

Douai Abbey Trust

Annual Report and Accounts

31 August 2024

Charity Registration Number
236962

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Reference and administrative information

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The trustees present their statutory report together with the accounts of Douai Abbey Trust ('the charity') for the year ended 31 August 2024.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 25 to 30 of the attached accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, applicable laws and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Introduction

Douai Abbey, the Community of St Edmund of the English Congregation of the Order of St Benedict ('the Community'), is situated at Upper Woolhampton, Reading, Berkshire. It comprises a community of monks engaged in educational, pastoral, and other work.

The accounts accompanying this report are the accounts of the charitable trust on which the assets of the Community in England are held. The charity is governed by a trust deed dated 22 September 1934, and is registered under the Charities Act 2011, Charity Registration Number 236962.

The trustees are incorporated under the Charities Act 2011 as a body known as 'The Trustees of Douai Abbey' by a certificate granted by the Charity Commissioners on 7 May 1999.

Mission

Douai Abbey Trust aims to support the religious and other charitable work carried on by the members of the Community. These ministries carried out by the monks, all of which benefit members of the general public, fall into the following main areas:

- The administration of the sacraments and maintenance of the Divine Service in the Abbey Church and in other parishes for which the Community has responsibility;
- Caring for members of the Community including those who are older and/or frail;
- The provision of education in the broadest sense, and the education of new members of the Community training for the monastic life;
- The provision of social and pastoral work, particularly in the field of hospitality; and
- Supporting financially by the provision of donations, other organisations with objectives consistent with those of the charity.

Activities, specific objectives and relevant policies

Activities and specific objectives

As stated above under 'Mission' the charitable activities of the Douai Abbey Trust are undertaken by the monastic community at Douai Abbey and can be divided into several

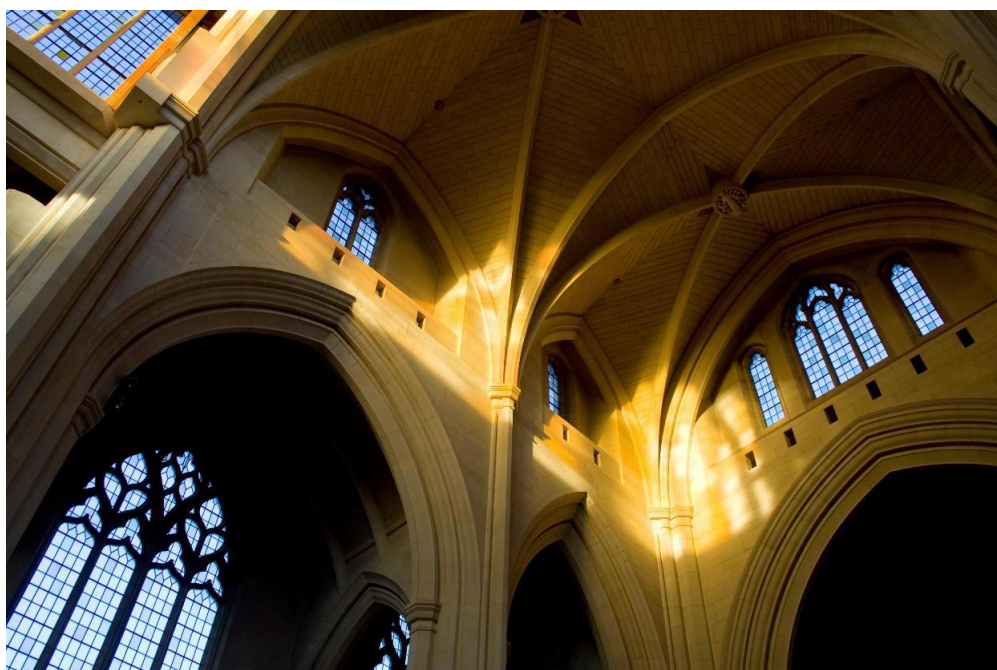
Activities, specific objectives and relevant policies (continued)***Activities and specific objectives (continued)***

principal areas. Each of these areas is discussed in further detail in the paragraphs which follow.

In setting the charity's objectives and planning its activities, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

- **Formal Divine Service and other services in the Abbey Church**

The monks gather in the Abbey Church five times a day for formal services and visitors are always welcomed and invited to participate. The masses on Sunday and on feast days are well attended by parishioners and by others from further afield. At other times, the Church is open and visitors may come and pray by themselves. The church is also used by the diocese and by other churches in the area who do not have enough space for large celebrations.



The Abbey Church is a listed building (Grade 2*) and some people come to appreciate the architecture; guide books and postcards are available. The trustees appreciate their responsibility to maintain the building to the highest standards.

In addition, regular concerts in the Abbey Church are organised by the monastic community and by outside organisations and enhance the cultural opportunities of the locality.

It is made clear to those who attend such concerts that the Abbey Church is a sacred space. This highlights the aims of the charity, even if visitors' primary reason for attending is to listen to the music. The Abbey Church is also used by local primary schools, both Catholic and non-Catholic, for various functions, including Christmas carol services and

Activities, specific objectives and relevant policies (continued)***Activities and specific objectives (continued)***

formal gatherings to mark the end of the school year. Most of these events are made possible without a prescribed charge to the outside organisations.

- **Caring for members of the Community including those who are older and/or frail**

The trustees are very conscious of their moral and legal obligation to care for the older and frailer members of the Community. None of the monks has resources or private income of his own since their earnings, gifts or donations, as well as their pensions, have been covenanted to the charity. As the Community's age profile increases, so too does the need to provide increasingly expensive care for the members. The trustees will continue to make this one of their priorities for the future and, consequently, they will assess how it affects the ministries of the individual members of the Community. They are aware of the financial implications for the charity's resources.

- **The provision of education**

The Community's work in the field of education is broad and includes the education of new members of the Community training for monastic life and Church ministry, the education of young people in various ways through pastoral and chaplaincy work, and the education of adults by courses, lectures and university teaching.

In line with their vision for the future, members of the monastic Community have in recent years moved from secondary into tertiary education by taking up teaching in university adult education programmes, by expanding adult education on site in the pastoral programme of talks, and by offering retreats and courses for spiritual and theological renewal. Furthermore, some monks publish books and articles in such disciplines as history and theology, which is another strand in the Community's educational outreach.

- **The provision of hospitality and pastoral work**

The Community is involved in the provision of hospitality and pastoral care by welcoming guests and visitors to the monastery; by serving parishes locally and further afield in Britain; by offering retreats and talks both within the Community's pastoral programme and elsewhere; by being available for spiritual direction and confession; by supplying priests to help in local parishes; or by other similar work on request.

Although there is a list of suggested charges for the use of the guest facilities, it is made clear to guests that the monastery welcomes all who seek to share in our hospitality and that inability to pay is no obstacle to using the Community's facilities. In practice, most people pay the suggested rate and thus contribute to the income of the charity, but others give only what they can afford. The trustees regularly review the suggested charges. The trustees consider that this is a clear and significant means by which the charity can discharge its duty of public benefit. While most of our guests are Roman Catholic, increasing numbers from other Christian denominations and other religions are also welcomed.

