



West Stow Anglo Saxon Village Trust

**Annual Report and Financial Statement
for the Financial year ending 31st March 2024**

Charity Number: 272897

West Stow Anglo-Saxon Trust Annual Report April 2023 - March 2024

Trustees' report 31 March 2024

The Trustees present their report together with the financial statements of West Stow Anglo-Saxon Trust for the year to 31 March 2024.

As of the 31 March 2024 the Board of Trustees comprised eleven members of whom five were appointed by West Suffolk Council, one by the Council for British Archaeology, there were two Ex-Officio Trustees one from the Friends of West Stow and one a representative from Suffolk County Council, Archaeological Department. The remaining three trustees are not affiliated to any specific organisation and were elected by the other Trustees.

The Trustees who served up until the date of this report were as follows:

Trustees

Cllr Sarah Broughton*(up until May 2024)

Cllr Ian Houlder*(up until 2024)

Cllr Stephen Frost*(up until May 2024)

Cllr Simon Brown*(up until May 2024)

Cllr Ian Shipp* (Post May 2024)

Cllr Andy Neal* (Post May 2024)

Cllr Susan Glossop*

Cllr Jon London* (Post May 2024)

Cllr Marilyn Sayer* (Post May 2024)

Robert Carr

David Addy

Adrian Tindall

Catherine Hills

Faye Minter (Ex-Officio Trustee)

Alan Hamilton (Ex-Officio Trustee)

** West Suffolk Council appointees*

Within this twelve-month period the Trustees met formally on three occasions: the first being on the 17th July 2023, 6th November 2023 and the 18th March 2024. During this period the constitution of the trust has remained the same. Following the District Council elections in May 2024 there were four replacement Trustees elected to the Trust by the Council.

The table below shows the visitor numbers for the financial year 2023-2024 and for comparison the preceding four years.

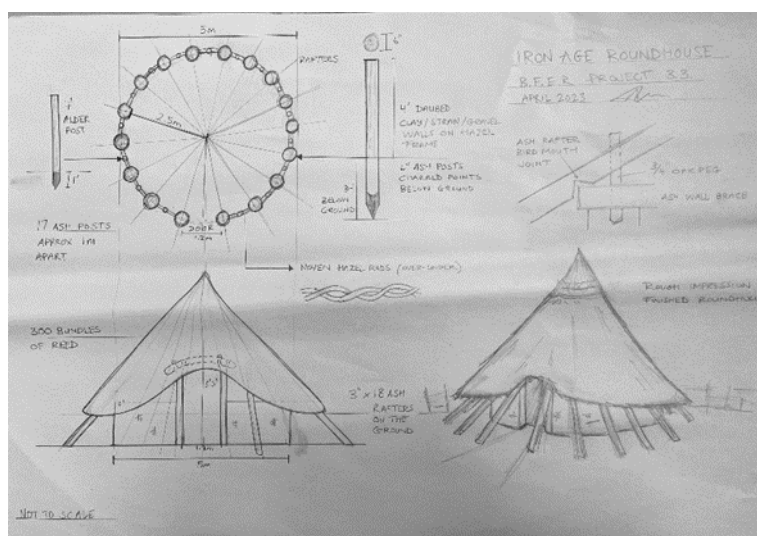
	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Group visits	13,964	14,947	10,000	456	14,369
General Admissions	19,676	22,155	24,774	11,158	21,648
Total visitors to Village (Pay Zone)	33,601	37,102	34,774	11,614	36,017
Visitor Centres (Non-Pay Zone)	83,539	81,521	70,216	26,681	82,145

Whilst there has been a rise in overall footfall into the visitor centre there has been a reduction in the number of admissions through to the pay zone area. The two main factors influencing this reduction are, we believe, a year of unpredictable weather and the ongoing impacts associated with the cost-of-living crisis, which has put pressure on families spend on non-essential items. The higher footfall into the visitor centre does at least demonstrates a potential growing interest in our site. With an ever-growing events list, we have found that many visitors in the Visitor Centre enquire about our future events and re-enactment weekends, again illustrating the interest in repeat visits to our site. Overall, the figures are positive and show a sustainable engagement with our visitors.

