



**annual
review
2021-2022**

CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

The Trust was founded in 1942. On 8 April 2021 it became a “Charitable Incorporated Organisation”, remaining registered as charity No. 502132.

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EIGHTIETH ANNUAL REVIEW BY THE TRUSTEES

2021 – 2022 (September 2022)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

The 80th Annual General Meeting will be held on **Saturday 1 October at 2.00 pm**, in the **Assembly Rooms Theatre** 40 North Bailey. It is also planned to make the meeting available via Zoom. To request a link please email zoom@durhamcity.org. The detailed agenda can be found on page 15 of this Review.

At the start of the meeting the Trust's Architectural Award for 2021/2022 will be presented to **Maya Polenz, "Head of Property" at Durham Cathedral**, in recognition of the Cathedral's superb new glazed lobbies.

After the formal agenda **John Pendlebury, Professor of Urban Conservation at Newcastle University**, will present a talk about **Thomas Sharp**, the town planner and author of *Cathedral City – A Plan for Durham*, the decisive planning document for the development of Durham City in the second half of the twentieth century.



RECEPTION AT DURHAM MUSEUM

Immediately after the AGM lecture there is a chance for members to view the Durham Museum exhibition, **"How Historic Durham Survived the 20th Century"**. This charts the role of the Trust in preserving Durham.

FROM THE CHAIR: THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF THE TRUST

2022 marks the 80th anniversary of the Trust's foundation as the City of Durham Preservation Society Limited in 1942. This was an astonishing act of faith and courage in the midst of World War II and we need to ensure that we are also resolute in carrying on the work of the Trust. It changed to its current name in 1966. Membership numbers remain steady at just under 400.

Before outlining some of our activities to mark this anniversary, I want to focus on the routine activity that we have carried out for years, week in and week out, and that is the consideration of planning applications. Each week the County Council's planning department helpfully sends all Trustees a list of all the applications they have validated that week. We consider all those of significance for the City. In the year under review we considered 332 applications, objected to 83, supported 17 and commented on 27. That works out at just over 10 responses per month. They focus on trying to ensure compliance with the policies of the recently adopted *County Durham Plan* and *Durham City Neighbourhood Plan*. Some of them are substantial documents and they can all be seen on our website: durhamcity.org/our-work/planning/.

Trustees constitute an unrivalled source of planning expertise and we work closely with the Parish

Council's Planning Committee. Some of us regularly attend its fortnightly meetings and our contributions are always welcomed. During his term as a Parish Councillor, Trustee Roger Cornwell chaired that committee and his extraordinary attention to detail is sorely missed, though happily not lost to the Trust.

As well as the Trust's 80th anniversary this year is also the 50th anniversary of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention and we are working with the World Heritage Site Coordinating Committee to convene a conference focusing on the future of the site. It is scheduled to be held on Saturday 5 November and further details are included in the flyer attached to this Annual Review.

As one of the celebratory activities for our anniversary our website is featuring every month a building, or heritage or green asset, that the Trust has been involved in protecting, preserving and conserving. They include Flass Vale and St Mary-le-Bow. The fascinating information, researched by Trustee Sue Childs who manages our website, can be found at durhamcity.org/tag/asset-of-the-month/.

The Trust has co-sponsored two walking guides for the City: *Coal Stories* explores the extensive reminders of the coal industry in the City. It was produced in co-operation with the Durham Energy Institute and Trustee Adrian Green was one of the co-authors. *The Seven Hills Trail* was pioneered by Trust member David Miller and was produced in co-operation with the Parish Council. It provides a route around the hills that surround the City and give glorious views of the Castle and Cathedral. We have also commissioned two drawings of Crook Hall by Angela Tracy, one of our members and a former artist-in-residence at the hall. They have been published as cards and postcards and are available for purchase on our website as a memento of the year.

All these activities are designed both to raise the profile of the Trust and also to involve as many citizens as possible in issues that affect our historical and natural heritage. In my view, the best way to mark this anniversary is for every member to recruit a new member so that we can continue to thrive and to celebrate, protect and enhance the heritage and landscape of the City.

The Trust will mark the actual anniversary of its foundation on 9 November with an informal civic reception from 7 – 9 pm in St Nicholas' Church in Durham Market Place. **All Trust members are warmly invited.**

John Lowe

Hard copies of the *Seven Hills Trail* are available from the Town Hall, *Coal Stories* from the Durham Cathedral bookshop, Durham University's Palace Green Library bookshop, and from Durham Museum on North Bailey, available to order online at the Durham University online shop: <https://bit.ly/2ZNOjoW>. The guide costs £5 and profits will go to the Mining Museum in Spennymoor.

CITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS

Trustees welcomed the Council Cabinet decision in March confirming the reopening of the former **DLI Museum** as an exhibition centre, art gallery and hospitality venue. The accessible floor space is to be doubled and the building to be envired in a "peace and contemplation garden". Space is reserved to display items from the extensive regimental collection built up by the DLI, complementing exhibitions at the forthcoming Durham History Centre at Mount Oswald. It should open as "The Story at Mount Oswald" in 2023, becoming the permanent home for the DLI Collection.

More controversial was the news confirmed in July that **the new riverside building at the Sands**, completed in March and originally planned as a new Council HQ, has been sold to the University as a new site for its **Business School**. Necessary internal rebuilding is expected to take some 18 months. It is hoped that University use might generate far less traffic than would have been the case with about 700 often commuting council workers. Others believe that the presence of these council employees nearby most of the day would have helped support the flagging shops in the City centre. These remain subject to closures, the continuing effects of the pandemic, and the market-distorting impacts of a large student population mostly present for only half the year. **Riverwalk**, for example, has already altered significantly from any designation as a mixed use "shopping centre", being now given over largely to food and drink establishments.

The planned demolition of the current **County Hall** at Aykley Heads has been confirmed. The replacement proposed is for a smaller civic centre, with conference facilities and offices, to be built not far from the current County Hall site, as well as occupying for Council use offices under construction at the Aykley Heads business park, and also with new offices at Stanley. In the meantime, the first new building of the business park site is emerging near Salvus House.

Work on the **replacement bus station** at North Road is said to be still on track for completion next Spring, despite delays caused by the need to prop up a neighbouring Grade II listed building.