Activities, specific objectives and relevant policies (continued)***The provision of hospitality and pastoral work (continued)***

- **Further provision of hospitality and pastoral work**

Members of the Community continue to maintain and develop pastoral work in the parishes that are the responsibility of the Community. There are two clusters of parishes, in Lancashire and in the South Midlands, the specific affairs of which are overseen by the separate Douai Abbey Parishes Trust. One member of the Community cares for the parish in the immediate area of the monastery. Two members of the Community are currently working in diocesan parishes which do not belong to the Community.

- **Members of the Community working elsewhere**

One member of the Community is currently working in Rome at the international Benedictine college of St Anselm, where he teaches, as well as supervising the formation of those students in training for the priesthood. He also serves the English Benedictine Congregation as its representative in Rome. The Abbot continues to work as Secretary of the Department of Christian Life and Worship of the Conference of Bishops of England and Wales.

- **Donations to other organisations**

When planning their budget at the beginning of the year, the trustees agree to set aside a certain amount for organisations whose work is consistent with the objects of the charity.

- **Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

Like all other organisations who serve in the community, the trustees recognise the absolute necessity of ensuring the protection and safety of all those the charity serves in any way. This means that members engaged in any ministry in Great Britain must obtain clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The trustees are fully committed to implementing all policies and procedures of the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS). The Safeguarding Lead for the charity appointed in the previous year continues to work for the community. She is a retired child-care professional who has had extensive experience of safeguarding at a local and national level; she and the Abbot form the community's Child Protection Committee under the RLSS, which oversees safeguarding for virtually all the religious congregations in England and Wales. Safeguarding appears as an agenda item on every trustee meeting and the Safeguarding Lead attends at least one meeting of the trust during the year. In July 2023 the community volunteered to undergo a pilot audit by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA). As a result, in the autumn of 2023, the community was granted 'Comprehensive Assurance' for its safeguarding policies and procedures. In October 2023 the entire community undertook intensive safeguarding training. Follow up training took place after the year end and will be an annual event.

Activities, specific objectives and relevant policies (continued)**Investment policy**

The charity has a portfolio of listed investments which together with cash awaiting investment had a market value as at 31 August 2024 of £4,606,057 (2023 – £4,976,793)

There are no restrictions on the charity's power to invest. The investment strategy is set by the trustees and takes into account income requirements, the risk profile, and the investment manager's view of the market prospects in the medium term. The trustees have agreed a detailed investment policy, including ethical guidelines, with the investment managers, Ruffer LLP, which informs their choice of securities for investment. According to the ethical policy, the trustees will not invest in companies which engage in activities which are contrary to the moral and social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, in so far as such activities can be practically established. With the help of our investment managers, the overall investment policy is to preserve capital and to maximise total return through a diversified portfolio, prioritising total return and portfolio growth over the provision of a pre-determined level of income.

The performance of the portfolio and the charity's investment strategy are reviewed by the trustees. For many years the trustees have appointed financial advisers who attend trustees' meetings three times a year. The trust's investment managers attend one of these meetings every year. Details of the advisers can be found on page 1.

The charity also has several properties which are used to generate rental income and which are classified in the accounts as investment properties.

Achievements and performance***Review of activities***

- **Formal Divine Service and other services in the Abbey Church**

By its very nature the regular round of Divine Services in a monastery do not vary much from year to year. The pandemic gave rise to many restrictions on the ability of lay people and guests to participate, but levels of attendance have recovered. Cameras and an enhanced sound system were installed in 2022 to enable live-streaming, and this has continued to be used for special occasions for the public, particularly for funerals and weddings.

- **Caring for older and frail members of the community**

One member of the community lived in the community infirmary, assisted by a monk infirmarian and outside medical professionals to address specific chronic health needs. Another member of the community was in a care home where his particular needs could better be met and where he was regularly visited by members of the community. Both these members passed away late in the reporting year. At present there is no member of the community requiring specialised care.

Achievements and performance (continued)**Review of activities** (continued)

- **Our buildings and our environment**

In July 2024 renovations were begun on an area of the monastery that had fallen out of regular use and into some disrepair to provide an office and facilities for the new monastic procurator. Otherwise, no major projects were undertaken, and work consisted of maintenance and repairs.

Our two churches on site (the Abbey Church and the Parish Church) have been subject to quinquennial inspections over many years in accordance with best practice and during the year the architect responsible made a similar inspection of all our buildings on site.

- **The provision of education**

A novice monk who began his studies in August 2023 continued his initial formation and made a simple profession of vows shortly after the year end, in October 2024. A junior monk, who is pursuing theological studies in Oxford, made his solemn profession in June 2024 and is now a permanent member of the community. The community hosted the novices of the English Benedictine Congregation for part of their shared formation programme.

The trustees consider the monastery's archive and library to be part of its service to education, and both are open to researchers and students. An archivist is employed to catalogue the archive and to assist researchers where necessary. The Community holds the archives of several other religious congregations and monasteries.

The community produces a magazine every year which is distributed free of charge to visitors, parishioners, former pupils of Douai School, and friends and supporters. The most recent edition included, among other things, the definitive biography of a monk of our community who was a missionary in colonial Australia, as well as pieces by two monks looking back on the liturgical life of the community in the 1950s.

The community's publishing imprint, Weldon Press, which is staffed by a member of the community, was preparing to publish in late 2024 the first biography of the eminent English Benedictine, Bishop Christopher Butler. Publishing works of scholarship is also seen as part of the community's wider involvement in education.

- **The provision of hospitality and pastoral work**

The Guest House has been open throughout the year and demand for retreats and other stays has been strong. We have seen steadily increasing demand for the Guest House and income from the Guest House and related income totalled £149,472 (2023 – £140,299).

Achievements and performance (continued)

Review of activities (continued)

Our monks have continued to serve in the community's own parishes in the Midlands and in Lancashire, as well as assisting the wider Church by serving parishes in West Wales and Hampshire.



Investment performance

During the year to 31 August 2024, the charity's listed investments produced an income yield of 0.5% (2023 — 1.20%). The charity's listed investments rose in value during the year, giving rise to a net investment gain of £138,431 (2023 – loss of £310,584) on the portfolio.

Investment properties produced rental income of £109,236 (2023 – £120,500) during the year.

Financial report for the year

Results for the year

A summary of the results for the year can be found on page 22 of the attached accounts.

Financial report for the year (continued)**Results for the year** (continued)

Total income for the year amounted to £568,545 compared to £597,883 in the previous year. Donations and legacies amounted to £250,475 compared to £221,719 in 2023. The total figures include donations of £23,079 (2023 – £21,057) being monies restricted in their use and mainly raised towards the future costs of maintaining the library and archives. Income from charitable activities, i.e. retreat house income and related receipts increased to £168,456 (2023 – £162,932) income from visitors and other trading activities dropped to £3,245 (2023 – £10,149). Income from listed and property investments, together with interest receivable, amounted to £134,369 (2023 – £191,083).

Expenditure amounted to £1,218,871 compared to £1,078,534 in 2023. The cost of raising funds increased to £101,274 (2023 – £77,819), the costs in relation to supporting the community and their ministry rose to £1,117,598 (2023 – £1,000,715). The increase is due to increases in the cost of premises and pastoral activities.

