

2023 Annual Report

Year ended 31 Dec 2023

Widcombe-in-the-Moor Church House and Lands Charity is registered with the Charity Commission under registration number 241096. The history of the charity goes back to 1635.

The governing documents of the Charity now comprise:

- 29 June 1877 Scheme by the Charity Commission;
- 13 March 1883 Scheme by the Charity Commission;
- 25 November 1904 Order by the Charity Commission; and
- 19 January 2021 Scheme by the Charity Commission;

supplemented by:

- 24 June 2004 Order by the Charity Commission;
- 23 March 2005 Resolution by the trustees of the charity; and
- 25 June 2020 Resolution by the trustees of the charity.

At the beginning of 2023, the trustees were:

- Rev Geoffrey Fenton Vicar of Widcombe-in-the-Moor (chair)
- Michael Pascoe a churchwarden of Widcombe-in-the-Moor parish church
- Andrew Power substitute for a churchwarden of Widcombe-in-the-Moor parish church
- John Dracup appointed by Widcombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council
- Caroline Mann appointed by Widcombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council
- John Southcombe appointed by Devon County Council

During the year, Rev Geoffrey Fenton retired as Vicar of Widcombe-on-the-Moor. Pending the appointment of his successor, he was replaced as an ex-officio trustee by Right Rev Mark Rylands, Rector of the Ashburton and Moorland Team.

Accordingly, at the end of 2023 and at the date of this report, the trustees were:

- Right Rev Mark Rylands Rector of the Ashburton and Moorland Team
- Michael Pascoe a churchwarden of Widcombe-in-the-Moor parish church
- Andrew Power substitute for a churchwarden of Widcombe-in-the-Moor parish church
- John Dracup appointed by Widcombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council (chair)
- Caroline Mann appointed by Widcombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council
- John Southcombe appointed by Devon County Council

The clerk to the trustees throughout 2022, and at the date of this report, was David Thomas. The charity's public address is Stone, Natsworthy, Widcombe-in-the-Moor, Devon, TQ13 7TR.

The Church House itself was disposed of more than 100 years ago. The charity's principal assets now comprise 1 to 4 Church Cottages, Dunstone, Widcombe-in-the-Moor, Devon, TQ13 7TH.

1 to 4 Church Cottages were all let to tenants at affordable rents, broadly equivalent to 80 per cent of the open-market rent. The Charity Commission scheme of 19 January 2021 confirms the properties can be let at less than market rent.

The rear elevations of 1 and 2 Church Cottages and the gable end of 1 Church Cottages were slate-hung during the year. 1 Church Cottages fell vacant in November 2023 and is currently awaiting internal refurbishment before being relet.

In November 2020 the charity applied to Devon County Council to revise the register of common land, in order to remove an area adjacent to 4 Church Cottages – which the charity contends had been included in error. A site inspection took place in March 2022, but – following an objection by the Open Spaces Society and the lodging of additional evidence by the charity – the application has not yet been determined.

Under the governing documents of the charity:

- half of any distributable money remaining goes towards the upkeep and outgoings of Widecombe-in-the-Moor parish church; and
- the other half goes to the Widecombe Educational Foundation (registered charity number 306864).

The principal activities of the charity during 2023 comprised:

- managing the tenanted properties;
- making grants to the two beneficiaries; and
- continuing to review the charity's operations and documentation.

Public benefit was provided through:

- the provision of accommodation for affordable rent;
- assisting the maintenance of the parish church; and
- (through the Widecombe Educational Foundation) assisting education.

During 2023:

- income amounted to £28,183.9 (rents of £28,104.00 plus bank interest of £79.99);
- all debts were paid as they fell due;
- outgoings (including on property renovations, repairs and insurance) amounted to £39,208.99;
- a grant of £2,000.00 was paid to the Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council;
- a grant of £2,000.00 was paid to the Widecombe Educational Foundation; and
- outgoings plus grants exceeded income by £11,025.00.

In 2021, to facilitate the refurbishment of the charity's properties, Mr and Mrs John Southcombe lent the charity £15,000.00 interest-free, repayable by yearly instalments of £3,000.00 each payable on 1 May in 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026. Following repayments of £3,000.00 each in 2022 and 2023, £9,000.00 is currently outstanding.

At 31 Dec 2023:

- the charity's bank balances amounted to £26,897.57;
- this includes the £9,000 balance of the loan;
- financial commitments (renovations contracted for in Jan 2024 not yet due) were £16,280 + VAT.

At their 2024 annual general meeting, the trustees decided to:

- make a grant of £2,000.00 to the Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council;
- make a grant of £2,000.00 to the Widecombe Educational Foundation; and
- to place the balance to reserve against repairs to the tenanted properties.

