



Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust

Supporting Oxfordshire's Churches since 1964

ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

www.ohct.org.uk Reg. Charity No. 1168567

THE OXFORDSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

Charity Number 1168567

Patrons	Marjorie Glasgow BEM, Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire The Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford The Rt Revd Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester Sir Hugo Brunner KCVO The Rt Revd Colin Fletcher OBE Bernard Taylor DL
President	The Rt Revd Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester
Trustees	Prof. Malcolm Airs OBE FSA FRHS Hilary CakebreadHall (Vice-Chair of the Trust & County Organiser for Ride and Stride) Dr Nicola Coldstream FSA Giles Dessain FCA (Treasurer) Dr Stephen Goss (Chair) Richard Hughes (Secretary) Natalie Merry (Trustee from 25.9.23) Cynthia Robinson (Grants Officer) Stephen Slack CBE David Warr (Trustee from 25.9.23 and Visits Coordinator)
Other officers	Gillian Coates (Website Editor) Clare Fox (Events Administrator) Eluned Hallas (Data Manager) Phoebe Hart (Membership Secretary)
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FROM THE CHAIR

This is the year of the Trust's Diamond Jubilee. We have just celebrated that with almost 200 members and guests attending a special Choral Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral: nothing could have been more heartening than to see together so many people all of whom are dedicated to protecting the glorious heritage of our county's churches. An account of the evening is on the Trust's website along with the splendid address given by the Rev'd Prof. William Whyte. We are grateful to the Dean and Chapter for making this possible. A second celebration of our Jubilee will be held in September with a special Members' Meeting at Rycote by invitation of our Patron, Bernard Taylor, and his wife Sarah.

The past year saw a record level of applications for support for works estimated at £2.6m. The Trust responded with a new record level of grant offers, 47 in all, totalling £525,793 (in the previous year, the figure was £434,500). A list of all grants is included below. It shows that 10 churches received £20,000 or more; and there were two David Booth Awards of £50,000, both towards providing improved social facilities.



Nuffield, Holy Trinity (Grade II* listed)

A Norman church in unknapped flint with a 15C roof. The chancel was restored by Benjamin Ferrey around 1845. A refurbishment will create a space for community use and for welcoming the many Ridgeway hikers whilst maintaining the church's use as a place of worship.

David Booth Award: £50,000

This level of grant-giving is dependent on the generosity of our Members and of a range of charitable foundations including the Cooper Trust, the Doris Field Trust, the Sam Guernsey Foundation, the Kilroot Foundation, the Lord Phillimore Trust, the Schuster Trust, and the Adrian Swire Trust. We thank you all for your continued support. We continue to receive legacies for our Heritage Fund. Do please consider remembering the Trust in your Will if you have not already done so.

Our most important recurrent source of donations is Ride+Stride. You'll see below that, despite the hot weather last September, our participants put in a remarkable effort and raised almost £85,000.

Our grant offers remain open for up to three years to give churches time to arrange for work to be done and to raise the other funds that they need. The past year saw four churches deciding not to go ahead with their work, and so £61,000 in grants were cancelled. This was more than usual: in a couple of cases it reflected changing circumstances which brought new priorities. Of course, churches which cancel their grants are welcome to apply again for new or updated projects.

Kingham, St Andrew's (Grade II* listed)

This medieval church with a 17C chancel and Victorian south aisle and porch has many Victorian furnishings - not least the remarkable pew-ends and backs carved from stone and the matching pulpit shown here. Restoration is being planned in many parts of the building, but a start has been made at roof level.
Awarded, £35,000 for repairs to the roof and tower



We keep our costs to a minimum by relying heavily on our volunteers - in particular, our Area Representatives. This year, we were sorry to lose two long-serving Council Members: Elizabeth MacLeod (Area Rep. for Deddington) who moved out of the county, and Dr Mark Stanley Price (Area Rep. for Bicester and Islip) who died just before Christmas. I should be delighted to receive responses to my request below for some new volunteers to make up our numbers. We welcomed two new Trustees this year, Natalie Merry and David Warr, both of whom have long served on Council.

ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING

Our Annual Members' Meeting in July at St Mary's, Witney was well attended. It was, we hope, the first of many which will be chaired by our new President, Gavin, Bishop of Dorchester. In addition to a review of the year and the other routine business of our annual meetings, there was a discussion of the implications of the aim of the Church of England both nationally and locally to move churches towards more efficient and environmentally friendly energy use. The meeting was pleased to hear that this agenda was being pursued with care, the difficulties posed in this area being considerable given the very nature of medieval buildings and the continuing development of new technologies. Churches of different sizes and designs and with different patterns of use are bound to need different approaches. The Trust has already awarded grants for new lighting and heating in some more straightforward cases, but it was acknowledged that this is a matter to be kept under review.

THE WOLFSON AND BLENHEIM LECTURES

Both our major annual lectures were sold out. Sir Tim Hitchens, President of Wolfson College and a Commonwealth War Graves Commissioner, gave the 2023 Wolfson Lecture, a fascinating insight into the work of the Commission and how it has recently had to grapple with increasing maintenance costs, the effects of climate change on its cemeteries, and the new expectations of today's visitors.

Prof. Diarmaid MacCulloch gave an excellent talk at Blenheim Palace. He described how, when the Reformation rejected what it saw as idolatrous, many rood screens became more simply 'chancel screens' often supporting the arms of local notables. Their remnant role in the Elizabethan church was as a kind of divider separating the sanctity of the chancel from the more worldly nave, and that was eroded when compulsory Holy Communion at weddings was removed from the Prayer Book in 1662. The sad result was that many fine screens were entirely lost by the mid-18th century. The Trust is indebted to His Grace the Duke of Marlborough who gives us the use of the Palace as our venue for this lecture.



Wheatley, St Mary the Virgin
(Architect: G E Street).

Awarded £10,000 for flooring.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Trust was glad in September to hold its first 'Roadshow' following Covid. Some 30 people gathered at St Mary and St Nicholas, Littlemore to hear from the Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, a conservation architect, and our Grants Officer on aspects of project management and fund-raising. The Rector, Margreet Armitstead, showed us the impressive and elegant facilities created recently at Littlemore. She spoke inspirationally about the highs and lows of the path to their completion.

In November, we hosted an online lecture by Dr Richard Peats on the distinguished Victorian church architect, G E Street; and, over the year, we have published 7 reviews of books on churches and their architecture on our website. I am grateful to the Trustees who write these reviews and to our Secretary, Richard Hughes, who masterminds the operation.

