

RETREAT CHARITY

(Charity registration number 238706)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024

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 2024 to December 31st 2024. This report covers the period from 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024.

Three full meetings of the trustees were held in the year. One Trustee resigned in September 2024. He held the post of Treasurer and kindly agreed to continue to oversee the accounts until a replacement was appointed. The Trustees are grateful to David Frost for his service and commitment over many years.

There were no void periods, and the same four Residents occupied the properties throughout the year.

In April 2024 an increase in Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC) was applied which raised the amount paid by each resident from £150.00 to £160. This increase was 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 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.

2.4 A full list of the Trustees of the Charity who held office in 2024 is shown as an Appendix to this report.

3. Occupants of the Almshouses

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)

3.1 There is one person on the waiting list.

3.2 The resident of number three made a number of complaints during the year relating to noise emanating from number four. During the year, the Trustees arranged for an Acoustic Survey to be completed. This reassured the Trustees that the level of sound insulation between numbers three and four is adequate and that no remedial work was recommended.



4. Repairs and maintenance

Major items

- Bathroom in number four converted to wet room
- Asbestos management survey (nothing of concern reported)

Minor maintenance works

- Two radiators replaced in number one.
- Replaced three radiator valves in number two
- Adjust tap and replace shower valve in number three.
- Ease and adjust rear door on number four

5. Finance

5.1 The Weekly Maintenance Contribution was raised from £150 to £160.00 with effect from 1st April 2024. This 6.7% 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 2024 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

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premiums, minor maintenance and repairs, and other authorised expenses are made from this account. At the end of 2024 the balance in this account was £21,213.54

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 the accounts at the end of 2024 was £18,417.33.

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

5.5.1 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 2024 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 £2,636.85 on last year, to stand at £35,516.17 at the end of 2024.

5.6 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.

6. In conclusion

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

6.2 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 possibility of obtaining grants for this type of work.


ROBERT A SCARFF
Chair of Trustees
30/9/25

APPENDIX

to the Charity's Annual Report 2023

RETREAT CHARITY TRUSTEES 2024

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

Treasurer and Secretary: Mr David Frost RETIRED SEPTEMBER 2024
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 186





CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Retreat Cottages

238706

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/01/2024

To

31/12/2024

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 £
A1 Receipts					
Rental incomes	32,460	-	-	32,460	29,242
Interest	263	-	-	263	121
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	32,723	-	-	32,723	29,363
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
M&G Multi Asset	-	-	-	-	-
Blackrock	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	32,723	-	-	32,723	29,363
A3 Payments					
Light and heat	4,126	-	-	4,126	5,350
Repairs and maintenance	14,185	-	-	14,185	5,122
Rates and water	1,425	-	-	1,425	1,236
Subscriptions	275	-	-	275	267
Insurance	865	-	-	865	849
Sundry expenses	-	-	-	-	8
tenants gifts	90	-	-	90	6
Accountancy	600	-	-	600	-
Professional fees	588	-	-	588	-
Sub total	22,154	-	-	22,154	12,838
A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	22,154	-	-	22,154	12,838
Net of receipts/(payments)	10,569	-	-	10,569	16,525
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	29,062	-	-	29,062	12,537
Cash funds this year end	39,631	-	-	39,631	29,062

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 £
B1 Cash funds	Current account	21,214	-	-
	Deposit account	18,417	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	39,631	-	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))		OK	OK	OK


	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	M&G Multiasset fund	Unrestricted	-	35,516
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		ROBERT A SCARFF	30/9/25



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 2024

Charity no (if any)

238706

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2024**.

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").

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.

Independent examiner's statement

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:

Date:

25/09/2025

Name:

Julie Graham

IER

ACCA

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body:

Connolly Accountants and Business Advisors

Address:

The Stable Yard, Stony Stratford

MK11 1BN

Section B

Disclosure

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.