Frere's Almshouses, Bitton

Trustees' Annual Report 2025

A CHARITY AND TRUSTEE DETAILS

Name of charity
Frere's Almshouses

Charity registration number
247354

Names of charity trustees

Trustee name	Duration	Affiliation
Ness Brunner-Ellis	Since November 2025	Vicar (ex-officio trustee)
Jeff Dando	All year and current	Vice chair (elected trustee)
Mike Blackmore	Resigned May 2026	(elected trustee)
John Dugay	Resigned May 2026	(elected trustee)
Susan Hawking	Resigned May 2026	Bitton Parish Councillor
Nick Watson	Since May 2026	Bitton Parish Councillor
Chrissie Cushing	All year and current	Hanham Abbotts Parish Councillor
Steve Reade	All year and current	Siston Parish Councillor
Brenda Langley	All year and current	South Glos County Councillor

B STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Frere's Almshouses charity is a registered charity governed by a Charity Commission Scheme. The first scheme was sealed in 1923, and subsequent schemes made alterations to it. The scheme was last updated and sealed in 1978 with a minor amendment in 1991.

The site of the almshouses was the gift of Edward Frere by Trust Deed dated 30 December 1854. The buildings were subsequently erected and completed in 1859. They comprise five small unfurnished dwellings in a gothic-style terrace with substantial gardens to the front. The buildings were Grade II listed in July 1981.

The charity is governed by a board of volunteer trustees. The scheme document sets out who the board of trustees consists of:

- One ex-officio trustee – the Vicar of the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary, Bitton.
- Five 'nominative' trustees
- Three 'co-optative' trustees

Currently there is no Chair. In addition there is a Treasurer and a Secretary, also volunteers.

The previous Vicar left in February 2024, so the board was missing one trustee during the interregnum, which lasted until November 2025.

The five ‘nominative’ trustees are appointed by the four neighbouring Parish Councils (Bitton, Hanham Abbots, Oldland and Siston) and the County Council (South Gloucestershire). Currently Oldland Parish Council have been unable to find a person to nominate.

The three ‘co-optative’ trustees are local people elected by the board of trustees. Currently there are two vacancies. It continues to be a challenge to find people willing to serve. Attempts to recruit by advertising locally have not been successful. Personal contacts with local people have had more success. Potential trustees submit a short CV to the board who then vote them onto the board, usually at the Annual General Meeting. Formal meetings of the trustees are held four times a year.

C OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The charity provides affordable housing to those in financial and housing need. Entry is restricted to persons, not less than 55 years of age, living within the four local parishes.

As with other almshouses, there is no landlord / tenant relationship. Residents are licensed beneficiaries of the charity, with occupancy conditions set out in their letter of appointment. Residents make a Contribution in lieu of rent, set at a level well below a full market rent. If residents are eligible for housing benefit, this is paid directly to the charity.

Contributions go towards the cost of running the charity. Items covered include:
- Building repairs and maintenance
- Servicing and repair of water and electrical installations
- Decoration costs
- Buildings insurance

A communal boiler house contains an oil-fired boiler which supplies hot water for central heating and domestic hot water. All running and maintenance costs for this are borne by the charity. In addition, water and sewerage charges and TV licences are paid by the charity.

Day-to-day management matters are dealt with by a small number of individuals from the charity. Minor maintenance and repair work is carried out by trusted local tradesmen as and when required. More substantial items of work, identified in the latest quinquennial report, are planned and carried out at the appropriate time scale.

During the few previous years there have been upgrades to many of the dwellings, replacing baths with walk-in showers. In 2024 major repair work was carried out in one dwelling, dealing with significant wet rot in the ground floor, including the provision of new underfloor ventilation. Engaging a chartered surveyor to obtain listed building consent and administer the repair contract involved considerable additional expense.

In comparison, there were relative few items of maintenance expenditure during 2025.

D FINANCIAL REVIEW

The income of the charity comes almost entirely from the Contributions paid by the residents.

Expenditure is quite variable, depending on the maintenance requirements of a listed Victorian building. Substantial deficits were incurred in 2023 and 2024. This was partly from unexpected items of expenditure, but partly from a loss of income following the death of a resident. The loss of income lasted ten months until a new resident was found.

The Contributions paid by residents are reviewed annually. In the light of recent deficits, and a recognition that Contributions have not kept up with inflation, recent increases have been made slightly above the rate of inflation.

The charity currently holds more than £71,000 in financial reserves, mostly with CCLA. There is no explicit policy for the holding of reserves, although the scheme document requires there to be a reserve fund, available for unexpected substantial maintenance and repair costs, to which substantial amounts are transferred every year.

At the end of 2025 the charity's finances showed a modest surplus, although as explained in the accounts, there was effectively a slight deficit.

E DECLARATION

The trustees declare they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature: J F Dando

Full name: Jeffrey Frank Dando

Position: Vice chair

Date: 2nd October 2026

Frere's Almshouses, Bitton

Annual Accounts for 2025

Income & Expenditure Accounts for year ended 31 December 2025

	£	£
Income:	**2025**	2024
House contributions & benefits	24,367	19,015
RSA compensation	700	0
COIF, NAACIF & Lloyds Bank interest	109	244
Allotment rents & wayleaves	17	19
	25,193	19,278

Expenditure:	**2025**	2024
ERF (Extraordinary Repair Fund)	1,800	1,800
Repairs & maintenance	4,021	14,699
Building insurance	2,076	2,010
Heating & lighting	6,780	7,104
Water & sewerage	1,589	1,348
TV licences	182	8
Council tax	0	446
Subscriptions	275	0
Professional fees	4,325	36
Christmas gifts	182	182
Room hire	119	108
Petty Cash	4	6
	21,353	27,747

NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT):	**3,840**	(8,469)

Bank Accounts:	**31/12/25**	31/12/24
Lloyds Current Account	6,767	3,008
Lloyds Savings Account	10,357	10,275
	17,124	13,283

Value of Investments:	**31/12/25**	31/12/24
COIF Charities Investment Fund - Accumulation Units (**incl. ERF**)	29,037	27,777
COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund - Accumulation Units	41,707	42,635
COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund - Income Units	208	219
NAACIF Shares	502	451
	71,454	71,082

Notes on 2025 accounts

1. House contributions have recovered after the long vacancy in 2024.

2. The compensation payment from the insurers Royal & Sun Alliance followed a second complaint regarding their handling of the subsidence claim.

3. Maintenance costs were much lower in 2025 with no major items of expenditure.

4. A full price TV licence became payable for the new resident of no. 22.

5. Council tax had been payable in 2024 while no. 22 was empty.

6. The Almshouse Association subscription for 2024 was paid in December 2023.

7. Professional fees paid in 2025 were to Kennett Surveys. This was for the quinquennial inspection in 2024; also a first-half payment for all the work involved with the timber treatment works to no. 14.

8. Overall there was a surplus of £3,840 for the year, but only because a second-half payment to Kennett Surveys of £4,240 (for work in 2024) was deferred until 2026. Effectively there was a deficit of £400.

9. The value of investments remained fairly static over the year.

Martin Lings
Hon. Treasurer
Frere's Almshouses

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: FRERE'S ALMSHOUSES

On accounts for the year ended: 31 DECEMBER 2025 | **Charity no (if any)**: 247354

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 / 12 / 2025

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn 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: S D **Date:** 27.8.2026

Name: SALLY DEACON

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF TAXATION

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