

2024 Annual Report

Year ended 31 Dec 2024

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.

Governing documents

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.

Property

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 are 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. 1 Church Cottages was vacant from January to April 2024, being refurbished.

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. The application has not yet been determined, but the charity has been told that a decision is imminent.

Beneficiaries

Under the governing documents of the charity:

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

Officers

At the beginning of 2024, 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 (chair) appointed by Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council
- Caroline Mann appointed by Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council
- John Southcombe appointed by Devon County Council

During the year:

- Rev Ross Hathway was appointed as Vicar of Widecombe-on-the-Moor and so became an ex-officio trustee – in place of Right Rev Mark Rylands who, as Rector of the Ashburton and Moorland Team, was an ex-officio trustee during the vacancy.
- Philippa Gimlette was appointed as a second churchwarden of Widecombe-in-the-Moor parish church and so became an ex-officio trustee – in place of Andrew Power, who was nominated by Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council to act as a trustee during the vacancy.

Accordingly, at the end of 2024 and at the date of this report, the trustees were:

- Rev Ross Hathway Vicar of Widecombe-on-the-Moor
- Michael Pascoe a churchwarden of Widecombe-in-the-Moor parish church
- Philippa Gimlette a churchwarden of Widecombe-in-the-Moor parish church
- John Dracup (chair) appointed by Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council
- Caroline Mann appointed by Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council
- John Southcombe appointed by Devon County Council

Throughout 2022 and until 31 January 2025 the clerk to the charity was David Thomas of Stone, Natsworthy, Widecombe-in-the-Moor, Devon, TQ13 7TR.

Principal activities

The principal activities of the charity during 2024 comprised:

- letting and 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.

Finance

During 2024:

- income amounted to £30,168.51 (rents of £30,117.00 plus bank interest of £51.51);
- all debts were paid as they fell due;
- outgoings (including on property renovations, repairs and insurance) amounted to £33,773.30;
- grants totalling £2,000.00 were paid to the Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council;
- grants totalling £2,000.00 were paid to the Widecombe Educational Foundation; and
- outgoings plus grants exceeded income by £7,604.79.

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, 2023 and 2024, £6,000.00 is currently outstanding.

At 31 Dec 2024:

- the charity's bank balances amounted to £19,292.78;
- this includes the £6,000.00 balance of the Southcombe loan;
- financial commitments (replacement of oil tank at 4 Church Cottages) were £2,151.60.

At their 2025 annual general meeting, the trustees decided to:

- make a grant of £2,500 to the Widecombe-in-the-Moor Parochial Church Council;
- make a grant of £2,500 to the Widecombe Educational Foundation; and
- to place the balance to reserve against repairs to the tenanted properties. The two grant sums are to be paid during the 2025 financial year.

This annual report for 2024 was approved by a meeting of the trustees on 3 February 2025

Signed by the chair of the meeting

John Dracup

WIDECOMBE-IN-THE-MOOR CHURCH HOUSE AND LANDS CHARITY
Established 1635 – Registered charity number 241096

2024 Annual Accounts

Year ended 31 Dec 2024

INCOME (CASH BASIS)	£	£
Rent¹		
▪ 1 Church Cottages [#1] ²	6,120.00	
▪ Shed adjoining #1 ³	450.00	
▪ 2 Church Cottages [#2]	7,329.00	
▪ 3 Church Cottages [#3]	7,884.00	
▪ 4 Church Cottages [#4]	8,334.00	
		30,117.00
Bank interest		51.51
TOTAL INCOME		30,168.51
EXPENDITURE (CASH BASIS)	£	£
Repairs and renovations		
▪ C R Tonepohl		
- Oil service and safety check #4	162.00	
- Fixing immersion heater #4	130.99	
▪ C Whale		
- General maintenance #1 - #4	716.00	
▪ Jettadrain Ltd		
- Drain cleaning #1-4	156.00	
▪ John French		
- Refurbishment #1	19,669.37	
- New carpets #1	2,567.23	
- New back door #3	771.08	
▪ J R & P W Dracup		
- Reimbursing cost of mould paint #1	145.14	
▪ J Southcombe		
- Reimbursing cost of shed lock #3	8.99	
▪ Octopus Energy		
- Electricity #1 during refurbishment	160.59	
- Electricity #1 during refurbishment	136.12	
- Electricity #1 during refurbishment	307.71	
- Electricity #1 during refurbishment	428.96	
- Electricity #1 during refurbishment	273.71	
▪ ProSweep Devn Limited		
- Chimney sweeping #1 during refurbishment	60.00	
		25,693.89
Services		
▪ Always Cleansing		
- Emptying septic tank #1-4	211.00	

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

² Jan-Apr: vacant while refurbished. May-Dec: let. Rent includes Jan 2025 rent paid early.

