

Dorset Historic Churches Trust

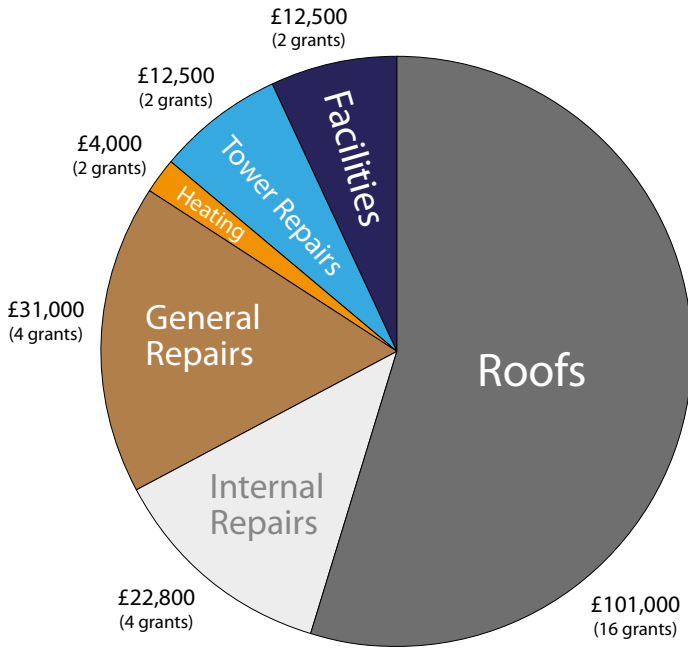
Conserving the past – enriching the future

2026 | ISSUE 21

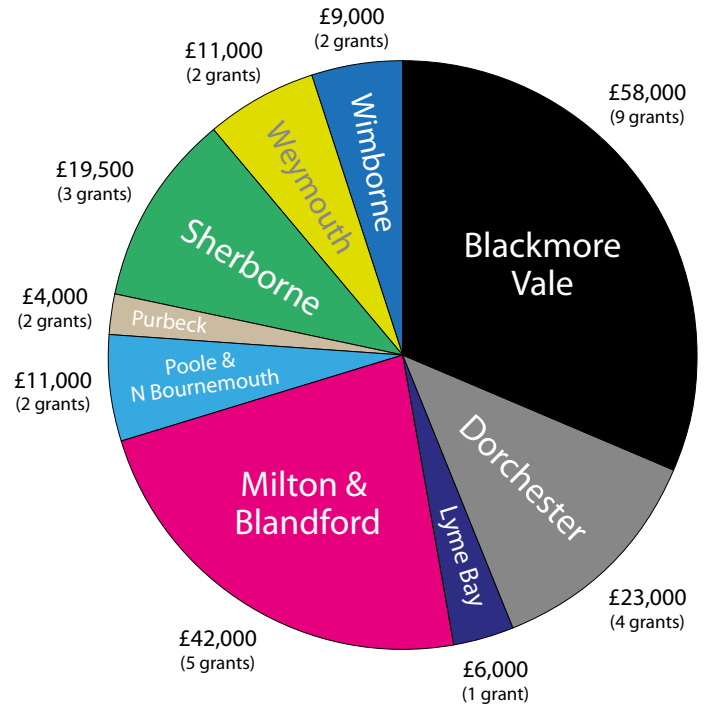
ANNUAL REPORT AND REVIEW

2025 at a Glance

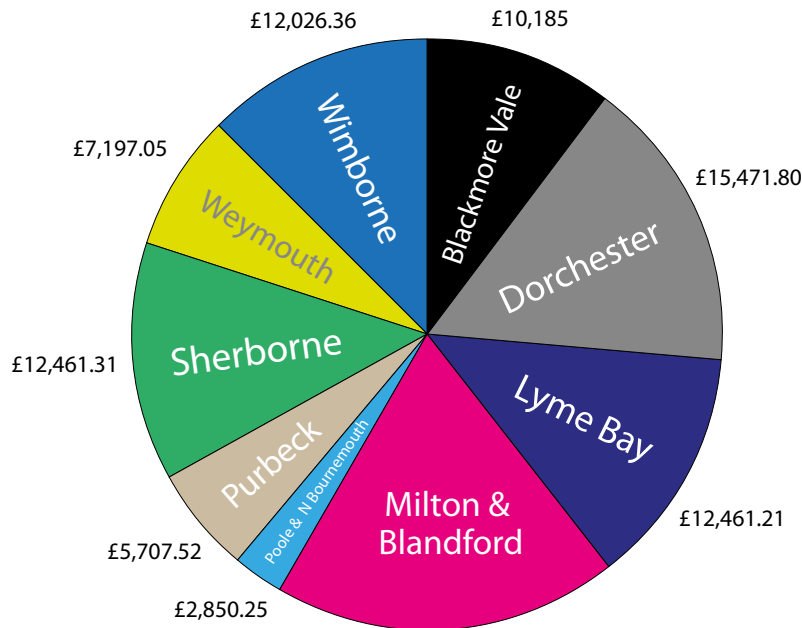
Number of Grants per Type of Work



Grants by Deanery Area



Ride+Stride Results by Deanery Area



Note:
Figures may not align exactly, as payments continue to come in after the official closing date.

