

# BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 288797

## Details

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Other names	ROYAL COUNTY OF BERKSHIRE CHURCHES TRUST, BERKSHIRE CHURCHES TRUST, R C B C T
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	1984-03-19
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

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Address	13 Buckingham Road Newbury RG14 6DH
Phone	0163530709
Website	<a href="http://www.berkschurchestrust.org.uk">www.berkschurchestrust.org.uk</a>

## Activities

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**Objects:** THE PRESERVATION REPAIR, MAINTENANCE, IMPROVEMENT, UPKEEP, BEAUTIFICATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF CHURCHES IN THE ROYAL COUNTY OF BERKSHIRE OR IN ANY PARISH ADJACENT THERETO AND OF MONUMENTS, FITTINGS, FIXTURES, STAINED GLASS, FURNITURE, ORNAMENTS AND CHATTELS IN SUCH CHURCHES AND OF THE CHURCHYARD BELONGING TO ANY OF SUCH CHURCHES.

**Activities:** To apply the income and capital of theTrust, at the discretion of the Trustees, for the "preservation, repair, maintenance, improvement, upkeep, beautification and reconstruction" of Churches of specified denominations in "Berkshire or in any Parish adjacent thereto, and of monuments, fittings, fixtures, stained glass and chattels in any sych Church or Churchyard belonging to such Churches"

## Classification

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- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations
- **What:** Religious Activities, Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

## Geography

- **Area of benefit:** BERKSHIRE AND ANY PARISH ADJACENT THERETO
- Bracknell Forest
- Reading
- Slough
- West Berkshire
- Windsor And Maidenhead
- Wokingham

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£41,213	£38,363	-	-
2024-03-31	£36,176	£36,235	-	-
2023-03-31	£31,763	£20,590	-	-
2022-03-31	£26,396	£18,829	-	-
2021-03-31	£21,239	£30,496	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Dr PETER DURRANT MBE		
ELEANOR ANN Rice		2017-05-27
Graham Barker		2021-08-05
Graham Mather CBE		2019-06-10
Jonathan Welfare		2021-08-05
Lucy Violet Zeal DL		2022-03-07
MR J H L PUXLEY, DL		
Robin D Hartley Russell		2022-03-07
TORQUIL JAMES MONTAGUE JOHNSTONE		

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**

England & Wales - Charity number 288797

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# Accounts

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**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**  
**REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
Year ended 31 March 2025

**Charity No: 288797**

# BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

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## BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

### REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- Patron** The Rt Hon Lord Benyon of Englefield PC GCVO
- Joint Presidents** The Rt Revd Mary Gregory, Bishop of Reading  
Andrew Try Esq., Lord-Lieutenant of Berkshire
- Honorary Vice-Presidents** The Lady Eliza Mays-Smith • Erica Lady Harman  
The Most Revd and Rt Hon the Lord Carey of Clifton  
The Rt Revd Dom Geoffrey Scott OSB • James Puxley Esq CVO  
Jim Barnes-Phillips
- Trustees** Graham Barker MSJ DL • Jim Barnes-Phillips (*to June 2025*)  
Dr Peter Durrant MBE DL • Catherine Haig (*to June 2025*)  
Willie Hartley Russell MVO DL • Graham Mather CBE  
Torquil Montague-Johnstone • James Puxley CVO  
Eleanor Rice FCA • Jonathan Welfare OBE • Lucy Zeal DL
- Executive Committee** Chairman : Dr Peter Durrant MBE DL  
Hon Secretary : John Pritchard • Hon Treasurer : Eleanor Rice FCA  
Anne Armitage • The Revd Dr Julia Binney (*to December 2024*)  
Marion Elly (*to June 2025*) • Leslie Grout (*to December 2024*)  
Catherine Haig (*to June 2025*) • Liz Kitch  
Prue Matchwick (*to December 2024*) • Torquil Montague-Johnstone  
The Ven Stephen Pullin • Henry Sanders AABC RIAS RIBA  
Jonathan Welfare OBE • Primrose Wilson CBE (*from March 2025*)
- Address** The Chairman, 84 Beech Lane, Earley, Reading RG6 5QE
- Bankers** Virgin Money (Yorkshire Bank plc),  
35 Regent Street, London SW1Y 4ND
- Independent Examiner** John Cullen ACCA
- Registered Charity number** 288797
- OBJECTIVES** To raise funds to help with the cost of repairs to the fabric of Christian Churches, Chapels and Meeting Houses in Berkshire, and for the repair and preservation of monuments, fittings and fixtures and stained glass. The Trust will also consider applications from Churches, Chapels and Meeting Houses for schemes to achieve a sustainable future as the centre of every community in the County, making use of their buildings for the benefit of the community at large, and may help to fund facilities necessary for this purpose, if this can be achieved without compromising the historic or architectural quality of the buildings and their settings within the local landscape.

## BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

### REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

for the year ended 31 March 2025

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and in accordance with the charity's trust deed and applicable law.

#### **Structure, Governance and Management**

The Berkshire Historic Churches Trust is an unincorporated association established by a Declaration of Trust dated 6 Feb 1984 under the name "Royal County of Berkshire Churches Trust". The name was changed to "Berkshire Historic Churches Trust" in June 2020. The Trust is a registered charity, no.288797.

The trustees who have served during the year are set out on page 1. The power of appointing new trustees is exercised by the existing trustees. New trustees are provided with information on the Trust activities, Trust Deed and Charity Commission guidance on the role and responsibilities of trustees, and are required to sign a declaration that the appointee accepts the position of trustee and undertakes to act in accordance with the Trust Deed.

The Trustees are authorised by the Trust Deed to delegate any of their functions, and have done this by the formation of an Executive Committee. A number of Trustees are also members of this Committee, which is responsible for considering applications for grants, and making decisions on grants within the policy approved by the Trustees, with the help of documentation and professional advice. Once decisions are made, progress of works is monitored before funds are released.

#### **Public Benefit**

The trustees are aware of the requirement placed upon them by the Charities Act 2011 to demonstrate compliance with Section 4 dealing with "public benefit". The trustees consider that the activities of the Trust clearly provide benefit to parishes and congregations responsible for the upkeep of historic church buildings, to the local communities who are enabled to make use of these buildings, and to the general public through preservation of buildings and contents of historic, architectural and artistic value.

BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST  
**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
for the year ended 31 March 2025

## GRANTS

It is seldom that a year goes by without some discussion of church roofs, and the year 2024/25 was no exception. Three of the grants paid and one of the applications received were either entirely or partly for roof repairs. However, several other matters were among those discussed, including drainage, rainwater goods, plastering, heating, lighting, toilets, access and planning, demonstrating both the range of issues faced by churches today and the flexibility of the Trust when it comes to helping.

Of the grants paid last year, the two largest were to **St Andrew, Boxford**, and to **St John, Newbury**. Boxford church is beautifully situated on the bank of the River Lambourn, but because of its low-lying position is vulnerable to damp. The oak beams in the tower roof had also suffered from water penetrating the old lead. The cost of work to repair the tower and to improve drainage around the walls was £150,000; we contributed £10,000.

St John's Church, Newbury, was built between 1955 and 1957 to replace an earlier church destroyed during the war. It is an impressive building, but the main entrance was not designed for access by those with limited mobility, and was perhaps a little forbidding. An imaginative solution includes an external glazed porch and a ramp into the south aisle. The total cost was £100,000, to which we contributed £10,000.

In addition to supporting these larger projects, we have made grants to **St Nicholas, Hurst** for installing wall-mounted infra-red heaters to replace a failed boiler (£3,000), **St John, Stockcross**, for repairs to rainwater goods (£1,200); **Thatcham Methodist Church**, for roof repairs and the installation of an accessible toilet (£1,500); **St Peter, Caversham**, for replastering after water damage (£500); **St Mary, Fawley**, for repairs to the lead covering of the tower (£500); and to **St Nicolas, Newbury**, towards a feasibility study for developing a scheme that would make major improvements to the church (£1,000). This last grant is the latest made in a scheme that allows us to pay towards surveys and feasibility studies. The hope is that by this means, more targeted and well-planned projects will be developed which will help to deliver cost-effective outcomes.

Altogether we paid out £27,700 in grants. This was less than in 2023/24, and less than we might have expected, or indeed could afford. However, we had by the year's end a further £36,900 pledged towards seven projects. Three of these were carried forward from the previous year; the remaining four were new applications.

The church of **St Peter, Cranbourne**, was built in 1849-50. It was restored in 2006-7 after an arson attack had destroyed the organ and badly damaged the pews and other fittings. A recent inspection had revealed that the nave roof urgently required renewal, the tiles having reached the end of their working life, a number having broken and slipped, so that water was penetrating in to the roof structure. The cost of repair was estimated at £149,000. We offered £15,000 – the first occasion on which we have offered a grant at our new maximum level.

Smaller grants were offered to **St Mary, Hampstead Norreys**, **Holy Trinity, Cookham**, and **St Peter, Brimpton**. At Hampstead Norreys the heating system has completely failed and the lighting was inadequate: we offered £5,000 towards improvement estimated at £71,000. At Cookham, where we also offered to help fund a new heating system, the scheme is part of a larger project that includes reseating and the installation of an accessible toilet. The total cost is £773,000, to which we will contribute £5,000. Finally, we made another offer under our scheme to support survey work. At Brimpton the spire needs urgent repair and re-shingling. However, the condition of the timber structure is unknown, so it is difficult to define the work needed, and

a survey by a steeplejack, followed by an assessment by a structural engineer and the preparation of measured drawings is necessary. We offered £1,000 towards an estimated cost of £10,150.

## EVENTS

The 2024 **Englefield Lecture**, delivered appropriately in St Mark's Church rather than the Long Gallery, was given by Professor Nicholas Orme. His topic was 'Going to Church in Medieval England', the subject of his recent award-winning book of the same title. His absorbing lecture was very well received by a large and appreciative audience, which also enjoyed a cup of tea and a choice of excellent cakes afterwards. The event raised over £1,000 for the Trust.

We were not able to arrange a garden visit or a study day this year, but a small group of supporters enjoyed a slightly windy tour of the ruins of Reading Abbey, led by our Chairman (who is also the Chairman of the Friends of Reading Abbey). The tour was followed by refreshments in Abbey Baptist Church, which, appropriately, is situated in the Abbey precincts. We are grateful to the church for its hospitality.

The annual **Ride and Stride** event benefitted from a sunny September Saturday, when over 150 participants (considerably more than in 2023) made almost 400 recorded church visits - though the true figure may well be higher. Participation was boosted by a large team from St Matthew, Midgham and an even larger one from St Nicolas, Newbury, the latter taking part for the first time. Both churches made Ride and Stride a parish 'event', generating a lot of interest and community spirit. Perhaps their success will encourage other churches; it is a little disappointing that only a minority of Berkshire's churches take an active part. Ride and Stride remains the most important fund-raising event for the Trust, this year raising almost £28,000, just a fraction less than in 2023: after a proportion was returned to participating churches, the Trust's funds were boosted by nearly £18,000.