The net expenditure for the year before investment gains and foreign exchange gains was £650,326 (2023 – £480,651). The net investment gains totalled £138,431 (2023 – loss of £310,584) in respect to listed investments and investment properties. Forward foreign exchange gains/losses totalled zero (2023 – gains of £65,852). When these net losses/gains are accounted for, the overall impact on the charity's funds is a decrease of £511,895 for the year (2023 – decrease of £725,383).

Reserves policy and financial position*Reserves policy*

As explained above, the charity carries out a diverse range of activities, some of which comprise short term and externally funded projects whilst others comprise long term projects requiring significant ongoing financial commitment and investment. The trustees have examined the requirement for free reserves i.e. those unrestricted funds not invested in tangible fixed assets, designated for specific purposes or otherwise committed. The trustees consider that, given the nature of the charity's work, the level of free reserves should be equivalent to a minimum of 36 months expenditure. The trustees are of the opinion that this reflects the charity's reliance on investments to generate sufficient returns to fund recurring expenditure. The policy also provides sufficient flexibility to cover temporary shortfalls in income due to timing differences in income flows, adequate working capital to cover core costs and will allow the charity to cope and respond to unforeseen emergencies whilst specific action plans are implemented.

Financial position

The balance sheet shows total funds £14,738,796 (2023 – £15,250,691).

These funds include an amount of £160,695 (2023 – £161,949) which is restricted. These monies have either been raised for and their use restricted to specific purposes, or they comprise donations subject to donor-imposed conditions. Full details of these

Financial report for the year (continued)**Reserves policy and financial position** (continued)*Financial position (continued)*

restricted funds can be found in note 17 to the accounts together with an analysis of movements in the year.

The tangible fixed assets fund equal to the net book value of the tangible fixed assets and amounting to £6,018,706 (2023 – £6,205,010) has been identified as a separate fund in recognition of the fact that such assets are required to enable the Community to carry out its charitable work and are not available to fund activities or meet future commitments.

Funds totalling £5,150,000 (2023 – £5,150,000) have been designated, or set aside, by the trustees for specific purposes as follows:

- An amount of £4,150,000 (2023 – £4,150,000) has been designated to meet the costs of the care and welfare of members of the Community as they grow old or frail. The members are wholly dependent on the charity for their maintenance and care. The amount of funds set aside has been calculated using actuarial principles and will provide only modest amounts in the future.
- £1,000,000 (2023 – £1,000,000) has been designated for the cost of future improvements to, and maintenance of, the charity's freehold properties.

Further details of the purposes of the designated funds and an analysis of the movements on the funds are set out in note 18 to the accounts.

General funds or 'free reserves' of the charity at 31 August 2024 total £3,409,395 (2023 – £3,733,732).

The trustees consider that this level of free reserves is appropriate despite it being slightly less than the amount set out in the charity's reserves policy above. The Trustees note the increased expenditure owing to general inflationary pressures, exceptional costs and regulatory compliance that gives rise to concern that reserves may be insufficient to meet the current policy of 36 months of expenditure. The Trustees have reviewed the policy, continue to believe the policy remains valid and sufficient reserves should be maintained to meet 36 months of expenditure. They also accept that in the years ahead, members of the Community are likely to require increasingly expensive health care, and that the designated retirement fund of £4,150,000 (2023 – £4,150,000) described above may prove to be inadequate. The recent cost of nursing home care for a member of the community who died during the year has brought this prospect into sharp relief. The Trustees are working with their advisors and the new bursar to look at ways to redress the current deficit, reducing expenditure and increasing income, together with looking at ways to increase the reserves to correct this potential imbalance.

Financial report for the year (continued)***Raising funds***

The charity aims to achieve best practice in the way in which it communicates with donors and other supporters. It takes care with both the tone of its communications and the accuracy of its data to minimise the pressures on supporters. It applies best practice to protect supporters' data and never sells such data, nor swaps it, and ensures that communication preferences can be changed at any time. The charity manages its own fundraising activities and does not employ the services of professional fundraisers. The charity undertakes to react to and investigate any complaints regarding its fundraising activities and to learn from them and improve its service. During the year, the charity received no complaints about its fundraising activities.

Future plans

The trustees intend to continue to follow up the recommendations of independent consultant Steven Little's financial report which was presented to them in October 2022. The recommended charges for the Guest House are under review, and they are still consulting with specialists in reviewing the range of activities related to the charity on which VAT relief might be sought. The Society of St Edmund at Douai Abbey (SSEDA), a fundraising vehicle launched in late 2023, is consolidating its role in securing long-time giving and engaging donors more closely in the life and identity of the Community.

In early August Mr Gordon Heslop took up the new position of lay Bursar, replacing a role hitherto filled by members of the monastic Community. This imposes an extra cost on the Community but at the same time brings more professionalism and expertise to the increasingly complex and challenging role of financial and operations management. Those matters more related to the internal life of the Community have been devolved upon a new position, Procurator, which has been filled by Fr Hugh Somerville Knapman, for which purpose he was called back to the monastery from his posting as a parish priest. The Procurator supports and advises the Bursar in his work, as well as safeguarding and promoting the material interests of the Community in pursuing its religious life and vocation.

Part of the new Bursar's contribution will be to offer a realistic assessment of the Community's financial position beyond the short term, and to help the Community adapt to emerging fiscal, regulatory, and demographic realities. Part of this will be facilitating the charity's transition from a charitable trust to a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) by 31 August 2026, a process now underway.

Governance, Structure and Management***Governance***

Douai Abbey is an autonomous monastery of the English Benedictine Congregation, within the Roman Catholic Church. The conduct and administration of the monastery is subject to the Constitutions of the English Benedictine Congregation and to the precepts of the Code of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church.

Financial report for the year (continued)**Governance** (continued)

In terms of civil law the charity is governed by a trust deed dated 22 September 1934 and is a registered charity, Charity Registration No. 236962. The trustees of the charity are the Abbot and the members of his Council. The membership of the Abbot's Council is renewed each year, with some members appointed by the Abbot himself from members of the Community, and the others elected by the members of the Community.

As all the trustees are members of the Community, they have a detailed knowledge of the work of the charity and its structure. Unlike many charity trustees who might live at a distance and meet briefly ever quarter or so, the charity's trustees are involved daily in the work of the charity, live mostly within the Abbey itself or on its parishes, and meet and interact on a frequent basis. As members of the monastic Community, the trustees are also beneficiaries of the charity, but they do not receive any benefits which are not also received by the other members. The trustees seek advice from professional advisors where necessary on legal, accounting, property, and other matters. In addition, a voluntary group of professionals of varied financial and business experience advises the trustees on investment policy and strategic development. The new Bursar has significant financial and management experience, both in the City and in trust management. The Abbot is also involved in other trusts and attends meetings with other religious superiors during the year. The other trustees are encouraged to attend relevant and appropriate courses and conferences to enable them to keep up to date regarding their responsibilities and with developments in the charity sector.

The names of the trustees who served during the year are set out as part of the reference and administrative information details on page 1 of this annual report and accounts. Brief biographical details of the trustees in office at 31 August 2024 are given below:

Rt. Rev. P Gunter OSB

Abbot of Douai and chairman of the trustees since May 2022. Previously he had been Parish Priest of Alcester since 2016 and continues as Secretary of the Department of Christian Life and Worship of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales since 2012. He was a Consultor to the Office of the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff, 2008–2013; Visiting Professor, Pontifical Athenaeum *Regina Apostolorum*, Rome 2008–2015; Professor at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Rome 2006–2016. Further Studies, Rome 2002–2006. Parish Priest, Studley 1999–2002 and Trustee of Douai Abbey Parishes Trust. Member, Council of Priests, Diocese of Clifton 1995–1999; assistant priest, school chaplain, hospital chaplain, Cheltenham 1992–1999.