NEWS SENT IN FROM REDHILLS

Since the Trust was sent the report printed here its interest has been deepened further by news that Redhills has been selected as one of eight “workers assembly halls” to be put forward for the prestigious UNESCO world heritage status. See <https://redhillsdurham.org/redhills-to-join-unesco-bid/>.

The Past We Inherit The Future We Build: Redhills Durham Miners Hall reopening in 2023

Ownership of Redhills: Durham Miners Hall has been handed over to the people of the Durham Coalfield by the Durham Miners Association (DMA) as an exciting renovation project begins. The project will see the transformation of the Miners Hall into a centre for culture, heritage and education to celebrate the past that we inherit and the future we build.



Historic England has named Redhills among the 100 “irreplaceable” places in the country's history, alongside the Palace of Westminster. The magnificent, Grade II-listed building was purpose-built as the headquarters of the DMA in 1915. At its heart is The Pitman's Parliament, where elected delegates created a pioneering social system across Durham's communities before the national welfare state was invented.

The Miners Hall will be restored to its former glory, becoming a living archive of the Durham coalfield and a centre of learning for schools, the local community and the wider public. It will tell a people's history of Durham coalfield through guided tours, opening up the building and its collections as never seen before.

Redhills will become a hub of cultural activity, where community groups can meet, brass bands and choirs of the county can perform, and artistic talent can showcase their work. The 60 banner groups that proudly maintain their coalfield communities' colours and parade them at the Miners' Gala every year will have a shared home.

Another significant objective for the scheme is beginning to tackle the massive carbon footprint of the historic Durham coalfield. As well as events and educational activities linked to climate change the hall itself will be heated using renewable energy sources, becoming one of the first historic buildings in the county to integrate ground source heat pumps.

The vision for Redhills has been shaped and informed by community groups and members of the public over the past five years and a new charitable organisation constituted to serve as stewards of this remarkable heritage.



These plans are made possible thanks to the support of critical stakeholders who have pledged their funds. In 2021, the project was awarded £4.5million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund; Durham County Council also supports protecting the region's heritage for future generations with £1.1m. The DMA has worked tirelessly to raise the remaining funds from trades unions and other supporters to make the vision a reality,

If you would like to keep up to date with the renovation of Redhills and learn more about the exciting programme of events planned for opening in 2023, you can do so by signing up to the Redhills mailing list here: <https://redhillsdurham.org/signup/>

The images show – architect impression of the new atrium at Redhills; Alan Mardghum, secretary of Durham Miners Association hands over Redhills: Durham Miners Hall to Redhills CIO Chair Chris McDonald in 2021.

The Redhills CIO Team (email admin@redhillsdurham.org.)

ARCHITECTURAL AWARDS FOR 2020-2021

Since 1990 The City of Durham Trust has given an annual architectural award to a new outstanding building or renovation in the Durham area (see <https://durhamcity.org/awards/past-awards/>). At the end of each calendar year Trustees will normally nominate possible candidates from the previous 12 months, and site visits are then arranged. Key factors being considered include: overall architectural challenge, adaptation to site, unity of design, interplay of form and function, and the use and quality of materials and detailing. Last but not least is ‘durhamness’, Douglas Pocock’s useful coinage for the suitability of the development to Durham in particular, historically, culturally and aesthetically.

The unique conditions of 2020 and the pandemic interfered with the usual site visits. After some debate, it was finally decided to consider awards for 2020 and 2021 together, in case the unique difficulties of 2020 had eclipsed something. Four candidates were nominated at the end of 2021 and are listed below, with the one winner listed first.

Durham Cathedral’s new glazed lobbies at the north and south doors were opened in February 2020, ironically just in time for the closures and disruptions of the Covid pandemic. However, visitors over the last year will have been able to admire how well the new large transparent lobbies work in this very sensitive location. They simultaneously enhance and conserve the building, their structures mirroring each other across the nave of the Cathedral. Skilled working is apparent in the detailing of the glass fixings and in the fit of the glass to the historic structure, which is effectively showcased. Upwards lighting now enhances the beautiful archway stonework and its carving -- highlights that would have been mostly unnoticed in the past. Technical fitments such as the floor heating ducts and automatic door controls are incorporated sensitively. The modernised entrances meet contemporary access requirements and reduce heat loss.

Both the transparent lobbies create a strong drama on entry, giving opened views east and west through the Cathedral, as well as across the nave to each other. There is now even a glimpse of the cloisters from the north entrance. The original wooden doors are kept, now held permanently open inside the new structures. Fully displayed within the new entrances, they can now be better examined for their various workings and decorations (details on the Cathedral website, bit.ly/3oPrqKE).

Work on the lobbies was carried out by Vest Construction of Bishop Auckland, following the design of



Cathedral Architect Chris Cotton and his team at Purcell. Our thanks and congratulations to all involved – a superb award-winner. Who would have thought that Durham Cathedral itself could be significantly improved!

The Mathematical Sciences and Computer Science Building, Upper Mountjoy.

On approach, visitors are struck at once by the bold symmetrical square design of this building. Its three upper storeys are marked by projecting horizontal bands of pre-patinated copper separated by glazing. These storeys rise above a

base glazed area with pillars, and a small entrance area lies further below that at one side. The copper banding and distinctive glazing are a strongly unifying design feature, while the lower more conventional glazing to the front seemed less successful. The building was officially launched in March 2021.

It is designed around four inner green courtyards with a spacious and thoughtfully designed interior, relaxing yet studious, with full facilities for students. The atmosphere is sustained by thoughtful features such as the use of glass partitions rather than opaque walls to close off the teaching rooms from long access corridors. Trustees were given a generous tour of the building by two members of the academic staff (Professors John Hunton and Anne Taormina) infectiously delighted with their new space. That this is a world of mathematicians and computer scientists was evident in the small blackboards to be found in the occasional small seating areas along the corridors. The building is the work of partners Ryder Architecture, Gardiner & Theobald LLP, Sir Robert McAlpine, and DPP Planning.