The 2024 **Annual Meeting and Church Tour** was on the Berkshire Downs, starting at St James, Leckhampstead, with a brief business meeting and an opportunity to admire the latest stage of the work which we had supported, and which has transformed the church. From there we visited St Mary, Fawley, an impressive and imposing Victorian building designed by GE Street, replacing a small mediaeval building and immortalised by Thomas Hardy in *Jude the Obscure*. We then made our way to All Saints, Farnborough, a small aisleless church of Norman origin, and of particular significance to all who care for historic churches: Sir John Betjeman lived for a time at the Old Rectory and is commemorated by a stained glass window designed by John Piper, and Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, founder of the Friends of Friendless Churches is buried here - as his monument rightly says, he 'dedicated his life to the preservation of ancient churches'. Finally we reached St Barnabas, Peasmore for a splendid tea and a service of evening prayer. All four churches had recently received grants from the Trust.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Publication of our occasional Newsletter continued, with two issues during the year.

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We continue to consider ways in which we can improve the Trust's effectiveness, but progress has been hampered by vacancies in key roles. We urgently need to find people to take responsibility for managing contact with our church supporters, organising events, co-ordinating Ride and Stride, and for publicity and promotion generally.

## PEOPLE

We were delighted to welcome Lord Benyon as Patron of the Trust. This is a new role, and we look forward to exploring ways in which we can work with him to raise the Trust's profile in Berkshire.

We were also very pleased that the Right Reverend Mary Gregory, Bishop of Reading, and Mr Andrew Try, recently appointed Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, both accepted invitations to become a Joint President. James Puxley, who stood down as a Joint President following his retirement as Lord Lieutenant, has accepted an invitation to become a Vice-President, and we are delighted that his long association with the Trust will continue.

There have been several changes in the Executive Committee. We accepted with regret the resignations of Leslie Grout, Revd Julia Binney and Prue Matchwick. Leslie's retirement brings to an end a connection with the Trust going back to its very earliest days, whilst Julia and Prue joined more recently. We thank them all for their contributions to our work. Towards the end of the year we welcomed Primrose Wilson as a member of the Committee. She brings with her a wealth of experience from her time with the Ulster Churches Trust, and we look forward to working with her in Berkshire.

Finally, we record with sadness the death of Ian Pilkington, a generous supporter of long standing, who had been one of our Vice-Presidents since 1990.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

This year's accounts have again been prepared on an accruals basis. Grants are included in expenditure when actually paid; grants approved but not yet paid are identified in the notes to the accounts. Grant offers are valid for three years, and will lapse (unless otherwise agreed by the Trust) if the work is not completed within that period, or if the recipient notifies the Trust that it has decided not to proceed.

The principal source of income for the Trust is the sponsored Ride+Stride event, held in September each year. Participants may designate a church to receive 50% of the money which they raise, but not all choose to do so. The total raised by the 2024 event was slightly less than the previous year, representing a net income of £17,737 to the Trust.

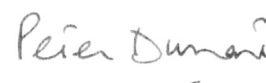
Following the decision last year to cease selling Christmas cards, we disposed of the remaining stock of cards.

Although we are aware of a substantial need for repairs, maintenance and improvement to Berkshire churches, the Trust continues to receive relatively few grant applications. The financial resources would allow more grants to be given if applications are received for eligible work.

Unlike some county churches trusts, the Trust does not have an endowment fund to provide investment income, but funds not needed for current operations are held in interest-bearing accounts to generate some income.

The Trust does not currently have a formal reserves policy; this will be reviewed during the coming year. For many years the expenditure in making grants has been limited by the number of applications received, not by the financial resources of the Trust.

Approved by the Trustees on 2 June 2025 and signed on their behalf



*Peter Durrant*  
**Peter Durrant**  
*Chairman & Trustee*

**Independent Examiner's Report**  
to the Trustees of Berkshire Historic Churches Trust  
Year ended 31 March 2025

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Berkshire Historic Churches Trust ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do 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 no concerns and 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.

John Cullen ACCA (Retired)  
Independent Examiner of Accounts

BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2025

	<i>Note</i>	<b>2025</b>		<b>2024</b>	
<b>Income</b>		£	£	£	£
<b>Voluntary Sources</b>					
Donations / annual membership		4,895		2,185	
Life membership		-		2,000	
Legacies / one-off donations		-		5,000	
Gift aid for current year		444		944	
Church Membership		<u>2,415</u>		<u>2,135</u>	
			7,754		12,264
<b>Fundraising Income</b>					
Ride & Stride	1	17,737		18,395	
Englefield Lecture	4	1,010		1,530	
Other Events / Fund Raising	5	<u>216</u>		<u>989</u>	
			18,953		20,914
<b>Trading Income</b>					
Christmas Card Sales	3		193		234
<b>Other Income</b>					
Interest		-		18	
United Trust Bank		2,467		1,570	
CCLA		<u>1,731</u>		<u>1,620</u>	
			4,198		3,208
<b>Total Income</b>			<u><b>31,108</b></u>		<u><b>36,620</b></u>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b>Direct Charitable Expenditure</b>					
Grants to Churches	2		27,700		35,300
<b>Fundraising Expenses</b>					
Ride & Stride	1		-		-
Englefield Lecture	4		-		308
<b>Administration</b>					
Printing, Postage & Administration			105		140
Web hosting			130		130
Insurance			75		75
Heritage Alliance, Local History Assn			66		64
Annual Report & Leaflets			182		218
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<u><b>28,258</b></u>		<u><b>36,235</b></u>
<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>			<b>2,850</b>		<b>385</b>

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**  
**Balance Sheet as at 31 March**

<b>Assets</b>	<b><u>2025</u></b> £	<b><u>2024</u></b> £
Yorkshire Bank		
Current account	34,702	37,417
Ride & Stride account	2,840	1,915
CCLA COIF Charities Deposit Fund	36,673	34,499
United Trust Bank	59,674	57,208
United Trust Bank 1-year deposit	25,000	25,000
Gift aid on membership received 9 April	444	-
Yorkshire Bank WREN account (Restricted)	1	1
	<b>159,334</b>	<b>156,484</b>
<b>General Fund</b>		
Balance at 1 April 2024	156,484	156,099
Surplus for year	2,850	385
Balance at 31 March 2025	<b>159,334</b>	<b>156,484</b>

Approved by the Trustees on 2 June 2025 and signed on their behalf



*Peter Durrant*  
**Peter Durrant**  
**Chairman & Trustee**

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

**Note 1 - Ride & Stride**

The major fundraising event during the year was the sponsored Ride & Stride. This raised:

	<b>2025, £</b>	<b>2024, £</b>
Gross Funds (without Gift Aid)	22,249	23,749
Gift Aid	5,592	4,202
	27,841	27,951
<i>less repayments to Churches</i>	10,105	9,556
	17,737	18,395
<i>less expenses</i>	-	-
	17,737	18,395

**Note 2 - Grants to Churches**

	<b>2025, £</b>	<b>2024, £</b>
<b>Grants paid during year to 31 March</b>		
St Barnabas, Peasemore		7,000
St Mary, Kintbury		1,800
St James, Leckhampstead		6,000
St Peter, Brimpton		1,400
All Saints, Windsor		5,000
St Lawrence, Hungerford		10,000
St Mary, Thatcham		4,100
St John, Newbury	10,000	
Thatcham Methodist Church	1,500	
St Andrew, Boxford	10,000	
St Mary, Fawley	500	
St Peter, Caversham	500	
St Nicolas, Newbury	1,000	
St John, Stockcross	1,200	
St Nicholas, Hurst	3,000	
	27,700	35,300
 <b>Grants offered but not paid at 31 March</b>	 <b>2025, £</b>	 <b>2024, £</b>
St Mary, Beech Hill	500	500
St Mary, Fawley		500
St Andrew, Boxford		10,000
St Mary, Thatcham (balance of original grant)	900	900
St John, Newbury *		10,000
St Nicolas, Newbury		1,000
St Peter, Cranbourne *	15,000	9,000
St John, Stockcross		1,200
Thatcham Methodist Church		1,500
All Saints, East Garston	9,500	
St Mary, Hampstead Norreys	5,000	
St Peter, Brimpton	1,000	
Holy Trinity, Cookham	5,000	
	36,900	34,600

\* These churches had been awarded a grant in principle but the amount had not been finalised: the figure shown for 2024 was the initial estimate

**Note 3 - Trading profits from sale of Christmas cards**

	2025, £	2024, £
Total Receipts	193	234
	<u>193</u>	<u>234</u>

It was decided in 2024 that it is not economically viable for the Trust to continue to sell Christmas cards. The receipts shown for 2025 are for the disposal of the remaining stock.

**Note 4 - Englefield Lecture**

	2025, £	2024, £
Total Receipts	1,010	1,530
Less expenses	-	308
	<u>1,010</u>	<u>1,222</u>

**Note 5 - Other Events & Fundraising**

	2025, £	2024, £
Peter lecture		25
Donation from Wesley Methodist Church		108
Annual Meeting teas (less expenses)	66	86
John Johnson study day		240
Open garden		255
Visit to Kedermister Library		275
Reading Abbey tour	150	
	<u>216</u>	<u>989</u>

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**

England & Wales - Charity number 288797

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# Accounts

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# Berkshire Historic Churches Trust

A wide-angle, low-perspective photograph of the interior of a large Gothic Revival church. The view is down a central aisle lined with dark wood pews, each with a light blue cushion. The ceiling is a high, dark wood-paneled vaulted structure. On either side, tall stone piers support pointed arches. In the background, a balcony holds a large pipe organ with many pipes. The church is well-lit, with light coming from windows on the sides.


