

THE CHARITY OF EDITH ELISABETH MARIE WILSHERE

(CHURCH HOUSE CHARITY)

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 255448

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

THE CHARITY OF EDITH ELISABETH MARIE WILSHERE

Charity Registration Number 255448

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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CHARITY INFORMATION

Chairman of Trustees	The Revd Christopher Bunce	Rector of Hitchin Parish
Trustees	Elizabeth Cranfield	Churchwarden, St Mary's Church
	Terry Brazier	Churchwarden, St Mary's Church
	Anne Senechal	Member of St Mary's DCC
Charity registration number	255448	
Working name	Church House Charity	
Offices and registered address	Church House Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1HP	Telephone 01462 452758
Treasurer	Optima Accountancy Services Ltd	7 Paynes Park Hitchin, SG5 1EH
Independent examiner	Trevor Groom	6 Bell Close, Hitchin, SG4 9NJ
Bankers	Lloyds TSB Bank plc	1 Bancroft Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1JG

THE CHARITY OF EDITH ELISABETH MARIE WILSHERE

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TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their report for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Charity was founded by a Deed regulated by a Scheme of the Charity Commissioners dated 16 August 1929 as affected by Schemes of the Charity Commissioners dated 11 June 1965 and 22 October 1975. However, the Deed was redrawn in February 2019 to reflect the sole use of the building by St Mary's. Since the other churches have their own halls there was inefficiency in the management of the building by other Church's Wardens.

Since the formation of the Hitchin Team Parish in 1977 the incumbency of St Mary's Church was taken over by the Team Rector of the Parish of Hitchin and the local duties by the Vicar of St Mary's, although these roles are in practice held by the same person. The Charity continues to provide its former function for the incumbent but, as only residual use was being made of the hall or offices by the other churches in the Parish, the Deed has been changed to reflect this. Now only the Churchwardens of St Mary's act as Trustees along with the Vicar of St Mary's and one outside Trustee is appointed who is deemed to have relevant experience. No Trustee receives any remuneration or expenses. In the next financial year, 2024, the Parish has been reorganised to comprise solely of St Mary's Church and its PCC.

Newly appointed Trustees receive guidance on trusteeship, appropriate to their position, from existing Trustees, and additional professional training may be arranged if required.

Unless otherwise approved by the Charity Commissioners the charity must invest any surplus funds in approved charity investments. Currently there are investments in the Charities Official Investment Fund and Charinco Income shares under permissions granted by the Charity Commissioners.

The Charity holds unrestricted General Funds and restricted Furniture Fund and Extraordinary Repairs Fund.

Risk Management

The Trustees maintain a continuing risk review policy concerning the structure and contents of Church House, consistent to the resources available.

Objectives and Activities

The Charity was created to maintain land and property bequeathed by the late Edith E M Wilshire to provide an office for the Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Hitchin, and accommodation for the caretaker if required and for the holding of social functions.

Since the original bequest, land has been sold and the current Church House building was erected in 1968. The objects of the Charity continue largely unchanged, with some recent variation. Previously Church House provided a flat for the verger of St Mary's Church but, as this role is no longer exists, this 2-bed accommodation, Flat 1, along with Flat 2 (1 bed) are available for letting and the income to date has been retained by the Church House charity.

The offices are needed for the Vicar and the Parish administrator who assists him and maintains printing facilities for the Parish. The hall is let for a variety of purposes to local community groups. It is no longer practical for the front office to be staffed by volunteers and it is simply a second office space.

Achievements and Performance

During the year the hall is let most weekdays and evenings, while on several Saturdays of the month coffee mornings or craft fairs are held and some private functions booked intermittently. This allows various organisations to advertise their services at a central location in the town and provide valuable financial support for the Charity to cover the increasingly heavy costs of maintenance and repairs. This year it has been necessary to completely replace the wooden front doors of the building, which are fitted with quick release bars and handles in compliance with Fire safety regulations. Some redecoration was carried out to the rented flats. Repairs to lighting and wiring as well as plumbing are often required.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

St Mary's Church uses the hall for committee and council meetings when the Church is too cold, and some social functions, for instance the Diamond Jubilee celebration reception after the civic service. The congregation and groups hiring the Church must also use the toilet facilities in the hall as none exist in St Mary's. Water from the kitchen is taken over to Church and coffee is served there instead of in the hall since Covid. The verger's role was dissolved post 2020 during the Covid pandemic, as it proved impossible to recruit a full time member of staff for these duties, so the flat has been refurbished and let with the second flat throughout the current year. The Rector's secretary continues to provide secretarial services to the Trustees and negotiation is under way over charges for this with the new St Mary's Parochial Church Council.

Reserves

The Trustees seek to hold in reserve an amount of cash reasonable to the financial activities of the Charity. Reserves may be accumulated to meet future planned major expenditure, mainly repairs to the building.

Investments

The Charity holds investments in the Charities Official Investment Fund and Charinco Common Investment Fund. Details of units held and market value at the end of the year are shown on page 7 to the accounts.

The Charity's investments increased in value by net amount of £15062 (2022 decrease of £18377). Total returns (combined income and capital) on the investments during the year vary from fund to fund because of sales and purchases in the year at different times, but returns on those shares held throughout the period were as follows:

Investment Fund	2023 % Return	2022 % Return
Charities Official Investment Fund Income Shares	12.18	-8.99
Charities Official Investment Fund Accumulation Shares	12.37	-8.99
Charinco Common Investment Fund Income Shares	1.65	-17.29

General

The Trustee's freehold property, Church House, Hitchin, part of the original bequest, is not shown at valuation in the accounts, not having been valued in recent years. It is classified as a Band B exempt property (estimated valuation £40,000-£52,000 at 1st April 1991) for Council Tax purposes. Costs of fixtures and equipment have similarly been excluded, and routine replacements have been written off in the year of expenditure. The building was insured for £985,070 and the contents for £45,553 as at 25th March 2019.

