreed, in the forthcoming year, to seek additional trustees both from London and Kent. The trustees met five times during the year, four times using Zoom and once (including the AGM) face-to-face. A major challenge was presented by the indisposition of our chair, the Rev'd Susie Paddock. Susie agreed to relinquish the role of chair but remain as a trustee. We look forward to Susie resuming her special capacity in shaping the life of Hoppers when her health fully returns. Richard Strawson agreed to provide cover for Susie and chaired and provided leadership for much of the year.

During the year trustees considered whether to continue as a Company as well as a Charity. The task of re-negotiating our constitution with both Companies House and the Charity Commission was considered to be too much of a headache. However, in the light of recent requirements set by Companies House to counter fraud this may lead to re-consideration in the forthcoming year. This has not been helped by Companies House requiring us to relegate 'The' to the rear of our name. Our official name is as detailed above.

Financial Report

We are pleased to report that the income from Lettings has substantially increased from £10,685 in 2023/24 to £26,322 in 2024/25. This extra income enabled us to match a grant from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to pay for the replacement of windows in the Cottage with

better quality windows, and we are grateful to the Council for their generous grant. More guests are choosing the laundry service so income for this went up from £272 to £2,971.

The increased Lettings has led to the need for more Caretaking and Cleaning support, and we have increased the rates we pay for this work, taking note of national pay increases.

Overall expenditure increased from £21,667 to £29,358 in 2024/25, but the income exceeded expenditure by £6,663 whereas in the previous year there was a deficit.

The Total Funds carried forward improved by £xx,xxx from £1,430,469 to £1,4xx,xxx.....
including the value of our property

Other activities

Trustees revisited our risk assessment and were pleased to be able to reduce areas of concern. The following assessment was made:

- i. To downgrade financial risk including use of reserves
- ii. Increase need for recruiting new trustees
- iii. Downgrade the risk of insufficient marketing
- iv. Increase alertness to fulfilling our charitable obligations.

This re-assessment was due to increased bookings and our regular review of charges. This increased level of activity both necessitated and enabled us to increase the remuneration of our cleaning and caretaking contractors and our thanks are due to their flexibility, hard work and commitment.

Our premises

The buildings remain in good condition. The peeling paintwork which had been a problem since the flooding in 2022, is gradually being addressed. We benefitted from a grant from the West Kent Rural Grants Scheme (see Financial Report above) which enabled us to replace crumbling window frames as well as improve our energy consumption. Our thanks are due to Richard (Strawson) for following up this opportunity.

Tasks for the following year

Priorities for the forthcoming year

- appoint / recruit someone 'with significant control' (Companies House terminology for 'chair')
- fulfil requirements from Companies House regarding trustees' proof of identity and new methods of account filing
- investigate the pros and cons of solar heating
- recruit additional trustees
- consider the possibility of producing a newsletter
- analyse our activity to check that we are fulfilling our charitable purposes.

July 2025

RED HOUSE STEPNEY (INCORPORATED) (THE)

Annual General Meeting minutes of the Trustees of Red House Stepney (Incorporated) (The) on 16th July 2025 at 6.30 p.m. via Zoom

PRESENT: Richard Strawson, Mary Straw, Margaret Kesterton, Ann Morisy, George Bush, Raks Patel and Bridget Cass.
In attendance: Susannah Strawson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Susie Paddock, Kizzie Procter

Richard opened the meeting in prayer

MINUTES FROM LAST AGM MEETING 23rd July 2024

These were agreed as a correct record.

Bridget Cass was welcomed to the meeting.

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL REPORT:

Ann presented the annual report which emphasised the importance of governance and building matters. Margaret presented the accounts which had been inspected by Robert Kesterton, Margaret's nephew (ACCA qualified, CEO Atlantic Green) It was noted that lettings for the year totalled £26,058, which was more than twice that of the previous year, with a further £4,763 carried forward to 2025/26. Income for the year totalled £34,990 and expenditure was £30,811. Total assets, (based on insurers valuation of our property) increased from £1,430,469 to £1,469,729. Margaret noted that the amount we have invested recorded a fall (from £75,465 to £71,949) due to the turbulence in the markets associated with tariff rises promoted by the USA government. This fall in the markets had already corrected.

Trustees accepted both reports with gratitude (nem con).

ACTION: Margaret will print copies and post for Richard to sign.

ACTION: Ann to write and thank Robert Kesterton for his work on our behalf.

ACTION: Ann to update Companies House and the Charities Commission

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Susie Paddock had served notice that she wished to resign as chair but continue to be a trustee. This was agreed and it was sincerely hoped that Susie would soon return to full health.

Richard Strawson was appointed chair: nominated by Ann, seconded by Margaret as chair (likely for a short period)

Ann was appointed company secretary: nominated by Richard, seconded by Margaret

Margaret was appointed Treasurer: nominated by Richard, seconded by George

APPOINTMENT OF NEW TRUSTEE

Mary nominated (seconded by Ann) Bridget Cass as a trustee. Bridget outlined her interest in the work of Hoppers; this was after her CV was circulated to trustees. Bridget's heart warmed towards Hoppers because of recollections of the significance of Hoppers to her parish, (St Dunstan's, Stepney) under the leadership of the then rector, the Rev'd Norrie McCurry. Bridget had also made a commitment to invest her skills in modest rather than larger, well-resourced ventures.

Bridget was warmly welcomed as a trustee

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that all trustees should complete declarations of interest including for spouse

ACTION: Bridget to send template

ACTION: Ann to circulate and chase any laggards