Village building repairs & new initiatives

Andrew Neeve, the thatching consultant for West Stow, retired in the summer of 2023. Dominic Meeks and his thatching team started to work for the site from September, repairing the weaving house and Hall rigids and replacing the top coat of the workshop. These repairs should ensure the longevity of the buildings' structures.

Work on building an Iron Age Round House at West Stow commenced in April 2023. The project is being funded via the lottery 'Breck's Fen Edge & Rivers (BFER)' project. The design structure is based on one of the three round houses excavated at West Stow in the 1970's. The idea behind the project is to enable West Stow to interpret the multi period nature of the location and put the Anglo-Saxon time-line in context for visitors. The building should be completed in mid-2024 (August).



The BFER project has also funded a new interactive 'info point'. The info point has enabled visitors to download information via smart phones about the site including old photos, excavation plans to further enhance the visitor experience.

Throughout the year the Trusts Academic Committee have met on several occasions to progress plans for a controlled deconstruction of the Oldest House, planned for late 2024. The oldest house reconstruction was originally constructed in 1973.

Events

The events calendar for West Stow has been significantly bolstered post covid and we've been able to welcome back the most popular enactment groups to our site once more. The annual Dragon Festival 2023, which is a family friendly event designed to encourage new audiences to visit, was well attended and received very favourable feedback with over 2,000 visitors.

The site also welcomed theatre productions on site again this year including:

Bad Dad - an open-air adaptation of David Walliams' Bad Dad is the perfect summer family entertainment.

Wind in the Willows - boating with Ratty, a feast with Badger and high-jinx on the open road with that reckless ruffian, Mr Toad.

Machamlear - a farcical piece of new writing from award-winning playwright Michael Davies that shamelessly exploited the genius of England's most celebrated writer.

Sense and Sensibility - The ups and downs of Regency romance a literary classic with a twist.

Loki: Lord of Mischief - an interactive and immersive theatre experience designed to excite and delight its young audience.

Sir Gawain of the Round Table - another interactive theatre experience giving children the chance to become part of the story and feel a part of the arts.