Plans for Future Periods

Plans included the installation of a ramp and new entrance doors to the front of the property to enable unrestricted access to all members of the community and the trustees are currently looking into the feasibility of this project. The trustees are also keeping possible areas for further refurbishment and preventative maintenance under review.

Approval

This report was approved by the Trustees on 4th June 2025 and signed on their behalf by

REVEREND CHRISTOPHER BUNCE

Chairman of Trustees

THE CHARITY OF EDITH ELISABETH MARIE WILSHERE

Charity Registration Number 255448

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

I report to the trustees on the accounts of the above named charity for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 4 to 8.

Respective responsibilities of Trustee and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement

- In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:
- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed TREVOR GROOM

Dated 4th June 2025

THE CHARITY OF EDITH ELISABETH MARIE WILSHERE

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RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

		Unrestricted General Fund	Restricted Furniture Fund	All Funds 2023	All Funds 2022
	Notes	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS					
Operating activities					
Hire of hall, etc.		11,808		11,808	14,068
Rent of flats		19,009		19,009	18,908
Investment income					
Bank & Charities deposit interest, etc.		1,187	195	1,382	1,898
Investment withdrawal				-	
Other receipts					
Grant		-		-	1,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS		32,004	195	32,199	35,874
PAYMENTS					
Charitable activities - operating costs					
Maintenance, repairs & renewals		13,648	-	13,648	1,885
Contribution to Verger costs				-	
Laundry, cleaning, refuse collection		2,684	-	2,684	4,391
Heat, light, water		10,052	-	10,052	11,925
Rates		-		-	
Insurance		2,479	-	2,479	2,304
Printing and Stationery		1,278	-	1,278	215
Accountancy		720	-	720	720
		30,861	-	30,861	21,440
Other Payments					
Recoupment Orders		-	-	-	-
TOTAL PAYMENTS		30,861	-	30,861	21,440
NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS) FOR THE YEAR		1,143	195	1,338	14,434
Cash and bank balances at beginning of year		18,541	4,446	22,987	8,553
CASH, BANK AND INVESTMENT BALANCES AT YEAR END		19,684	4,641	24,325	22,987

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STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds £
Cash funds			
Bank current account	19,202		19,202
Cash float	330		330
COIF - Deposit account	150		150
COIF - Deposit account Furniture Fund		4,641	4,641
Total cash funds	19,682	4,641	24,323
	Fund		Current Value
Investment assets			
COIF Extraordinary Repair fund	Restricted		-
Permanent Endowments	Endowment		161,217
			161,217
Assets retained for charities own use			
Church House Land & Building	Restricted		-
Tables, chairs and hall equipment	Unrestricted		-
Kitchen Equipment	Unrestricted		-
Rectors office computer	Unrestricted		-
White goods in flats	Unrestricted		-
			-
Liabilities			
Trade Creditors	Unrestricted		-
St Mary's DCC - Verger costs	Unrestricted		-
Re-coupmnt order 1999	Unrestricted		730
Re-coupmnt order 2011	Unrestricted		8,130
COIF Extraordinary Repair fund	Unrestricted		1,200
			10,060

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NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

NOTE 1.

PERMANENT ENDOWMENT

The following investments are held under the specific authority of or restriction by, the Charity Commissioners:

PURPOSE & INVESTMENT	NO. OF UNITS	PRICE PER UNIT £	VALUE 2023 £	VALUE 2022 £
Permanent Endowment (Capital)				
The Trustees may only use this fund with an approved 'Recoupment Order' but may use the income. The Charity Commission may allow the use of capital to finance improvements to Church House but will require repayment over a period of time.				
Charities Official Investment Fund Income Shares	549.58	19.8450	10,906	9,988
Charinco Common Investment Fund Income Shares	11,296.86	1.4834	16,758	16,485
Charities Official Investment Fund Accumulation Shares	48.09	248.0003	11,926	10,613
Charities Official Investment Fund Income Shares	448.45	19.8450	8,899	8,151
AA Wilshire Augmentation Fund				
Only the income may be used				
Charities Official Investment Fund Income Shares	1,169.00	19.8450	23,199	21,246
Recoupment Order 20 December 1967 (completes 2058)				
Permission to spend £28,000 to build Church House to be recouped by a single investment of £560 accumulating over 90 years.				
Charities Official Investment Fund Accumulation Shares	361.00	248.0003	89,528	79,672
TOTAL VALUE			£161,217	£146,155

Note 2

Provision has been made for unpaid re-coupment orders over the last seven years.

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NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Note 3

Extraordinary Repairs Fund

The Charity Commissioners made an Order on 20 December 1967 that provided for an annual sum of not less than £50 to be invested to provide for extraordinary repair, improvement or rebuilding of Church House. This Fund should be used before any permission is sought to withdraw from the Permanent Endowment capital under provisions of recoupment.

Note 4

Furniture Fund

The Trustees agreed to continue the Fund by appropriating an annual sum from General Fund but, in view of additional expenditure directly from General Funds in recent years, agreed to suspend transfers for the time being.

Approval

This report was approved by the trustees on 4th June 2025 and sign on their behalf by

REVEREND CHRISTOPHER BUNCE

Chairman of Trustees