



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Retreat Cottages

238706

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

31/01/2023

To

31/12/2023

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Rental incomes	29,242	-	-	29,242	20,326
Interest	121	-	-	121	20
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>29,363</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,363</b>	<b>20,347</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
M&G Multi Asset	-	-	-	-	15,000
Blackrock	-	-	-	-	488
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,488</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>29,363</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,363</b>	<b>35,835</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Light and heat	5,350	-	-	5,350	4,826
Repairs and maintenance	5,122	-	-	5,122	26,632
Rates and water	1,236	-	-	1,236	1,973
Subscriptions	267	-	-	267	299
Insurance	849	-	-	849	727
Sundry expenses	8	-	-	8	23
tenants gifts	6	-	-	6	5
Administrative expenses	-	-	-	-	16
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>12,838</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,838</b>	<b>34,502</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>12,838</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,838</b>	<b>34,502</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>16,525</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,525</b>	<b>1,333</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>12,537</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,537</b>	<b>11,204</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>29,062</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,062</b>	<b>12,537</b>

# **RETREAT CHARITY**

(Charity registration number 238706)

## **ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023**

### **1. SUMMARY**

The Charities Act, 2011, set out a requirement for the Trustees of charities to prepare an annual report of their activities and to publish a statement of its financial affairs. The Retreat has a turnover of more than £10,000 per annum and so is not exempt from this requirement. This means that there is a public record of the financial activities of the Charity during the period 1st January 2023 to December 31st 2023. This report covers the period from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.

Four full meetings of the trustees were held in the year. Two Trustees resigned at the end of 2022 and four new potential Trustees attended the Trustees' meeting on 26th January 2023 as observers. Since the meeting, it has been confirmed that all four are to join as Trustees. It was recorded shortly after the June Trustees' meeting one of the new Trustees requested to resign for personal reasons. The Chairman accepted her resignation.

The Trustees met all four residents at the the Methodist church in Stony Stratford on 4th August 2023 for a "Meet the Trustees" event. The meeting went very well and all present thought it was a good idea to have another resident's meeting in the Spring 2024.

There have been a number of enquiries for accommodation at the Retreat in the past year. There is now only one person awaiting a vacancy. Fortunately there were no void periods.

In April 2023 an increase in Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC) was applied which raised the amount paid by each resident from £125.00 to £150.00. This increase is aimed at reducing the gap between the Charity's WMC and the Local Housing Allowance available to those eligible for social housing.

The need to complete all the works stated in the Quinquennial Inspection report has been the focus of attention throughout much of the year.

The Charity continues to enjoy a healthy balance in the current account and Business Reserve Account. No transfers have been made to the Extraordinary Repair Fund as the pending refurbishment work meant that easy access to the current account would be the most convenient way to finance these. The financial reports appear at the end of this document.

A more detailed report on the above topics is contained on the following pages but the trustees are confident that the aims of the Charity have been fulfilled, namely:-

to run the Charity in accordance with the terms of the Trust Deed,  
to maintain, and wherever possible, improve the almshouses,  
to safeguard and strengthen the finances of the Charity to support its objectives; and  
to support the residents to live good lives.

## **2. Trustees**

2.1 The Charity's Trust Deed drawn up in 1893 requires that seven Trustees are appointed (to include the Chairman and Secretary) and that of this number four should be male and three women. Two of the seven should be members of the Church of England and the remainder should be in membership of one of the other Churches in Stony Stratford. It was agreed in 2018 that these stipulations with regard to gender and religious allegiance are not considered acceptable in today's society and now the main qualities required of a Trustee should be dependability, integrity, and a willingness to accept the role.

2.2 A debt of gratitude is owed to each and every one of the Trustees for the time, effort and skills freely donated to the interests of the Charity. As can be seen from the accounts, no Trustee receives any payment of any kind for services rendered to the Charity, other than way of reimbursement for authorised expenses incurred on the charity's behalf.

2.3 As mentioned, in June 2023 Margery Shaw resigned as a Trustee due to personal reasons.

2.4 After discussion with the Charity Commission, it appears that none of our residents would be considered vulnerable. However, the Trustees agreed that it would be wise to have all serving Trustees DBS checked and this will be done as soon as possible.