ANNUAL REPORT 2023–24

# Berkshire Historic Churches Trust

- Patron** The Rt Hon Lord Benyon of Englefield PC
- Joint Presidents** The Rt Revd Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading  
James Puxley Esq. CVO, Lord-Lieutenant of Berkshire \*
- Honorary Vice-Presidents** The Lady Eliza Mays-Smith • The Most Revd and Rt Hon the Lord Carey of Clifton  
Ian Pilkington Esq • Erica Lady Harman • The Rt Revd Dom Geoffrey Scott OSB
- Trustees** Graham Barker DL • Jim Barnes-Phillips • Dr Peter Durrant MBE DL  
Catherine Haig • Willie Hartley Russell MVO DL • Graham Mather CBE  
Torquil Montague-Johnstone • James Puxley CVO • Eleanor Rice FCA  
Jonathan Welfare OBE • Lucy Zeal DL
- Executive Committee** Chairman : Dr Peter Durrant MBE DL  
Hon Secretary : John Pritchard • Hon Treasurer : Eleanor Rice FCA  
Anne Armitage • The Revd Dr Julia Binney • The Revd Carol Dunk (to Oct 2023)  
Marion Elly • Catherine Haig • Liz Kitch • Prue Matchwick  
Torquil Montague-Johnstone • The Ven Stephen Pullin  
Henry Sanders AABC RIAS RIBA • Jonathan Welfare OBE
- Address** The Chairman, 84 Beech Lane, Earley, Reading RG6 5QE
- Bankers** Virgin Money (Yorkshire Bank plc), 35 Regent Street, London SW1Y 4ND
- Independent Examiner** John Cullen ACCA
- CONSTITUTION** The Trust was set up by a Declaration of Trust dated 6 Feb 1984 under the name "Royal County of Berkshire Churches Trust".  
The name was changed to "Berkshire Historic Churches Trust" in June 2020.  
Registered Charity number 288797
- OBJECTIVES** To raise funds to help with the cost of repairs to the fabric of Christian Churches, Chapels and Meeting Houses in Berkshire, and for the repair and preservation of monuments, fittings and fixtures and stained glass. The Trust will also consider applications from Churches, Chapels and Meeting Houses for schemes to achieve a sustainable future as the centre of every community in the County, making use of their buildings for the benefit of the community at large, and may help to fund facilities necessary for this purpose, if this can be achieved without compromising the historic or architectural quality of the buildings and their settings within the local landscape.
- REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES** The Trustees are authorised by the Trust Deed to delegate any of their functions, and have done this by the formation of an Executive Committee. Applications for grants are considered by the Executive Committee with the help of documentation and professional advice. Once decisions are made, progress of works is monitored before funds are released.

*\* Mr Puxley retired as Lord Lieutenant on 23rd October 2023, but has continued as Joint President during the reporting year*

Approved by the Trustees on 3 June 2024 and signed on their behalf by

  
..... Trustee

## from the Chairman



This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust. Founded in 1984 as the Royal County of Berkshire Churches Trust, and renamed in 2020, for nearly four decades we have been making grants to support the repair and restoration of Berkshire's churches. The first grant offers were made in 1987, and the first payments in 1988. In total we have given away over £750,000, and have made a significant contribution to the preservation of these wonderful buildings.

Much needed in 1984, our support is needed still more today, as rising costs and dwindling congregations make it harder and harder for local churches to raise the funds they need. But churches are there for everyone, not just the faithful few who gather on Sundays, and they must be preserved, not only as beacons of faith, but as places of historical value, architectural merit and artistic beauty – and also, as has been shown so often, as places from which community benefit, of all kinds, can be delivered.

It can be done, as striking examples of ambitious projects realised across Berkshire in recent years have shown. Our Trust has helped many of these. That we have been able to do so is entirely down to the generosity of our supporters – donors, subscribers and sponsors of Ride and Stride.

Thank you for your support.

**Peter Durrant**

## Report of the Executive Committee

### GRANTS

We gave seven grants in 2023/24, to a total of £35,300 – a significant increase from the previous year, but still only a fraction of the costs of the projects we supported. We also made five definite offers for work which, in most cases, is now under way, and agreed in principle to support two further projects, leaving the actual level of grant to be decided once details of the work to be undertaken (and the associated costs) have been received.



Our largest grant was to **St Lawrence, Hungerford**, for a project to develop the west end of the church with greatly improved facilities – a kitchen, capable of serving hot meals, two toilets (replacing a ‘glorified broom cupboard’ with no disabled access), three meeting rooms (two at ground level, with folding partitions to allow opening to the body of the church, and one in the existing gallery), and a new

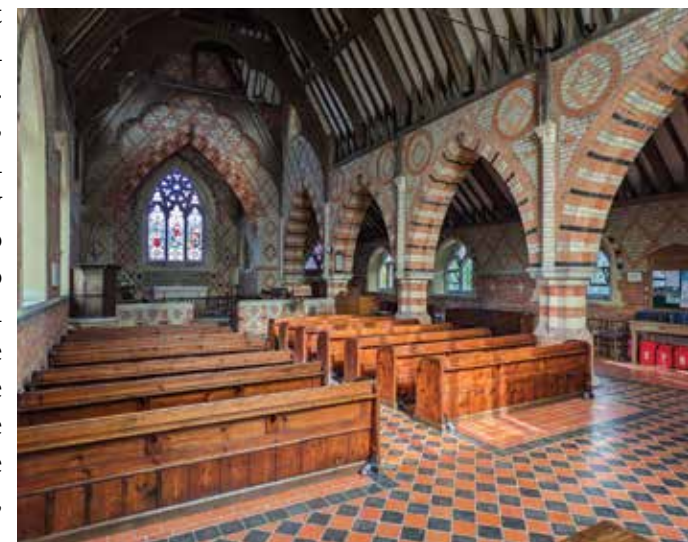
vestry. The church has an active programme of events and activities, but attempts to develop these further have been greatly hampered by the poor facilities available, which this project addressed. The total cost was £813,000. We gave our maximum grant of £10,000.

Two other grants also helped fund projects that were wholly or in part to improve facilities. At **St Barnabas, Peasemore**, we supported a scheme designed to make much better use of space at



the west end of the church, and (by the installation of a York stone floor) to enhance the appearance of that end of the church. A wooden platform has been removed, so that the whole area is level, the font has been brought forward from its cramped position in the base of the tower to a new location in the nave, and the tower space has been used for a lobby/refreshment preparation area and a disabled-compliant toilet. Running water has also been introduced into the church for the first time. The scheme, developed in conjunction with the village community, was costed at £146,500. We gave £7,000.

The third development grant also included an element for restoration. This was at **St James, Leckhampstead**, a church where we had previously supported a project to undertake major repairs to the roof (see the Annual Report for 2019/20). The new project, the third stage in an extended programme of work, comprised the levelling of the floor, which was relaid with traditional tiles (the Victorian ones being used as far as possible), with electric underfloor heating, supplemented with fan-assisted convection heaters; the retention of the Victorian pews (apart from those too badly affected by death-watch beetle to be useable), now mounted on castors; and the installation of a toilet and servery. As at Peasemore, the scheme was designed to enable the church to serve the village community more effectively, and to provide a space for larger events that cannot be accommodated in the village hall. It was costed at £168,000. We gave £6,000.



In addition to supporting these major projects, we gave grants to **All Saints, Windsor**, for a scheme to improve the very inadequate lighting in the nave (and simultaneously, through the use of LED lighting, to

reduce energy consumption; £5,000); to **St Mary, Thatcham**, for repairs to the roof and walls at the west end (the church had suffered from damp penetration, partly as a result of a blockage to the gully in the valley between the nave and north aisle roofs; £4,100); to **St Mary, Kintbury**, for reroofing the vestry following lead theft (£1,800); and to **St Peter, Brimpton**, to replace the heating system following the failure of the ancient oil-fired boiler (£1,400).

Most of the grants offered but not yet paid, were for repairs, some of significant scope. **St Andrew, Boxford**, on a low-lying site next to the River Lambourn, has suffered recently from damp in the walls. In addition, water has penetrated the old lead roof of the tower, causing damage to the main oak beams, which have also suffered from death-watch beetle attack. We offered £10,000 towards an estimated cost of £150,000. We also offered smaller sums to **Thatcham Methodist Church**



(£1,500) to replace a worn-out flat roof on an extension to the original (1834) chapel; to **St John, Stockcross** (£1,200) for repairs to rainwater goods; and to **St Mary, Fawley**, (£500) for repairs to the roof of the tower (the lead of the



pyramidal roof had split and half had become detached, so that daylight could be seen through the roof and the weather and birds could enter: the inspecting architect also reported a close encounter with a squirrel inside the bell chamber). Additionally, a further £900 has been promised to St Mary, Thatcham, towards the cost of installing a French drain. (This was part of an original offer of £5,000, but will not be paid until this part of the work has been completed). We made an in-principle commitment to **St Peter, Cranbourne**, for repairs to the roof, but wanted to see more detailed specifications and costings before determining the actual size of the grant.



Finally, we made an offer of £1,000 to **St Nicolas, Newbury**, towards a feasibility study for developing a scheme that would make major improvements to the church, but is likely to cost in excess of £1 million, and an in-principle commitment to **St John, Newbury**, for a project to improve access: here, as at Cranbourne, we are waiting for further details before determining the size of the grant. We also have an offer to **St Mary, Beech Hill** (towards the cost of a survey to investigate a rather alarming crack in the south wall), carried over from the previous year.

We are very aware of the inexorable rise in costs facing churches planning both repairs and improvements. In response to this situation, the Trustees have agreed to increase our maximum grant from £10,000 (a figure that has been in place for many years) to £15,000.

## EVENTS

The 2023 Englefield Lecture, held in the Long Gallery of Englefield House, was given by Professor Nigel Saul, Emeritus Professor of Medieval History at Royal Holloway, University of London. His subject was “English Medieval Parish Churches: the Endless Joy of Variety”, and a large and appreciative audience was treated to an absorbing lecture, accompanied by a dazzling succession of images of churches from across historic Berkshire. The event raised £1,200 for the Trust.

Following the success of our visit to Bray in 2022, we arranged three further events for supporters. On a lovely sunny day in June a group of us enjoyed a visit to the gardens at Bucklebury House, where our host



was trustee Willie Hartley Russell. He treated us to a leisurely tour, embracing all the varied areas of the gardens, including the medieval fishponds (Bucklebury was once a possession of Reading Abbey), followed by a delicious tea. In July, on a day that was sometimes very wet and always overcast, our secretary John Pritchard led a study tour of buildings designed by the architect John Johnson. We began the afternoon at Woolhampton House, now Elstree School, where, in the 1850s, Johnson designed alterations to the original house, and from there visited churches at Woolhampton, Midgham and Brimpton, ending the afternoon with tea and cakes at Brimpton. In August the sun returned to smile on us in Slough, where trustee Graham Barker led a visit to two churches, first St Laurence in Upton, a magnificent Norman building, and then St Mary, Langley Marish, which houses the amazing Kedermister Library. After the visits, we repaired to the Red Lion, across the road from St Mary's, for lunch. All three events were greatly enjoyed by those attending, and also raised valuable funds for the Trust.

The annual Ride and Stride, in September, took place on an exceptionally hot day, and all participants are to be congratulated on their endurance! We were encouraged to find that the sum raised for the Trust was slightly greater than in the previous year. However, attracting active engagement remains a problem. A full report appears on pages 9-10.

The final event of the year was our annual meeting and church tour, which took place later in September, and included visits to five churches in central Berkshire. A full report follows.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Publication of our Newsletter continued, bringing news of the Trust to supporters and others. Three issues were published, very attractively designed and produced by our Secretary, containing news of recent grants and forthcoming events, reports of Trust activities, and occasional articles of interest. They are sent to all regular supporters (by email where possible) and are available on our website.