Very Rev. Gabriel Wilson OSB

Before joining the Douai community in 2008 he was a Teacher of English, Head of Department and Advanced Skills Secondary School Teacher for 17 years. He is currently Prior and Novice Master. Previously he has directed the Community's Pastoral Programme, led retreats, coordinated the Community's Alongsider Programme for those exploring monastic life, and been Parish Priest of St Mary's, Woolhampton. He looks after the Douai Abbey apiary, advocating locally adapted bees and treatment-free beekeeping.

Financial report for the year (continued)**Governance** (continued)*Rev. Francis Hughes OSB*

He has served in several of Douai's current and former parishes including St Osburg's in Coventry, as well as Pangbourne, Theale, St Anne's in Ormskirk, St Elizabeth's in Scarisbrick, and currently St Benet's in Kemerton. A graduate of University College, Galway in chemistry and mathematics, he read theology at Oxford and has a MA in canon law from the University of London. He completed courses in counselling at the Richmond Fellowship and Manchester University and in Deaf Studies with the Open University. He has worked with the deaf community as chaplain and pastoral worker, and has been a governor for St Mary's School, Scarisbrick and St Gregory's School, Cheltenham. He has been Prior and Junior Master at Douai Abbey and is currently a member of the Clifton Marriage Tribunal.

Rev. T J Oliver Holt OSB

After taking a degree in English from Oxford, he was for many years a teacher of the subject in Douai School from 1977–1999, and housemaster there 1982–1999, later Bursar of Douai Abbey 2005–2024, trustee at various times since 1997, trustee of Priors Court School 2005–2014, trustee of the Lejeune Clinic for children with Down's Syndrome 2006–2016, trustee of Friends of the Newbury Spring Festival 2008–2018, and trustee of Downside Abbey 2016–2019. In Autumn 2024 he took up the role of Parish Priest at the Douai parish of Stratford-upon-Avon.

Rev. A Hugh Somerville Knapman OSB

Joining the monastery in early 2001, he was ordained a priest in April 2007 after theological studies in Oxford, with studies in Rome after ordination. His 2017 MPhil theological dissertation at the University of Bristol was published by Paulist Press of New York in the autumn of 2018. Before entering the monastery, he studied at the University of Sydney, and worked in education and later in a civilian role as radio communications officer for the New South Wales Police in Sydney (Australia), of which city he is a native. In August 2024 he returned to the monastery from a parish posting to take up the new role of Procurator. He undertakes various publishing projects for the Community under its imprint, Weldon Press, edits the Community's annual *The Douai Magazine*, and manages the Community's website.

The Douai Abbey trustees have several financial advisers who attend three meetings a year on a purely voluntary basis and are also available for consultation between meetings. The trustees are seeking additional advisors with areas of expertise currently under-represented in the trust.

Margaret Chin-Wolf is an ICF Certified coach, a Meyler Campbell trained business and leadership coach, and holds the FT Non-Executive Director Diploma. An economist and barrister by training, she was also a portfolio manager, and an investment analyst and strategist for 32 years. She was governor of the University of Winchester 2014–2021 and of the Pilgrims' School, Winchester 2012–2022. After many years of generous and valuable service she retired as an advisor to the trust in the summer of 2024.

Financial report for the year (continued)**Governance** (continued)

Dr Ralph Townsend was Headmaster of Winchester College 2005– 2016. He was President of Keio Academy of New York and Special Adviser to the President of Keio University 2017–2021, and Chairman of The Prep Schools Trust 2017–2022. He has been Director of an educational consultancy, Winton Consult Limited, since 2017, advising on school governance, management, and curriculum in Europe and the USA.

Graham Hutton worked in financial services for the whole of his career until retiring in 2020. He was a director of the merchant bank, Morgan Grenfell 1988–1998, and Chief Executive of Morgan Grenfell Private Equity 1998–2001. He then co-founded the private equity firm, Hutton Collins, of which he was one of two senior partners until his retirement. He is a Knight of Magistral Grace in the Order of Malta, and Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Orders of St John Care Trust. He is a board member of the International Theological Institute in Trumau, Austria and was Chairman of Aid to the Church in Need, UK, 2013–2022.

Kate Burke is the Community's Safeguarding Lead. She was a social worker for 42 years. She has undertaken advanced training in Child Protection (Safeguarding). She delivered training for many years until 2014 at the Thames Valley Police College, Sulhamstead to Police and Social Services. She served for 15 years on the Portsmouth Diocesan Safeguarding Commission, until 2019. Kate currently works with the dioceses of Southwark, Westminster, and Portsmouth and undertakes critical assessments for the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency. She has pursued studies on the theology of safeguarding.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the situation of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these accounts, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and

Financial report for the year (continued)***Trustees' responsibilities statement*** (continued)

- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, the relevant Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the charity's trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of any financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of accounts may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Key management

The trustees consider that they, together with the Bursar, comprise the key management of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis.

The trustees are all members of the Community, and while their living and personal expenses are borne by the charity, they receive no remuneration or reimbursement of expenses in connection with their duties as trustees. The Bursar is an employee of the charity and serves as clerk of trustees as part of his duties as Bursar.

Structure and management reporting

The trustees are ultimately responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. They meet every two months to review developments regarding the charity or its activities and to make any important decisions.

As stated above, when necessary, the trustees seek advice and support from the charity's professional and voluntary advisers, e.g. property consultants, investment managers, solicitors, and accountants. For some matters the constitutions of the

Financial report for the year (continued)***Trustees' responsibilities statement*** (continued)

English Benedictine Congregation require the Abbot to seek the whole Community's consent, for other matters it is only necessary to consult the Community.

Working with other organisations

The Community is responsible for the administration of seven Roman Catholic parishes in England. The property and finances of these parishes are administered through a separate registered charity, the Douai Abbey Parishes Trust (Registered Charity No. 1063237). Currently four of the trustees of the Douai Abbey Trust are also trustees of the Douai Abbey Parishes Trust. Details of transactions between the two charities are given in the notes to the accounts.

Risk management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, particularly those relating to the specific operational areas of the charity, its investments and its finances, and have done so having regard to the effects of the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. The trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring controls exist over key financial systems, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks. The trustees review a risk management matrix annually, which includes such potential risks as the loss of key personnel, disaster recovery, and reputational risk.

The key risks for the charity, as identified by the trustees, are described below together with the principal ways in which they are mitigated:

- *Loss of key management (Abbot, Bursar et al)*

The trustees are aware that they are very dependent on several key people, and that the implications of losing these people would be serious. The trustees consider that strong support from financial advisers, training of trustees, and ongoing discussion of ways of lightening the administrative burden of the Abbot will all mitigate this risk. In addition, the English Benedictine Congregation, of which the Community is a member, has developed structures of congregational support, including the lending of personnel, to assist any communities who find themselves in difficulties. The Community has not so far needed to avail itself of such support.