2.5 A full list of the Trustees of the Charity who held office in 2023 is shown as an Appendix to this report.

## **3. Occupants of the Almshouses**

3.1 There have been full occupancy of the cottages throughout 2023. The Charity's beneficiaries (residents) were:

Cottage No.1	Martha Keilty	start date 1st July 2016
Cottage No.2	June Sanotra	start date 2nd May 2022
Cottage No.3	David Clowsley	start date 2nd May 2022
Cottage No.4	Jennifer Pezzella	start date 21st November 2006 (previously at No.2)

3.2 There is one person on the waiting list.

3.3 The topic of noise has been raised by the residents and the Trustees are seeking professional advice on the matter.

## **4. Repairs and maintenance**

4.1 The rear window at No.4 was replaced by the Old Joinery Shop.

4.2 External lighting has been updated.

4.3 Gutter damage at the front has had a temporary fix by Derek. As the Retreat is a Listed Building a full replacement may take time to organise.

4.4 The tap at No.4 has been replaced.

4.5 There was a suspected water leak downstream of the meter outside the cottages that serves the Retreat, DW Roberts and the Rohan shop. It was agreed to pay one third each to the cost of inspection to locate the leak and then whoever was found responsible to pay for the repair. Fortunately it was not the Retreat charity.

4.5 A rotary washing line was concreted in at the rear of the cottages. The gate has been installed securely at the rear of the cottages.

4.6 Jennifer Pezzella at no.4 has requested her bathroom to be converted to a wet room. The Trustees have agreed with her request and will obtain two quotes and hopefully the work can be completed in early 2024.

4.7 Regular autumn service of the oil fired boiler was carried out by Yardley Heating.

4.8 A Risk Assessment was carried out of the Boiler room and Patrick will get a quote to carry out a full Risk Assessment on tall aspects of the Retreat as minuted. Derek will arrange an asbestos check of the Cottages.

## **5. Finance**

5.1 The Weekly Maintenance Contribution was raised from £125.00 to £150.00 with effect from 1st April 2023. This 20% increase is part of a plan to close the gap between WMC and the Local Housing Allowance set for the equivalent properties.

5.2 Three of the four residents pay Weekly Maintenance Contribution by bank Standing Order. One resident is in receipt of Milton Keynes Local housing Allowance which is paid directly into the Charity's bank account every four weeks.

5.3 The Charity's final accounts for the year ending 31st December 2023 accompany this report. The following explanations may lead to a fuller understanding of some of the figures.

5.4 The charity maintains two cash accounts at the NatWest Bank for the day to day conduct of its affairs. These are:

5.4.1 Current account into which the tenants' Weekly Maintenance Contributions and housing benefits are paid. The payments for heating oil, utility services, insurance

premiums, minor maintenance and repairs, and other authorised expenses are made from this account. At the end of 2023 the balance in this account was £10,907.09

5.4.2 A Charities Reserve Account which is used as a repository for any access cash held in the current account. It is an interest earning account allowing short term deposits and immediate withdrawals and is considered as an extension of its revenue funds and not as an investment. The amount in this account at the end of the year was £18,153.98 and during the year £16,000 has been transferred to this account from the Current account. As previously mentioned, pending refurbishment work meant that easy access to the current account would be the most convenient way to finance these.

5.5 The year has seen a marked change in sentiment with regards its investment. Equity markets have risen and this is reflected in the revaluation of the Charity's investments which are subject to stock market movements. and interest rates have also reached levels not seen for many years.

5.6 The Charity investments fall into one fund. This is:

#### 5.6.1 Extraordinary Repair Fund

This reserve fund can be drawn upon to meet major items of repair by application to the fund managers without the prior consent of the Charity Commission. It is held in the National Association of Almshouses Common Investment Fund (NAACIF) as accumulation shares administered by M&G Investments. During 2023 no transfers were made into this fund, preferring to hold readily credible funds in the current account. The annual valuation of the fund has reflected the rise in equity investments and shows an increase of £1921.94 (6.2% increase) on last year, to stand at £32,879.32

5.7 It has proven very difficult to change the signatories to our NatWest mandate to remove one Trustee and replace with a new Trustee. NatWest now have an automated system on the computer and despite several attempts, they have rejected the amendments. The treasurer of the Retreat Charity has sought advice from the Charity Commission and consequently spoken at length with NatWest and asked them to speak to the Charity Commission directly (as requested by the CC) but NatWest have refused to do so. It is most unsatisfactory situation but the charity Commission are aware of the issues.

5.8 Membership of the Almshouse Association continues to provide smaller charities such as the Retreat, with representation at national level in discussion with Government and such bodies as the Charity Commission, whose decisions can have a major effect on the way that the business of all registered charities is conducted. The subscription not only covers regular bulletins on events of interest to almshouse administrators but brings notification of courses being run by the Association which are a benefit to Trustees. One of the new Trustees is due to attend a training day organised by the Almshouse Association in April 2024.