This is a strong building whose full impact would demand a spacious green frame. The main factor damaging the prospect of an award was the limited and rather cheap looking landscaping, as well as the cluttered, dark feel of the main courtyard entrance with a substation and badly sited bike facilities. The sparse planting can improve only slightly with age and large areas of bare grass are already affected by drought. A large, unsightly car park also sits just outside the building on slightly raised ground towards the University Woods, and an access road

to it breaks intrusively upon Hollingside Lane opposite the botanic gardens, spoiling the sense of rural transition the lane used to have there. The Trust had argued that this car park was unnecessary.

As with the new and also well-designed Teaching and Learning Centre at Lower Mountjoy, there is a lingering reservation: that many Durham residents would have preferred the open green spaces beforehand to almost any new building.

The New Cycle and Footpath, Mountjoy.



The new path runs broadly downhill, linking the Mount Oswald and the hillside colleges to the University science site. Trustees welcomed this development, though it is not of course a new building as such. Matthew Phillips describes it as “the best quality cycle route built in Durham since the 1930s”, but overall it still seems an excellent idea not quite perfectly executed. The signage is unclear in places and does not adequately indicate the two ends of the route.

Strangely, despite the path’s obvious utility, it is still rare to see cyclists on it. The uphill route can seem steep at times and we know of at least one cyclist who uses this path rather than the nearby South Road only when riding downhill.

However, considered solely as a footpath, the new route is superb, offering a new attractive pedestrian route passing through Little High Wood. It forms a welcome alternative to South Road’s noisy traffic and overcrowded, narrow pavements.

The Hub, Mount Oswald.

This new building is shared by John Snow College and South College at Mount Oswald. It lies at the focal point of an internal street in the new campus and offers a hub of facilities for students, including a gym, a drama studio, music practice rooms, an exercise/yoga studio, a faith room, an events hall, a launderette. There is also an outdoor multi-use games area that can be floodlit. The area for formal diners can also be adapted as a 500-seat space for performances and talks.

The Hub’s unusual oval shape is a strong source of architectural interest, though the outward impression remains of a building rather functional in appearance, with a great deal of bare walling on the circumference. The entrance façade is very broadly glazed under a large canopy, and makes for welcoming effect on approach, particularly when illuminated after dark. The Hub was designed by Willmore Iles Architects.

As noted in bulletin 91 for spring 2021, a vital renovation scheme at 34-35 Saddler Street (“Estate House”) that might normally have been a strong candidate for an award was botched in its final realization, as will be all too visible to visitors making their way up Saddler Street.



“SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSIONS”

The County Durham Plan adopted in 2020 included a Policy 5 for two so-called “sustainable urban extensions” to the City, built on what was Green Belt. Both are to be sizeable new housing estates, with 1,700 new houses to be built at **Sniperley Park**, and another 420 at **Bent House Lane** off Sherburn Road. Comprehensive masterplanning would be required in each case. Transports plans would also be needed “to reduce the dominance of car traffic [and] both sites will incorporate convenient, safe and high-quality bus, pedestrian and cycle routes within, and connecting to, adjoining facilities”.

These cases have progressed this year to mixed effect. An opportunistic application from Banks to build an estate of “up to 500” houses on the whole site (not the Plan’s 420) off **Bent House Lane** was approved in October 2021, despite the absence of the comprehensive masterplan, and with inadequate regard for

questions of affordable housing, carbon neutrality in design, and provision for sustainable transport. Trustees' dismay led to a letter of protest on the low quality of recent local planning decisions, exemplified by the approval of a scheme so patently at odds with the County Plan. This failing at Bent House Lane marked the lowest point of the planning year.

Having secured this outline permission Banks has since made a deal on the project with Miller Homes and Barratt Homes, which jointly submitted detailed planning applications for 470 houses on the majority of the site in July. These represent a downgrading of the already inadequate outline plan, offering just the kind of bog-standard, "anywheresville", very car-dependent housing estate that the County Plan policies on "sustainable urban extensions" were striving to transcend. Trustees have sent in detailed objections, still hoping that policies ignored in the outline can be better respected in its specific realization.

Hope is latent in the way the case of Bent House Lane contrasts starkly with the professional care taken by Councillors and Officers about prospects for **Sniperley Park**. The Council produced its own comprehensive masterplan for the site, and held a public consultation from 29 November till 14 January on both this and the associated "Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan".

The case of Sniperley then came to demonstrate the fraught politics of local government planning. In the autumn two developers jumped ahead of the Council's public consultation by submitting opportunistic planning applications for differing parts of the whole site, Bellway Homes Ltd for 370 dwellings, and 1,550 from County Durham Land LLP (a total of 1,920, well over the 1,700 in the County Plan). Neither application offered the required overall masterplanning nor gave much promise of offering more than just another uninteresting car-dependent suburb. Officers were required by law to consider these applications in the normal manner, and Trustees were alerted in June to two detailed advisory assessments of them written by the Principal Planning Officer for the case. In both the developer's application had been held against the County Plan and the aspirations of the Council's own then developing masterplan and found badly wanting. Just as this Review went to press in late August came that news that Bellway and County Durham Land LLP had appealed to the Planning Inspectorate against the Council's non-determination of their applications. However, the applications are to be determined in early September, **recommended for refusal**. *Our website may have further news.*

A final draft of the Council masterplan was approved on 22 June, for "up to 1,700 houses" over 28 hectares. Its stated ambition is that Sniperley Park "be an extraordinary development that responds to this special location and character. It will be an exemplar of design excellence and strive to be a carbon neutral development through its use of renewable energy, excellent sustainable transport connections and the high standard of its housing". The masterplan can be found on the DCC website, bit.ly/3zJ2r1X. These ambitions now confront the inertia of commercial developers.

The Trust has been broadly supportive of the masterplan and cited for comparison in its consultation responses some **national examples of good practice in housing developments**, bit.ly/3OHA4pb. Concerns remain about some vagueness in its aspirations for sustainable transport and that the plan fails adequately to deal with the impact of this huge development on the surrounding area. Given growing realization of the threat of the climate emergency, it will be important to make the term "sustainable" here truly more than another exercise in false consciousness.