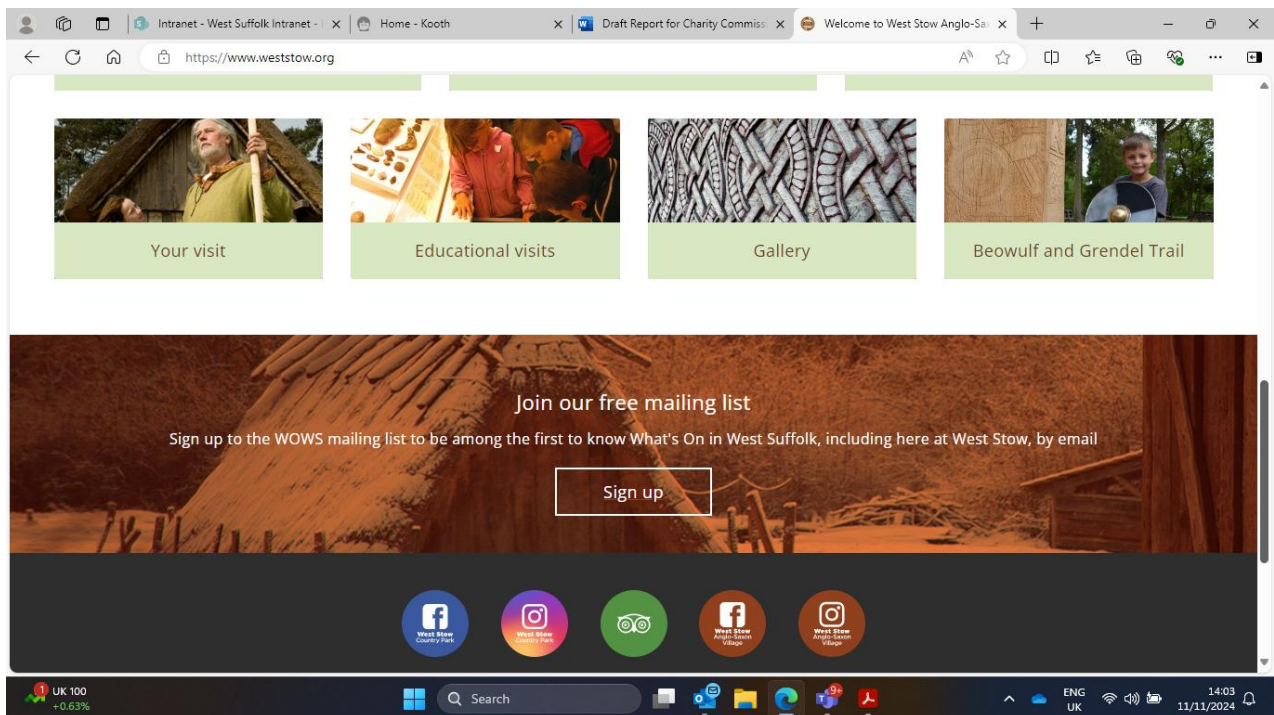
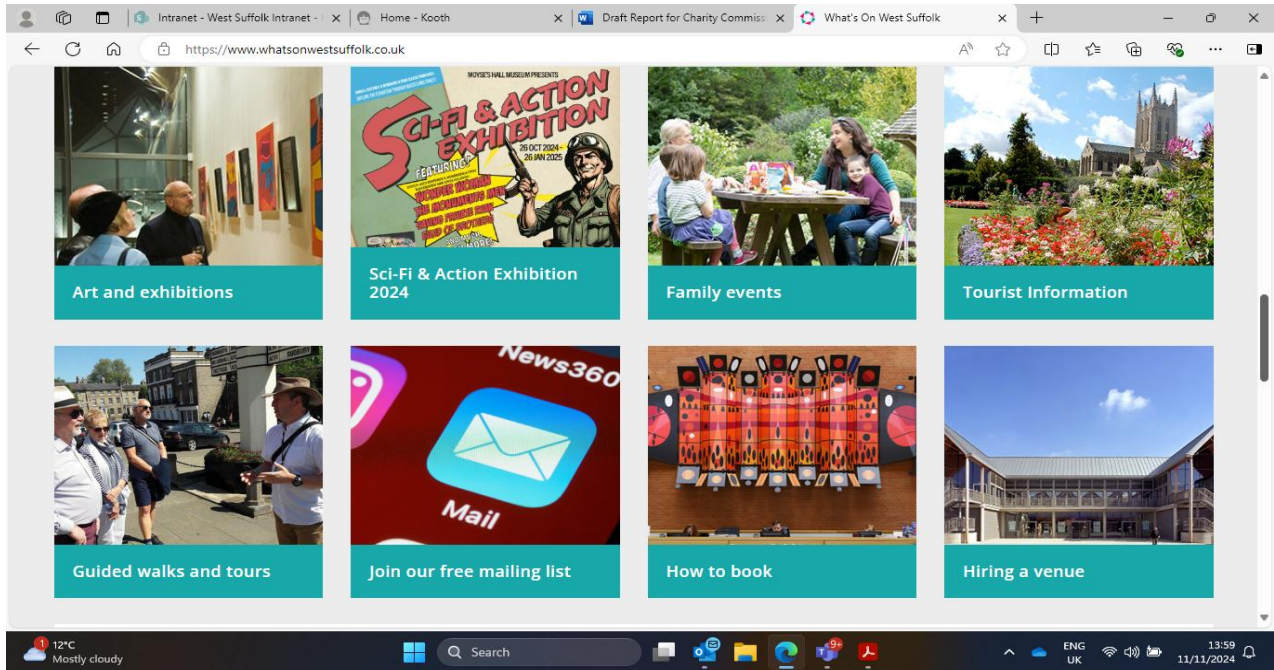
Health and wellbeing

The BFER project has also helped enable the establishment of a wellbeing programme on site this year which has seen the introduction of Yoga, drumming workshops and mindfulness walks on site. The activities link both the Anglo-Saxon Village to the surrounding landscape of the park.

Marketing strategy

The Heritage email database has now grown to over 25,000 customers, who have all agreed to receive information about events and exhibitions at West Stow Anglo-Saxon-Village and Country Park. It has been our strategic vision for a number of years now to prioritise growing this database, as it provides a detailed insight into who these customers are, where they live and what type of events they purchase tickets for.

