

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

			<u>2023</u>		<u>2022</u>
<i>Income</i>	<i>Note</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Voluntary Sources					
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
Fundraising Income					
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
Trading Income					
Christmas Card Sales	3		547		717
Other Income					
Bank compensation		-		50	
Interest		49		49	
United Trust Bank		432		310	
CCLA		<u>581</u>		<u>15</u>	
			1,062		424
Total Income			<u>31,763</u>		<u>26,396</u>
Expenditure					
Direct Charitable Expenditure					
Grants to Churches	2		19,250		18,000
Fundraising Expenses					
Ride & Stride	1		-		240
Lecture	4		266		-
Trading Expenses					
Expenses re Christmas Cards			51		133
Administration					
Printing, Postage & Administration			559		218
Insurance			150		-
Annual Report & Leaflets			314		238
Total Expenditure			<u>20,590</u>		<u>18,829</u>
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD			<u>11,173</u>		<u>7,567</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

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

	<u>2023</u> £	<u>2022</u> £
Note 1 - Ride & Stride		
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	4,102	4,452
	<u>25,983</u>	<u>25,263</u>
less repayments to Churches	9,790	9,923
	<u>16,192</u>	<u>15,340</u>
less expenses		240
	<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 Ilsley		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	10,000	-
	<u>19,250</u>	<u>18,000</u>

Grant funds offered but not paid at 31 March 2023

St Mary's, East Ilsley	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	51	133
	<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	267	-
	<u>1,263</u>	<u>-</u>

Note 5 Other Fundraising

Ringers tea	79	-
Bray outing	300	20
Outing teas	78	94
	<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