The feasibility is still being examined of a **district heating scheme** for Sniperley using geothermal energy from old underlying mines. Members who heard the talk for the Trust on 2 April by Professor John Gluyas of the University's Energy Institute may remember his support for such a geothermal scheme at Sniperley and his warm appreciation for the work of the Council's "low carbon team". The talk is on the Trust's You Tube channel: <https://bit.ly/3s3EgHO>.

Along with these sizeable urban extensions, the County Plan also allocated 50 new houses for the **former police skid pan at Aykley Heads**, built to



Fencing along the former skid pan, viewed from the southern edge of Newton Hall

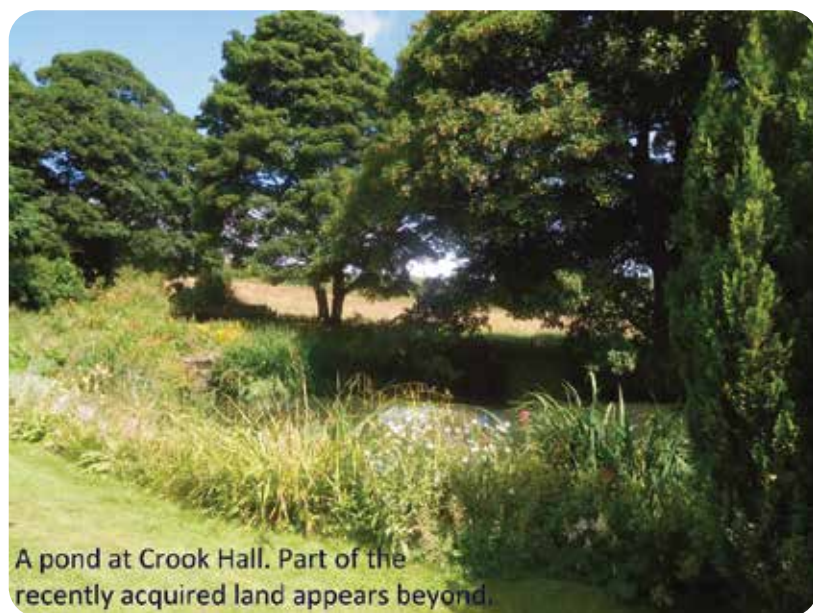
comparable standards. Though relatively small, the site is very prominent, especially to the north, lying on the rising side of a green valley facing the edges of Framwellgate and Newton Hall on the other side. Its inclusion in the Plan as a housing site still seems questionable, surrounded as it is by the Green Belt on three sides, an area of high landscape value, and lying within the broadly defined boundary of the World Heritage site inner setting.

The application was from Persimmon Homes, the company already responsible for the adjacent new housing at Aykley Woods. Persimmon had reduced the requested number of houses from an original 57 to 48. Design and layout remain rather standard instead of strongly reflecting the sensitivity of the site. The Council's report to the planning committee gave welcome acknowledgement of concerns expressed by the Trust and others, but it still recommended acceptance. Trustees had highlighted a relative lack of focused measures to meet ambitions in both the County and Neighbourhood Plans on reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions—why not actually require solar panels and heat pumps? Provision for cyclists remained inadequate and adequate bus provision is unlikely, given the distance from the main road network. It is important that all the recommend planting is undertaken to screen the estate from the Green Belt land lying below it.

CROOK HALL AND GARDENS REOPENS UNDER THE NATIONAL TRUST

“Crook Hall and Gardens” reopened on 13 July under this changed ownership as “**Crook Hall Gardens**”, with the focus on the beautiful gardens and the mediaeval hall. The main house and upper storey of the café are devoted to forms of holiday accommodation.

A small group of Trustees met representatives of the National Trust on Monday 13th June. They were very generous with their time explaining with enthusiasm plans for the gardens and hall. It has been a remarkably fast turn-around, the property finally being acquired in March and opening July, with work especially to align catering facilities with those in other NT properties. The café, located outside the area you have to pay to enter, is associated with a tiny second-hand book stall, rather than a full NT shop. Interest was expressed in displaying available CDT publications. The car park next to Crook Hall is free to NT members, but its officers were keen to stress how very easy Crook Hall Gardens is of access by means other than car.



A pond at Crook Hall. Part of the recently acquired land appears beyond.

In 2019 a significant area of land adjacent to the gardens was acquired by Crook Hall's then owners, Maggie and Keith Bell. The NT plans there a wildflower meadow, with a nature trail and also space for events. Close involvement with the local community is a key ambition. Plans for 2022 are partly on a see-how-it-goes basis, with some 27,000 visitors estimated to come for the year, even with the July opening, and over 33,000 in subsequent years. This is considerably more than the c. 20,000 a year welcomed under the opening arrangements of the previous ownership and it will be important to check pressure on the facilities. The National Trust has some 6 million members.

Crook Hall Gardens is currently open daily 10am - 5pm until 30 October, then winter weekends.

There are striking ambitions to make Crook Hall Gardens a gateway to a wider green corridor north of Durham even up to Finchale priory, including the NT-owned Moorhouse Wood. NT officers are currently researching questions of ownership and making contact with possible partners interested in the enhancing this green corridor. A project manager has been appointed. A regional example of a NT property with such links into the wider area appears in what the NT has done on the coast at Souter Lighthouse and the Leas, [bit.ly/3oJrUSJ](https://www.durhamcity.org/bit.ly/3oJrUSJ). Officers are aware of older plans for a Necklace Park along the river from the City to Finchale and support reopening the Belmont Viaduct as a walking and cycle route.

THE UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY EXPANSION

As reported in the last bulletin, the City already now accommodates more students than the University's target of 21,500 for 2027. The figure as of December 2021 is 22,220. Entry of new students for the academic years 20-21 and 21-22 hugely exceeded estimates, due largely to the effects on school grades of the reinvented exam arrangements made necessary by the pandemic. We understand that the University policy is to return over time to the target of 21,500 maximum.

While Trustees fully recognise the numerous benefits the University bestows on Durham they support making the University more aware of the severe problems it is causing. There is a glaring clash between the University's presenting itself to the world as an exemplar of social inclusion and its having effectively pursued a policy of settler colonization of Durham City itself, such that Saddler Street most mornings resembles a busy thoroughfare on a campus – a case of “The University that ate a city” (Michael Hurlow).