The Year in Figures

- Ride + Stride raised £100,000 (plus Gift Aid)
- Grants paid out to 23 churches: £120,000
- Grants awarded to 30 churches: £184,000

Chairman's Report 2025

2025 proved to be another busy and productive year for DHCT, in which the Trust received an increased number of applications. As a result, the Trustees were able to award grants of £184,000 during the year. The annual Ride + Stride fund-raising event raised over £100,000 which, together with recovery of associated Gift Aid money, has – yet again – provided a significant boost to the Trust's resources.

Recent focus has been on HMG's announcement on 22 January 2026 that the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPoWGS) would come to an end on 31 March 2026. Anticipation of the Scheme's demise triggered a rush of applications with the predictable consequence that the Scheme ran out of money on 18 February 2026. At the same time as announcing the end of the Scheme, HMG introduced its new Places of Worship Renewal Fund (PoWRF). At the time of writing, the Fund's rules of procedure have yet to be published. The National Churches Trust website states that *"Historic England are still working on the details of the PoWRF and how they will be implementing it. They are set to share the plan in a few weeks with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for review."*

There already appear to be some significant differences between it and the previous scheme. While the LPoWGS was administered as a VAT reclaim scheme, under which listed places of worship were automatically entitled to reclaim the VAT on works of repair and maintenance (latterly subject to a limit of £25K), it appears that the Fund will be run as a discretionary fund administered by Historic England in accordance with HMG's overarching "Plan for Change". The criteria which will apply to applications to the Fund have not yet been published, so there is significant uncertainty about the arrangements which will apply after 1 April 2026. As a result, there cannot be any expectation that an application will be successful as of right.

The amount of money available to listed places of worship under the new Fund will be less than was previously available under the old Scheme. While the headline figure announced by HMG was £92m, closer reading reveals that sum is to be spread over 4 years, so £23m per annum. That is less than the budget of £42m which was originally provided for under the Scheme in 2024/25.

The ministerial statement states: *"...the new Fund will target our capital funding where it is needed most, focusing on repair and conservation work...to secure our heritage while supporting the government's wider missions for national renewal and community cohesion..."*. One can wonder how such criteria would be applied to an area such as Dorset. Further, an application may have to satisfy a "community cohesion" criteria. Works carried out by local builders and specialist trades provide an excellent example of a community project being carried out and would chime with any 'heritage' criteria.

Turning to the business of the Trust, Ride+Stride was a great success in 2025. No less than 167 churches provided active participants, and many more churches opened their doors to welcome visitors. That reflects well on the R+S team and the DARs who encourage participation in the event at the grass roots level.

Another important, and growing, source of income for the Trust is by way of legacies. During the year the Marketing and Friends

teams have revised DHCT's legacy leaflet to make it simpler to complete. I encourage all, particularly DHCT's Friends, to consider making a Bequest to the Trust.

The Friends continue to provide core support to the Trust. Four Church Crawls were arranged during 2025, all of which were well attended. In addition two Lecture Lunches were also well attended. These events provide an excellent opportunity to learn about the history of various churches in Dorset, as well as proving to be popular social events.

As ever, the Trust would like to recruit some new Church Representatives, who provide local support for Ride+Stride and often the first step in a grant application. If this role appeals to you, or you know someone who might like to become involved, please do let us know. You will be very welcome!

The past year has been one of solid achievement for the Trust. The coming year will undoubtedly bring fresh challenges. DHCT has a worthy role in keeping the churches in Dorset in good repair. Particularly as regards smaller rural churches, keeping the wind and rain out can mean churches remain in use and thus able to contribute to local community life. Thanks to all who have given generously of their time and effort in enabling the Trust to fulfil that role.

David Grant



Left to right: Dr Tim Connor – Trustee, David Burnett – Dovecote Press, Dr Andrew Rumsey – Bishop of Ramsbury, David Grant – Trust Chairman.

DHCT is a Light in the Darkness

It is easy to feel discouraged by the scale of the need to maintain the listed church buildings in this lovely county. Whether medieval treasures or 19th century “modernisations”, these structures – so vital to the look and feel of our predominantly rural area – are in need of plenty of love right now and Dorset Historic Churches Trust is on the case and has been for 65 years. It gives advice, support and money.

National Churches Trust (NCT) explains that there are nearly 1000 historic churches in England in such urgent need of repairs that they have been officially designated as ‘At Risk’. Historic England lists seven church or former church buildings “At Risk” in Dorset.

With smaller – and often shrinking – populations around them, rural churches face a big challenge just to fulfil the basic requirement to keep the building standing, dry and safe.

While churches must sometimes become redundant, we cannot argue that they should just be left to fall down when no one wants them. There is a legal duty to look after “Listed buildings”: structures designated as having special architectural or historic interest and protected from being altered or demolished. No fewer than 134, or about one third, of all church buildings in Dorset are listed, many at Grade 1.

The NCT advises thinking about some highly imaginative solutions to this problem, such as becoming a filming location or hosting farmers’ markets, but I think a further problem – and one bound to become greater as time and the current generation pass away – is finding people to consider taking on this responsibility.