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2024 the Trust celebrates its 40th anniversary. Over those 40 years we have given away over three-quarters of a million pounds to Berkshire churches. This has made a real difference to churches facing major challenges maintaining and repairing historic buildings. But is it enough? Though we are a small Trust, with resource challenges ourselves, we would certainly like to do more. Of course, we would like to have more money to give away, and one ambition must be to improve our fund-raising – for which we will need to raise our profile in Berkshire. But we would also like to offer more help to churches planning major projects, particularly since, in many cases, those involved in such planning will have had little prior experience to draw on. The sub-committee set up to consider these issues continues to meet, and though progress has been perhaps slower than we had hoped, plans are being developed which we hope will contribute to making the Trust more effective in achieving its objectives.

One urgent need is for more people to step to active roles in the Executive Committee, both to fill vacancies (Bracknell area representative, Ride+Stride co-ordinator) and for new positions (Events co-ordinator, Churches membership secretary, and people to undertake publicity, marketing and fund-raising).

## PEOPLE

During the year we said farewell to the Revd Carol Dunk, who had joined the Executive Committee in December 2021, as commitments elsewhere obliged her to stand down. We thank her for her contribution.

**Peter Durrant**

## Annual Meeting 2023

Our 2023 annual meeting and church tour took us to mid-Berkshire, to visit five churches just to the west of Reading.

We began the afternoon at Holy Trinity, Theale. After a brief business meeting held in the open air in front of the west end, we spent time looking round the church itself. It was built between 1820 and 1822 (the tower was added between 1827 and 1832) and has been described as one of the most remarkable of all English churches for its date. The architectural style is clearly modelled on Salisbury cathedral. It was paid for by Mrs Sophia Sheppard, sister of Dr Martin Routh, Rector of Tilehurst, the mother parish, and also President of Magdalen College, Oxford.



From here we drove to St Mark's Church, Englefield, where Ann and Miles Edgar gave us a guided tour. This is a thirteenth-century church, with an early sixteenth-century chantry chapel north of the chancel, largely rebuilt by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1857 and 1868. It remains a very attractive estate church, lying at the end of the village street, and in the shadow of Englefield House.

We then drove north, calling first at St Laurence, Tidmarsh and then at St Nicholas Sulham. The former is medieval: it was built in the twelfth century and remodelled and extended east in the thirteenth, which is the date of the unusual medieval apse. It has



a splendid Norman south door. By contrast, Sulham church was rebuilt in 1836-38 by the rector, John Wilder, who seems to have acted as his own architect. It has some delightful details, including a triple-arched stone screen between nave and chancel, and a hammer-beam roof. In both churches our guide was our Secretary, John Pritchard.

The final church on our journey was St James the Less, Pangbourne, where we were welcomed by Ellie Thorne who – after we had enjoyed a splendid tea – gave us a guided tour of the building. This is mostly Victorian, to designs by the Reading architect WH Woodman, though it has an eighteenth-century brick tower, and some rather nice monuments transferred from the earlier building.



We finished the day as usual with a service of evensong, where we gave thanks for our heritage of historic churches and for the work of the Trust in helping to preserve them, and prayed for blessing on our future endeavours.

We were made very welcome at all the churches we visited, and we extend our thanks to those who helped to arrange the day for us and who gave up their Saturday afternoons to welcome us.

## Ride and Stride 2023

Ride and Stride 2023 took place on one of the hottest-ever September days. However, notwithstanding the heat, riders and striders set out in all parts of Berkshire to raise money for the county's historic churches. Together they succeeded in raising almost £28,000 – the best result for many years.

After a proportion of this was returned directly to participating churches, it means that the Trust's funds, and thus its ability to give grants, were boosted by over £18,000.

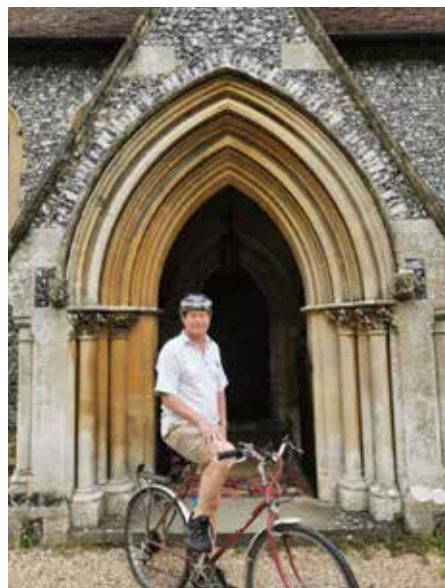
Of the 47 churches that made returns (this was slightly fewer than in 2022), some four-fifths had raised funds, in sums ranging for £20 to £2,500. The church with the best result was St Matthew, Midgham, but five churches raised over £1,000. Churches reporting visitor numbers recorded between one and 24 each, though only six had ten or more visitors on the day.

Altogether nearly 90 individuals took part either as riders or striders, or as stewards, welcoming people to their church. This was a considerable increase in participation from 2022, though the total number of church visits recorded was down – perhaps it was just too hot! Even so, some remarkable individual performances were achieved, including by one cyclist who clocked up 26 churches in east Berkshire between Wokingham and Maidenhead, and another who managed 17 in the Reading area.

Our trustee Torquil Montague-Johnstone visited 26 churches in his tour of the Bradfield area, where he is the area co-ordinator. Trustees Catherine Haig and Peter Durrant called at seven churches in the course of a nine-mile walk starting at Knowl Hill and proceeding by a circuitous route to Twyford.

Ride and Stride remains the most important fund-raising event of the year, and we are grateful to all those who took part – local organisers, church stewards, the riders and striders themselves, and those who generously sponsored them. We also acknowledge the work of the Trust's Ride and Stride team. This year's success, in challenging economic circumstances, is something to be very pleased about.

Nevertheless, we remain a little disappointed that we seem unable to encourage greater participation. For those who do take part it is generally a very positive experience, and our challenge for the future is to bring both more churches and more individuals to the event.



## Recent Grants to Churches

	£		£
<b>2017/18</b>			
Binfield, All Saints <i>Roof and other repairs</i>	10,000	Leckhampstead, St James <i>Repairs to windows</i>	2,000
Maidenhead, St Mary <i>Major refurbishment</i>	10,000	Wokingham, All Saints <i>Roof alarm</i>	1,000
Newbury, St Nicolas <i>Replacement of lighting system</i>	5,000	Woodley, Emmanuel <i>New facilities including toilets &amp; kitchen</i>	5,000
Shinfield, St Mary <i>Roof alarm</i>	1,000	Woolhampton, St Peter <i>Repairs to bell-turret and spire</i>	10,000
Windsor, St John the Baptist <i>Buttress repairs</i>	5,000		
<b>2018/19</b>		<b>2021/22</b>	
Ascot Heath, All Saints <i>Repointing brickwork</i>	1,000	Boyne Hill, All Saints <i>Restoration of Victorian floor tiles</i>	10,000
Bisham, All Saints <i>Disabled toilet and meeting room</i>	5,000	East Ilsley, St Mary <i>Repairs to windows</i>	3,000
Bracknell, Holy Trinity <i>Roof repairs and new slates</i>	10,000	Maidenhead, St Joseph RC <i>Replacement of boilers</i>	5,000
Cookham, Holy Trinity <i>Restoration of tower</i>	5,000		
Reading, Sacred Heart (Polish) <i>Roof repairs</i>	10,000	<b>2022/23</b>	
Sandhurst, St Michael <i>Restoration of stained glass</i>	2,000	Beedon, St Nicholas <i>Repairs to plaster in ceiling</i>	450
Thatcham Methodist <i>New front door and flooring</i>	2,000	Eastbury, St James <i>Renewal of roof on south side</i>	5,000
		East Garston, All Saints <i>Tower access and repairs to stonework</i>	3,300
<b>2019/20</b>		Great Shefford, St Mary <i>Inspection &amp; treatment of dry rot</i>	500
East Garston, All Saints <i>Repair of buttress</i>	2,000	Wokingham, All Saints <i>New floor, heating, toilets, servery, access</i>	10,000
Leckhampstead, St James <i>Renewing roof</i>	10,000		
Thatcham URC <i>Repair of windows</i>	500	<b>2023/24</b>	
		Brimpton, St Peter <i>New under-pew electric heating</i>	1,400
<b>2020/21</b>		Hungerford, St Laurence <i>New toilets, kitchen, meeting rooms and heating system</i>	10,000
Combe, St Swithun <i>Roof alarm</i>	1,000	Kintbury, St Mary <i>Replace stolen lead on roof with TCSS</i>	1,800
East Garston, All Saints <i>Roof repairs</i>	5,000	Leckhampstead, St James <i>Re-lay nave floor, heating, toilet, kitchen</i>	6,000
Farnborough, All Saints <i>Repairs to tower roof and nave window</i>	2,000	Peasemore, St Barnabas <i>Create meeting area, with toilet &amp; kitchen</i>	7,000
Fawley, St Mary <i>Replace guttering</i>	2,000	Thatcham, St Mary <i>Repairs to roof and walls</i>	4,100
Lambourn, St Michael <i>Boiler replacement</i>	1,500	Windsor, All Saints <i>New lighting system</i>	5,000

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2024**

	Note	<u>2024</u>		<u>2023</u>	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>					
<b>Voluntary Sources</b>					
Donations, membership & legacies		9,185		9,106	
Gift aid for current year		944		639	
Church Membership		<u>2,135</u>		<u>2,230</u>	
			12,264		11,975
<b>Fundraising Income</b>					
Ride & Stride	1	18,395		16,192	
Englefield Lecture	4	1,530		1,530	
Other events / Fund Raising	5	<u>989</u>		<u>457</u>	
			20,914		18,179
<b>Trading Income</b>					
Christmas Card Sales	3		234		547
<b>Other Income</b>					
Interest		18		49	
United Trust Bank		1,570		432	
CCLA		<u>1,176</u>		<u>581</u>	
			2,764		1,062
<b>Total Income</b>			<u><u>36,176</u></u>		<u><u>31,763</u></u>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b>Direct Charitable Expenditure</b>					
Grants to Churches	2		35,300		19,250
<b>Fundraising Expenses</b>					
Ride & Stride	1		-		-
Lecture	4		308		266
<b>Trading Expenses</b>					
Expenses re Christmas Cards			-		51
<b>Administration</b>					
Printing, Postage & Administration			140		559
Web hosting			130		-
Insurance			75		150
Heritage Alliance, Local History Assoc.			64		-
Annual Report & Leaflets			<u>218</u>		<u>314</u>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<u><u>36,235</u></u>		<u><u>20,590</u></u>
<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>			<u><u>(59)</u></u>		<u><u>11,173</u></u>

**Balance Sheet as at 31 March**

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Yorkshire Bank</b> Current account	37,417	36,828
Savings account	-	48,559
Ride & Stride account	1,915	1,590
<b>CCLA COIF Charities Deposit Fund</b>	34,499	33,322
<b>United Trust Bank</b>	57,208	35,638
<b>United Trust Bank 1-year deposit</b>	25,000	-
<b>R&amp;S for 2022 received in 2023/24</b>	-	161
<b>Yorkshire Bank WREN account (Restricted)</b>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u><u>156,040</u></u>	<u><u>156,099</u></u>
<b>General Fund</b>		
Balance at 1 April 2023	156,099	144,926
Surplus for year	<u>(59)</u>	<u>11,173</u>
Balance at 31 March 2024	<u><u>156,040</u></u>	<u><u>156,099</u></u>

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST  
NOTES TO THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£	£	£
<b>Note 1 - Ride &amp; Stride</b>				
The major fundraising event during the year was the sponsored Ride & Stride. This raised:				
Gross Funds (without Gift Aid)	<b>23,749</b>	21,881		
Gift Aid	<b>4,202</b>	4,102		
	<b>27,951</b>	25,983		
less repayments to Churches	<b>9,556</b>	9,790		
	<b>18,395</b>	16,192		
less expenses	-	-		
	<b>18,395</b>	16,192		
<b>Note 3 - Trading profits from sale of Christmas cards</b>				
Total Receipts			<b>234</b>	547
Less purchases & postage			-	51
			<b>234</b>	497
No account has been taken of the value of stock in hand, which at 31 March 2023 was negligible. It has been decided that it is not economically viable for the Trust to continue to sell Christmas cards.				