A question in the minds of many Durham residents must now be: given that the University's target for 5 years' time has already been exceeded, and all those students are accommodated, then surely the pressure on the City for yet more student housing will now cease? 2022 has proved a depressing awakening in this respect. This issue came to a head this year in the case of the former **Apollo Bingo Hall** off Sherburn Road, as described in the Spring Bulletin. Councillors approved an application to have this building demolished and replaced by a new block of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), despite strong objections from the Trust and others both about the site and that no more such accommodation was needed.

Trying to clarify why this had happened two trustees (Roger Cornwell and John Ashby) met with two council officers involved and Matthew Wright from the University. This was a friendly meeting but its upshot was the officers are caught in a situation that can make restrictions on such newly built student blocks difficult. The relevant County Plan Policy is 16.2 “Purpose-Built Student Accommodation” (PBSA). It seems that developer applications are answering the policy's requirement for evidence of a quantitative need for more such student accommodation by referring to “market need”, i.e. that some students would be like the “broader choice” of a range of accommodation options, given that some housing options are cheaper than others or differ in other ways. In sum, the fact the City already holds more than the University's target numbers does not mean that pressure will ease to build more PBSAs or to convert more residential dwellings to student houses.

Restraint is inherent in the County Plan's endorsement of the so-called Article 4 policy introduced very belatedly in 2016 for central Durham -- that conversion of extant family housing to student accommodation would always need planning permission and that this would not normally be granted if more than 10% of the total number of residential units within 100 metres were student occupied. This was extended to Newton Hall and Framwellgate in 2017 and to Mount Oswald, Belmont and Carrville in 2021. This policy has been leaky at times and does not affect newly built PBSAs.

The University has restated its target to have 50% of its students living in its own accommodation, partly by accepting some PBSAs as colleges. The Durham living-in rate is currently 38%, very low compared to other Russell Group universities in the UK. The County Plan envisages new PBSAs being built on the University's own estate. However, the Student Union also reports that many students prefer to live in a house of multiple occupation, especially given the expense of the University's own colleges.

One overall implication must be that the aim of having an “inclusive, mixed and balanced community” in Durham can best be aided by the University providing more and attractive accommodation of its own at competitive prices.

The “**Memorandum of Understanding For the Strategic Partnership Between Durham University And Durham County Council**” is an overview document meant to help ensure workings of the University and the Council are aligned and support each other, bit.ly/3SaMicR. Originally signed in 2017 it has been reaffirmed under the new Vice Chancellor, Professor Karen O'Brien. Trustees feel the document to be little more than a PR exercise. There was no consultation and it seems a missed opportunity to address the keen concerns of many residents, not merely on housing and social disruption, but also the impact of the University on central shops. Support for the World Heritage Site and action on climate change are also missing from the Memorandum.

THE RIVER AND RIVERBANKS

The River Wear and riverbanks at Durham have been a particular focus over the past year. At the 2021 autumn Open Meeting on 11 December Martin Roberts's annual illustrated lecture gave detailed history of the river and banks up till the 20th century, *"The Riverbanks of the Durham Peninsula: From Defensive Moat to Romantic Landscape"*. The talk is available on the Trust's You Tube channel, <https://bit.ly/3s3EgHO>.

In 2019 Durham County Council declared a "climate emergency" and made a series of pledges (see <https://www.durham.gov.uk/climatechange>). Destructive change is already unfolding at a frightening pace said to exceed most climate models. April 2022 saw the Council declare an "ecological emergency" for the county, and it committed itself to drawing up an action plan within six months. The state of the natural environment in and about Durham City is bound to become a more prominent issue for Trustees. The current state of the river and its banks was a topic in the Autumn 2021 Bulletin and a special supplement to the last Spring bulletin (<https://durhamcity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Rivers-flyer.pdf>).



Problems with the River Wear in Durham were visible even in May, with areas of duckweed and algae scum developing on the surface of the stilled, warmer water near the weirs, becoming an unsightly spectacle by mid-July, as the image shows. Such growth reflects levels of nutrient overload in the rivers, from sewage and from run-off of various kinds. There is little a body like the Trust can do beyond supporting the general and growing public anger across the UK that outflows into waterways need to be more strictly curtailed.

Various local initiatives to improve the river and riverbanks are afoot this year. The **Wear Rivers Trust** is working to improve public awareness of just how badly the riverbanks and local green spaces have become infested with ecologically destructive invasive non-native plants, especially Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam. WRT's long-term project is to remove invasive non-native species of plant from the river banks and other areas, including ultimately the whole catchment area. Work to date includes the beginning of management of Giant Hogweed on Old Durham Beck, which acts as the source of this species to Durham and the main River Wear as a whole, and various "balsam bashes" in both Durham and the wider catchment. This will be followed up by treatment of Japanese Knotweed at Maiden Castle and upstream areas, including the source populations in Weardale, in late Summer/Autumn and further management of all three species in the 2023 INNS period. A call for volunteers is ongoing and people can choose their own level of engagement (<https://wear-rivers-trust.org.uk/>).

National law is currently of limited help against invasive plant species, not requiring land-owners to deal with these damaging plants, but only to prevent their spreading onto other land. Some local areas now seem irredeemably infested with balsam, such as Hopper's Wood where it extends east of the railway, also the banks opposite the former DLI Museum. A "balsam bash" at the wood in July could only skirmish a little with the invasion, but the fact that efforts at Flass Vale have kept it clear of this pest inspires some hope.

Our Trust is represented on the steering group of the Wear Rivers Trust's **Invasive Non-Native Species** project ("INNS") for the Durham peninsula. In July the Cathedral's representative to that group reported on investigations planned into the deteriorating condition of the **two local weirs**, hopefully to include underwater images of the weir running between the two mills which, surprisingly, is timber based.

Intentions to clear the two weirs of accumulated debris were being stalled by the need for an official ecological report on the use of the debris by wildlife. Rumours of an otter holt on a weir are said to be false, but the debris has made the weirs categorizable as habitat for these protected creatures. Last year rubbish blocking the fish pass at the weir near Milburngate led to many fish becoming fatally trapped.

The weir between the two mills ("Prebends Mill") is owned by the Cathedral. The fracturing one near Milburngate (pictured here) is said to be maintained by the County Council, though its ownership is obscure.