There is a great shortage of volunteers. Evidence suggests there

are many reasons for this. People are busy. We work longer and retire later. Care of grandchildren or elderly family members can be time consuming and energy sapping. The cost-of-living crisis makes people nervous of being out of pocket, not least in an area with little public transport. Old habits were questioned during the pandemic lock-downs. People were forced to stop volunteering and have not returned.

I think, too, people are daunted by the work involved. The environment around restoration projects is not always sympathetic. The Church, which ultimately owns these buildings, is not an esteemed organisation nationally and much of the energy of faith-minded parishioners goes into evangelism on its behalf. This involves persuading sceptical people to learn more about the church from a limited background of knowledge and consider joining in gently – not going on committees, or organising fund-raising, or taking on responsibility for dealing with architects, engineers, surveyors, archaeologists, tree experts, bat conservationists, bank managers, investment companies, the Government Department of Culture Media and Sport, not to overlook the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

Volunteers also try not to be always talking about money and worrying about the uncertain successor to the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and the chances of being able to reclaim the VAT paid on building work. This very worrying matter is far from clear when this report goes to press.

There are other grant-awarding bodies of course and thank goodness for them all – but the existence of DHCT is a light in the darkness we must keep burning into the uncertain future.

Tom Wickson



The riders and striders of St Mary Sturminster Marshall prepare to set off.

A Reflection by Canon Andrew Rowland, Vicar of Wimborne and DHCT Trustee

“Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.” – Isaiah 58:12

This verse captures the very heart of our mission at the Dorset Historic Churches Trust. Our work is not only about repairing roofs or restoring windows; it is about raising up foundations that have carried faith through centuries, ensuring that these sacred places remain living centres of worship and community for generations yet to come.

Over the past year, once again, I have seen how the Trust’s support has helped parishes and churches across Dorset, to meet daunting challenges with courage and hope. Whether it was a leaking roof threatening the sanctuary or a crumbling porch that welcomed countless worshippers, each project has been a testimony to resilience and shared commitment. These repairs are more than practical necessities – they are acts of faith, preserving the spiritual heartbeat of our villages and towns.

Churches continue to stand as precious places of prayer, hospitality and solace. They welcome all who enter, whether seeking God in worship, quiet reflection or simply the comfort of familiar walls. In a time when many feel disconnected, our historic churches remind us of continuity, belonging and the steadfast love of God. Many of our churches are used anonymously as places for private prayer.

Alongside all my fellow Trustees, I give thanks for the volunteers, donors and friends whose generosity makes this vital work possible. Your dedication is itself a form of ministry, embodying the call to be “repairers of the breach.”

As we look ahead, may our churches remain not only monuments of the past but beacons of hope, inspiring us to nurture community, deepen faith and extend welcome to all.

Andrew Rowland

Taking on the role of Deanery Area Representative

The Treasurer of our PCC, of which I am no longer a member, suggested that I might volunteer for the DHCT and that he could pass my name on if I was interested. I had taken part in Ride + Stride and therefore already knew a little about the charity which provides such valuable financial help to churches in Dorset.

So, I found myself volunteering with DHCT just in time to help with the build up to the September 2025 Ride + Stride. Fortunately, I live in the Dorchester Deanery and am familiar with many of the churches and villages as a result of cycling past them while enjoying the Dorset countryside. However, tracking down and getting in touch with the R+S Church Reps took some patience and determination. Nevertheless, I was able to deliver the R+S “packs” in good time together with some useful Hi-Viz R+S gilets. It was pleasing to see how well the churches in my

area fared in this year’s results.

After R+S was over for this year, the deadline for grant applications for the October meeting brought a surprising number of last minute applications that needed face-to-face meetings and advice before the forms could be forwarded to the Trust for consideration. I clearly got this right because, as a result, I was able to inform 3 churches of substantial grant offers.

Several months in, and now working with another new DAR who covers the other half of the Dorchester Deanery, I am already feeling better prepared and I am looking forward to a greater involvement with churches in my area of Dorset.

Philip Clive

Legacies and Donations

The Trust acknowledges with deep gratitude legacies and donations from:

- The Estate of Mr Ian Lennox
- Mr and Mrs Pitt-Rivers
- The Sherborne FIAC

How to make a donation

You can make a donation to the Trust today by going to the Home page of our website (www.dhct.org.uk) and scrolling down to the link to Stewardship and following the guidance. Thank you.

Legacies

Please remember the Trust in your Will. You can download the draft text for a codicil from the Home page of our website. Thank you.