Stephen Goss

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2023-24

		£
Adderbury, St. Mary	Window repairs	2,500
Ashbury, St. Mary	Stonework repairs	8,000
Aston Upthorpe, All Saints	Nave ceiling repairs	1,400
Bampton, St. Mary	Renewal of lead roof/rainwater goods	24,000
Barford St. Michael, St. Michael *	Repairs to leaking roof	500
Barford St. Michael, St. Michael	External repairs/WC and kitchen facilities	30,000
Black Bourton, St. Mary	Kitchen/repairs to roof and drainage	20,000
Broadwell, SS Peter & Paul	Upgrade of heating and lighting	20,000
Carterton, St. Joseph RC	Upgrade of heating upgrade	9,000
Charlbury, St. Mary the Virgin	Installation of WC/kitchen	15,000
Chesterton, St. Mary	Repairs to church clock	2,000
Chesterton, St. Mary	Roof inspection and associated work	2,500
Chinnor, St. Andrew	Repairs to walls/roof and stonework	7,000
Cholsey, St. Mary	Purchase of electronic organ	4,000
Combe Longa, St. Lawrence	Churchyard works	1,200
Dorchester Abbey, SS Peter & Paul	Repairs to Abbey Turret Clock	3,000
Fyfield, St. Nicholas	Installation of WC/kitchen	30,000
Garford, St. Luke	Repairs to bell	2,000
Goosey, All Saints Chapel	Repairs to drainage system	4,000
Hook Norton Baptist Church	Upgrade of heating and lighting	12,000
Kelmscott, St. George	Roof and masonry repairs	20,000
Kingham, St. Andrew	Roof and tower repairs	35,000
Kirtlington, St. Mary the Virgin	Porch repairs	15,000
Leafield, St. Michael & All Angels	Upgrade of electricity supply	6,000
Marcham, All Saints **	Refurbishment of WC/kitchen	50,000
Middleton Stoney, All Saints	Repairs to organ/installation of WC/kitchen	25,000
Mollington, All Saints	Stonework repairs	15,000
Nuffield, Holy Trinity **	Community space/WC/kitchen	50,000
Oddington, St. Andrew	Repairs to porch and stained glass windows	5,000
Oxford, St. Michael & All Angels	Repairs to guttering	2,100
Oxford, St. Michael & All Angels	Decarbonisation investigation	2,100
Pyrton, St. Mary	Restoration of pulpit	3,000
Rotherfield Greys, St. Nicholas	Upgrade of church clock	1,000
Shutford, St. Martin	Repairs to plaster/redecoration of interior	8,000
Stoke Talmage, St. Mary Magdalene	Stonework repairs	10,000
Stoke Talmage, St. Mary Magdalene	Repairs to gutters/downpipes	10,000
Tackley, St. Nicholas	Replacement pipe organ	18,000
Thame, St. Mary the Virgin	Heating feasibility assessment	2,280
Uffington, St. Mary	Restoration of church clock	7,500
Upton, St Mary the Virgin	Extension for WC/kitchenette	5,500
Wallingford, St. Mary-le-More	Repairs to windows/valleys	11,000

* Emergency applications, ** David Booth Awards

			£
Warborough, St. Laurence	QI repairs/restoration		7,000
Waterstock, St. Leonard	Window replacement		1,500
West Hendred, Holy Trinity	Inspection of tower bell frame		1,100
West Hendred, Holy Trinity	Under-pew heating		3,000
Wheatley, St. Mary the Virgin	Replacement flooring		10,000
All general purposes grants	46 grants	Sub-total	521,580
Roof alarm grants	1 grant		4,213
Total new grants offered			525,793
Less grants not taken up from previous years			(61,000)
GRAND TOTAL COMMITTED			464,793

PLEASE HELP THE TRUST BY VOLUNTEERING

Our Area Representatives, members of the Trust's Council, perform a vital role in our grant giving. They are the point of contact between potential applicants and the Trust: they visit the church to see what is needed and to hear from churchwardens. They can give advice, including on what is eligible for one of our grants, and, once the formal application is received, they write a brief note and recommendation to present to Council for a decision (we have just three meetings per year). Our Grants Officer, Cynthia Robinson, can provide additional guidance at any stage. Ideally, there is an Area Representative for each Deanery, and each is helped by an 'Alternate' who can stand in if the Representative is not available or perhaps has a conflict of interests.

The most important qualification is that you should enjoy visiting churches and have some understanding of church buildings and how they are used (in Oxfordshire, you'll also need to be a driver). Some of our Representatives have specialist knowledge, but that is not essential: the post of 'Alternate' is ideal for learning the role.

This work is not onerous, and it is both interesting and fulfilling. We currently have vacancies (mostly for Alternates) in Bicester and Islip, Cowley, Deddington, Wallingford and Wantage. Please contact chair@ohct.org.uk for more information.



Broadwell, SS Peter & Paul
(Grade I listed)
Capital with deeply undercut stone carving
Awarded £20,000 for heating and lighting

THE RIDE+STRIDE CHALLENGE!

