

# **Walsall Wood (Former Allotments) Charity – 29 February 2024**

## **Annual Report 01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023**

Charity Registration Number: 510627

Address: Walsall Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TW

Trustees: Councillor Keith Sears (Chair of the Trustees)  
Councillor Mike Bird  
Councillor Ken Ferguson  
Councillor Amanda Parkes  
Mr Alan Paul  
Councillor Vera Waters

### **1 Summary of Report**

- 1.1 This report presents the work of the Charity during 2022-2023. The Committee met on three occasions and ensured the Charity acted in accordance with its purpose of relieving beneficiaries who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities.
- 1.2 This report was initially prepared for submission as part of the Charity's Annual Return (2022-23) to the Charity Commission in January 2024. Due to ongoing issues with the Charity Commission's new digital system and user data, the annual return is still pending completion. The Charity Commission are working to resolve these issues. This is an issue affecting multiple charities and the Charity Commission have advised that they will amend the date of annual returns for any affected charities to show they were filed on time.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the work of the Charity be noted.
- 2.2 That a report be brought to a future meeting for Trustees to review existing policies and to consider whether they wish to develop further policies to complement their operations.

### **3 Governance and Trustees**

- 3.1 The Charity's Committee of Management consists of five co-opted Trustees serving five-year terms of office and one Trustee nominated by Walsall Council serving a four-year term of office. This is in accordance with the Charity's governing Trust Scheme (September 1993, as amended 2006 and

2023). New co-opted Trustees are recruited when vacancies become available and are appointed by the existing Trustees at special meetings.

- 3.2 In August 2022 the Charity re-appointed Mr A. Paul as a co-opted Trustee and appointed Councillor V.Waters as a new co-opted Trustee to fill the existing vacancy.
- 3.3 The Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed by Trustees at the first meeting of the Trustees in each municipal year and the Chair is always eligible for re-election.
- 3.4 At their ordinary meetings, Trustees consider and determine applications received for financial assistance, after which the day-to-day administration of grants and the processing and handling of new applications, is delegated to the Clerk to the Trustees in co-operation with the Treasurer and Chair. The Clerk is provided by Walsall Council's Democratic Services team. Risks revolving around the spending of charity resources by successful applicants are managed closely by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, outside of Charity Meetings.
- 3.5 In March 2023 the Trustees approved an amendment to the Charity's scheme to allow for meetings to be conducted in-person and via virtual, telephone or hybrid (a combination of these) methods. It was intended that meetings would continue to be held in-person however this provision would help future-proof the charity and manage business effectively and efficiently.

#### **4 Charity Priorities and Activities**

- 4.1 The Charity's governing document explains that its income should be used for the purpose of relieving beneficiaries who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities. The governing document also states that charity income cannot be used to relieve 'rates, taxes or other public funds'. Further to this, Trustees have further developed the Charity's purpose with the following local conventions:
  - The Charity will not use its income for the relief of the following:
    - Rent arrears and deposits;
    - Bankruptcy fees;
    - Applications for assistance from applicants living outside of the borough of Walsall Council.
  - Due to the substantial number of applications received and limited charitable resources, those applicants from residents in the Walsall Wood area (denoted by WS8 and WS9 postcodes) will be considered first.
- 4.2 At their ordinary meetings, Trustees consider and determine applications received for financial assistance based on their own merit and the resources available to the Charity. Trustees have a legal and moral obligation to ensure that when considering applications, they are fair and even-handed, and that the age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation of applicants do not prejudice or influence decision making. Requirements are in place for applications to be supported by minimum standards of evidence to help ensure Trustees make awards to those who most require assistance and

therefore best meet their objectives of relieving beneficiaries who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

- 4.3 During 2022-23, regular meetings re-commenced with three meetings being held. Grants were made to 124 applicants, including some who had applied for assistance while meetings were unable to take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Awards were made for assistance including white goods, flooring, furniture, school uniform and clothing. Applications from residents in WS8 and WS9 postcodes were considered first however most awards were made to residents in the rest of Walsall Borough. Outgoing payments, including payment for some awards outstanding from the previous reporting year, totalled £21,036.00.

## **5 Financial Review**

- 5.1 Details of the Charity's financial review can be found in the appended financial report. Trustees have a duty to manage the Charity on a sound financial footing and should seek to spend within its income levels.
- 5.2 The attached financial review was previously reported to and noted by Trustees at their meeting of 24 August 2023.

## **6 Risk management**

- 6.1 The associated risks to this report revolve around the financial security of the Charity and statutory reporting requirements.

### *Serious incidents*

- 6.2 There have been no serious incidents requiring reporting.

### *Policy Statements*

- 6.3 The Charity Commission recommends that Charities should have policies in place to ensure that it carries out its aims lawfully and to safeguard its funds and assets. Whilst there is no specific legal requirement to have in place formal policies for some matters referred to by the Charity Commission, it would be good practice to provide positive statements in areas where there is an identifiable need.
- 6.4 The Charity currently has in place the following policies and procedures:
- Safeguarding (adopted March 2017)
  - Trustee conflicts of interest (adopted December 2016)
- 6.5 It is recommended that a report be brought to a future meeting for Trustees to review the existing policies and make any necessary amendments and to consider whether they wish to develop any further policies to complement their operations.