- *Failure to recruit and retain new members*

The trustees are very much aware of the age profile of the members of the community and of the need to recruit new novices. One member of the community is responsible for directing vocations and for attracting younger people to visit the monastery.

Financial report for the year (continued)***Risk management*** (continued)

- *Dependence on returns from investments rather than from operations*

The charity relies largely on the returns from its investment portfolio to cover its outgoings. The performance of the investment portfolio and the investment strategy are reviewed in meetings of the trustees and in regular meetings with the investment managers, considering current and future political and economic uncertainties. As explained in 'Reserves Policy' on page 9, the charity's reserves policy reflects the need to hold investments to generate investment returns to fund recurring expenditure. In addition, the charity maintains sufficient reserves to cover temporary shortfalls in income. The trustees have maintained a regular dialogue with the charity's investment managers, Ruffer LLP.

- *Safeguarding and other reputational issues*

These are addressed under relevant policies on page 5.

Employees, volunteers, and members of the Community

The trustees wish to record their recognition of the professionalism and commitment of all their staff, volunteers, and individual members of the Community. Their contribution to the life and work of the charity is greatly valued and appreciated.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Trustee:



Approved by the trustees on: 20 May 2025

Opinion

We have audited the accounts of Douai Abbey Trust (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 August 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows, the principal accounting policies and the notes to the accounts. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the accounts:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 August 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs [UK]) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the accounts in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the accounts, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the accounts is appropriate. Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the accounts are authorised for issue. Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report and Accounts, other than the accounts and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the accounts does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the accounts, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the accounts or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the accounts or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the accounts; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the accounts are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the accounts, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the accounts as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these accounts.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the accounts is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

How the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- The engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- We identified the laws and regulations applicable to the charity through discussions with management and trustees and from our knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- We focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the accounts or the activities of the charity. These included but were not limited to the Charities Act 2011; Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102); and Safeguarding Regulations; and
- We assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and review of minutes of trustees' meetings.

We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- Making enquiries of trustees as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- Considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- Performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- Tested and reviewed journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- Carried out substantive testing of expenditure including the authorisation thereof;
- Assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- Investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- Agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- Reading the minutes of meetings of trustees; and
- Enquiring of as to actual and potential litigation and claims.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

We did not identify any irregularities, including fraud.

On the website of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements can be found: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and with regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Caldwell Penn

10 June 2025

Caldwell Penn, Statutory Auditor
7a Abbey Business Park
Monks Walk
Farnham
GU9 8HT

Caldwell Penn is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006

Statement of financial activities

Year to 31 August 2024

	Notes	2024 Unrestricted Funds £	2024 Restricted Funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Unrestricted Funds £	2023 Restricted Funds £	2023 Total £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	1	227,396	23,079	250,475	200,662	21,057	221,719
Charitable activities	2	168,456	–	168,456	162,932	–	162,932
Other trading activities	3	3,245	–	3,245	10,149	–	10,149
Investments and interest receivable	4	134,369	–	134,369	191,083	–	191,083
Other sources			–			–	
–Miscellaneous income		12,000		12,000	12,000		12,000
Total income		545,466	23,079	568,545	576,826	21,057	597,883
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	5	101,275	–	101,275	77,819	–	77,819
Charitable activities							
–Support of members of the Community and their Ministry	6	1,093,263	24,333	1,117,596	985,615	15,100	1,000,715
Total expenditure		1,194,538	24,333	1,218,871	1,063,434	15,100	1,078,534
Net (expenditure) income before gains (losses) on foreign exchange and investments	9	(649,072)	(1,254)	(650,326)	(486,608)	5,957	(480,651)
Other recognised gains and losses							
Gains on the revaluation of investment properties	14	–	–	–	–	–	–
Forward exchange gains (losses)	14	–	–	–	65,852	–	65,852
(Losses) gains on the revaluation and disposal of listed investments	14	138,431	–	138,431	(310,584)	–	(310,584)
Net (expenditure) income and net movement in Funds		(510,641)	(1,254)	(511,895)	(731,349)	5,957	(725,383)
Reconciliation of funds							
Fund balances brought forward at 1 September 2023		15,088,742	161,949	15,250,691	15,820,082	155,992	15,976,074
Fund balances carried forward at 31 August 2024		14,578,101	160,695	14,738,796	15,088,742	161,949	15,250,691

All the charity's activities derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods.

All recognised gains and losses are included in the above statement of financial activities.

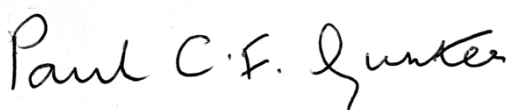
Balance Sheet

Year to 31 August 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	13		6,018,706		6,205,010
Investments	14		8,546,057		8,921,457
			14,564,763		15,126,467
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks		7,137		16,451	
Debtors	15	100,671		101,368	
Cash in bank and in hand		184,437		57,077	
		292,245		174,896	
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one Period	16	(118,212)		(50,672)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			174,033		124,224
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			14,738,796		15,250,691
NET ASSETS			14,738,796		15,250,691
FUNDS					
Restricted funds	17		160,695		161,949
Unrestricted funds					
- General fund			3,409,395		3,733,732
- Designated funds			5,150,000		5,105,000
- Tangible Fixed Asset fund			6,018,706		6,205,010
TOTAL FUNDS			14,738,796		15,250,691

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by

Trustee:



Approved on: 20 May 2025

Statement of cash flows

Year to 31 August 2024

Year	Notes	2024	2023
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash used in operating activities	A	(495,470)	(405,063)
Investment income including rent received		134,369	192,610
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(11,540)	(34,615)
Proceeds from the disposal of listed investments		6,945,299	3,586,208
Net proceeds from settlement of foreign exchange contracts		–	53,809
Purchase of listed investments		(7,120,146)	(3,889,964)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		443,450	(91,952)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(51,988)	(497,015)
		236,457	733,472
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 September			
	B	184,469	236,457
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 August			

Notes to the statement of cash flows for the year to 31 August 2024.

A Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash used in operating activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Net movement in funds (per the statement of financial activities)	(511,895)	(725,383)
Depreciation charge	197,168	196,966
Purchase of fixed assets	11,540	
Net losses (gains) on foreign exchange contracts and investments	(138,431)	244,732
Investment income including rent receivable	(134,369)	(191,083)
Decrease in stocks	9,314	358
Decrease (increase) in debtors	697	58,344
Increase (decrease) in creditors	70,507	11,003
Net cash used in operating activities	(495,470)	(405,063)

B Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	184,437	57,077
Cash held by investment managers	32	179,380
Total cash and cash equivalents	184,469	236,457

No separate reconciliation of net debt has been prepared as there is no difference between the net cash (debt) of the charity and the above cash and cash equivalent

Principal accounting policies

31 August 2024

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the accounts are laid out below.

Basis of preparation

These accounts have been prepared for the year to 31 August 2024 with comparative information provided in respect to the year to 31 August 2023.

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policies below or the notes to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The accounts are presented in sterling and are rounded to the nearest pound.

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Preparation of the accounts requires the trustees to make significant judgements and estimates.