Old Churches

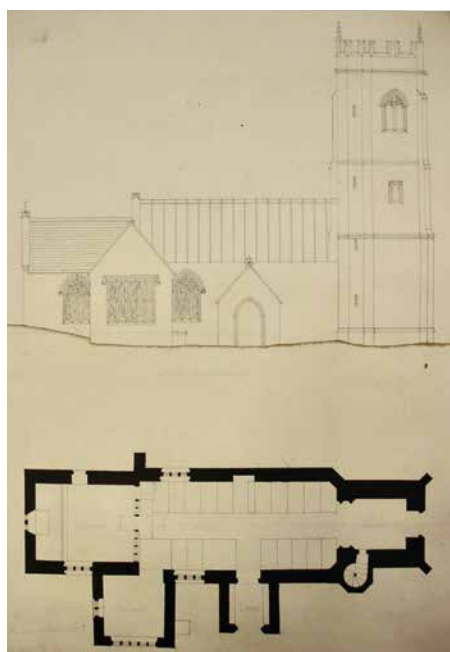
The physical condition of most Dorset churches in the early nineteenth century was very poor indeed. Leaking roofs, floors, in some cases of little more than mud, few benches and draughty windows cannot have assisted religious devotion. During the century a huge effort was made by many individuals to transform this situation, and the successful and varied results of this we see in almost all the churches we visit on our Church Crawls. Today it is quite often the case that the sterling work of these nineteenth century builders is coming to the end of its useful life.

But there is very little record of what our churches looked like before this great restoration programme began. In some counties – Somerset is a fortunate example – a private individual commissioned the well-known topographical artist John Buckler to draw *all* the churches in the county; these drawings survive in four grand volumes at the Record Office. Dorset was not nearly so fortunate; only in a very few cases do drawings and illustrations give us some idea of our churches from the early nineteenth century or even before, but it is a very scanty record.



St Martin, Wareham.

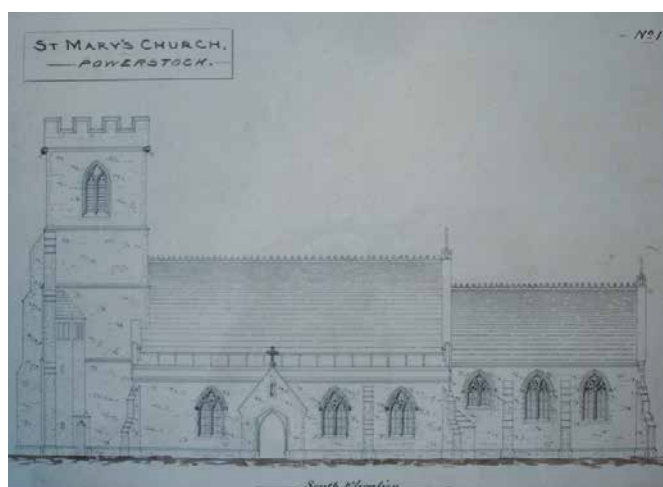
The Saxon church of St Martin's **Wareham** provides an early example. A drawing was made of it in 1790, the south window largely bricked up and ivy beginning to creep up the west end. By the time a print was made from it, the ivy had devoured the whole of the west end, and neglect seemed total. The church was perhaps fortunate; it had to wait until 1936 for its careful restoration, and the installation of the distinguished monument to Lawrence of Arabia, by Eric Kennington. Sometimes the drawings made by the improving Victorian architects hint at parts of a church that have completely disappeared. At **Batcombe**, for example John Hicks's plan of 1864 shows a substantial chapel on the



Batcombe prior to restoration.



Powerstock un-restored.

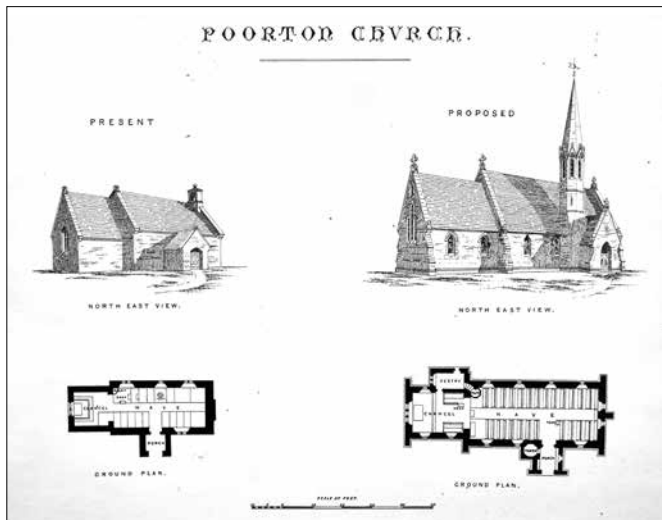


Powerstock – Hicks proposed windows.

north of the nave, probably a family burial chapel in origin, which was swept away when he restored the church.

A good example of Victorian attitudes to “improvement” of the buildings they found is illustrated in the case of **Powerstock** where a fine painting, which was destroyed in a fire in the school in 2011, used to commemorate the opening of the new village school in 1840. This showed the still unrestored church from the south east, with a variety of windows of different dates, shown even more clearly in Hicks's pencil drawing of the south elevation, where eighteenth-century round headed windows can be seen in the nave. Nothing is more characteristic of the attitude of most early Victorian restorers than that he should prepare a drawing of what he intended to do: to replace such unworthy, un-medieval windows with more ‘correct’ examples.

There seem to be very few illustrations of Dorset churches made before ‘restoration’. What might be the most straightforward version of the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ churches can be found among the records of the tiny remote church of **North Poorton** in 1862, where John Hicks, again, was



St Mary, Magdalene North Poorton.

employed to replace the nondescript late medieval building with an improved, modern Gothic version, with adequate pointed windows to light the interior and the little bell-cote replaced with

delicate octagonal tower and slender spire, that looks exactly at home among the surrounding fields.

