

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**Chester
Women's
Aid**

NO EXCUSE FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE

FROM THE CHAIR



This AGM marks the end of my inaugural year as Chair of Chester Women's Aid, having taken over from Fiona Neame at last year's AGM.

2020-2021 has continued to be a challenging year not just in the charitable sector, but in society, and particularly for those experiencing abuse. The continuation of lock downs in the UK and other social restrictions has meant that the 'shadow pandemic' of domestic abuse has continued in parallel with the COVID pandemic.

In April, the Domestic Abuse Bill received Royal Assent, which expanded the legal definition of Domestic Abuse to include non-physical abuse such as coercive control, emotional, and economic abuse.

The courts and police have been granted additional powers and victims additional protections in regard to domestic abuse. Importantly, it recognises children as victims of abuse if they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse. Whilst there are some desired protections and actions left out of the Bill, it is the most significant legal recognition of the scourge of domestic abuse on our society, and in particular for women and children. Chester Women's Aid's Board of Trustees welcomed the passage of the bill, having participated in the consultations leading up to its readings in Parliament.

Alongside the Bill, Her Majesty's government has further recognised that the increase of working from home due to the pandemic has meant an increased risk for those in abusive relationships and as a result, has emphasized the role of employers in keeping their employees safe regardless of their work location. On 14 January 2021, Business Minister Paul Scully called on employers to ensure their organisations are spotting signs of domestic abuse and helping their staff find the right support. His open letter recommends raising awareness, making your support clear, and signposting employees to resources.

Our most significant achievement in the 2020-2021 year was launching our domestic abuse awareness training for employers, in service of our vision of a “Domestic Abuse Free Chester”. It has been created to help Cheshire businesses recognise domestic abuse and enable them to direct employees to appropriate sources of help. The aim of the training is to support employers with their duty of care to provide a safe and inclusive workplace for all. We have been working closely with UP CIC who deliver the live (virtual at present) training on our behalf. Due to funding received in March of 2020 from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, we are able to offer the training free of charge to small/medium enterprises and sole traders and continue our emergency grant programme for those escaping and recovering from domestic abuse.

The grant programme itself had a milestone this year with the launch of our “Homes for Hope” voucher programme, utilising Love2Shop cards generously donated by the Appreciate Group. When a successful application is made for one of our grants, the cards can be topped up with our emergency grant funds and given to survivors who are often moving into new homes following an escape from abuse. The funds can be spent at a wide range of shops using the cards.

The ongoing pandemic has also meant another year without in-person events, at which Chester Women’s Aid could raise funds and awareness. Despite this challenge, we have continued to receive donations and support from repeat and new donors following our Christmas and urgent appeals, and personal fundraising efforts by supporters. We sincerely hope for a safe return to live events in the next year so that we can meet our members, donors, and friends again.

We now look ahead to our 2021-2022 year, focusing on the continued development of the training programme, Homes for Hope, and the succession of our Board of Trustees. These will be accompanied by an exciting new website and brand evolution, so stay tuned! The tireless work of our Board of Trustees has resulted in the success of our projects, and I sincerely thank them for their dedication, support, and trust over the last year.



NO EXCUSE FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE

Our beliefs:

- Domestic abuse can affect anyone
- The overwhelming majority of victims are women and their children
- We believe in the right of all women to live free from fear and abuse

Our actions:

- Fundraise and provide financial grants to victims who are in crisis need
- Monitor service provision of relevant local agencies
- Promote interaction, good practice and knowledge exchange between organisations
- Raise awareness of and educate about domestic abuse

EMERGENCY GRANT FUNDING UPDATE

One of Chester Women's Aid's core activities is the giving of emergency grant aid to people experiencing domestic abuse, who may have to leave their home at very short notice. Some are able to "target harden" their home to enable them to stay there safely, but if they have been financially controlled, they may have no access to funds of their own.

People can access these emergency grants via the key workers who are supporting them. We ask that a risk assessment has been completed for each case, so that we can be sure that the person who has been harmed is in a safe place, where the help we give will enable them to start their new life with some personal possessions and other urgently required items, such as new glasses, ID documents, travel to appointments and other necessities too numerous and varied to mention.

Where hardship is still being experienced, for example at the time of moving out of refuge or dispersed housing, we will occasionally make a second grant for household essentials or moving costs. We are somewhat reluctant to do this, because we would always want to have funds available for people at the point of fleeing, however we do review each case individually.

To ensure that the review of the grant funding applications is fair, we have a sub-Committee that discusses every application form, and a majority decision is required, before funds are granted. The sub-Committee sometimes increase or decrease the amount requested and will frequently ask supplementary questions for clarification of the circumstances. Each grant application is coded to ensure a degree of anonymity while still being able to monitor number of applications per client, and the grant is issued through the key worker, rather than handed over by CWA.