The items in the accounts where these judgements and estimates have been made include:

- assessing the probability of the receipt of legacy income and estimating the amount to be received;
- estimating the useful economic life of tangible fixed assets for the purposes of determining the annual depreciation charge;
- estimating the fair value of investment properties;
- determining the value of designated funds needed at the year end, in particular in respect to the assumptions made in determining the value of the retirement fund; and estimating future income and expenditure flows for the purpose of assessing going concern (see below).

Assessment of going concern

The trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in preparing these accounts. The trustees have made this assessment in respect to a period of at least one year from the date of approval of these accounts.

Principal accounting policies (continued)

31 August 2024

Assessment of going concern (continued)

The trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees are of the opinion that the charity will have sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

The most significant areas of judgement that affect items in the accounts are detailed above. With regard to the next accounting period, the year ending 31 August 2025, the most significant areas that affect the carrying value of the assets held by the charity are the level of investment return and the performance of the investment markets (see the investment policy and the risk management sections of the trustees' report for more information).

Income recognition

Income is recognised in the period in which the charity has entitlement to the income, the amount of income can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Income comprises donations, legacies, investment income, income from the sale of books and artefacts, income from retreats and visitors and other income.

Donations, including salaries and pensions of individual religious received under Gift Aid or deed of covenant, are recognised when the charity has confirmation of both the amount and settlement date. In the event of donations pledged but not received, the amount is accrued for where the receipt is considered probable. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

In accordance with the Charities SORP FRS 102 volunteer time is not recognised.

Legacies are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the legacy, the executors have established that there are sufficient surplus assets in the estate to pay the legacy, and any conditions attached to the legacy are within the control of the charity.

Entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. Where legacies have been notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, but the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material. In the event that the gift is in the form of an asset other than cash or a financial asset traded on a recognised stock exchange, recognition is subject to the value of the gift being reliably measurable with a degree of reasonable accuracy and the title of the asset having been transferred to the charity.

Principal accounting policies (continued)

31 August 2024

Income recognition (continued)

Investment income is recognised once the dividend or equivalent has been declared and notification has been received of the amount due.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Income from the sale of books and artefacts and from retreats and other visitors is measured at fair value of the consideration received or receivable, excluding discounts.

Expenditure recognition

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure comprises direct costs and support costs. All expenses, including support costs, are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. The classification between activities is as follows:

- Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure associated with raising funds for the charity. This includes investment management fees and investment property costs.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs associated with furthering the charitable purposes of the charity through the provision of its charitable activities. Such costs include charitable donations and grants, costs in respect to the support of members of the Congregation and enabling their ministry, including governance costs.

Charitable grants and donations are made where the trustees consider there is real need following a review of the details of each particular case and comprise single year payments rather than multi-year grants. Grants and donations are included in the statement of financial activities when approved for payment. Provision is made for grants and donations approved but unpaid at the period end.

All expenditure is stated inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Tangible fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised.

- a. Functional freehold property

Principal accounting policies (continued)

31 August 2024

Tangible Fixed Assets (continued)

Freehold properties used for the direct charitable work of the charity are included in these accounts at an estimate of their historic cost as determined by the trustees.

Due to its historic nature, the Abbey is depreciated at a rate of 1% per annum on a straight line basis.

Other functional freehold properties are depreciated at a rate of 2% per annum on a straight line basis in order to write the buildings off over their estimated useful economic life to the charity.

b. Other tangible fixed assets

Plant and other tangible fixed assets are capitalised and depreciated at the following annual rates in order to write them off over their estimated useful lives:

- Plant, furniture and equipment – 5% to 20% per annum based on cost
- Motor vehicles – 25% per annum based on cost

Other tangible fixed assets which have been fully depreciated are written out of the accounts as their net realisable value is considered to be negligible.

Fixed asset investments

Listed investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price.

Management of the charity's investment portfolio includes the use of foreign exchange contracts including forward contracts. These are a form of complex financial instrument. They are recognised initially at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date, using the prevailing exchange rate at that date. Changes in fair value are credited (or debited) to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

As noted above the main form of financial risk faced by the charity is that of volatility in equity markets and investment markets due to wider economic conditions, the attitude of investors to investment risk, and changes in sentiment concerning equities and within particular sectors or sub sectors.

Properties held for investment purposes are included in these accounts at fair value based on open market value. Investment properties were last re-valued formally on 27 February 2023 for the year ended 31 August 2022 on an open market basis by Messrs Carter Jonas LLP, Chartered Surveyors, in accordance with the appropriate sections of the current RICS Professional Standards (PS) and RICS Global Valuation Practice Statements (VPS) contained in the RICS Valuation—Professional Standards 2020 incorporating the IVSC International Valuation Standards (the 'Red Book').

Principal accounting policies (continued)

31 August 2024

Realised gains (or losses) on investment assets are calculated as the difference between disposal proceeds and their opening carrying value or their purchase value if acquired subsequent to the first day of the financial year. Unrealised gains and losses are calculated as the difference between the fair value at the year end and their carrying value at that date. Realised and unrealised investment gains (or losses) are combined in the statement of financial activities and are credited (or debited) in the year in which they arise.

Debtors

Debtors are recognised at their settlement amount, less any provision for non-recoverability. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid. They have been discounted to the present value of the future cash receipt where such discounting is material.

Stock

Stock is comprised of books, cards and other similar items held for sale in a small shop for visitors to the Abbey. Stock items are valued at the lower of cost or realisable value where this is deemed to be lower than original cost'

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand represents such accounts and instruments that are available on demand or have a maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition. Deposits for more than three months but less than one year have been disclosed as short-term deposits.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are recognised at the amount the charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt. They have been discounted to the present value of the future cash payment where such discounting is material.

Fund structure

Restricted funds comprise monies raised for, or their use restricted to, a specific purpose, or contributions subject to donor imposed conditions.

General funds represent those monies which are freely available for application towards achieving any charitable purpose that falls within the charity's charitable objects.

Designated funds comprise monies set aside out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

The tangible fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the charity's tangible fixed assets.

Foreign currencies

Assets and liabilities in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the rates of exchange ruling at the balance sheet date. Transactions in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the rate of exchange ruling at the date of the transaction. Exchange differences are taken into account in arriving at the net movement in funds.

Services provided by members of the Community

For the purposes of these accounts, no value has been placed on administration and other services provided by the members of the Community.

Pension contributions

Contributions in respect of the charity's defined contribution pension scheme are charged to the statement of financial activities when they are payable to the scheme. The charity's contributions are restricted to the contributions disclosed in note 10. There were no outstanding contributions at the year end. The charity has no liability beyond making its contributions and paying across the deductions for the employees' contributions.