Tim Connor

Grants Committee 2025

The Committee met three times during the year and made grants to thirty churches totalling £183,800. As has been the case in recent years, we have thought that our primary duty was to help keep churches weatherproof. So, roofs have been our main concern but, in several cases, windows too have been a problem in terms of the ingress of water, as was the case of our largest grant to Sturminster Newton in July. Stonework of walls also deteriorates under the relentless drip of rainwater and the west wall of Cattistock and the towers at Minterne and Tarrant Monkton needed help with problems of this sort.

Altogether, 'waterproofing' of one sort or another was the target of three quarters of grants made not just the Church of England's buildings but to Baptist, Roman Catholic and United Reformed church buildings as well. With weather such as the early months of 2026 have offered, I doubt that either the need or our attempt to help with these sorts of ongoing weaknesses will alter in the foreseeable future. Many churches would like to upgrade their facilities to make their buildings more welcoming to congregations as well as to visitors, but our ability to assist in this worthwhile endeavour must unfortunately take second place to stopping the rain getting in.

In assessing the requests by parishes for support we consider all the aspects outlined

in the application form. We do indeed pay attention to whether a parish has been able to help toward Ride + Stride and what effort they have made to find other possible grant making bodies. In particular, the Erskine Mutton Fund, managed by the Salisbury diocese but dedicated for Dorset churches alone, should generally be appealed to alongside any application to us. We do attempt to form an impression of the overall wealth (or otherwise) of parishes. This is by no means easy because parishes don't always give a very clear idea of their total funds, but it does matter, because of the wide disparity between the wealthiest parishes – with resources of over half a million pounds - and a few with less than £5000 in the bank. The average holding, taken from nearly 100 churches that have applied to us in recent years, of their 'entire resources' seems to be in the region of £40,000. The advice and support of the Deanery Representatives is of considerable assistance, just as a photograph of the blue tarpaulin covering the hole in the roof at Halstock helped concentrate our minds wonderfully at a recent meeting.

Increasing weather damage to the fabric of our historic buildings remains our biggest current problem. The Trust exists to do what it can to help. The amount at our disposal continues to grow, even if not quite at the same rate as the increase in costs, and the abolition of the VAT exemption will be a serious blow for us all. But, if you need our help, PLEASE apply.

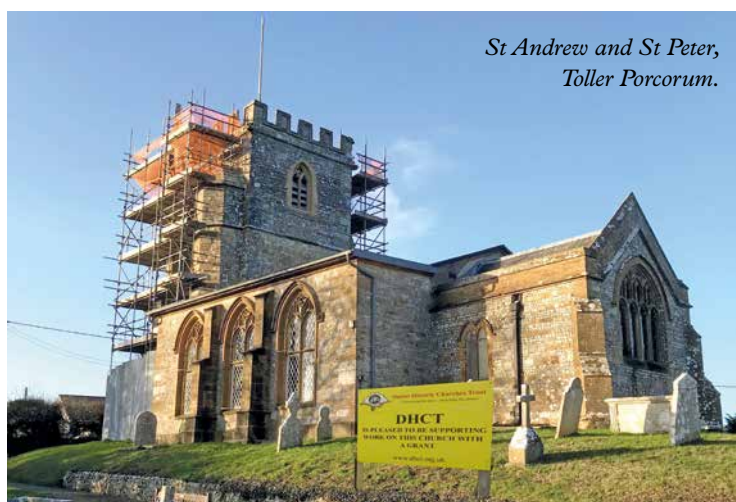
Tim Connor



St Eustace Ibberton.

Grants Awarded 2025

Pimperne – St Peter North aisle roof repairs	£9,000	Todber – St Andrew Repairs to roof and windows	£5,500
Corfe Castle – Saint Edward the Martyr Heating replacement	£500	Enmore Green – St John the Evangelist St John's Repair fund for waterproofing	£8,000
West Orchard – St Luke Roof repairs	£3,000	Sturminster Newton – St Mary Repairs to East window and other priority masonry repairs	£12,500
Hilton – All Saints Installation of disabled WC, kitchenette and servery	6,000	Silton – St Nicholas Reinforcement and repair of internal roof timbers	£5,300
Ibberton – St Eustace Roof repairs	£10,000	Poole – Parkstone Baptist Church Re-roofing and high level repairs	£6,000
Minterne Magna – St Andrew Repairs to the roof of the tower	£6,000	Ibberton – St Eustace Towards internal repairs	£5,000
Corfe Mullen – St Hubert Guttering replacement	£3,000	Wareham – United Reformed Church Towards roof repairs	£3,500
Fontmell Magna – St Andrew Repairs to south aisle roof	£10,000	Stalbridge – St Mary Towards roof repairs	£5,000
Margaret Marsh – St Margaret Roof repairs	£4,000	Radipole – St Aldhelm Towards roof repairs	£5,000
Bradford Abbas – St Mary the Virgin Installation of heating system	£3,500	Spetisbury – St John the Baptist Towards both internal and external repairs	£10,000
Cattistock – St Peter and St Paul Repair to roof and west wall exterior	£6,000	Dorchester RC – Holy Trinity Towards roof and flooring repairs	£5,000
Buckland Newton – The Holy Rood Roof repairs	£6,000	South Perrott – St Mary Towards roof repairs	£6,000
Wyke Regis – All Saints Repairs to windows	£6,000	Tarrant Monkton – All Saints Towards bell tower repairs	£6,500
Sturminster Marshall – St Mary Project Welcome - repairs, renovations and new facilities	£6,000	Langton Long – All Saints Towards stonework repairs	£6,500
Beer Hackett – St Michael Underground drainage and tower roof repairs	£10,000	Poole – Skinner St URC Towards roof repairs	£5,000



*St Andrew and St Peter,
Toller Porcorum.*

The FACTS!