CWA's objectives include monitoring local provision of support for people experiencing domestic abuse, so we do report to Cheshire West and Chester's domestic abuse support services if we notice any trends developing across the range of agencies who request emergency grants for clients. We have noted an increase in the number of grants paid to people who experience so called Honour Based Violence, but this could actually be a positive sign that people now feel more supported to escape this form of abuse. Recently we have written to our MP to raise awareness of and query delays in setting up payment of Universal Credit to people who have experienced domestic abuse, which results in the need for an emergency grant to bridge the gap.

Since the beginning of March this year CWA has given out 40 grants totalling £5,517.00. Whilst we are pleased to be able to help, it is a shocking number of people to find themselves in such desperate need, solely due to the actions of another person who is harming them, and we are only halfway through our financial year for 2021-22.

URGENT APPEAL

Throughout this pandemic we received double the amount of grant requests. As a result we issued an urgent appeal, asking for donations so we could continue giving grants to people in need.

The women needing help, some pregnant and some with young children, needed emergency funding to cover basic items that most people take for granted.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

CHESTER WOMEN'S AID FROM A NEW MEMBER'S PERSPECTIVE - HANNAH LANGFORD

During the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was restless and at a loss. It was the first time I had ever had so much time on my hands, yet so little I could do. I have always been passionate and a strong advocate of women's rights and empowerment for individuals. I had spoken to Fiona in 2019 when she was the Chair of CWA and discussed volunteering with the charity. However, at the time I could not commit to the charity due to my job role. Then the pandemic hit and I was left redundant, recovering from major surgery and had all the time in the world.

I got in contact with CWA again and applied for the Treasurer role. I was voted in by the committee and was set to work. From the get go I discovered things about the charity and the people they help during my first few months as Treasurer. The charity does so much the general public would never imagine they would do. They lobby parliament, campaign for those fleeing domestic abuse and help victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Furthermore, volunteering for CWA gave me a new perspective on life and how so much of our society is in need of change and how little is known about domestic abuse.

Meeting the committee members and general volunteers has been one of the best things for me, as meeting like-minded individuals who share the same common interests and goals as myself was refreshing. I felt I had made new friendships after feeling the loneliness of lockdown.

CWA has supported me from the moment I started and there is always a friendly face or someone at the end of the phone to talk to. When I started my Masters at the University of Chester in October 2020, they offered me a new position as Marketing Co-ordinator, to aid and develop my skills for when I have graduated and am looking for a permanent job in my desired field.



HIGHLIGHTS

#STITCH4SURVIVORS

This year, we continued to engage in the community-led project #Stitch4Survivors, in order to raise awareness and show support for all victims of domestic abuse.

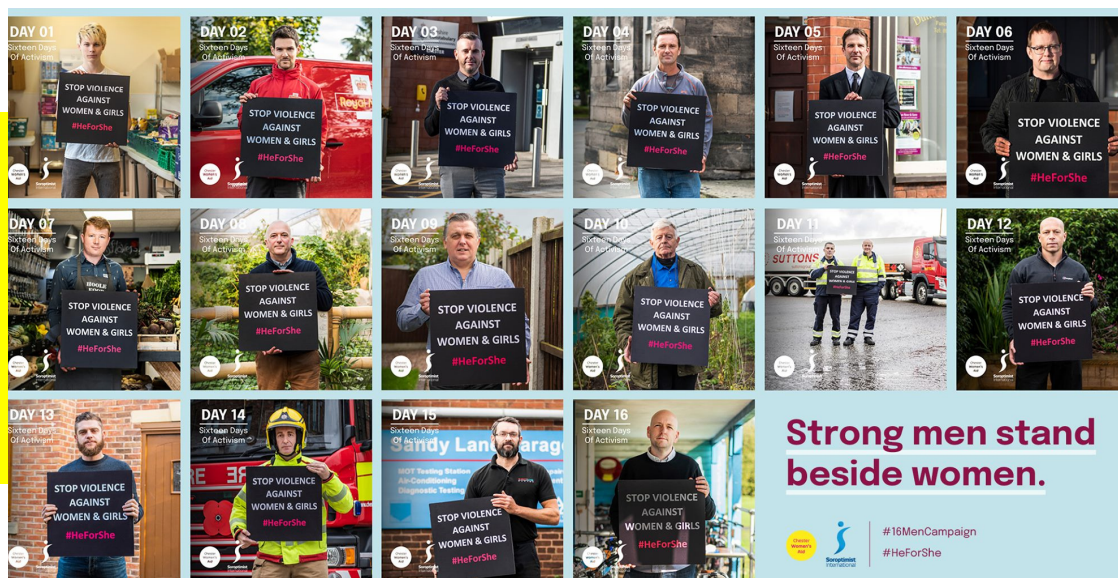
As part of our annual White Ribbon Day event, we held a virtual #Stitch4Survivors knit-a-thon, in order to produce pieces which would contribute to the large community ribbon. We additionally asked the people of Chester to get involved with World Wide Knit in Public Day to raise awareness and support for victims of domestic abuse.