1 Income from: Donations and legacies

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Donations	19,056	23,078	42,134	11,115	21,057	32,172
Legacies	(17,932)	–	(17,932)	14,128	–	14,128
Collections & offertory	37,971	–	37,971	52,211	–	52,211
Amount receivable from parishes administered by Douai Abbey	111,945	–	111,945	51,950	–	51,950
Pensions and other income of individual religious received under deed of covenant	76,356	–	76,356	71,258	–	71,258
Total funds	227,396	23,078	250,474	200,662	21,057	221,719

2 Income from: Charitable activities

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Sales of religious books and Artefacts	6,745	–	6,745	10,404	–	10,404
Retreat house & related income	149,472	–	149,472	140,299	–	140,299
Other	12,239	–	12,239	12,229	–	12,229
Total funds	168,456	–	168,456	162,932	–	162,932

3 Income from: Other trading activities

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Visitors for non-religious purposes	3,245	–	3,245	6,746	–	6,746
Other	–	–	–	3,403	–	3,403
Total funds	3,245	–	3,245	10,149	–	10,149

4 Income from: Investments and interest receivable

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Income from listed investments & National Savings Bonds	21,908	–	21,908	53,308	–	53,308
Income from investment property - Rental income	109,236	–	109,236	120,500	–	120,500
Interest receivable	816	–	816	5,547	–	5,547
Exchange gains on investments	2,409	–	2,409	11,728	–	11,728
Total funds	134,369	–	134,369	191,083	–	191,083

5 Expenditure on: Raising funds

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Investment property expenses	57,992	–	57,992	15,608	–	15,608
Investment manager's fees	40,622	–	40,622	59,226	–	59,226
Other	2,661	–	2,661	2,985	–	2,985
Total funds	101,275	–	101,275	77,819	–	77,819

6 Expenditure on: Support of members of the Community and their ministry

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Staff costs (excl. pastoral activities)	225,590	–	225,590	205,836	–	205,836
Depreciation	197,168	–	197,168	196,966	–	196,966
Living and personal costs	305,241	–	305,241	229,412	445	229,857
Premises	207,725	24,303	232,028	233,140	–	233,140
Pastoral activities (incl. staff costs)	77,884	30	77,914	79,782	14,655	94,437
Governance (note 7)	50,368	–	50,369	23,575	–	23,575
Donations (note 8)	6,305	–	6,305	634	–	634
Other	22,982	–	22,982	16,270	–	16,270
Total funds	1,093,263	24,333	1,117,596	985,615	15,100	1,000,715

7 Governance

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Professional fees	40,509	–	38,509	9,086	–	9,086
Legal fees	3,859	–	3,859	1,349	–	1,349
Auditor's remuneration	6,000	–	6,000	13,140	–	13,140
Total funds	50,368	–	50,368	23,575	–	23,575

8 Donations

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Mary's Meals	1,000	–	1,000	–	–	–
Cardinal Hume Centre	1,000	–	1,000	–	–	–
Providence Row	1,000	–	1,000	–	–	–
CAFOD	1,000	–	1,000	–	–	–
Marriage Care	1,000	–	1,000	–	–	–
Donations less than £1,000	1,305	–	1,305	634	–	634
TOTAL	6,305	–	6,305	634	–	634

9 Net (expenditure) income before (losses) gains on foreign exchange and investments

This is stated after charging:

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Staff costs (note 10)	294,922	–	294,922	249,857	–	249,857
Auditor's remuneration - Statutory audit services	6,000	–	6,000	13,140	–	13,140
Depreciation	197,168	–	197,168	196,966	–	196,966

10 Employees and staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	264,387	233,815
Social security costs	21,180	17,572
Other pension costs	9,356	8,470
Total	<u>294,922</u>	<u>249,857</u>

No employee earned in excess of £60,000 per annum (including taxable benefits) or more during the year (2023 – none).

The average number of employees during the period was 15 (2023 – 15).

The key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis comprise the trustees and the Bursar. The Bursar received £3,083 salary (2023 – none).

The trustees received no remuneration or reimbursement of expenses in connection with their duties during the year (2023 – £nil).

11 Trustees' expenses and remuneration and transactions with trustees

The charity's trustees are all members of the Community and consequently their living and personal expenses, all of which are consistent with the amounts paid in respect to other members of the Community, are borne by the charity. None of the trustees has received any remuneration or reimbursement of expenses in connection with their duties as trustees (2023 – none).

As members of the Community, none of the trustees have resources of their own as all earnings, pensions and other income have been donated to the charity under a Gift Aid compliant Deed of Covenant. During the year, the total amount donated by the trustees to the charity was £8,648 (2023 – £12,766).

12 Taxation

Douai Abbey Trust is a registered charity and, therefore, is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities or tax on capital gains, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities.

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land & buildings	Plant, furniture & equipment	Motor vehicles	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cost at 1 September 2023	9,347,196	308,721	36,864	9,692,781
Additions	–	–	11,540	11,540
Disposals			(11,454)	(11,454)
Cost at 31 August 2024	9,347,196	308,721	36,950	9,692,867
Depreciation at 1 September 2023	3,261,391	204,080	22,300	3,487,771
Charge for year	171,432	17,832	7,904	197,168
Disposals	–	–	(10,778)	(10,778)
Depreciation at 31 August 2024	3,432,823	221,912	19,426	3,674,161
Net book value at 31 August 2024	5,914,373	86,809	17,524	6,018,706
Net book value at 1 September 2023	6,085,805	104,641	14,564	6,205,010

As permitted under FRS 102, the charity has adopted a policy of not revaluing its tangible fixed assets. Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost. Where a valuation has been used in periods prior to the implementation of FRS102, this has been taken to be deemed cost under the transitional arrangements of FRS 102.

It is likely that there are material differences between the open market values of the charity's freehold land and buildings and their book values. These arise from the specialised nature of some of the properties and the effects of inflation.

14 Fixed asset investments

At 31 August 2024 fixed asset investments comprised:

	2024	2023
Freehold investment property (see a below)	3,940,000	3,940,000
Listed investments and cash held for re-investment (see b below)	4,606,057	4,976,793
Foreign exchange contracts (see c below)	–	4,664
Total	8,546,057	8,921,457

Movements on each category of investment are summarised below.

14 Fixed asset investments (continued)

a. Freehold investment property

	2024	2023
Fair (market) value at 1 September	3,940,000	3,940,000
Revaluation gains in the year	—	—
Total	<u>3,940,000</u>	<u>3,940,000</u>

The charity's freehold investment properties are included at fair value based on open market value. They were re-valued formally on 27 February 2023 for the year ended 31 August 2022. The valuations were determined on an open market basis on behalf of Messrs Carter Jonas LLP, Chartered Surveyors, in accordance with the appropriate sections of the current RICS

Professional Standards (PS) and RICS Global Valuation Practice Statements (VPS) contained in the RICS Valuation—Professional Standards 2020 incorporating the IVSC International Valuations Standards (the 'Red Book').

The Trustees do not consider there to be a material difference in the open market value between the valuation date and the current date.

b. Listed investments and cash held for re-investment

Listed investments	2024 £	2023 £
Fair (market) value at 1 September 2023	4,976,413	4,804,241
Additions at cost	7,120,148	3,889,964
Disposals	(7,447,796)	(3,475,687)
Disposals (realized gain)	—	—
Net unrealised investment (losses) gains	(42,740)	(421,105)
Fair (market) value at 31 August 2024	4,606,025	4,797,413
Cash held by investment managers for re-investment	32	179,380
	<u>4,606,057</u>	<u>4,976,793</u>

All listed investments were dealt in on recognised stock exchanges.

14 Fixed asset investments (continued)

At 31 August 2024, listed investments included the following individual holdings deemed material when compared with the overall valuation of listed investments as at that date marked.