- 2025 was another very successful year!! DHCT Ride+Stride raised an amazing £100,000, with Gift Aid tax relief of £12,500 to be added. Thank you very much to everyone who worked so hard to help achieve this.
- £2532 was raised by All Saints Church, Wyke Regis who will receive the Morshead Trophy.
- £2730 was raised single handedly by Simon Bird for St Andrew's Church, Trent. A stunning achievement!
- 25 Churches raised more than £1000 in sponsorship and will be receiving a letter of congratulations and a commemorative plaque from the Chairman, David Grant
- 167 churches and chapels opened their doors and welcomed hundreds of Riders and Striders right across Dorset.

This event could not take place without the dedication of all the participants. The Church Representatives are the key people in each Church or chapel who make this event happen so successfully. Putting up the signs, persuading people to participate, gathering a welcome team, arranging refreshments, preparing the church and finally collecting the sponsorship money and sending it to our Finance Team. Thanks to the Deanery Area Representatives who actively support Churches and chapels and help them to make their day a success.

St Catherine's in Wimborne also gave out slips of paper with a thought for the day. One of these said – *“Give something, however small to the one in need. For it is not small to the one who has nothing”* (St Gregory Nazianzen). St. Mary's church at Blandford St Mary and Bridport United Church opened and welcomed visitors, despite not having any participants themselves. We are grateful to all Churches and chapels for their continuing support and enthusiasm.

Hundreds of people cycled, walked or ran around Dorset, visiting

our churches, each one beautiful in its own way. Many people participated at more leisurely pace, enjoying discovering notable churches, full of interesting facts and architecture. Others set a more demanding course and completed the day feeling elated and a little tired, whilst a small number of very keen cyclists recorded routes of 30-40 miles and more. One of whom started well before 10am, finished very late in the day.

Perhaps Michael Trevett, one of our Deanery Area Reps, and his wife Alison found the most elegant way to travel, driving Sway Mister Bojangles – a beautifully turned-out pony and trap.



Sponsors of our Riders and Striders have once again supported them very generously, when financial times are not easy for some. DHCT are very grateful to them.

Several Churches held different events as they were not able to participate in the usual way. Winterborne Zelston hosted a coffee morning called “Coffee from around the World,” inspired by a

recent holiday in South America. St Michael the Archangel in Lyme Regis hosted a Heritage Day, while Holy Trinity Church in Bothenhampton held a Cream Tea.



All Churches and chapels are invited to participate in alternative activities that require some effort and sponsorship. We look forward to seeing the innovative ideas participants will propose for 2026.

Anna Butler produced her final Ride+Stride pack in 2025, having completed this task for 25 years. We thank her for all her efforts. She has been replaced by Eve Baker, who is our new Ride+Stride Administrator.

Thanks to Roger Blaber and Becka Brierly for managing the finances and returning half the sponsorship to Churches well before Christmas.

Save the Date! R+S 2026 will be on Saturday 12 September.

Liz Jones

Friends of DHCT

Once again, the Friends of DHCT and their guests had a great year of Lecture Lunches and Church Crawls. In the early Spring we attended the two lecture lunches at the Langton Arms in Tarrant Monkton. In March our speaker was Dr Tim Connor who gave us a fascinating insight into the opportunities that the Great Fire gave architects such as Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor in re-building new churches, under the title *“Churches after a Fire: London, 1666 – 1720”*.

The second lecture lunch was more technically challenging when Sue Bruce-Payne took us through the development of music,

especially church music, from the early Middle Ages. The short extracts that she played us were saved on the “Cloud” but all were recovered at the right moment and her scholarship was much appreciated.

The new Crawls team arranged four Church Crawls that took in Weymouth, the north Dorset border, Milton Abbas and four churches along the A350. Renewed thanks are due to our now retired Crawls leader, Sue Bruce-Payne, along with Di Hooley, Anne Gwatkin, Deborah Priddy and, of course, Dr Tim Connor for his excellent architectural and historical descriptions.

Tim Smith

The Road to the Morshead Trophy by All Saints Wyke Regis

In 2021 I became Ride+Stride Church Rep for All Saints Wyke Regis. I was also Churchwarden and an enthusiastic cyclist and, although we had no great track record of previous involvement, I felt this was a project we could embrace and get a lot of fun from, whilst raising money for two very good causes: DHCT and ourselves!

So that year, having press-ganged my son into joining the All Saints cycling team (of two), and with additional support from a small team of walkers led by our Licenced Lay Minister, Janet Hall, we got our first post-pandemic Ride + Stride campaign underway.