It is great to have the community white ribbon to showcase the overwhelming support Chester has given to people who have experienced domestic abuse! The #Stitch4Survivors project has now raised £682 for victims of domestic abuse in Chester, and we cannot wait to continue knitting into the new year.



Emma in 2019

16 MEN CAMPAIGN



In November 2020, we ran a 16 men campaign, in partnership with Sorooptimists International Chester. The campaign featured men from the local community showing their support for stopping violence against women and girls.

Thank you to everyone involved in making the campaign a success, especially to photographer Kat (Kat Hannon Photography).

HIGHLIGHTS

OPENING OUR DOORS



During the first two week of the lockdown in 2020, at least 16 Domestic Abuse killings took place in the UK - a figure much higher than that of previous years. Calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helplines had also doubled by the third week of lock down.

This situation highlighted the importance of initiatives such as the multi-agency, Cheshire wide, Open the Door campaign, which aims to 'open the door' on unhealthy relationships and domestic abuse, encouraging people to seek help, advice and support.

As a result, in December 2020, we opened our doors to share some of the positive quotes we've received from the recipients of our emergency grant programme that year.

FIND, FOLLOW AND JOIN IN

www.chesterwomensaid.org

contact@chesterwomensaid.org



TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial year 2020-21 has again seen high demand for our emergency grant programme, as the shadow pandemic of domestic abuse continues apace with the COVID pandemic. However, the increase in support for charities combined with an increased awareness of domestic abuse meant that Chester Women's Aid received funding grants from foundations and other organisations to continue our missions.

We would like to thank the organisations funding our work. Without these funds and without the ability to fundraise as usual, we would have faced a dire financial situation imperilling our ability to provide vital help to people escaping and recovering from domestic abuse.

Funding Grants Received:

Awarding Organisation	Awarded Funds	Funding Purpose
Steve Morgan Foundation	£355	Professional Zoom and Just Giving Accounts
Cheshire Communities Grant Foundation	£948	Digital Tools, Insurance, Website Hosting, and other administrative costs
CWAC COVID-19 Community Response Fund	£2,000	Development of the Domestic Abuse Awareness Training for Businesses
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire	£40,000	Marketing, Administration, and delivery of the Domestic Abuse Awareness Training for Businesses in Cheshire

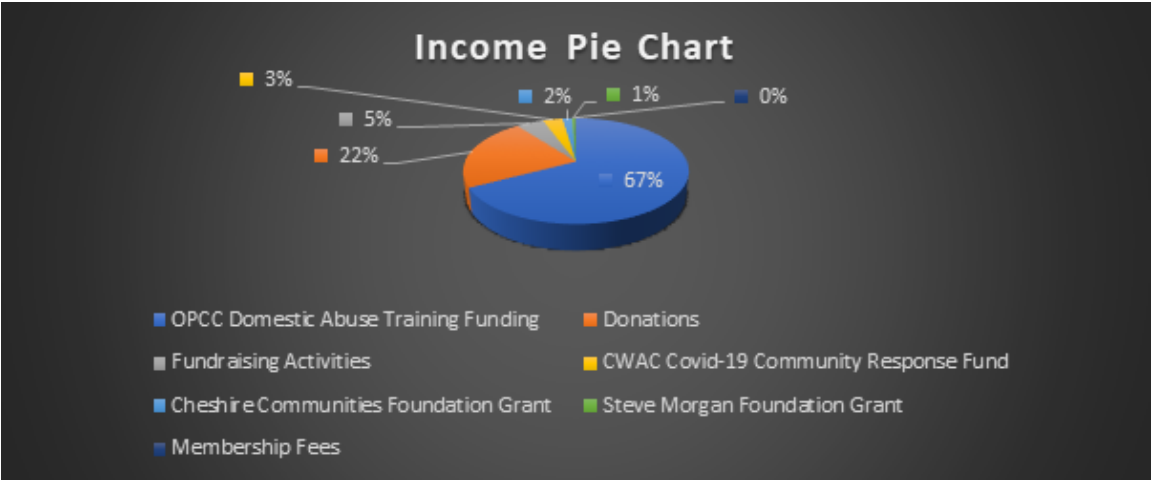
Our total income for this year was £59,529, a significant increase over 2019-2020 due to the funding listed above. We received a nearly 50% increase in donations over the previous financial year, including:

- £3,000 donation from the corporation Bristol Myers Squibb
- £2,177 donation from national logistics corporation Kuehne+Nagel
- £1,600 donation from the Chester Business Club
- £1,000 donation from the Masonic Charitable Foundation
- £600 donation from the Chester Round Table
- £333 donation from Waitrose Community Matters
- £322 donation from the University of Chester Events Course team "Eventsify" from their virtual Valentine's Day event
- £200 donation from Samuel Jackson

Thank you to all of the above donors and additional donors who have helped Chester Women's Aid continue to weather the pandemic and keep up our grant and awareness programmes.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

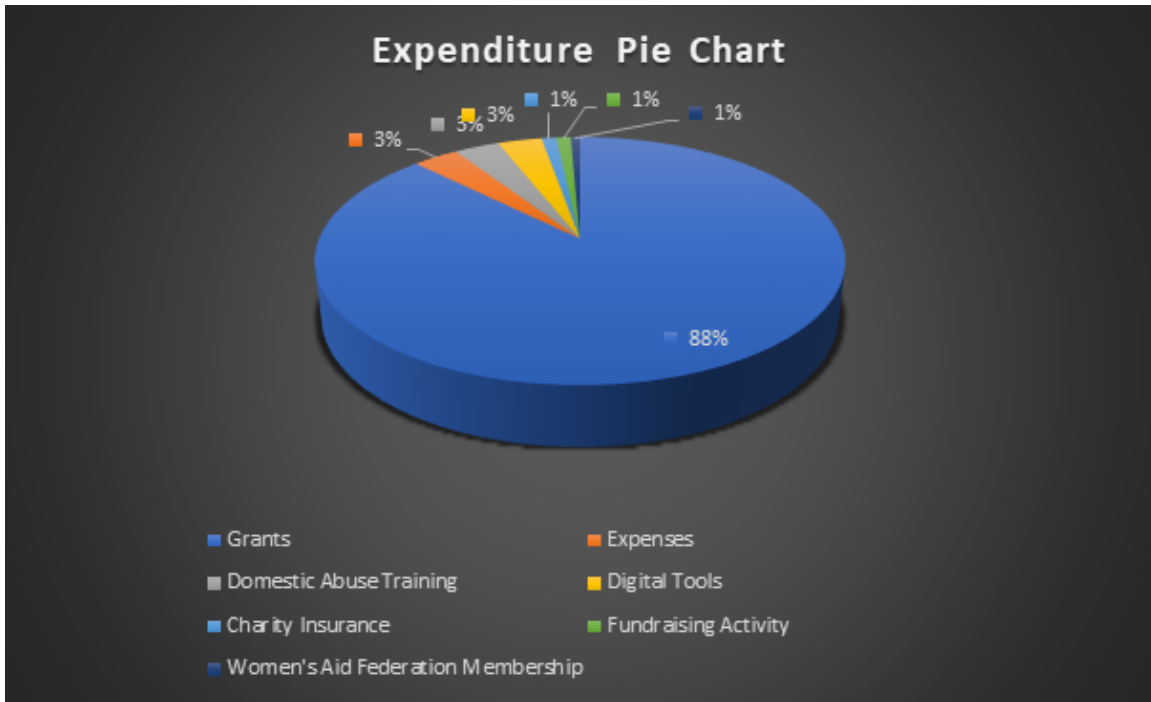
Our total expenditure for this year (including fees, expenses, and insurances) was £14,958, a less than £500 increase on 2019-2020's total costs.



In 2020-21, we did not hold any in person fundraisers or events – all fundraising has been done through virtual events and individual efforts by our committee members and supporters. Having a Just Giving account, and digital tools like Zoom and Hootsuite have enabled our fund and awareness raising efforts. These tools make it much easier to reach a wide range of individual donors and receive donations in a safe and contactless manner.

Our virtual events supported by these tools raising funds included our White Ribbon Day event 2020, a Stitch4Survivors live knit along and discussion group, a Christmas appeal, Spring Steps event, and an urgent appeal.

Looking ahead to 2021-2022, we sincerely hope to revive some form of public event, starting with our 2021 White Ribbon Day event on 28th November in Chester city centre. Conditions and restrictions permitting, we will debut another digital tool to help us raise funds – contactless card readers for easy street collection. We will also continue social media appeals and promotions and seek fundraising events by volunteers and supporters of Chester Women's Aid.