**Note 2 - Grants to Churches in year to 31 March**

St Mary, Great Shefford		500
St James, Eastbury		5,000
All Saints, East Garston		3,300
St Nicholas, Beedon		450
All Saints, Wokingham		10,000
St Barnabas, Peasemore	<b>7,000</b>	-
St Mary, Kintbury	<b>1,800</b>	-
St James, Leckhampstead	<b>6,000</b>	-
St Peter, Brimpton	<b>1,400</b>	-
All Saints, Windsor	<b>5,000</b>	-
St Lawrence, Hungerford	<b>10,000</b>	-
St Mary, Thatcham	<b>4,100</b>	-
	<b>35,300</b>	19,250

**Grants offered but not paid at 31 March**

St Mary, East Ilsley		7,000
St Mary, Kintbury		1,800
St Barnabas, Peasemore		7,000
St Lawrence, Hungerford *		5,000
All Saints, Windsor		5,000
St James, Leckhampstead		6,000
St Mary, Beech Hill	<b>500</b>	500
St Mary, Fawley	<b>500</b>	-
St Andrew, Boxford	<b>10,000</b>	-
St Mary, Thatcham **	<b>900</b>	-
St John, Newbury ***	<b>10,000</b>	-
St Nicolas, Newbury	<b>1,000</b>	-
St Peter, Cranbourne ***	<b>9,000</b>	-
St John, Stockcross	<b>1,200</b>	-
Thatcham Methodist Church	<b>1,500</b>	-
	<b>34,600</b>	32,300

\* amount to be confirmed

\*\* balance of original grant

\*\*\* these churches have been awarded a grant in principle, but the amount has not been finalised; the figure shown is a provisional sum

**Note 4 - Englefield Lecture**

Total Receipts	<b>1,530</b>	1,530
Less expenses	<b>308</b>	267
	<b>1,222</b>	1,263

**Note 5 - Other Events & Fundraising**

Ringers teas	<b>25</b>	79
Donation from Wesley Methodist Church	<b>108</b>	-
Visit to Bray	-	300
Open garden	<b>255</b>	-
John Johnson study day	<b>240</b>	-
Visit to Kedermister Library	<b>275</b>	-
Annual meeting teas (less expenses)	<b>86</b>	78
	<b>989</b>	457

## Berkshire Churches Trust - the first 40 years

In 2024 the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust celebrates forty years of supporting the churches of Royal Berkshire. Established in 1984 as the Royal County of Berkshire Churches Trust (it changed its name in 2020), it has made grants totalling over £750,000 to churches of all ages and many different denominations, for essential repairs and for the installation of the basic facilities (principally kitchens and toilets) that are necessary to enable the buildings to be used both for worship and as true centres of the communities that they serve.

Of course, setting up a trust doesn't happen overnight. The first moves to create our Trust came in 1982, and were inspired by the Suffolk Churches Trust's bike ride, first held in that year. Brigadier David Barbour, the driving force behind our Trust, heard through a nephew of this new venture in Suffolk. Why, he thought, can't we do something similar in Berkshire? Discussions with the Bishop of Reading, the Archdeacon of Berkshire and rural deans followed. Some were enthusiastic, others less so (David Barbour's surviving correspondence shows occasional frustration at the slow rate of progress he was able to make), but eventually it was agreed to go ahead. But questions remained to be answered. What should the Trust be called? Should it support just 'historic' churches (which, to David, really meant medieval: some of his comments on Berkshire's Victorian churches would have horrified the Victorian Society!)? Should it be just for Anglican churches, or should it include (as it eventually did) churches of all denominations? What about the 'contested' areas of Berkshire – the 'occupied' territories now in Oxfordshire and that part of the Deanery of Burnham that was transferred to the administrative county of Berkshire in 1974?

Eventually these thorny problems were resolved, and in February 1984 the Trust was formally set up, for the 'preservation repair maintenance improvement upkeep beautification and reconstruction' of churches in Berkshire or 'any parish adjacent thereto'. The first trustees were the Bishop of Reading, the Archdeacon of Berkshire, Sir John Smith of Shottesbrooke, and David Barbour himself.

But to fulfil its mission the Trust needed money. By June 1986 some £1,500 had been raised, but that wasn't going to go far. David Barbour's enquiries had revealed that over the previous few years just 13 churches had needed to raise over £360,000 for essential repairs, and that was clearly only

a small part of the story. A fundraising campaign was therefore set up. Though a man of great energy and drive, David Barbour could clearly not do this on his own. So in 1986 an approach was made to Erica Harman – and thus began her connection with the Trust that happily still continues.

Funds were raised initially from donations and subscriptions, and by December 1986 some £3,295 had been received. After much planning and hard work the Bike Ride was held for the first time in September 1987. It was a great success, raising some £11,600, and (as the annual report for the year rather oddly declared) 'generating much goodwill and some joy'.

David Barbour's vision had been achieved, but tragically he did not live to see it develop. He died suddenly, just before the Bike Ride (by now called CRoW – 'Cycle, Run or Walk') in September 1988. His contribution had been vital. In the words of the annual report for 1988, 'he was the founder of the Trust, its Secretary, sometime Treasurer and Organiser of the CRoW. His loss to the Trust cannot be measured: it owed its whole existence to his vision, courage and industriousness'. He had, however, lived to see the first grant offers made by the Trust – a total of £7,700, divided between seven churches. Then, as now, grants became payable only once the work they supported has been completed. The first to be paid, in 1988, were to St Gregory, Welford (£500), St Agnes, Reading (£500), and St Mary, Burghfield (£3,500).



David Barbour and Erica Harman in 1987

Following David Barbour's death, much of the work that he had initiated fell upon Erica Harman. Whilst ably supported by a succession of Trustees and Executive Committee members, it was her energy and determination that proved vital to the Trust's success. Looking back in 2011 after 25 years as Chairman, she wrote:

*"I shall never forget the excitement of the first meeting of the Executive Committee when we had actually raised enough money to start making offers of grants. At last we felt we were doing something useful and the atmosphere was completely different. The late Brigadier Barbour and I were*

completely ignorant about how to go about it. We knew there should be an application form, so David Barbour cobbled one together on his typewriter (at that time I was Chairman and he was Secretary because he had been to Staff College and could type better than me). He was all for sending the money to the churches as soon as we had decided how much to give them, but by now Jo Cormier had joined us as an Honorary Architectural Adviser and she pointed out that we needed some proof that work had actually been done before we parted with our hard-earned cash'.

Much had been achieved in those 25 years. A leaflet on church maintenance (later enlarged to a handbook) had been published, Christmas cards introduced, a new appeal launched (in 1991), and new events, such as open gardens, organised. Between 1988 and 2008 the Trust administered the distribution of money received from the Landfill Tax. And CRoW went from strength to strength, in 2007 raising over £28,000. And, of course, many more grants had been approved.

Whilst it was accepted that grants should not be paid before the work had been completed, it was from the beginning the policy of the Trust to respond to applications as soon as possible, both to provide encouragement to the applicants and in the hope that our support would encourage other funders to step forward.

Many of the problems leading to applications to the Trust in those early days are, unsurprisingly, ones that we are familiar with now: leaking roofs, crumbling stonework, decaying timbers, fractured tracery in windows and collapsing rainwater goods. Damage to shingles caused by woodpeckers is nothing new either. Floors wear out too, though only once, as far as I know, did we have to respond to a cry for help from a churchwarden whose floor (in his own words) had turned into Weetabix (an early venture into underfloor heating, overlaid with sub-standard flooring by the contractor, was evidently the cause of that problem).

In recent years our grants have helped, amongst other things, to renew or repair roofs (St James, Woodley; All Saints, Binfield; St James, Leckhampstead; St James, Eastbury), to repair a tower (Holy Trinity, Cookham) and to re-shingle a spire (St Peter, Woolhampton), to repair windows (St Nicolas, Newbury; St Michael and All Angels, Sandhurst), to replace a floor (a particularly fine Victorian example at All Saints, Boyne Hill), to improve or replace heating systems (St Michael, Lambourn; St Joseph, Maidenhead) and to support major refurbishment work (St Andrew and St Mary Magdalen, Maidenhead; All Saints, Wokingham). In 2015 the trustees agreed to accept applications for projects to instal

kitchens and toilets, and grants have been offered for this purpose to All Saints, Bisham (a particularly challenging case, as the drain had to run uphill), Emmanuel Church, Woodley and St James, Leckhampstead. More recently they have offered small grants for investigative work, in the hope that early identification of problems will lead to early action and will save money in the long run, and for feasibility studies to plan major projects.

Meanwhile the Trust has developed new activities designed to raise its profile and to keep supporters informed. Following a new appeal in 2013, a reception and exhibition of Victorian church building plans was held at the Berkshire Record Office. The following year the annual Englefield Lecture was inaugurated (so called as it is usually held in the Long Gallery at Englefield House, by kind permission of Lord Benyon). Not always on a church theme – indeed, the first was on Paul Sandby's drawings of Windsor, and a later one discussed the life of the first Duke of Wellington – this has proved very popular, and has raised useful income as well. A new website was introduced in 2018, and in 2022 the first of a regular series of newsletters was distributed to supporters and others. Also in 2022 new events, principally visits and study days, were offered. At the same time the annual meeting and church tour continues to provide an opportunity for supporters to see some of the work to which their subscriptions and donations have contributed, and CRoW – now redesignated 'Ride and Stride', to match the name by which it is known across the country – continues to bring in valuable funds.

In 2024 our work remains as vital as ever. Though the need is huge and our contributions are modest, they are still extremely important. They give encouragement, and they help to lever contributions from other sources, and without them, some projects would undoubtedly struggle.