In 2022, I teamed up with Michael Dillistone, our Parish Treasurer, to cycle around 22 churches between Portland and Abbotsbury. Then, in 2023, with our cycling team now four strong (welcome Bernard Verkooijen and Stuart Holden), and the walking team as keen as ever, we held our first Ride+Stride Cream Tea Afternoon at the church as a way of bringing the riders and striders together afterwards and further enhancing the day's fundraising potential. We even managed to squeeze in a couple of guided tours of the tower to add to the fun.

Our 2023 ride took in 23 churches in and around the Isle of Purbeck, while in 2024 we cycled to Beaminster and back through West Dorset via 24 churches.



All Saints Wyke Regis Riders at All Saints Tarrant Monkton. From left: Bernard Verkooijen, Michael Dillistone, Jeff Thomas.

No prizes, therefore, for guessing how many churches we visited last year! Although injury reduced our cycling team to three, and despite two punctures, we still managed to visit 25 churches from Blandford to Wareham via the Tarrant valley. Our walkers were just as active and the Cream Tea Afternoon every bit as busy. We also added the chance to start the day with a hearty breakfast at our sister church, St Edmund, Lanehouse.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and supporters, we raised £2,532: our best year yet and around twice our 2021 total!

Ride+Stride is now firmly established on the Parish of Wyke Regis events calendar. As well as all the fun and fundraising, Ride + Stride day is an opportunity to demonstrate the warmth of our welcome to visitors, and parishioners are increasingly happy and willing to support

it in any way that they can.

Jeff Thomas

65th Anniversary Event at Milton Abbey – Reaching a Wider Audience

Since its foundation in 1960, the Trust has made grants of more than £2.6 million helping parish churches address the challenge of maintaining, restoring, conserving and, where necessary, making the buildings in their charge more widely usable.

Recognising that the costs of that work are increasing, the Trustees decided to mark the Trust's 65th birthday by hosting an evening reception at Milton Abbey on 11 July to engage with a new and wider audience. The event was a one-off departure from the usual Friends' Annual Event. The invitation list included organisations and individuals with whom the Trust was not presently engaged, and who share a direct or indirect interest in the heritage, history, conservation and even survival of Dorset's church buildings. Among them, we welcomed architects, solicitors, building and conservation companies, representatives of Dorset societies, museums, local government officers, MPs and insurers.

During the evening David Burnett – Founder of The Dovecote Press, Dr Tim Connor – Trustee, The Right Reverend Andrew Rumsey – Bishop of Ramsbury and His Honour David Grant – Chairman of Trustees spoke persuasively and convincingly about the Trust and its 'cause'. In closing the event, our President, Mr Michael Dooley, Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, reflected that churches offer sanctuary both in the physical sense but also in a

deeper sense of harmony. He expressed the hope that everyone present would continue to work in harmony for the benefit of our wonderful churches.

The Trust is immensely grateful to our generous sponsors Boden, RLM Architects, Ellis & Co, Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, CCLA, Savills, B2B Architects and Chantry Conservation Architects. Also, our thanks are due to the Milton Abbey Heritage Trust and the Governors and Staff of Milton Abbey School for making the Abbey Church and School facilities and catering support available to us.

Andrew Graham

Why not support the Trust by joining as a Friend?

As well as supporting the work of the Trust, you will receive invitations to our Lecture Lunches, Church Crawls and the Annual Event as well as the Annual Report and Newsletters. Full details and the application and Standing Order forms can be found on the Friends page of our website (www.dhct.org.uk)

Salvete

Over the past year we have been joined by one new Trustee, three new DARs and a R+S Administrator.

Charlotte Springett studied History of Art at university and has had a career in public relations. Filling the post of PR Trustee, she has already made a very positive impact on the public profile of the Trust.

Philip Clive has a background in retail, is a very keen cyclist and lives in the northern part of the Dorchester Deanery Area for which he has become Co-DAR.

Philip Lawlor is a Chartered Engineer, has a keen interest in church buildings and the administration of the Diocese and lives on the southern part of Dorchester Deanery Area for which he has assumed the role of Co-DAR.

Bob Bowmer has a background in corporate finance, lives in Sherborne and has assumed the shared role of DAR for the Sherborne Deanery Area.

Eve Baker has lived and worked in the Wareham area for many years and is currently Benefice Administrator for the West Purbeck Benefice. She took over the key role of R+S Administrator from Anna Butler in good time to grasp the details of R+S.

Valete

The past year has been marked by the retirement of one Trustee, one DAR and our long-serving R+S Administrator.

Sue Bruce Payne was for many years the organiser of our Church Crawls and Lecture lunches. For a large circle of Friends she was the charming personification of the Trust. Names were always remembered and everyone was made welcome. With her husband David, a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, always on hand, the keys to organ lofts were usually found and whimsical recitals followed. Sue was also the Secretary to the Grants Committee where her deep knowledge of the churches of the County and her attention to detail were invaluable.

Shaun Leavey was a Co-DAR for Sherborne who brought with him the experience of running the Romney Marshes HCT. He was a keen promoter of R+S and made sure that he visited every church on his patch before filing a concise report, supported by a photograph, on each stop.