WE ARE SO VERY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE SUPPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM OUR AMAZING SUPPORTERS OVER THE LAST YEAR

A special thank you to the following individuals and organisations:

- Anna Demetriou
- Anne MacDonald
- Bristol Myers Squibb
- Catholic Women's League
- Charities Aid Foundation
- Cheshire West & Chester Council
- Chester Business Club Lunch
- Chester Cathedral
- Chester Rotary Club
- Chester Round Table
- Christine Stockton
- David Bickerton
- Easyspace
- Eventisfy
- Hoole United Reformed Church
- Jollifes Law
- Just Giving
- Kat Hannon
- Kuehne+Nagel
- Masonic Charitable Foundation
- Paypal
- Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire
- David Keane
- Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire
- John Dwyer
- Raymond Lea
- Ruth Tunnicliffe
- Samuel Jackson
- Soroptimist International Chester
- Steve Morgan Foundation
- Storage King
- University of Chester
- Waitrose Community Matters
- WHAG Community Enterprise
- Women's Aid Federation
- Zoom

We also thank anyone who has made a charitable donation via any of the following:

- Amazon Smile
- PayPal Giving Fund
- eBay sales
- Charities Aid Foundation

Chester Women's Aid Board of Trustees 2020 -2021

Chair Angela Benson

Vice Chair Emma Rees

Treasurer Cara Fletcher then Hannah Langford

Acting Treasurer Fiona Neame

Secretary Bridie Conboy (on leave)

Acting Secretary Rachel Lewis

Awareness Raising Pat Daniels

Committee Member Kate Wilson (resigned Feb 2020)

Committee Member Chiara Lisowski

Committee Member Emma Gray

Committee Member Chinwe Enyinna

Soroptimist International link Pat Higgins, then
Geraldine Garrs

With special thanks to Sophie Fullerton for her
contributions, and gratitude to CSASS and
Soroptimists International for their continued, and
mutual, support.

Watch this space for:

- **White Ribbon Day event and fundraising – 28th November, 2021 Chester City Centre**
- **16 Days of Activism #HeForShe – 25th November to 10th December**
- **Domestic Abuse Free Chester employer training sessions**



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2020

To

31-Mar

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	13,370	-	-	13,370	4,129
PayPal Donation	-	-	-	-	687
Activities - International Women's Day	247	-	-	247	272
Grants for IWD event sponsorship	-	-	-	-	1,300
Activities - White Ribbon Day	-	-	-	-	1,306
Bank Interest	9	-	-	9	60
Membership Fees	60	-	-	60	60
Fundraising Activities	2,539	-	-	2,539	571
CCLA balance adjustment 1/4/19	-	-	-	-	11
Cheshire Communities Foundation Grant	948	-	-	948	-
OPCC Domestic Abuse Training Funding	40,000	-	-	40,000	-
CWAC Covid-19 Community Response Fund	2,000	-	-	2,000	-
Steve Morgan Foundation Grant	355	-	-	355	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	59,529	-	-	59,529	8,395
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	59,529	-	-	59,529	8,395
A3 Payments					
Grants	13,082	-	-	13,082	12,727
Activities- International Women's Day	136	-	-	136	375
Activities- White Ribbon Day	-	-	-	-	50
Gavin & Stacy Event Expenses	-	-	-	-	400
WAFE Subscription	100	-	-	100	100
Stamps/stationery/Printer Ink/Raffle Tickets	5	-	-	5	117
AGM/EGM/Other Meeting Costs	-	-	-	-	164
16 Men Campaign Expenses	20	-	-	20	17
Website	95	-	-	95	98
Insurance	161	-	-	161	181
Other expenses	393	-	-	393	204
Domestic Abuse Training Expenses	488	-	-	488	-
Online donation platform processing fees	107	-	-	107	-
Just Giving Account Fee	198	-	-	198	-
Zoom Account Fee	173	-	-	173	-
Sub total	14,958	-	-	14,958	14,434
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	14,958	-	-	14,958	14,434
Net of receipts/(payments)	44,571	-	-	44,571	- 6,039
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	13,697	-	-	13,697	-
Cash funds this year end	58,268	1	-	58,268	- 07/12/2021

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Accounts	57,015	-	-
	Cash Account	1,253	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	58,268	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK


	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Angela Benson	07/12/2021



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Chester Women's Aid

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2021

Charity no
(if any) 504854

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2021.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

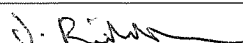
Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have 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.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: 

Date: 7 December 2021

Name: Joanne Rishworth

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

Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

Address:

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

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