Church buildings are important – not just to regular worshippers, but to many outside the church, even unbelievers, who nevertheless value them as community spaces, as landmarks in our countryside, as buildings of enormous architectural, artistic and heritage worth – and often simply as quiet places for reflection and regeneration. They have also, as recent studies by the National Churches Trust and the University of York clearly demonstrate, proved immensely important as places from which help can be given in times of crisis. Our mission is to help local communities ensure that these special places can continue to serve their communities for generations to come.

**Front cover** : Hungerford St Lawrence

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**

England & Wales - Charity number 288797

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# Accounts

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# Berkshire Historic Churches Trust

## Annual Report for 2022/23

### GRANTS

Our major grant this year was to **All Saints' Church, Wokingham**, in support of their hugely ambitious 'Space for All' project. All Saints is an active church in the centre of Wokingham, but its work was inhibited by an inflexible layout, poor lighting, inadequate heating, a cramped main entrance and minimal facilities (the nearest toilets, for example, were across the churchyard). The project was designed to expand the church's mission, providing an accessible and welcoming setting for more flexible forms of worship, and a large-scale venue for civic services and events, concerts, theatre, conferences and exhibitions. Phase one involved removing the existing (early-twentieth-century) pews and damaged floor, laying a flat stone floor across the whole of the nave with underfloor heating, creating a new accessible entrance, and installing toilets (suitable for disabled users), a kitchen/servery and a utility area, along with essential stonework repair. It aligned very well with our objective of helping churches to become real and sustainable centres in their communities, and we were pleased to offer our maximum grant of £10,000 towards costs of £1.3m, which was paid towards the end of the year.

Four other grants were also paid out during the year - to churches in Eastbury, East Garston, Great Shefford and Beedon.

At *St James, Eastbury*, the church faced a problem with which are very familiar: the roof on the south side was in a parlous condition, with missing, loose and broken tiles, and a significant issue with the whole fixing of the roof. (The roof on the north side had been replaced some years earlier). The work involved stripping the whole south side, inspecting and repairing the roof structure, installing insulation, new felt and battens. The nave roof was covered with new, hand-made tiles, whilst sound tiles salvaged from the nave roof were used to retile the roof of the chancel. The cost was £65,200, to which we contributed £5,000.

Roof repairs at **All Saints, East Garston**, had been carried out (with our support) in 2020, and the external fabric was in generally good condition, but the 2021 Quinquennial Inspection report identified a number of items requiring urgent action, including the exterior stonework of the tower. We gave £3,500 towards a total project cost of £33,445.

Smaller grants were paid to **St Nicholas, Beedon**, for repairs to the plaster on the underside of the roof (£450), and to **St Mary, Great Shefford**, where dry rot had been discovered in the tower (£500). In the latter case, the full extent of the damage was not clear, and could not be determined until the affected wood ceiling had been cut out and the timber above it treated. Whilst we do not routinely give grants for investigative work, we felt that it was important that the problem was dealt with promptly, and agreed that we could contribute to the costs of investigation and initial treatment. Happily this proved sufficient to resolve the problem and fully justified our support.

Altogether we paid out £19,250 in the year. Whilst this was more than we paid in 2022, it is still less than we might have expected, and suggests that in the present very difficult financial situation, many churches are still postponing projects. That being the case, we were very encouraged to be able to respond with offers to five applications during the

year, three of which were for development projects designed to provide facilities that would enable wider community use of the building.

At **St Barnabas, Peasemore**, the work proposed involves levelling the floor at the west end and making the last four rows of pews moveable, fitting an oak screen and door into the tower arch, installing a disabled toilet, kitchen facilities and storage in the tower, and connecting mains water and drainage. We offered a grant of £7,000 towards a total cost of £146,500

A similar, though rather larger, scheme was proposed at **St Lawrence, Hungerford**. Here the plan is to develop the west end, creating meeting rooms and a kitchen under the (currently little-used) gallery, with a vestry and third meeting room above, to replace the existing uneven flooring with stone paving, and to install toilets and a new boiler. We offered £5,000 towards an estimated project cost of £743,000.

The third development application came from **St James, Leckhampstead**. This represents a further phase in what is a very ambitious project for a small parish, involving restoration of the porch, major repairs to the roof (we reported on this in our report for 2019/20), and the provision of modern facilities in the church. It is proposed to relay the floor (re-using the Victorian tiles where possible) and instal underfloor heating (replacing the old wall-mounted radiant heaters which have been condemned as unsafe: the church currently has no heating) and a toilet. Most of the pews (those not damaged by wood-boring beetle) will be retained, but fitted with casters, so they will be moveable, thus allowing for flexible space at the back of the nave. We offered £6,000 towards a total cost of £168,000.

The remaining two offers were to **All Saints, Windsor**, for a new lighting system, and to **St Mary, Beech Hill**, for structural repairs (a serious crack has developed towards the eastern end of the south wall, requiring the removal of a stained glass window and threatening the integrity of the building)).

The latter offer is significant, as it is towards the cost of a detailed survey and design work. Hitherto we have not generally given grants at such an early stage of a project. However, as in the case of Great Shefford, we felt that prompt investigation was essential, and were anxious that funding should be in place to allow it go ahead as soon as possible. Taken together, these two grants mark a slight change of policy, approved by the Trustees in June 2022, allowing us to encourage and support early intervention, in the hope that this will both prevent more serious problems emerging later and help churches to define major projects and thus have a better starting point for planning, fund-raising and execution.

Altogether, our offers during the year amounted to £23,500.

## EVENTS

After a gap of two years, we were delighted to be able to hold our Englefield Lecture once again. This year, in the magnificent Long Gallery at Englefield House, we welcomed around 90 people to hear Brigadier Michael Aris DL, supported by Richard Bennett DL, give an absorbing lecture on *The Duke of Wellington - A Life of Service*. Aided by a splendid succession of illustrations, Michael took us through the Duke's military career in India, the Peninsula and culminating at Waterloo, his political service and his role as an elder statesman advising the young Queen Victoria. The evening was a great success, and raised over £1200 for the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust.

In August we were able to offer an additional event, arranged by Graham Barker DL, one of our Trustees. This was a visit to Bray, to include the church of St Michael and the Jesus Hospital. The church was built in 1293 by Queen Margaret, the second wife of Edward I. The Church Hall was probably erected as a chantry chapel for the soul of King Edward's first wife, Eleanor. Amongst the many interesting features in the church is the tomb of William Goddard, who founded the almshouse known as Jesus Hospital in 1627. Here we visited the chapel of Jesus Hospital, a grade I listed building, not normally open to the public, and had a leisurely tour of the delightful site. Afterwards we repaired to the sixteenth century Crown Inn for a light lunch. A beautifully sunny day with the lightest of breezes, good company, and excellent presentations by our hosts all made this a most enjoyable occasion.

The annual Ride and Stride, in September, was successful insofar as the sum raised for the Trust was slightly greater than in 2021, but perhaps less so in terms of participation. The event remains important for fund-raising, but attracting active engagement is increasingly challenging. A full report appears below.

The final event of the year was our annual meeting and church tour, which took place in October, and included visits to four churches in Maidenhead. A full report appears below.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Our first Newsletter appeared in March 2022. During the year under review we published three more issues containing news of the Trust, including recent grants and forthcoming events, reports of Trust activities, news of related organisations and occasional book reviews. Attractively illustrated, these are designed to keep supporters well-informed about the Trust, and - we hope - attract new supporters. They are sent to all regular supporters (by email where possible) and made available on our website

## **PEOPLE**

During the year we appointed two new trustees: Willie Hartley Russell DL and Lucy Zeal DL. We are delighted to welcome them and look forward to a long association. We also welcomed Anne Armstrong as the member of the Executive Committee representing the Wokingham area.

With great regret we said farewell to Michelle Martin. Michelle brought to the Committee her considerable experience of managing the major project at Leckhampstead, and we shall miss her contributions to our discussions, but wish her well as she oversees Phase 3 of that work.

## **RIDE AND STRIDE**

We look back on Ride and Stride 2022 with mixed feelings. On the one hand we can only be delighted that the total raised, £25,882, exceeded, by a small sum, that achieved in 2021, which was itself the best result for many years. However, the event continues to rely on the efforts of a relatively small number of people, and it is undeniable that the level of engagement, both by churches and individuals, was disappointingly small.

Of the 62 churches to make returns, just over half had raised funds, in sums ranging from £10 to £2660. The church with the best result was St Peter's, Woolhampton (which also recorded the participant with the highest individual total), but three others each raised £2,000 or more. Churches reporting visitor numbers recorded between one and 22 each,

though only seven had ten or more visitors on the day. Whilst for participants it is always a real pleasure to see a welcoming face on arrival at a church, at those places reporting low numbers it must sometimes have felt disappointing to see so few visitors. We were therefore heartened to read the comment from Wokingham Quakers that ‘we had a lovely day sitting outside the Meeting House, serving refreshments and meeting folk’.

Altogether some 50 individuals took part as riders or striders, between them making a little over 300 church visits - figures comparable to 2022. The team of young riders at Midgham collectively accounted for 46 of those visitors. A group of seven from St John’s, Crowthorne walked in Wokingham, and three cyclists from St Andrew’s, Caversham (including an Albanian student visiting the UK and an 85-year-old retired solicitor) toured Reading. Our trustee Torquil Montague Johnstone clocked up 22 churches in his tour of the Bradfield area between 10.00 a.m. and 6 p.m. Trustees Catherine Haig and Peter Durrant, unable to walk on Ride and Stride day because of prior commitments, opted instead to go out on the following Friday, walking part of the Lambourn Valley Way from Boxford to Lambourn in glorious autumn weather, visiting seven churches, all wonderfully different (and all open) and enjoying the lovely west Berkshire landscape on the way. (On their return from Lambourn they detoured to admire the splendid Saxon tower and the nineteenth-century papier-maché elephants at Wickham). A full report (with pictures) is on the website.

Ride and Stride remains the most important fundraising event of the Year for the Trust, and we are grateful to all who took part - local organisers, church stewards, riders and striders themselves, and those who generously sponsored them. We also acknowledge the work of the Trust’s Ride and Stride team, and especially that of our county co-ordinator Prue Matchwick, who worked tirelessly in the months leading up to the event to rally support. For those who do take part it is generally a positive experience, and it is the more disappointing that we have so far been unable to encourage greater participation. This continues to be a real challenge for the Trust in the future.

## **ANNUAL MEETING AND CHURCH TOUR**

Our 2022 annual meeting and church tour took us once again to east Berkshire, this time to visit four churches in Maidenhead, including two to which we had recently given grants.

We began the afternoon at St Peter, Furze Platt, in north Maidenhead. After a brief business meeting in one of the church rooms, and an introduction to the annual report by our Chairman, we were able to visit the church itself. This is a late-nineteenth-century building designed by local architect E J Shrewsbury (though the tower wasn’t added until 1963). We were welcomed there by Tony May, who gave us an enlightening account of the history of the church and parish.