The "Durham City Riverscape Community" was set up in 2021 in coordination with City of Durham Parish Council. This is a group involving the many local users and enjoyers of the river. Each last Saturday of the month a work group of volunteers gathers litter, both from the banks and in the river from a boat. It is easy to join the Facebook group ("Durham City Riverscape Community": <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1361735904297775>

On April 28 Mary Foy, MP for Durham City, raised in Parliament the issue of dangerous and unsightly levels of pollution and rubbish in the river, urged by concerns from pupils at St Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School at Belmont.

Rehabilitation of the River Wear

An initiative to rehabilitate the river and its banks in central Durham reached the stage in July of an initial funding bid to the Environment Agency. The focus is the peninsula between Elvet and Framwellgate bridges, incorporating the hoped-for extension of the World Heritage Site area to the riverbanks (as described in last year's *Annual Review* (bit.ly/3JrTjCb). The bid is being led by the Cathedral, at work with the Environment Agency, the County Council and the University. It is supported by a commissioned environmental study covering the state of the Wear and its banks from Shincliffe to Framwellgate Bridges.

A key aim is the construction of an effective, multi-species **fish pass** on the weir between the two mills. The study found that this weir is a severe barrier to fish movements. A pass could be built at the side of the Corn Mill, lying mostly underwater and designed so as to minimise any impact on the iconic view of the Cathedral above the Fulling Mill. Other measures aim to improve bankside habitats for fish, by means such as establishing fringe reed beds, and to address the impact or the threat of invasive alien species. Funding will also be sought for further public engagement activities based on volunteering and citizen science projects. Overall, the natural environment of the area should be improved, mitigating some impacts of climate change and enhancing interest and attractiveness for visitors and residents.

Reporting pollution incidents

Various pollution incidents in the river here have been reported by the public over recent months. Such incidents should be made known as soon as possible to the Environment Agency via its hotline, 0800 80 70 60. The Wear Rivers Trust would also wish to be informed (admin@wear-rivers-trust.org.uk).

LOOKING BACK, THE DURHAM MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Durham Museum has mounted an exhibition to celebrate the Trust's 80th Anniversary. **"How Historic Durham Survived the 20th Century"** charts the role of the Trust in preserving Durham. The Trust began life as Durham Preservation Society in 1942, in response to threatened redevelopment of the historic city. Thomas Sharp's *Cathedral City – A Plan for Durham* (1945) proposed widespread demolition of historic buildings outside the peninsular and Market Place, including Elvet, Claypath, Milburngate and Framwellgate. Elvet House (1951) on Hallgarth Street shows the low brick architecture envisaged as replacing the historic streets. Elvet House is set back from the street to allow for proposed demolition of the medieval barn and crescent of houses to make way for motor traffic.



Sharp's plaster model of his proposals, made in 1944, forms the centre piece of the exhibition. Sharp's plan was a response to Durham City Corporation and Durham County Council's proposals to redevelop Durham City centre, mooted before the war. In 1942 the Durham Preservation Society was formed to protect the historic buildings and green spaces in and around the City. Sharp was more hero than villain as planner for Durham City, and joined the Preservation Society in opposing Kipper Power Station in 1944. The exhibition includes a drawing of the proposed power station viewed from

Durham School. The exhibition also reproduces the Preservation Society's photographic record of buildings in Durham City, including dramatic scenes of demolition along New Elvet in the 1960s.

The exhibition explains how the work of the Trust over the last eighty years has helped to ensure Durham has survived as a historic city blessed with green spaces. Major achievements include the repeated campaigns to protect Flass Vale from development; the creation of a Green Belt, and pedestrianisation of the Market Place. All of which involved carefully prepared interventions in the planning process, reflecting the meticulous approach by generations of Trustees.

Durham Museum occupies St. Mary-le-Bow Church, which became redundant as a place of worship in the 1960s. The City of Durham Trust was central to the formation of the Bow Trust in 1975, repurposing the Grade I building as a heritage centre. Many items in the museum's collections relate to campaigns by the Trust, including artefacts such as the staircase from the demolished Sir John Duck's House on Silver Street, or the child's rowing boat made by the owner of Brown's Boathouse. Durham Museum also explains the history of the Neptune Statue in Market Place and Golden Teapot on Saddler Street, both saved by the Trust. The Special Exhibition thus relates to a number of items on permanent display in the museum. "How Durham Survived the 20th Century" will remain on display until summer 2023.

Thanks are due to **Daniel Burrell and Durham Museum volunteers** for their work in researching and erecting the exhibition curated by **Adrian Green** (a Trustee and Chair of the Bow Trust). The Museum's website is <http://durhammuseum.co.uk/> and opening times are 11am to 4.30pm, Wednesday to Sunday, Easter to October.

A reception at the Museum will be held for Trust members immediately after the AGM lecture on 1 October.

“LOOKING FORWARDS”

When the **Neighbourhood Plan** for the Durham City Parish was finalised a supplementary document was published with it called “**Looking Forwards’ – Durham as a Creative and Sustainable City**”. This outlines various proposals and aspirations for the area that currently fall outside the current policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and statutory planning. “Looking Forwards” is a rich document still too little known and warmly recommended to anyone thinking about the future of Durham City. It can be read online: bit.ly/3BsQROF . For context, the Neighbourhood Plan will be due for renewal at some time and the County Council is currently producing a management plan for the Durham City Conservation Area, due to go to consultation later in the year.



Trustees are keen to build up an evidence base to support proposals for future developments and are setting-up a subcommittee for the task. Three particular themes in “Looking Forwards” have been highlighted under the guidance of **Sue Childs**, the Trustee who was also a leading figure in drafting the

Neighbourhood Plan. The themes are “heritage and cultural assets”, “open spaces and other green assets” and “views”.