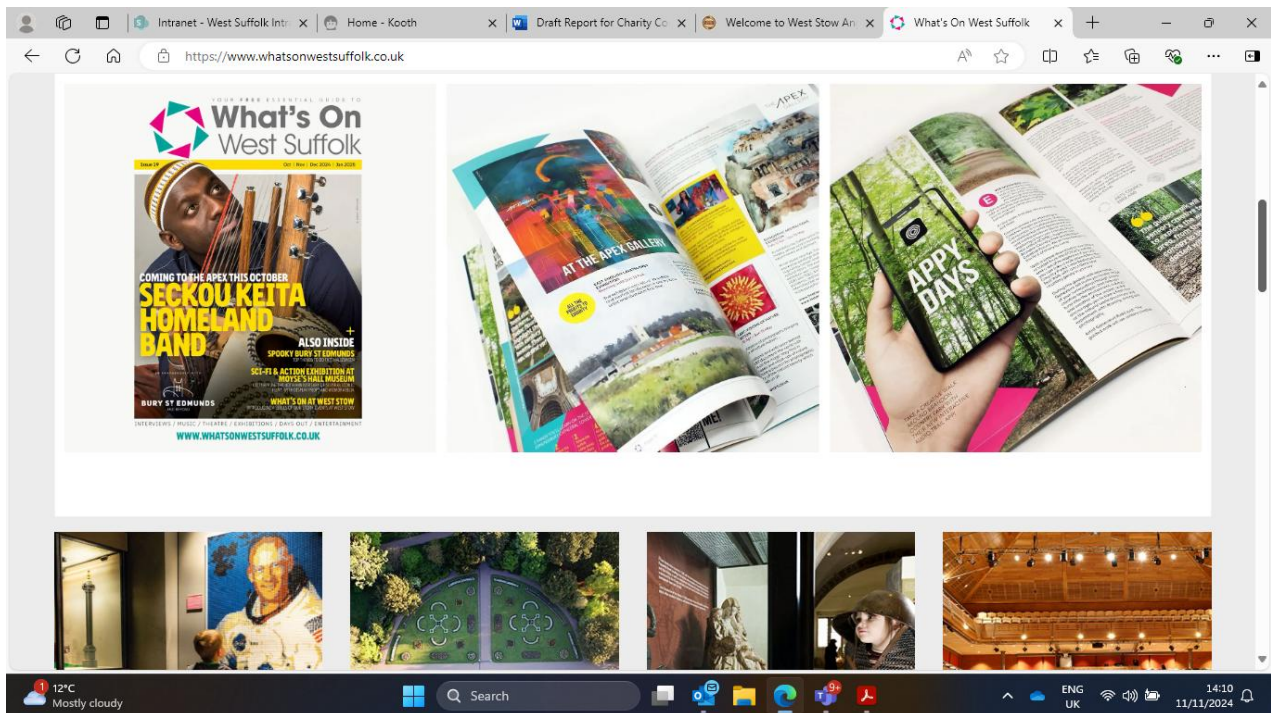
The Heritage service is now benefitting from this significant direct route to market. The database has also provided the marketing team with the data needed to run audience development campaigns and to target people who have previously booked for arts and cultural events in West Suffolk, but who may have not visited or booked tickets for an event at WSASV. Furthermore, it also allows the marketing team to communicate with existing WSASV customers to encourage them to make a repeat visit, or book for a specific event or festival.



What's On West Suffolk

West Stow events are included in the digital magazine, What's On West Suffolk (WOWS), which is emailed to the heritage and WOWS database three times per year

and made available via WOWS and West Stow ASV and Country Park social media accounts.