From here we drove south to visit St Luke’s church, where we were met by Ann Darracott. Ann is an authority on the church, and was able to impart a wealth of information about its history. It is a large and imposing building in Purbeck stone (and in that respect different from the other three churches we visited, all of which were mainly of brick). Designed by the London architect G R Clarke, it has had later additions, including a spire designed by John Oldrid Scott and added in 1893. It has a fine wrought-iron screen to the chancel, wall paintings which include a Jacob’s Ladder on tiles over the chancel arch, and some very good stained glass.

Just around the corner from Luke’s is St Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church, where our host and guide was the Parish Priest, Father Liam Cummins. The church was designed in two

stages by Leonard Stokes, whose work included many buildings for Roman Catholic clients. Its exterior, in a sort of Arts and Crafts style, is eye-catching; the interior is even more striking, particularly the impressive sanctuary, raised well above the level of the nave, with its memorable marble dado. We had contributed to the cost of a replacement heating system, following the failure of the church's aged boiler, and were pleased to know that it was performing both effectively and economically.

Our final church, and the undoubted climax of the afternoon, was All Saints, Boyne Hill. This is a masterpiece by G E Street, sometime architect to the Diocese of Oxford, and a man with many fine churches to his name. The church is part of a complex of buildings, including parsonage, school, clergy house and almshouses, mostly set around an enclosed quadrangle. It is constructed between 1855 and 1857 of richly polychromatic brickwork with stone dressings, and has an imposing north-west tower and spire. Most of the funding was provided by Emily and Maria Hulse, the Tractarian daughters of a former vicar of Holy Trinity, Reading, and it has always been Anglo-Catholic in its churchmanship. The interior is magnificent, but over the years the Victorian tiled floor had decayed to the point where it had become dangerous, and was inhibiting the church's work in the community. The project to restore it - to which we had contributed (and which was featured in last year's annual report) - had recently been completed, and the floor looked splendid. Churchwarden Ken Smith, who had masterminded the project, gave us an absorbing account of its progress (not omitting the difficulties encountered) and we were full of admiration for such an achievement. Ken's talk was followed by an excellent tea, and the afternoon concluded with a service of evening prayer, led by the vicar, the Revd Jeremy Harris, where we gave thanks again for our heritage of historic churches and for the work of the Trust in helping preserve them, and prayed for blessing on our future endeavours.

At all the churches we visited we were met with great warmth, and we extend our thanks to those who gave up their Saturday afternoons to welcome us.

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2023**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>2023 £</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>2022 £</b>
<b>Voluntary Sources</b>					
Donations		9,106		7,000	
Legacies		-		-	
Gift aid for current year		639		541	
Church Membership		<u>2,230</u>		<u>2,260</u>	
			11,975		9,801
<b>Fundraising Income</b>					
Ride & Stride	1	16,192		15,340	
Lecture	4	1,530		-	
Bray visit	5	300		-	
Fund Raising Events other (teas etc)	5	<u>157</u>		<u>114</u>	
			18,179		15,454
<b>Trading Income</b>					
Christmas Card Sales	3		547		717
<b>Other Income</b>					
Bank compensation		-		50	
Interest		49		49	
United Trust Bank		432		310	
CCLA		<u>581</u>		<u>15</u>	
			1,062		424
<b>Total Income</b>			<b><u>31,763</u></b>		<b><u>26,396</u></b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b>Direct Charitable Expenditure</b>					
Grants to Churches	2		19,250		18,000
<b>Fundraising Expenses</b>					
Ride & Stride	1		-		240
Lecture	4		266		-
<b>Trading Expenses</b>					
Expenses re Christmas Cards			51		133
<b>Administration</b>					
Printing, Postage & Administration			559		218
Insurance			150		-
Annual Report & Leaflets			314		238
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<b><u>20,590</u></b>		<b><u>18,829</u></b>
<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>			<b><u>11,173</u></b>		<b><u>7,567</u></b>

**Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2023 £</b>	<b>2022 £</b>
<b>Yorkshire Bank</b>		
Current account	36,828	26,664
Savings account	48,559	48,509
Ride & Stride account	1,590	1,515
<b>CCLA COIF Charities Deposit Fund</b>	33,322	32,742
<b>United Trust Bank</b>	35,638	35,206
<b>Not yet received from Cards for Good Causes</b>	-	289
<b>R &amp; S for 2022 received in 23/24</b>	161	
<b>Yorkshire Bank WREN account (Restricted)</b>	1	1
	<b><u>156,099</u></b>	<b><u>144,926</u></b>
<b>General Fund</b>		
Balance at 1 April 2022	144,926	137,359
Deficit/Surplus for year	11,173	7,567
Balance at 31 March 2023	<b><u>156,099</u></b>	<b><u>144,926</u></b>

**Examiner's report**

We have examined the books and records and confirm that these accounts reflect the transactions for the year

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
	£	£
<b>Note 1 - Ride &amp; Stride</b>		
The major fundraising event during the year was the sponsored Ride & Stride. This raised:		
Gross Funds (without Gift Aid)	21,881	20,811
Gift Aid	<u>4,102</u>	<u>4,452</u>
	25,983	25,263
less repayments to Churches	<u>9,790</u>	<u>9,923</u>
	16,192	15,340
less expenses	<u>16,192</u>	<u>15,100</u>

**Note 2 - Grants to Churches during year to 31 March 2023**

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
St Joseph's, Maidenhead	-	5,000
All Saint's, Boyne Hill	-	10,000
St Mary's, East Illsley		3,000
St Mary's, Great shefford	500	-
St James', Eastbury	5,000	-
All Saints, East Garston	3,300	-
St Nicholas, Beedon	450	
All Saint's, Wokingham	<u>10,000</u>	-
	<u>19,250</u>	<u>18,000</u>

**Grant funds offered but not paid at 31 March 2023**

St Mary's, East Illsley	7,000	7,000
St James', Eastbury	-	5,000
St Mary's, Kintbury	1,800	-
All Saints', Wokingham	-	10,000
St Mary's, Great Shefford	-	500
St Barnabas, Peasemore	7,000	-
St Lawrence, Hungerford (to be confirmed)	5,000	-
All Saints, Windsor	5,000	-
St James, Leckhampstead	6,000	-
St Mary's Beech Hill	500	-
	<u>32,300</u>	<u>22,500</u>

**Note 3 Trading profits from sale of Christmas cards**

Total Receipts	547	717
Less postage	<u>51</u>	<u>133</u>
	<u>497</u>	<u>584</u>

No account has been taken of the value of stock in hand at 31 March 2023  
The stock held in 2022 was estimated to be negligible

**Note 4 Lecture**

Total Receipts	1,530	-
Less expenses	<u>267</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>1,263</u>	<u>-</u>

**Note 5 Other Fundraising**

Ringers tea	79	-
Bray outing	300	20
Outing teas	<u>78</u>	<u>94</u>
	<u>457</u>	<u>114</u>

***Examiner's report***

We have examined the books and records and confirm that these accounts reflect the transactions for the year

Signed  
12/07/2023

John Cullen  
Retired ACCA

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**

England & Wales - Charity number 288797

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# Accounts

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# Berkshire Historic Churches Trust

## Annual Report for 2021-2

### GRANTS

We gave three grants in 2021/22, to a total of £18,000, one for a floor, one for a heating system and one for windows. For the first time in several years none was for a roof – though this does not mean, unfortunately, that every church roof in Berkshire is now secure, for we have already made one offer and we know that there is at least one more application imminent!

Our largest grant was to **All Saints, Boyne Hill** in Maidenhead towards the cost of restoring the Victorian tiled floor. The church is an outstanding work by one of the leading nineteenth-century church architects, G E Street. The original floor of specially designed tiles was beginning to crumble and had become a hazard. It needed to be completely re-laid, with broken and damaged tiles replaced, but the specialist nature of the work made it an expensive project. We were glad to be able to help. The church is active in the local community, hosting many events besides regular services of worship, and a safe floor is obviously essential if it is to continue and expand its work. We gave £10,000 towards a total project cost of £242,378.

The heating grant was to **St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Maidenhead**, to replace three old boilers (two already defunct and one on its last legs), and to renew the heating system generally to make it more efficient and environmentally sound. This church too has an active community role. We gave £5,000 towards a project cost of £85,264.

The third grant was to **St Mary, East Ilsley**. We had promised £10,000 towards an ambitious restoration programme encompassing work to the roof, windows and stonework. The church had struggled to raise the funds required for the whole project, but the work to the windows was urgent, and we agreed to release a part of the grant to enable this to go ahead. Our grant of £3,000 was paid through The Good Exchange so that it attracted match funding from the Greenham Common Trust.

*New applications* were few and far between this year. We offered a major grant to **All Saints, Wokingham**, for their ambitious 'Space for All' project, encompassing a major reordering, a new floor with underfloor heating, repairs to stonework and redecoration, and improvements including a servery and toilet, to equip the church to fulfil its potential as a civic church and community space. Smaller grants were offered to **St James, Eastbury**, for the renewal of the roof on the south side, and to **St Mary, Great Shefford**, to assist with investigative work into dry rot in the tower.

Whilst the number of grants paid and offered might have fallen from the year before, this is sadly not an indication that all is well with our churches (and it is not just roofs that are the problem), but rather a clear sign that the financial situation in which churches find themselves is extremely difficult. We know of a number of cases where action is required and where projects are under consideration, demonstrating a continuing need for repair and improvement, but where work cannot start because of the financial position of the church. We also know of the vital role that churches play in our communities. To continue that work they need buildings that are warm, welcoming and weathertight: our role, whether through grants, advice or encouragement, is to help them to achieve that.

## **EVENTS**

After the enforced inactivity of 2020/21 we were at least able to arrange our annual meeting and church tour, though the Englefield Lecture was again a casualty of Covid. A full report of the annual meeting appears [below]. Ride and Stride did take place, and in spite of reduced participation raised nearly £25,000, a significant increase on the previous year and a most encouraging performance in financial terms if not in engagement. A full report appears [on page xxx].

## **PEOPLE**

During the year we welcomed a number of new faces to the Trust, and, with regret, said farewell to others.

Most notably, we said both farewell and welcome to Erica Harman. Erica was the Trust's first chairman, a role she fulfilled with huge energy and commitment, working tirelessly to establish the Trust and devoting her considerable skills to promoting its work. Its success owes much to her leadership, and all of us involved in the Trust today stand in her debt. However, after more than thirty years as a trustee (and for most of those as chairman) she felt the time had come to retire, a decision we accepted, though with great regret. Happily, she accepted nomination as a Vice-President: we welcomed her in her new role and are delighted that her connection with the Trust will continue.

We also welcomed the Rt Rev Geoffrey Scott, Abbot of Douai and a distinguished scholar and historian of Roman Catholicism, as a Vice-President, and Graham Barker, Vice Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, and Jonathan Welfare as trustees.

