

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 2024

THE CHARITY OF EDITH ELISABETH MARIE WILSHERE

Charity Registration Number 255448

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

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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 WILSHIRE

Charity Registration Number 255448

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their report for the year ended 31 December 2024.

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 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. A risk assessment template is given to all hirers to be populated with their unique risks and this must be submitted with the booking forms.

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 vergers 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 to fund routine maintenance costs.

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 rewire more of the offices as the old Pyro wiring had failed and also minor repairs to the toilets. More redecoration was carried out to the rented flats due to damp problems. Repairs to lighting and wiring as well as plumbing, drainage and roofing 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 and Coronation celebration receptions after the civic services. 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 vergers' 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 ever since through a professional letting agency. The Rector's secretary continues to provide secretarial services to the Trustees and negotiation is under way over the level of charges for this with the new St Mary's Parochial Church Council, following the new parish structure in April 2024.

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 to the accounts.

The Charity's investments increased in value by net amount of £5391 (2023 increase of £15062). 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	2024 % Return	2023 % Return
Charities Official Investment Fund Income Shares	5.04	12.18
Charities Official Investment Fund Accumulation Shares	5.08	12.37
Charinco Common Investment Fund Income Shares	-4.42	1.65

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

The trustees are also keeping possible areas for further 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 2024

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

I report to the trustees on the accounts of the above named charity for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 5 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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TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

		Unrestricted General Fund	Restricted Furniture Fund	All Funds 2024	All Funds 2023
	Notes	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS					
Operating activities					
Hire of hall, etc.		15,412		15,412	11,808
Rent of flats		19,494		19,494	19,009
Investment income					
Bank & Charities deposit interest, etc.		1,197	245	1,442	1,382
Investment withdrawal				-	
Other receipts					
Grant		-		-	-
TOTAL RECEIPTS		36,103	245	36,348	32,199
PAYMENTS					
Charitable activities - operating costs					
Maintenance, repairs & renewals		5,487	-	5,487	13,648
Legal fees		327		327	
Laundry, cleaning, refuse collection		2,845	-	2,845	2,684
Heat, light, water		9,903	-	9,903	10,052
Rates		1,017		1,017	
Insurance		2,540	-	2,540	2,479
Printing and Stationery		-	-	-	1,278
Accountancy		720	-	720	720
		22,839	-	22,839	30,861
Other Payments					
Recoupment Orders		-	-	-	-
TOTAL PAYMENTS		22,839	-	22,839	30,861
NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS) FOR THE YEAR		13,264	245	13,509	1,338
Cash and bank balances at beginning of year		19,534	4,791	24,325	22,987
CASH, BANK AND INVESTMENT BALANCES AT YEAR END		32,798	5,036	37,834	24,325

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STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds £
Cash funds			
Bank current account	32,464		32,464
Cash float	330		330
COIF - Deposit account	158		158
COIF - Deposit account Furniture Fund		4,879	4,879
Total cash funds	32,952	4,879	37,831
	Fund		Current Value
Investment assets			
COIF Extraordinary Repair fund	Restricted		-
Permanent Endowments	Endowment		166,608
			166,608
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 2024

NOTE 1.

PERMANENT ENDOWMENT

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

	NO. OF UNITS	PRICE PER UNIT £	VALUE 2024 £	VALUE 2023 £
PURPOSE & INVESTMENT				
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	20.2933	11,153	10,906
Charinco Common Investment Fund Income Shares	11,296.86	1.4177	16,016	16,758
Charities Official Investment Fund Accumulation Shares	48.09	260.6156	12,533	11,926
Charities Official Investment Fund Income Shares	448.45	20.2933	9,100	8,899
AA Wilshire Augmentation Fund				
Only the income may be used				
Charities Official Investment Fund Income Shares	1,169.00	20.2933	23,723	23,199
Re coupment 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	260.6156	94,082	89,528
TOTAL VALUE			£166,608	£161,216

Note 2

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

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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