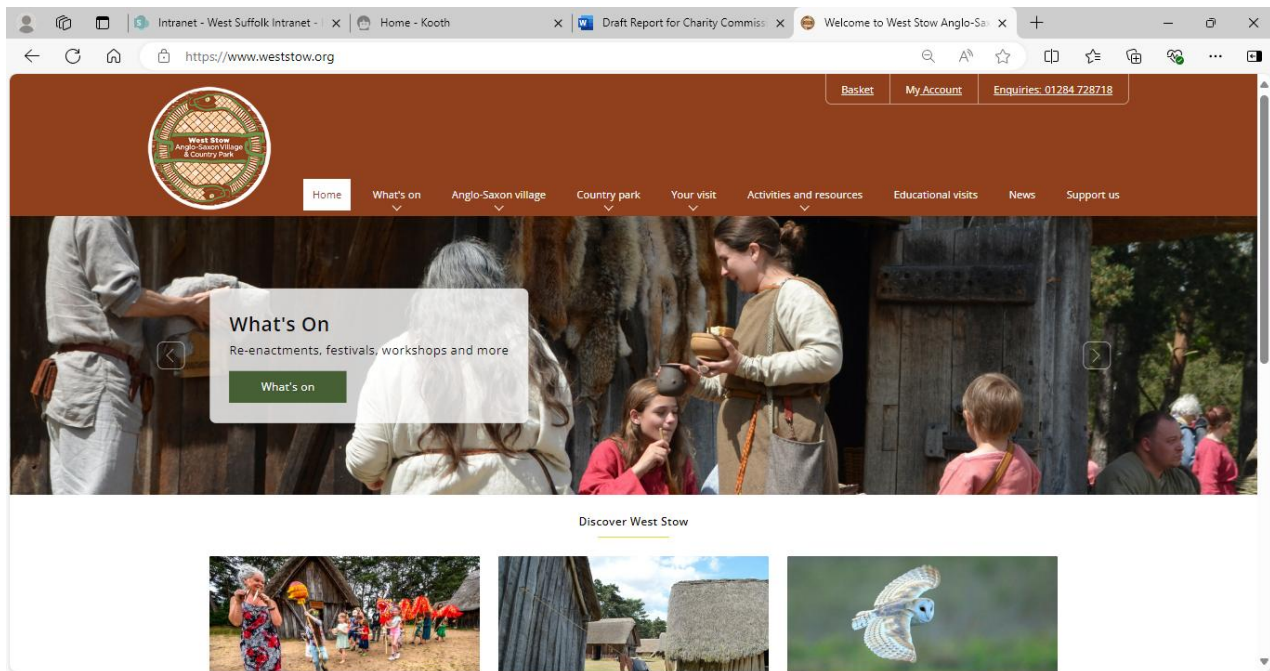
The increased and diverse range of events now taking place at WSASV, such as well-being events including yoga, sound bathing, Pilates and meditation as well Theatre in the Parks and Dragon Fest, have all helped to attract new visitors to the village.

West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village & Country Park website

In 2023/24, the West Stow ASV & CP website continued to see an increase in traffic. Analysis of Google Analytics for the West Stow website has identified that there were 101,224 visits to the website in 2023/24. This is up from (11%) from 91,101 visits to the website in 2022/23. As with previous years, website traffic increases during spring and summer and peaks in June and July.

The number of visitors landing on the West Stow website via social media generated by the West Suffolk Council Leisure marketing team has increased from 4.62% in 2022/23 to 6.1% in 2023/24.

The number of website visitors coming directly to the website, as opposed to via a search engine has increased from 29% in 2022/23 to 36%% in 2023/24. This means visitors have either directly entered the West Stow url into their browser or come to the website via the marketing team's heritage and WOWS email campaigns.



Website visitor demographics

25% of our audience are between 25-34 followed by 20% that are between 35-44 and 16% between 45-54. This demonstrates we are appealing to young families. We also have a high number of over 65s, the grandparent category. The gender split is 59% female to 40% male, this is higher than some of our other websites.

Locations

Most viewers who access the West Stow Anglo Saxon Village and Country Park website are, in order of quantity, from the following towns/cities: London, Cambridge, Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, Peterborough, Colchester, Birmingham, and Haverhill.

Content

The most viewed pages in 2023/2024 were the 'Homepage', 'What's on', 'Your visit', 'About' and 'Admission prices'.

Devices

The most popular means of accessing our website is via a mobile phone (91%) up 5% from 2022/23). We have therefore ensured that our websites remain compatible and optimised to view and navigate on all formats.

Social Media

The West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village Facebook now page has continued to grow and now has 7,945 followers, up from 7,266 followers in 2022/23. In addition, the West Stow's social media followers are online mostly between 6-9pm. The best time to post to reach the maximum amount of people is 8pm.