## **6. In conclusion**

6.1 The past year has seen all the properties occupied and a full quota of serving Trustees.

6.2 Major refurbishment works is required at No.4 Cottage and this will now take place in 2024. The funding for this will come mainly from the current and reserve accounts with the option to withdraw further monies from the Extraordinary Repair Fund.

6.3 The Charity continues to be in a position where funding projects as above can be considered but it is appropriate to review the contributions made to the Extraordinary Repair Fund.

6.4 There are still major works to be done as a result of the Quinquennial Inspection i.e. replace the roof on all four dwellings. This will involve considerable cost and drain the reserves but the Trustees are already looking at the possibly of obtaining grants for this type of work.

# **APPENDIX**

to the Charity's Annual Report 2023

## **RETREAT CHARITY TRUSTEES 2023**

Chairman: Mr Robert Scarff  
Elected 6th December 2018  
147 High Street, Stony Stratford MK11 1AT  
078834 902737

Treasurer and Secretary: Mr David Frost  
Elected 3rd December 2009  
34 Calverton Road, Stony Stratford MK11 1LE  
07398 455684

Minutes Secretary: Mrs Rebecca Rich  
Elected 1st February 2023  
13 Bunsty, Galley Hill, Milton Keynes MK11 1NJ  
07749 240668

Maintenance and Inspections: Mr Derek Beaumont  
Elected 1st June 2020  
1 Horsefair Green, Stony Stratford MK11 1JW  
01908 562064

Applications and resident well-being: Mrs Kate Willett  
Elected 19th November 2015  
103 Clarence Road, Stony Stratford MK11 1JF  
07753 257361


Resident well-being: Mrs Susan Starr  
Elected 1st February 2023  
12 Market Square, Stony Stratford MK11 1BE  
07801930879

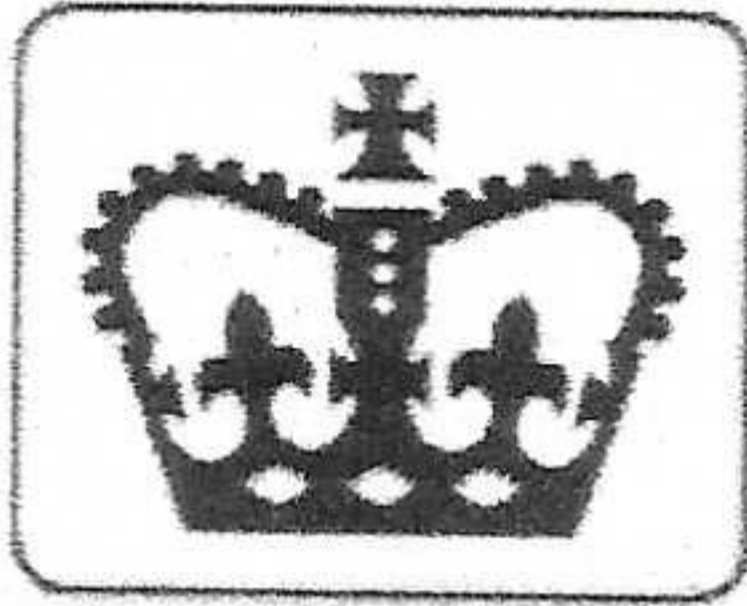
Trustee: Rev. Canon Professor Patrick Comerford  
Elected 1st February 2023  
51a High Street, Stony Stratford  
MK11 1AA  
07578 186765

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Current account	10,908	-	-
	Deposit account	18,154	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>29,062</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	M&G Multiasset fund	Unrestricted	-	32,879
	Investment property		-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		ROBERT ALAN SCARFF DAVID FROST	11/7/24 11/7/24



# CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A

### Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
The Retreat Cottages

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 December 2023

Charity no  
(if any) 238706

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2023**.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

Independent  
examiner's statement

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

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

Signed:

*Zoe Jones*

Date:

3/7/2024

Name:

Zoe Jones

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body:

FCA (ICAEW)

Address:

Connolly Accountants and Business Advisors

The Stable Yard, Stony Stratford

MK11 1BN

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

Limitation of scope: This is the first year which the charity has exceeded the threshold requiring an independent examination. This examination is limited in scope to the year end 2023 only and does not provide any assurance over the comparative figures for 2022 year.