	Value 2024 £	Percentage 2024 £
Charity Assets Trust C Inc	4,605,758	100%

	Market value 2023 £	Percentage 2023 %
Ruffer Illiquid Multi Strategies Fund 2015 Ltd	330,556	6.9
UK (Govt of) 0.125% 31/01/2024	363,359	7.6
UK (Govt of) 0.25% 31/01/2025	479,393	10.0
Ruffer SICAV Fixed Income Z GBP Cap	1,452,977	30.3
Ruffer Protection Strategies International z GBP	334,251	7.0
Wisdom Tree Brent Crude Oil ETC	322,539	6.7

c. Gains (losses) on foreign exchange contracts for the year ended 31 August 2024 consisted of the following:

	2024 £	2023 £
Foreign exchange contracts		
Fair value gains on unsettled contracts brought forward	4,664	2,777
Fair value gains (losses) on settlement	(4,664)	58,411
Fair value gains (losses) on unsettled contracts carried forward	-	4,664
Total gains (losses) on foreign exchange contracts	-	65,852

15 Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Investment income and interest receivable	–	475
Gift Aid recoverable	–	12,495
Legacies receivable	–	44,500
Prepayments	65,806	–
Other debtors and accrued income	14,865	23,898
Loan to Douai Abbey Parishes Trust (see below)	20,000	20,000
	100,671	101,368

On 13 February 2020, the trustees signed a loan agreement with Douai Abbey Parishes Trust (see note 21) to loan funds to one of the parishes accounted for within the Douai Abbey Parishes Trust to be applied towards the refurbishment of a parish hall. The maximum amount to be advanced by the charity was £20,000. The full amount was drawn down by Douai Abbey Parishes Trust during September 2021. The loan is interest free and repayable over a period of five years, the first repayment becoming due two years after the completion of the work on the hall, however repayments have not yet started. Repayments will be due annually and amount to £4,000. per annum. The hall is now in use.

16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Expense creditors and accruals	104,001	47,334
Credit card	10,019	–
VAT payable	4,192	3,338
Total	118,212	50,672

17 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trusts to be applied for specific purposes:

Fund	At 31 August 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 1 September 2024 £
Library Archives Fund	154,356	20,125	(24,333)	–	150,148
Restricted retirement Fund	2,544	2,585	–	–	5,129
Student Fund	4,103	369	–	–	4,472
Other restricted funds	946	–	–	–	946
Total	161,949	23,079	(24,333)	–	160,695

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

- ***Library Archives Fund***

This fund represents monies received specifically for the development of an archives database at the library, the maintenance of the archive, and the employment of a cataloguer.

- ***Restricted retirement Fund***

This fund is made up of donations made to the Abbey towards the cost of retirement of members, including medical and care costs.

- ***Student Fund***

This fund represents monies received to help fund the studies of a student in India.

- ***Other restricted funds***

This fund represents monies received for one-off specific purposes.

18 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	At 1 st September 2023 £	New designations £	Utilised/ Released £	At 31 st August 2024 £
Retirement reserves	4,150,000	-	-	4,150,000
Development fund	1,000,000	-	-	1,000,000
	5,150,000	-	-	5,150,000

	At 1 st September 2022 £	New designations £	Utilised/ Released £	At 31 st August 2023 £
Retirement reserves	4,150,000	-	-	4,150,000
Development fund	1,000,000	-	-	1,000,000
	5,150,000	-	-	5,150,000

The retirement reserve represents monies designated by the trustees to provide for the members of the Community in their retirement.

The development fund comprises money set aside for future projects.

19 Tangible fixed assets fund

	£
1 September 2023	6,205,010
Movement in year	(186,304)
31 August 2024	<u>6,018,706</u>
	£
1 September 2022	6,367,361
Movement in year	(162,351)
31 August 2023	<u>6,205,010</u>

The tangible fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the charity's tangible fixed assets and has been set up in recognition of the fact that the assets are required for the day-to-day work of the charity and are not available to finance current expenditure or meet contingencies.

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were represented by:

	General Fund £	Designated Fund £	Tangible fixed assets fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total Funds £
Tangible fixed assets		—	6,018,706	—	6,018,706
Investments	3,235,362	5,150,000	—	160,695	8,546,057
Net current (liabilities) assets	174,033	—	—	—	174,033
Total	3,409,395	5,150,000	6,018,706	160,695	14,738,796

Prior Year

	General Fund £	Designated Fund £	Tangible fixed assets fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total Funds £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	6,205,010	-	6,205,010
Investments	3,609,508	5,150,000	—	161,949	8,921,457
Net current (liabilities) assets	124,224	—	—	—	124,224
Total	3,733,732	5,150,000	6,205,010	161,949	15,250,691

20 Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

The total unrealised gains constitute movements on revaluation and as at 31 August 2024, excluding those relating to forward exchange contracts (see note 14c), they were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Unrealised Gains (Losses) included above		
On Investment Properties	1,340,000	1,340,000
On Listed Investments	185,759	47,328
Total Unrealised Gains at 31 August	1,524,759	1,387,328
Reconciliation of movement of unrealized gains		
Unrealised Gains at 1 September	1,387,328	1,853,121
Less: Disposals in the Year	-	(44,688)
Net (Losses) Gains on Revaluation	138,431	(421,105)
Total Unrealised Gains at 31st August	1,524,759	1,387,328

21 Related party transactions

The Douai Abbey Trust is connected to the Douai Abbey Parishes Trust (Charity Registration Number: 1063237) as both charities have several trustees in common.

During the year, rent of £12,000 (2023—£12,000) for the use of St Mary's Church and office space in the monastery was received by Douai Abbey Trust from Douai Abbey Parishes Trust. No balance was outstanding at either year end.

On 13 February 2020 the trustees signed a loan agreement Douai Abbey Parishes Trust to loan funds to the parish of Our Lady and St Joseph's, Alcester. The amount agreed to be loaned by Douai Abbey Trust was a maximum of £20,000. The full amount was drawn down by Douai Abbey Parishes Trust during September 2021. The loan is interest free and repayable over a period of five years, the first repayment becoming due two years after the completion of the work on the hall. Repayments will be due annually and amount to £4,000 per annum but repayments had not yet started by the year end. The amount receivable at 31 August 2024 was therefore £20,000 (see note 15).

During the year, total amounts of £97,380 (2023 – £51,950) were received from the Douai Abbey Parishes Trust via the Common Purse, which represents amounts receivable directly by members of the Community in their capacity as parish priests. Amounts receivable at the year-end amounted to £14,465 (2023 – £16,565).

The salary and social security payments for the post of Douai Parish Administrator within the Douai Abbey Parishes Trust are processed through the charity's payroll. £14,184 (2023 – £18,318) was recharged to the Douai Abbey Parishes Trust in respect of the cost of employment for this staff member and no amounts were outstanding at the year end.

21 Related party transactions (continued)

During the year, the charity paid administrative costs of £1,786 (2023 – £3,270) in relation to printing on behalf of Douai Abbey Parishes Trust. At the year end, none (2023 – £3,270) remained outstanding.

In the prior year the Douai Abbey Parishes Trust purchased a laptop at a cost of £1,500 for one of its parish priests during the year. The charity reimbursed the full amount and there was no balance outstanding at the year end.

Other than the transactions above and the donations received by trustees disclosed in note 11 to these accounts, there were no other related party transactions during the year which require disclosure (2023 – none).