## **7 Legal implications**

- 7.1 Charities with an income exceeding £25,000 are required to provide a copy of the trustees' annual report, the Charity's accounts and Independent Examiner's Report as part of their annual return to the Charity Commission.
- 7.2 The annual return for 2021-2022 required by the Charity Commission was completed.
- 7.3 Due to ongoing issues with the Charity Commission's new digital system and user data, the annual return for 2022-23 is still pending completion. The Charity Commission are working to resolve these issues. This is an issue affecting multiple charities and the Charity Commission have advised that they will amend the date of annual returns for any affected charities to show they were filed on time.

## **8 Equality implications**

- 8.1 Trustees have a legal and moral obligation to ensure that, when considering applications, they are fair and even handed and that the age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation of applicants does not prejudice or influence decision making.

## **9 Consultation**

- 9.1 The Council's finance team have

### **Author**

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Democratic Services Officer

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# Walsall Wood Allotment Charity

## Receipts and Payments Statement For the year ended 31 March 2023

2021/22			2022/23		
Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted funds (inc endowments) £	Total £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted funds (inc endowments) £	Total £
<b>Receipts from:</b>					
2,431	25,654	28,085	2,480	26,167	28,647
0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	8	195	0	195
0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>2,439</b>	<b>25,654</b>	<b>28,093</b>	<b>2,675</b>	<b>26,167</b>	<b>28,842</b>
<b>Payments on:</b>					
0	4,445	4,445	0	21,036	21,036
0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>0</b>	<b>4,445</b>	<b>4,445</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21,036</b>	<b>21,036</b>
<b>2,439</b>	<b>21,209</b>	<b>23,648</b>	<b>2,675</b>	<b>5,131</b>	<b>7,806</b>
27,634	50,644	78,278	30,073	71,853	101,926
<b>30,073</b>	<b>71,853</b>	<b>101,926</b>	<b>32,748</b>	<b>76,984</b>	<b>109,732</b>

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*L. S. Darcy*

Shaun Darcy  
Treasurer to the Trust

Management Account for Walsall Wood Allotment Charity  
As at 08 August 2023

Forecast Receipts and Payments 2023/24

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted funds (inc endowments) £	Total £
<b>Receipts received to date</b>			
Investments	615	6,494	7,109
Bank Interest	267	0	267
	<b>882</b>	<b>6,494</b>	<b>7,376</b>
<b>Forecast Receipts</b>			
Investments	1,846	19,482	21,328
Bank Interest	665	0	665
	<b>2,511</b>	<b>19,482</b>	<b>21,993</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>25,976</b>	<b>29,369</b>
<b>Payments made to date</b>			
Charitable expenses	0	5,994	5,994
Insurance	349	0	349
Administrative expenses	0	0	0
	<b>349</b>	<b>5,994</b>	<b>6,343</b>
<b>Forecast payments for rest of year</b>			
Charitable expenses	0	23,091	23,091
Insurance	1,100	0	1,100
Administrative expenses	519	0	519
	<b>1,619</b>	<b>23,091</b>	<b>24,710</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>29,085</b>	<b>31,053</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) as at 10th May 2023</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>1,033</b>
<b>Forecast Surplus/(Deficit) for Year</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>(3,109)</b>	<b>(1,684)</b>

Uncommitted Cash Funds

Details	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Current Account	3,473 -	3,462	11
Deposit Account	29,808	80,947	110,755
<b>Total Cash Funds</b>	<b>33,281</b>	<b>77,485</b>	<b>110,766</b>

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*L. S. Hayes*

Shaun Darcy  
Treasurer to the Trustees

Analysis of forecast expenditure for remainder of year

Description	Category	Value £
Unpaid Approved Grants	Charitable Expenses	4,875
Accountancy Fee	Administrative expenses	519
Insurance	Administrative expenses	1,100
Payments made by Walsall Council	Charitable Expenses	1,219
Predicted Spend for rest of year Grants	Charitable Expenses	16,997
<b>Total projected expenditure</b>		<b>24,710</b>

Projected bank balance year end:

	£
Current bank balance	110,766
Adjustments to the Bank	-
Less uncashed cheques (check bank reconciliation)	-
Add income for rest of the year.	21,993
Less expenditure for rest of the year.	24,710
<b>Projected year end balance</b>	<b>108,049</b>
Bank balance at start of year	109,733.00
Projected movement in bank balance	1,684.00
	-

Investments

Details	Fund to which investment belongs to	No of units held	Market valuation as at 04/05/2023 £	Market valuation as at 08/08/2023 £
COIF Charities Investment Fund	Unrestricted Fund	4,552.40	84,695	86,004
<b>Total unrestricted fund investments</b>			<b>84,695</b>	<b>86,004</b>
COIF Charities Investment Fund	Restricted Fund	48,031.82	893,603	907,422
<b>Total restricted fund investments</b>			<b>893,603</b>	<b>907,422</b>
<b>Total Investments</b>			<b>978,298</b>	<b>993,426</b>

# INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF WALSALL WOOD ALLOTMENT CHARITY

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2023.

## **Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 43 (2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43 (7) (b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## **Basis of Independent Examiner's Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. 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 you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view of the accounts.

## **Independent Examiner's Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements set out below have not been met.

- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
- To prepare accounts which accord the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act

Signed



Mr Robert Page MSc CPFA

Walsall MBC, Civic Centre 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1TP

16 August 2023.