To give an instance of a difficult issue being raised under the first and third of these headings, “Looking Forwards” includes the aspiration of “reducing the visual impact of car parking on historic streets” (from Initiative 17: “Healthy and Active Streets”). Areas such as Crossgate and Old Elvet ought to be attractive streets of historical interest, but what one walks through are effectively extended, unattractive car parks. This already seems to clash with accepted policies in the Neighbourhood Plan itself, including “protecting important views of the Durham

City Conservation Area from viewpoints within and outside the Conservation Area” (Policy H2, g), and “taking opportunities to open up lost views and create new views and vistas” (H2, h). The constraints must be many and motorists cannot be blamed for using the parking options available, but discussion seems justified of what might be done to reduce such claustrophobic disfigurement.

Thinking related to the third theme, “heritage and cultural assets”, is already underway. Last winter Trustees submitted nominations for a local heritage list being compiled by the County Council. The scheme relates to buildings or places of value that are not designated officially as a “heritage asset” (such as a listed building, or as singled out in the 2016 character appraisal of the City’s conservation area). We understand that inclusion on a recognised and reviewed list of “non-heritage assets” could offer a kind of speculative insurance in times when national planning regulations are being relaxed, as well as adding to the evidence base for future changes to local policy.

Correlating their work with that of the Parish Council, Trustees made a fair number of submissions, including three colleges of the 1960s (Trevelyan, St Aidan’s and St Mary’s), Observatory Hill, St Margaret’s Allotment and Great High Wood. The County Council had already listed over 470 such assets. That list seems unavailable online.



PERSONALIA

Good Citizen Awards. Warm congratulations are due to Trustees **John Ashby** and **Roger Cornwell**. Both received “Good Citizen Awards “ from the Parish Council on 25 May to acknowledge all they have done for the City.

John Lowe has continued his dedicated, focused chairmanship as the Trust has continued to evolve, leading the monthly meetings of Trustees. A rare good side-effect of the pandemic is that Trustees have become very used to online meetings and are happy to keep their relative flexibility as part of their repertoire. John also represents the Trust on the management body of the World Heritage Site. **Francis Pritchard** is Honorary Secretary of the Trust, setting up meeting and overseeing membership. He has set up a special **YouTube Channel for the Trust**, on which online talks are being archived, <https://bit.ly/3s3EgHO> .

Dr Malcolm Reed is stepping down as both trustee and as Honorary Treasurer. He has served as Treasurer since 2015, overseeing the transfer last year of the Trust’s financial accounting to the simpler procedures of Charitable Incorporated Organization status. He became a trustee in 2012, and his long experience and professional expertise in planning in general and transport planning in particular have consistently informed the Trust’s work for the last decade. He gave its representations on issues such as the threatened “relief roads” an unprecedented authority. He will be badly missed.

Michael Hurlow provides initial, illustrated reports each week on significant cases in the Council’s weekly planning list, he and **John Ashby** in particular often lead the Trust’s monthly batch of responses to planning applications and other developments, supported by **John Lowe**, **Roger Cornwell** and **Richard Hird**. **Malcolm Reed** and **Matthew Phillips** offer special expertise on transport and sustainability. Matthew submitted this year critical studies of transport measures relating especially to the new City extensions. He also continues to oversee the Trust’s stock of publications. **Timothy Clark** drafts the Trust’s bulletins and liaises with our printer. **Sue Childs** sustains the new website. She is marking the Trust’s 80th anniversary this year with an unfolding item called “**Asset of the month**”, featuring each month a well-researched entry on a building, place or issue in Durham that has been a focus for the Trust in this time. **Dr. Adrian Green** is both a professional historian (author of a study of John Cosin as an influential architectural patron) and an administrator of Durham Museum on the North Bailey, <http://durhammuseum.co.uk/index.html> . This year he set up a special exhibition to mark the Trust’s 80th anniversary – his description of it is given in this Review. He is co-author of *Coal Stories*, not strictly a Trust publication but one it warmly supports and promotes.

Dr Lucy Szablewska is not seeking re-election as a trustee, having served since 2019 and working as minutes secretary between 2014-2019. Colleagues will miss her sharp focus on issues of communal amenity, such as footpath access near Houghall or across Observatory Hill, or defending the Rocking Horse Rehearsal Rooms under threat at Blagdon Depot. **Councillor Liz Brown** stepped down as Trustee early in 2022, to avoid any possible perception of conflicts of interest with her roles as both Parish and County Councillor.

Warm thanks are due again to **Jan Hutchinson** for keeping so thoroughly and clearly the minutes of Trustees’ meetings and preparing other monthly records for them. Things could not be better documented.

POSITION VACANT, TREASURER FOR THE TRUST

With Malcolm Reed stepping down as Honorary Treasurer for the Trust, this vital role now falls vacant. **Any member interested in taking it up should contact our Chair**, chair@durhamcity.org . The duties can be described as vital but not onerous, and Malcolm will assist the new Treasurer during a transition period.

DONATIONS

Finally, Trustees extend a warm thanks for a bequest of £500 from the estate of the late Gwladwyn Ashby. Gratitude is also due to the person who has made the Trust an anonymous donation of £480, as well as to two others who have given £20 and £100. You will know who you are and please accept this grateful

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

The 80th Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 1 October at 2.00 pm, in the Assembly Rooms Theatre 40 North Bailey. To attend the meeting via Zoom instead, please request a link by emailing zoom@durhamcity.org.

Interested in becoming a Trustee and engaging with us on the future of the City? Contact our chairman in advance of the meeting on chair@durhamcity.org.

At the start of the meeting the Trust's Architectural Award for 2021/2022 will be presented to **Maya Polenz, "Head of Property" at Durham Cathedral**, in recognition of the Cathedral's superb new glazed lobbies.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 79th Annual General Meeting (Wednesday 27 October, 2021), copied below.
3. Matters Arising from the Minutes
4. Report of the Trustees and Presentation of Accounts of the Trust for the period ended 7 April 2022: to be presented by the Honorary Treasurer, Malcolm Reed
5. Appointment of Trustees
6. Appointment of the Honorary Officers of the Trust
7. Honorary Secretary's Report
8. Chairman's Remarks
9. Any other business which might be brought forward by members. It would be helpful if notice of this could be given to the Chair in advance, at chair@durhamcity.org.

* * * * *

After the formal agenda **John Pendlebury, Professor of Urban Conservation at Newcastle University**, will present a talk about **Thomas Sharp**, the town planner and author of *Cathedral City – A Plan for Durham*.