In 2020, Ride+Stride (albeit in 'Covid' format) was a great success – we were all so very glad to get out and about again. Then September 2021 saw a rising tide of new Covid infections, but, whilst some caution was required as many of us had only had our first vaccination by then, it looked as though we were approaching a kind of 'normal'. Then, in 2022, the Queen died just 48 hours before Ride+Stride Saturday throwing us into an unprecedented turmoil – none of us knowing quite what was the right way to proceed. It turned out to be a memorable but very different Ride+Stride.



All aboard!



Strapped in and raring to go

In 2023, I merrily thought (and said) – 'there can't be another year of disrupted Ride+Stride' – WRONG! It turned out to be the hottest day of the year – with record-breaking temperatures. Despite that, I am delighted to report that we raised almost £85,000 (which was more than had been raised in the previous year). Ride+Stride participants are not easily deterred from their determination to raise funds to support our work. We received many emails telling us of plans to go out at 6 a.m. to beat the heat. Others chose not to cycle but instead to walk in areas where a large number of churches could easily be reached on foot (visits to Oxford and Wallingford were particularly high for this reason), and still others simply postponed their effort to a later and cooler day. All these were wise measures fully supported by us. The unfortunate downside was that many churches, especially those in areas where there

was more challenging topography (hills were better avoided!) had few and, in some instances, no visitors: I know that for those churches this was deeply disappointing. My visits are always by car so I can cover as wide an area as possible, and I was greeted by welcome cold drinks and the sanctuary of a cool building with, on occasion, a group of very hot participants hiding inside from the exhausting heat.



Bishop Gavin taking part in
Ride and Stride



A family affair

Despite all the challenges that Ride+Stride has faced, it has every year remained the largest regular annual source of donations for the Trust, and so its support for our grant-giving programme is essential. On a background of inflating building costs, our churches need all the help they can get, and the Trust will continue to do its utmost to support them. The Trust and the county's churches are deeply indebted to all who take part, whether riding, striding, giving, or welcoming participants to churches and helping with administration.

As ever, our thanks go to our President, Bishop Gavin, who nobly cycled his way round 19 churches covering 50 miles. He is shown here with his route planner and fellow cyclist, Chris Brennan our Ride+Stride Area Coordinator for Bicester and Islip. Their routes for 2021 and 2023 are detailed on our website for anyone who has an ambition to cycle in a Bishop's footsteps – or should that be wheel tracks?

Hilary CakebreadHall

TRUST EVENTS IN 2023

DAVID WARR'S SPRING AND AUTUMN CHURCH TOURS

We are grateful to David who again ran both his Spring and Autumn tours twice so that numbers on each tour were manageable. Last year's May tours took us to four of the churches in the Akeman Benefice, starting with two 12th-century churches - All Saints, Middleton Stoney and St Mary the Virgin, Kirtlington. Both are imposing and have been extensively developed and restored over the years, not least in the 19th century: for instance, at Kirtlington, the tower had been rebuilt by Benjamin Ferrey and extensive work done to the chancel by Sir George Gilbert Scott



Kirtlington, St Mary's
(Grade II* listed)
*Awarded £15,000
for porch repairs*

After our usual pub lunch, we saw two churches dedicated to St Giles. Bletchington has several fine early 20th-century stained glass windows (see back cover). Hampton Gay, despite its 13th-century origins, was extensively rebuilt in the 18th century and has the surprise of a thoroughly Georgian interior.

The Autumn tours included five churches in the Shill Valley and Broadshire Benefice. These ranged in origin from early Saxon to late Victorian: St George's, Kelmscott is the birthplace of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and is largely untouched thanks to William Morris; and St Mary the Virgin, Holwell is a fine example of late Gothic Revival. Two other churches visited were within two miles of each other: both are very fine and had been minster churches. These were St Matthew's, Langford and SS Peter and Paul, Broadwell (image on page 7), a church with many Templar references.