This annual report for 2023 was approved by a meeting of the trustees on 12 February 2024

Signed by the chair of the meeting

John Dracup

2023 Annual Accounts

Year ended 31 Dec 2023

INCOME (CASH BASIS)	£	£
Rent¹		
▪ 1 Church Cottages [#1] ²	5,844.00	
▪ 2 Church Cottages [#2]	6,921.00	
▪ 3 Church Cottages [#3]	7,452.00	
▪ 4 Church Cottages [#4]	7,887.00	
		28,104.00
Bank interest		79.99
TOTAL INCOME		28,183.99

EXPENDITURE (CASH BASIS)	£	£
Repairs and renovations		
▪ C R Tonepohl		
- Gas service and safety check #1	98.40	
- Oil service and safety check #4	235.20	
▪ C Whale		
- Repairs #3	221.00	
▪ Jamie Cullen		
- Garden clearance #3	350.00	
▪ J Berry		
- Supply and fit new smoke and CO alarms #1	217.00	
- Heater repair #3	40.00	
- Bathroom light #3	65.00	
▪ Jettadrain Ltd		
- Drain Survey #1-4	495.00	
- Drain repairs #1-4	2,706.00	
▪ J Southcombe		
- Reimbursing cost of alarms #4	31.99	
▪ Richmond Building		
- Mould treatment #1	438.86	
▪ Sam Mucklow (S W Roofing)		
- Slate-hanging materials #1	8,680.00	
- Slate-hanging labour #1	8,010.00	
- Slate-hanging materials #2	3,800.00	
- Slate-hanging labour #2	2,956.40	
▪ Tower Scaffolding		
- Scaffolding #1 and #2	1,350.00	
		29,694.85
Services		
▪ Always Cleansing		
- Emptying septic tank #1-4	205.00	
▪ Buckland Hall		
- Meeting room hire	20.00	

¹ Amounts actually received during the year. There were no outstanding arrears of rent.

² Vacant Nov-Dec 2023, after the tenants gave notice and left, pending refurbishment.

▪ Howard Douglas - Inspection report #1-4	336.00	
▪ Endsleigh Insurance - Property insurance	1,656.35	
▪ Ecclesiastical Insurance - Trustee insurance	296.79	
Loan repayment		2,514.14
▪ Mr and Mrs J Southcombe - Second annual loan repayment		3,000.00
Payments to beneficiaries		
▪ Widecombe Educational Foundation	2,000.00	
▪ Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council	2,000.00	
		4,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		39,208.99

EXCESS INCOME/EXPENDITURE (CASH BASIS)	£
Total income (as above)	28,183.99
Total expenditure (as above)	-39,208.99
EXCESS EXPENDITURE	-11,025.00

CASH MOVEMENTS 31 DEC 2022 TO 31 DEC 2023	£	£
Santander bank balances at 31 Dec 2022		
Current account	27,845.84	
Deposit account	10,076.73	
		37,922.57
Excess expenditure (as above)		-11,025.00
Cash at bank on 31 Dec 2023		26,897.57
Long-term loan by Mr and Mrs J Southcombe ³		-9,000.00
BALANCE AT 31 DEC 2023		17,897.57

CASH BALANCE AT 31 DEC 2023	£	£
Santander bank balances		
Current account	16,740.85	
Deposit account	10,156.72	
CLOSING BALANCE⁴		26,897.57

<i>These 2023 accounts were approved by a meeting of the trustees of the charity on 12 Feb 2024</i>
<i>Signed by the chair of the meeting</i>
<i>John Dracup</i>

³ To facilitate the refurbishment of the charity's properties, Mr and Mrs J Southcombe lent the charity £15,000 interest-free, repayable by yearly instalments of £3,000 each payable on 1 May in 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026. Following the 2022 and 2023 repayments, the outstanding balance is £9,000.

⁴ Post balance sheet event: In Jan 2024 the trustees agreed to employ contractors to renovate the vacant 1 Church Cottages at a cost of £16,280 plus VAT.

Scrutiny of Accounts Calendar FYE 31 Dec 2023

Widcombe Church House & Lands Charity 241096

Financial Year to 31st December 2023.

The Accounts' income and expenditure amounts were again found to be well presented. Records of income and expenditure paid, and opening and closing balances in the two bank accounts have been checked and tally satisfactorily.

The Committee continue to use procedures for the safe authorisation of their grants and timely release of funds approved for payment. There seems little margin for cutting the administration burden any further while maintaining sufficient control

Confirmation of receipt by grantees of the two Charitable grants continues to be documented appropriately.

I confirm that my checks indicate that the accounts give a fair assessment of the monies passed through this Charity and that the resulting money balances for the last financial year to 31st December 2023 tally correctly. The remaining balance of the £15k loan is being monitored

Comments.

The ongoing large maintenance and repair costs are a continuing very heavy burden on the viability of this Charity. The committee recognise the dilemma and continues to search for options to resolve the problem. The trustees have acknowledged that the present situation is hardly sustainable, as well as placing severe demands on the trustees' provision of 'free' professional services, and are seeking alternative options to run the Charity.

I suggest that in principle the nominal rent should be the full market rate as a default position. However 'relief of need' remains a charity commitment.

The Committee have had some success in the delicate task to partially reduce the cost of providing hardship relief from market-rated rents. Perhaps there is still scope for further economy currently.

A key issue would be to evaluate with some certainty and by independent assessment what financial level of tenants' income and assets constitutes 'need' justifying the currently 20% rent discount. Loss of discount is naturally staunchly resisted.



Presented documents were reviewed by Mr R G Casey.

2nd Feb 2024