There were several changes to the Executive Committee. Guy Cole left us on his appointment as Team Rector of Leominster in the diocese of Hereford, and John Edwards on his retirement from active ministry. We welcomed the Rev Carol Dunk as representative for the Bracknell area in succession to Guy, and Michelle Martin, a churchwarden at Leckhampstead, both of whom will bring valuable experience to our work. We also welcomed Christine Walker, who joined the Ride and Stride sub-committee as representative for the Wokingham area.

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The challenges facing our churches today are enormous, and in the face of this we were prompted to sit down and reconsider how we, as a small trust with limited funds, could help to make a difference. Without a doubt, the best way to really make a difference would be to raise more money to give in grants, but for this we will need to increase substantially the number of our supporters and donors. To this end, with a view to raising the profile of the trust, we have set up a small sub-committee to look at events and communications. In February we published the first issue of what we hope will become a regular newsletter, and at the year's end we had plans not only for a revived Englefield Lecture (in abeyance during the pandemic), but also two further events that we hope will attract interest and support. But we also want to work with churches and with the diocese to help churches embarking on conservation or development projects, and we have set up a separate sub-committee to review and make recommendations on ways to provide appropriate help and advice. Meanwhile, our need to promote Ride and Stride and increase engagement is as great as ever, and the standing Ride and Stride sub-committee continues to meet regularly to discuss ways of achieving this.

All this takes time and energy, and commitment from the small team of people involved, but we are optimistic that even in the present challenging circumstances we *can* make a difference – and we are determined to do so.

## Annual Meeting and Church Tour 2021

Our 2021 annual meeting and church tour took us, on a lovely early-autumn afternoon, to four churches in east Berkshire. After missing out in 2020, on account of Covid restrictions, it was a delight once again to visit some of Berkshire's wonderful churches, including, this year, two to which we have recently given grants.

We began the afternoon at Holy Trinity, Cookham. Here we had supported work on the tower, and the first thing to catch our eyes as we entered the church was a display of photographs, eloquently illustrating both the need for the repair and the quality of the finished work. The tower is now safe again, and will be for many years to come.

After a brief report by our chairman on the past year, Michael Johnson, a former churchwarden, treated us to a short history of the church. There has been a church in Cookham since before the Norman conquest, and many people have passed through its doors in the intervening millennium. Some of these are commemorated in the fine brasses and monuments to be found in the church, which Michael pointed out to us, and which happily we had time after his talk to explore and admire more closely.

From Cookham we made our way to All Saints, Bisham, another Thames-side church with a long history, where we were met and welcomed by Sheila Featherstone-Clark. Bisham is widely renowned for its monuments to members of the Hoby and Vansittart-Neale families, and Sheila spoke about the background to these in a brief but wide-ranging introductory talk. Our members were glad of the opportunity to study and admire these; some of us were also interested in seeing the smart new toilet that we had helped fund. The toilet is cunningly fitted into an old boiler room; what is not apparent is that, because the church is on low-lying ground by the river, the drain had to run uphill – an added complication! Now this facility is helping the church realise its ambition to become truly a building for all.

After Bisham we drove to St James the Less, Stubbings. Stubbings, once in the parish of Cookham Dean (but some distance from the parish church) is even today a tiny hamlet, and was even smaller when the church was built 170 years ago. It was paid for by Henry Skrine, the Lord of the Manor (one of whose sons was the first incumbent) and was built to designs by R C Carpenter, a noted architect of the early gothic revival. It is remarkably little altered. Roger Strike, the church's historian, gave us a short introductory talk. As we looked round afterwards, churchwarden Sue Harrington Hill drew back the curtain behind the altar to reveal the most marvellous glazed wall tiles. The sight drew gasps of amazement from the group of visitors.

Our last church was St John the Baptist, Cookham Dean. Here, after admiring the magnificent view from the churchyard across the Thames Valley, we went into the Jubilee vestry for a splendid tea, before moving into the church itself. This church was also designed by Carpenter, and has been described as 'an epitome of the Camdenian ideal of the small village church, of "unpretending but solemn character"'. In the church, our secretary, John Pritchard, spoke about the revolution in church design that occurred in the

early nineteenth century, and of the role that the Cambridge Camden Society played in bringing this about, thus valuably placing St John's in its historical context and explaining its significance in the gothic revival movement.

We finished the day, as usual, with a service of evensong, where we gave thanks for our heritage of historic churches and for the work of the Trust in helping to preserve them, and prayed for blessing on our future endeavours.

At all the churches we visited we were met with great warmth, and we extend out thanks to those who gave up their Saturday afternoons to welcome us and introduce us to their building.

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2022**

<i>Income</i>	Note	£	<u>2022</u> £	£	<u>2021</u> £
<b>Voluntary Sources</b>					
Donations		7,000		3,555	
Legacies		-		1,000	
Gift aid for current year		541		515	
Church Membership		<u>2,260</u>		<u>2,670</u>	
			9,801		7,740
<b>Fundraising Income</b>					
Ride & Stride	1	15,340		11,739	
Lecture	4	-		-	
Fund Raising Events other (teas etc)	5	<u>114</u>		<u>-</u>	
			15,454		11,739
<b>Trading Income</b>					
Christmas Card Sales	3		717		1,192
<b>Other Income</b>					
Bank compensation		50		80	
Interest		49		49	
United Trust Bank		310		401	
CCLA		<u>15</u>		<u>38</u>	
			424		568
<b>Total Income</b>			<u><b>26,396</b></u>		<u><b>21,239</b></u>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b>Direct Charitable Expenditure</b>					
Grants to Churches	2		18,000		29,500
<b>Fundraising Expenses</b>					
Ride & Stride	1		240		100
Lecture	4		-		-
<b>Trading Expenses</b>					
Expenses re Christmas Cards			133		470
<b>Administration</b>					
Printing, Postage & Administration			218		284
Examination of Accounts			-		-
Annual Report & Leaflets			238		142
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<u><b>18,829</b></u>		<u><b>30,496</b></u>
<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>			<u><b>7,567</b></u>		<u><b>(9,257)</b></u>
<b><u>Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021</u></b>					
<b>Assets</b>					
<b>Yorkshire Bank</b>					
Current account			26,664		19,587
Savings account			48,509		48,461
Ride & Stride account			1,515		1,190
<b>CCLA COIF Charities Deposit Fund</b>			32,742		32,727
<b>United Trust Bank</b>			35,206		34,896
<b>Not yet received from Cards for Good Causes</b>			289		497
<b>Yorkshire Bank WREN account (Restricted)</b>			1		1
			<u><b>144,926</b></u>		<u><b>137,359</b></u>
<b>General Fund</b>					
Balance at 1 April 2020			137,359		146,616
Deficit/Surplus for year			7,567		(9,257)
Balance at 31 March 2021			<u><b>144,926</b></u>		<u><b>137,359</b></u>

**Examiner's report**

We have examined the books and records and confirm that these accounts reflect the transactions for the year

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	£	£
<b>Note 1 - Ride &amp; Stride</b>		
The major fundraising event during the year was the sponsored Ride & Stride. This raised:		
Gross Funds (without Gift Aid)	20,811	15,408
Gift Aid	4,452	2,575
	<b>25,263</b>	<b>17,981</b>
less repayments to Churches	9,923	6,242
	<b>15,340</b>	<b>11,739</b>
less expenses	240	100
	<b>15,100</b>	<b>11,639</b>

**Note 2 - Grants to Churches during year to 31 March 2022**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	£	£
St James, Leckhampstead	-	2,000
All Saints, Farnborough	-	2,000
Emmanuel Church, Woodley	-	5,000
St Peter's, Woolhampton	-	10,000
St Swithin, Coombe	-	1,000
St Michael's, Lambourn	-	1,500
All Saints, Wokingham	-	1,000
St Mary's, Fawley	-	2,000
All Saint's, East Garston	-	5,000
St Joseph's, Maidenhead	5,000	-
All Saint's Boyne Hill	10,000	-
St Mary's East Ilsley	3,000	-
	<b>18,000</b>	<b>29,500</b>

**Grant funds offered but not paid at 31 March 2022**

St Mary's, East Ilsley	7,000	10,000
St Joseph's, Maidenhead	-	5,000
All Saints' Wokingham	10,000	-
St Mary's Great Shefford	500	-
St James' Eastbury	5,000	-
All Saints, Boyne Hill	-	10,000
	<b>22,500</b>	<b>25,000</b>

**Note 3 Trading profits from sale of Christmas cards**

Total Receipts	717	1,192
Less purchases	133	470
	<b>584</b>	<b>722</b>

No account has been taken of the value of stock in hand at 31 March 2022 which is of negligible value. The stock held in 2021 was estimated to be £500.

**Note 4 Lecture**

Total Receipts	-	-
Less expenses	-	-
	-	-

**Note 5 Other Fundraising**

Sale of wine	20	-
Outing teas	94	55
	<b>114</b>	<b>55</b>

**BERKSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
<b>Income</b>		
Voluntary Sources	7,000	3,555
Donations	-	1,000
Legacies	-	-
Gift aid for current year	541	515
Church Membership	2,260	2,670
<b>Fundraising Income</b>	9,801	7,740
Ride & Stride	15,340	11,739
Lecture	-	-
Fund Raising Events other (teas etc)	114	-
<b>Trading Income</b>	15,454	11,739
Christmas Card Sales	717	1,192
<b>Other Income</b>	3	-
Bank compensation	50	80
Interest	49	49
United Trust Bank	310	401
CCLA	15	38
<b>Expenditure</b>	26,396	21,239
<b>Direct Charitable Expenditure</b>	18,000	29,500
Grants to Churches	2	-
Fundraising Expenses	240	100
Ride & Stride	1	-
Lecture	4	-
<b>Trading Expenses</b>	-	-
Expenses re Christmas Cards	133	470
<b>Administration</b>	218	284
Printing, Postage & Administration	-	-
Examination of Accounts	238	142
Annual Report & Leaflets	18,829	30,496
<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>	7,567	(9,257)
<b>Assets</b>		
Yorksire Bank	26,664	19,587
Current account	48,509	48,461
Savings account	1,515	1,190
Ride & Stride account	32,742	32,727
CCLA COIF Charities Deposit Fund	35,206	34,896
United Trust Bank	289	497
Not yet received from Cards for Good Causes	1	1
Yorksire Bank WREN account (Restricted)	144,926	137,359
<b>General Fund</b>	137,359	146,616
Balance at 1 April 2020	7,567	(9,257)
Deficit/Surplus for year	144,926	137,359
Balance at 31 March 2021		

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021

Assets  
Yorksire Bank  
Current account  
Savings account  
Ride & Stride account  
CCLA COIF Charities Deposit Fund  
United Trust Bank  
Not yet received from Cards for Good Causes  
Yorksire Bank WREN account (Restricted)

Examiner's report  
We have examined the books and records and confirm that these accounts reflect the transactions for the year

*John Curran*  
27/3/22  
Reviewed ACLA