Langford, St Matthew's
(Grade I listed)

The fifth church was St George's Kencot, a delightful little building with surprises such as its marquetry (see page 14) and a wonderful tympanum over the south doorway depicting Sagittarius as The Redeemer's Triumph slaying a devil reminiscent of St George's dragon!

AUGUST EVENING VISIT TO ST ANDREW'S, EAST HAGBOURNE

Our guide to this splendid church on the Downs above Didcot was the Rector, a member of our Council, Canon Jason St John Nicolle. We saw remarkable sculpture and fine stained glass before retreating for supper to the *Fleur de Lys*.



St Andrew's, East Hagbourne
(Grade I listed)

TOURS OF RHODES HOUSE

Council member and Trust President 2021-22, Charles Baker, ran two tours of Rhodes House, which had been designed by his grandfather, Sir Herbert Baker. Members enjoyed seeing both the original 20th-century building and the fine and sensitively done 21st-century additions which were completed just in time for the repeat tour.

MORE OF THIS YEAR'S GRANTS



STOKE TALMAGE, ST MARY MAGDALENE

(Grade II listed)

Somewhat decayed after its medieval origin, this church was largely rebuilt in the 18C and then expanded in the 19C by Sir George Gilbert Scott. It has plans for thoroughgoing structural strengthening.

Awarded £20,000 towards masonry, gutters and downpipes

BLACK BOURTON, ST MARY

(Grade I listed)

Over 900 years old, this church is a small treasure-house with an early 12C doorway, fine carved capitals in the nave, and 13C wall-paintings. The bell tower was added in the 15C.

Awarded £20,000 for the roof, drainage, and kitchen facilities



TACKLEY, ST NICHOLAS

(Grade II* listed)

An 11C building much added to since: the tower and south aisle are 15C, the north transept early 17C, and the south porch and internal fittings are by G E Street.

Awarded £18,000 towards a replacement pipe organ

FYFIELD, ST NICHOLAS

(Grade II* listed)

This 12C church, frequently modified over the following 800 years, is notable for many fine fittings and monuments. A space for flexible use will be created at the west end of the nave.

Awarded £30,000 towards a WC and kitchen



BAMPTON, ST MARY THE VIRGIN

(Grade 1 listed)

This imposing building, a Saxon minster, was consecrated in 1062. It was developed further from the 12th to the 15th centuries: the clerestory was added, the tower built higher, and the spire added. The Victorians undertook further restoration and added some fine stained glass.

Awarded £24,000 to renew lead roofing and rainwater goods

WHO MAY APPLY FOR A GRANT?

OHCT gives grants for repairs and practical enhancements to places of Christian worship of all denominations provided that they are more than 50 years old and open for regular public worship. Churches considering applying may wish to make contact with our Area Representative (see our website www.ohct.org.uk for details) who will be pleased to visit and advise on the scope of our grant support. The Council of OHCT meets three times per year to consider applications, though, in emergencies, grants may be awarded outside these meetings. In considering applications, the Council takes into account the applicant church's financial resources and its ability to raise additional funds.

The application form is short and simple and may be completed and submitted online.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Our income, at £437,369, was increased from £341,554 in the preceding year: this year, bequests to the Trust were higher by £61,654, there was increased generosity by other trusts making grants to us, and we received higher dividends from our investment portfolio. Ride+Stride raised a very creditable £84,859, slightly more than in 2022.

Following the Trust's decision in 2022-2023 to reduce the level of reserves, we gave grants in 2023-2024 of £525,793 as compared with £434,500 in the year before. We shall aim to continue this substantially increased level of grant giving in coming years.

Administrative expenses in the year were £27,809 (£25,028 in 2022-2023). Our principal costs remain IT infrastructure, publicity for Ride+Stride, and audit. A substantial portion of the administrative activity of the Trust is undertaken by trustees on a voluntary basis, enabling the Trust to operate at low cost.