Facebook provided 90% of our social media acquisition this year and Instagram provided 6%. Research and analysis has identified that X (formerly Twitter) provides very poor return on investment and so our marketing resource has been focused into Facebook and Instagram. We will continue to monitor this. We will imminently be setting up a LinkedIn account for the Village and Country Park, which will provide a platform to a business focused audience.

In 2023/24, our top Social Media post formats in terms of ranking were:

1. Video
2. Photo
3. Link
4. Status
5. Shared video

Video production

Given that video is proving to be the most impactful format, a new promo for WSASV & CP is currently in production. The footage shot will be used to create one thirty second promo video, as well as providing content for dozens of additional shorter social media posts.

Our social media audience are located in:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. Bury St Edmunds | 6. London |
| 2. Ipswich | 7. Thetford |
| 3. Cambridge | 8. Sudbury |
| 4. Norwich | 9. Newmarket |
| 5. Ely | 10. Stowmarket |

**Financial Statement
for the financial year ending 31st March 2024**

Actual Total Funds 2022/2023 £	<u>RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT</u>	Note	Actual Unrestricted Funds 2023/2024 £	Actual Restricted Funds 2023/2024 £	Actual Total Funds 2023/2024 £
	<u>Receipts</u>				
21	Interest	1	375	94	469
0	Central Government Business Grant	2	0		0
91	Donations	3	124		124
77,016	Visitor Charges	4	72,776		72,776
71,663	School Parties	5	79,126		79,126
148,791	Total Receipts		152,400	94	152,495
	<u>Payments</u>				
0	Archaeological Consultant	6	0		0
1,935	Other Expenses (Insurance - Premises)	7	2,690		2,690
148,679	Service Charge	8	151,901		151,901
150,614	Total Payments		154,591	0	154,591
-1,823	Net Receipts/(Payments)	9	-2,191	94	-2,096
11,466	Cash funds last year end		7,704	1,940	9,644
9,643	Cash funds this year end		5,513	2,034	7,548

**WEST STOW ANGLO-SAXON VILLAGE TRUST
FINAL ACCOUNTS 2023/2024**

Actual Total Funds 2022/2023 £	<u>STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS AT 31ST MARCH 2024</u>	Note	Actual Unrestricted Funds 2023/2024 £	Actual Restricted Funds 2023/2024 £	Actual Total Funds 2023/2024 £
	<u>Cash Funds</u>				
7,704	Accumulated fund	10	5,513		5,513
1,939	Match funding account	11		2,034	2,034
9,643	Total Cash Funds		5,513	2,034	7,548

WEST STOW ANGLO-SAXON VILLAGE TRUST
FINAL ACCOUNTS 2023/2024

NOTES

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

1	Interest	Interest on investment was earned at an average rate of 4.868% in 2023/2024.
2	Central Government Business Grant	
3	Donations	
4	Visitor Charges	} See note 8 below.
5	School Parties	
6	Archaeological Consultant	Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service now employs the Archaeological Consultant (w.e.f. 1st April 2005).
7	Other Expenses	This expenditure relates to the cost of the insurance premium payable on the houses.
8	Service Charge	This sum is equal to the income received from visitor charges and school parties (notes 4 and 5). It arises because of the management agreement with the District Council which is in a form acceptable to the Charity Commissioners.
9	Net receipts/(Payments)	After reviewing its financial position, the Trust agreed in June 1998 that future budgets be prepared on a break even basis (excluding any match funding payments).

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

10	Accumulated fund	The low level of balances reflects past decisions to draw on reserves to fund deficits.
11	Match funding account	This account is set up to provide the possibility of match funding other outside grants when this is a condition of grant aid. It was set up by a generous grant from Suffolk County Council's locality budget arrangements.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

West Stow Anglo Saxon Village Trust

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 March 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

272897

Set out on pages

2, 3 & 4

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 03 / 2024**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

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 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.

Signed:

Date:

09/12/24

Name:

Lorna Heather Jenkins

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

MAAT

Address:

West Suffolk House

Western Way

Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3YU

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.

There are no matters of concern.

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