³ Jan-Apr: vacant. May-Dec: let to tenants of #1. Rent includes Jan 2025 rent paid early.

▪ Howard Douglas		
- Inspection report #1-4	360.00	
- Letting fees #1	450.00	
▪ Endsleigh Insurance		
- Property insurance ⁴	3,761.62	
▪ Ecclesiastical Insurance		
- Trustee insurance	296.79	
Loan repayment		5,079.41
▪ Mr and Mrs J Southcombe		
- Third annual loan repayment		3,000.00
Payments to beneficiaries		
▪ Widecombe Educational Foundation (2 x £1,000.00)	2,000.00	
▪ Widecombe Parochial Church Council (2 x £1,000.00)	2,000.00	
		4,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		37,773.30

EXCESS INCOME/EXPENDITURE (CASH BASIS)	£
Total income (as above)	30,168.51
Total expenditure (as above)	-37,773.30
EXCESS EXPENDITURE	-7,604.79

CASH MOVEMENTS 31 DEC 2023 TO 31 DEC 2024	£	£
Santander bank balances at 31 Dec 2022		
Current account	16,740.85	
Deposit account	10,156.72	
		26,897.57
Excess expenditure (as above)		-7,604.79
Cash at bank on 31 Dec 2024		19,292.78
Long-term loan by Mr and Mrs J Southcombe ⁵		-6,000.00
BALANCE AT 31 DEC 2024		13,292.78

CASH BALANCE AT 31 DEC 2024	£	£
Santander bank balances		
Current account	16,084.55	
Deposit account	3,208.23	
CLOSING BALANCE⁶		19,292.78

These 2024 accounts were approved by a meeting of the trustees of the charity on 3 Feb 2025

Signed by the chair of the meeting

John Dracup

⁴ This insurance was cancelled at 31 Jan 2025 and a partial refund of £2,525.46 is awaited. It was replaced from 1 Feb 2025 by insurance through Access Underwriting Ltd at a reduced annual cost of £1,190.52.

⁵ 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, 2023 and 2024 repayments, the outstanding balance is £6,000.

⁶ Unpaid commitments: The trustees agreed to replace the oil tank at #4. Bills awaited for £1,089.60 (cost of tank) and £1,062.00 (cost of installation).

Widcombe Church House & Lands Charity 241096

Financial Year to 31st December 2024.

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 generally sound procedures for the safe authorisation of their grants and timely release of funds approved for payment. Approval notes include a clearly printed identity of the authoriser as well as a signature. The proper, dated sequence of job completion, approval for payment and payment of funds is maintained.

However it was not immediately clear from written records that a modest carpet-fitting contract had any element of competitive quotation; but, at approx only £2k, and in an unoccupied property, the work may have been adequately discussed by relevant trustees before committing to work.

There seems little margin for cutting the administration burden any further while maintaining sufficient control. The absence of income arrears is commendable.

Confirmation of receipt by grantees of the two Charitable grants continues to be recorded 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 2024 tally correctly. The remaining balance of the £15k loan continues to be monitored, as is the dwindling solvency of the Trust overall.

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' may continue to determine that a discount is often justifiable and it remains a charity commitment. Independent financial evaluation of tenants' resources may help to establish a compromise percentage support.

Any increases in living costs are naturally staunchly resisted by tenants. (Committee meeting 7 Oct 2024).

It is perhaps worthy of note that during the period the charity was paying for Octopus electrical energy supplies in 2024, Octopus recommended a change of tariff away from Economy 7 for substantially lower tenant costs.

Further, I suggest the trustees are particularly careful to evaluate appropriately the impact on tenants of imposing a switch to electric storage heating, and the proper design of controlled heating.

Energy costs for oil have been for several years about £0.07p/kWh, while electricity has a basic marginal cost of about £0.35p/kWh. For a responsive warm-up a domestic oil boiler delivers at a rate about 16kw; this is several times faster than an electric storage heater system. These factors must impact the perceived affordability of rents.

Presented documents were reviewed by Mr R G Casey.



23 Jan 2025