Our investment portfolio is unchanged from last year. The trustees, advised by the finance committee, which has a range of appropriate experience of investment management, accountancy and charity trusteeship, believes the present portfolio serves us well. Ninety per cent of the portfolio is held in three broad-based multi-asset funds, with the remaining 10% in two other funds, one invested in stocks and the other in property. The Trust's aim is to invest prudently to protect capital value in the long term while producing a good level of total return. The value of our investments at the year-end was £5,864,155. This is an increase in the portfolio's value of £326,306, more than compensating for the capital loss of £277,680 in 2022-2023.

In line with Charity Commission guidelines and professional advice, we are continuing to build our Heritage Fund as an expendable endowment invested to produce a dividend income which is used to fund grants. In the past, we have sought legacies specifically for this purpose, and we are now encouraging donors, especially those contemplating giving larger sums or leaving substantial legacies, to give to our Heritage Fund in order to provide a steady income stream for our future work.

I should like to thank the finance committee for the help and support.

Giles Dessain FCA



St George's, Kencot: marquetry on the altar table

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES IN THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		Year to:	March 31st 2023	March 31st 2024
REVENUE				
Ride+Stride			83,661	84,859
Subscriptions & Donations			15,949	15,257
Trusts			32,000	44,965
Investment Income			181,086	200,506
Events and miscellaneous sales			766	2,111
General Fund Income (sub-total)			313,462	347,698
Heritage Fund income			28,092	89,672
Total Revenue			341,544	437,369
EXPENDITURE				
Grants awarded			434,500	525,793
Less grants not taken up			(2,244)	(61,000)
Parish share of Ride+Stride revenue			32,889	34,137
Ride+Stride administration			7,583	6,584
Administration			17,445	21,225
General Fund Expenditure (sub-total)			490,173	526,739
Total Expenditure			490,173	526,739
MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS				
Net income/(expenditure)			(148,619)	(89,370)
Gains (losses) on investments			(277,680)	326,306
Overall Movement in Funds			(426,299)	236,936
BALANCE SHEET				
Investments			5,537,849	5,864,155
Current assets:-				
Bank Accounts			256,399	189,316
Gift Aid recoverable /Prepayments			4,753	1,145
(sub-total)			261,151	190,461
Less current liabilities:-				
Grants still to be paid			543,500	561,480
Accrued expenses			4,650	5,350
(sub-total)			548,150	566,830
Net assets			5,250,850	5,487,787
Comprising:-				
General Fund			1,212,193	1,185,710
Heritage Fund			4,038,658	4,302,077
Net funds			5,250,850	5,487,787
Movement in investments				
Starting balance			5,815,529	5,537,849
Gains/(losses) on investments			(277,680)	326,306
Closing balance invested			5,537,849	5,864,155

Full Statutory Accounts and the Annual Report will be filed with the Charity Commission when they have been audited, and they will be published on the Trust's website in the Autumn.

MEMBERSHIP AND HOW TO JOIN

Membership of the Trust is an enjoyable and easy way of helping us to preserve Oxfordshire's heritage of churches, chapels and meeting houses. Members are asked to make an annual donation of at least £20 for individuals or £30 for a family (at one address), and they receive our newsletters with early notice of tours, lectures and meetings. To find out more and join, please visit www.ohct.org.uk/membership or email membership@ohct.org.uk.



Two soldier saints with Michael:
memorial window St Giles', Bletchington

LEGACIES

Once you have considered your family and friends in your Will, a legacy gift is a lasting way of helping to protect the historic churches of Oxfordshire for the future. Anyone intending to leave a legacy to the Trust should seek advice from their own solicitor. We should like to encourage anyone making us a bequest to consider specifying that it should be held in our Heritage Fund, whose aim is to provide the Trust with a consistent source of investment income for the future.

Please see our website: www.ohct.org.uk/donate/legacy/