There will be a **reception in Durham Museum** after the AGM lecture. This offers a chance to view the exhibition, **"How Historic Durham Survived the 20th Century"**.

MINUTES OF THE 79th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TRUST HELD AT 7 pm IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, NORTH BAILEY AND ONLINE ON WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2021.

1 WELCOME, PRESENTATION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. The Chair (John Lowe) welcomed attendees (in person and via Zoom) to the Trust's 2021 AGM in the beautiful setting of the Assembly Rooms Theatre and quipped that there would be three 'acts' this evening: presentation of the Trust's Architectural Award (2019), the formal AGM business, then an illustrated talk by Dr Douglas Pocock.

For the first act, he was delighted to hand the 2019 award commemorative plaque to Kate Barton, Theatre Manager of the Assembly Rooms. The historic theatre cost £2.5M to renovate and Trustees were impressed by the sensitive preservation of notable features alongside modern functionality (*copies of the Trust's Bulletin No. 88 detailing the project were available for members at the AGM*). Kate gave thanks on behalf of the University for the award and for holding the AGM here. She agreed it is a very special building and said it was an honour to have been involved in its refurbishment. She gave a fascinating run-through of the building's history from the 1600s to the present day, including interesting discoveries such as: a medieval defensive wall uncovered in the foundations and the original rigging system and trapdoor that are still used. The Chair thanked her for her enthusiastic commentary.

Starting the formal business of the AGM, apologies were received from Roger Cornwell, Sue Shaw, and Fenwick and Joan Lawson. The Lawsons had sent their thanks for the Honorary Membership status bestowed on them, which they were thrilled to accept.

2 MINUTES OF THE 78th AGM (30 September 2020). The Minutes, already approved by Trustees, were noted.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES. There were no matters arising.

4 REPORT OF TRUSTEES AND PRESENTATION OF THE TRUST'S ACCOUNTS (period ended 7 April 2021): presented by the Honorary Treasurer Malcolm Reed. Malcolm highlighted items from his Treasurer's Report in the Annual Review (pages 13 & 14). For this unusual year, with the pandemic and the Trust's change to CIO status, it made sense to extend the accounting period to 7 April 2021 (from 31 December 2020), to avoid the need for a second set of accounts up to the Company's official closure. Hence, the 15 months covered by the accounts are not directly comparable with preceding/succeeding years due to the higher subscription income balanced against lower operating costs and loss of retail sales. The Trust's finances are healthy with a sufficient buffer. There were no questions. The 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts, already approved by Trustees, were accepted as a true record at the AGM.

5 AMENDMENTS TO SUBSCRIPTION RATES. This resolution was shared with Members on 11 October 2021 and listed in the Annual Review (page 11). Malcolm explained the reasoning behind the proposal to level up the subscription rates to make membership more accessible, and he ran through points A to D of the formal resolution. The Chair thanked Malcolm for his work on the accounts and the resolution. There were no questions, so the Chair moved to a vote. There were no votes against, so the resolution was overwhelmingly carried.

6 APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES. Four Trustees who are retiring and willing to continue, Liz Brown, Richard Hird, Matthew Phillips and Prof. Barbara Ravelhofer, were proposed and re-elected by consensus. The Chair thanked them for their continued service. A Trustee co-opted during the year, Francis Pritchard, was proposed and confirmed by consensus. The Chair thanked Francis for his valuable work on membership and meetings.

7 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY OFFICERS OF THE TRUST. Proposed by the Chair, and carried by acclaim, the following were elected: Francis Pritchard as Hon. Secretary, and Dr Malcolm Reed as Hon. Treasurer. The Chair congratulated them both. As a CIO, the requirement for vetting of our accounts is now simpler, so the proposal is for Members at the AGM to remit the appointment of Examiner to Trustees, who will reconsider the terms of appointment to match the Charity Commission guidance for CIOs. The proposal was agreed by AGM attendees.

8 HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT. Membership, Francis reported that the Trust currently has just under 400 members (387) consisting of: Honorary: 8; Joint: 44; Joint Senior: 142; Life: 47; Ordinary: 30; Senior: 115; State benefit: 1.

9 CHAIR'S REMARKS. The Annual Review 2020-2021 describes key aspects of this unique and decisive year for our city. This is our first AGM as a CIO and Trustees re-started in-person meetings in September. It is gratifying that the Neighbourhood Plan has proved influential in planning decisions/appeals, but the County Plan is proving less effective judging by the recent Bent House Lane application decision. Trustees intend to raise the issue of CDP Policy 5 conditions being ignored with DCC's new Cabinet members. The decision to de-register The Sands common land is disappointing but the Trust and the Parish Council were ably represented at the public inquiry by Michael Hurlow and Roger Cornwell. We await to see what DCC's new administration plans for the land. Reports concerning the DLI museum, Dunelm House, Redhills and Crook Hall are also in the Annual Review, with welcome recent news that Crook Hall is being sold to the National Trust. 2020-21 saw the launch of the Trust's new website and Matthew Phillips has written excellent blogs on sustainable transport. We have a talented and committed team of Trustees - more details can be read on page 10 of the Annual Review. Do get in touch with ideas to commemorate our 80th anniversary (October 2022) and we all need to try to recruit new members.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS. No other business. The Chair thanked all attendees and drew the formal business to a close at 19.50.

As a 'grande finale' to the evening, the Chair invited **Dr Douglas Pocock** to present his illustrated talk: *"A City in trust: Eight decades of caring for Durham"*, which sets the scene for the Trust's 80th anniversary next year. The fascinating talk was very warmly received by all attendees. Dr Adrian Green thanked Douglas for his tremendous summary of the Trust's work over the last eight decades and noted the recurring battle themes. He highlighted how important Douglas's grasp of detail and judgement of what is significant has been to the Trust's work and thanked him on behalf of Trustees and Members. The event concluded at 21.00.

The Trustees



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
City of Durham Trust

**On accounts for the year
ended**

7 April 2022

**Charity no
(if any)** 502132

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

**Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

- In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention
1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met ; or
 2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date: 23 August 2022

Name:

Yasmin Bari

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body**

Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales (ICAEW)

1000

Net of receipts/(payments)

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

Categories