Anna Butler was R+S Administrator for 25 years and was personally responsible for setting up the robust system of R+S packs – one for every church – which contained all the information needed by Church Reps (formerly POs), participants and church Treasurers. Her contact spreadsheets were the basis of mailshots and the vital source of names and addresses for the DARs. Even after moving to Cornwall on the retirement of her husband, she was happy continue in the role until a suitable successor was found.

New Members of the DHCT Team



*Left to right:
Becka Brierly – Bookkeeper,
Eve Baker – R+S Administrator,
Philip Lawlor – Co-DAR Dorchester,
Philip Clive – Co-DAR Dorchester*

Ride+Stride Results 2025

Parish	Church	Deanery Area	Omitted 2024	Ride+Stride Total
Sturminster Marshall	St Mary	Wimborne		£4,965.86
Trent	St Andrew	Sherborne		£2,730.00
Wyke Regis	All Saints	Weymouth		£2,532.86
Spetisbury	St John the Baptist	Milton & Blandford		£2,085.00
Fontmell Magna	St Andrew	Milton & Blandford		£1,910.00
Silton	St Nicholas	Blackmore Vale		£1,850.00
Piddlehinton	St Mary the Virgin	Dorchester		£1,775.00
Litton Cheney	St Mary	Lyme Bay		£1,505.53
Cranborne	St Mary and St Bartholomew	Wimborne		£1,486.00
Whitchurch Canonicorum	Holy Trinity	Lyme Bay		£1,435.00
Winterborne Houghton	St Andrew	Milton & Blandford		£1,425.00
Ashmore	St Nicholas	Milton & Blandford		£1,317.50
Burton Bradstock	St Mary	Lyme Bay		£1,297.00
Tarrant Gunville	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£1,260.00
Sherborne	Abbey Church of St Mary	Sherborne		£1,231.60
Chettle	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£1,180.00
Melbury Osmond	St Osmond	Sherborne		£1,176.80
Corfe Castle	St Edward the Martyr	Purbeck		£1,165.00
Dewlish	All Saints	Dorchester		£1,150.00
Purse Caundle	St Peter	Blackmore Vale		£1,135.00
Over Compton	St Michael	Sherborne		£1,115.00
Charminster	St Mary the Virgin	Dorchester		£1,097.00
Iwerne Minster	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£1,092.00
Dorchester	St Peter	Dorchester		£1,000.00
Wool	Holy Rood	Purbeck		£1,000.00
Fishpond	St John the Baptist	Lyme Bay		£971.58
Farnham	St Laurence	Milton & Blandford		£950.00
Godmanstone	Holy Trinity	Dorchester		£905.00
Yetminster	St Andrew	Sherborne		£885.00
Stourpaine	Holy Trinity	Milton & Blandford		£880.00
Crossways	St Aldhelm	Dorchester		£860.00
Hazelbury Bryan	St Mary and St James	Blackmore Vale		£855.00
Puddletown	St Mary the Virgin	Dorchester		£855.00
Stoke Abbott	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£755.00	£851.10
Canford Magna	Parish Church	Wimborne		£821.00
Warmwell	Holy Trinity	Dorchester	£775.00	£810.00
Tarrant Rushton	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£750.00
Radipole	St Aldhelm	Weymouth		£750.00
Woodlands	Church of the Ascension	Wimborne		£747.50
Broadmayne	St Martin	Dorchester	£480.00	£710.00
Bradpole	Holy Trinity	Lyme Bay		£710.00
Chickerell	St Mary	Weymouth		£703.00

Parish	Church	Deanery Area	Omitted 2024	Ride+Stride Total
Littlebredy	St Michael and All Angels	Lyme Bay		£700.00
Sandford Orcas	St Nicholas	Sherborne		£700.00
Witchampton	St Mary, St Cuthberga and All Saints	Wimborne		£700.00
Weymouth	St Paul	Weymouth		£685.00
Poole URC	Skinner Street	Poole & North Bournemouth		£684.00
Affpuddle	St Laurence	Purbeck		£665.00
Lytchett Minster	Lytchett Minster	Poole & North Bournemouth		£661.25
Athelhampton Orthodox	St Edward	Dorchester		£655.00
Chaldon Herring	St Nicholas	Purbeck		£647.00
Winfrith Newburgh	St Christopher	Purbeck		£640.52
Chetnole	St Peter	Sherborne		£632.91
Kingston Lacy	St Stephen	Wimborne		£632.00
Winterborne St Martin	St Martin	Dorchester		£629.00
Evershot	St Osmond	Sherborne		£620.00
Wimborne Newborough St John	St John	Wimborne		£619.00
Lydlinch	St Thomas Becket	Blackmore Vale		£610.00
Blandford RC	Our Lady of Lourdes and St Cecilia	Milton & Blandford		£607.00
Dorchester UC		Dorchester		£605.00
Pimperne	St Peter	Milton & Blandford		£605.00
Corscombe	St Mary	Sherborne		£600.00
Sturminster Newton	St Mary	Blackmore Vale		£585.00
Osmington	St Osmund	Weymouth		£584.00
Hilton	All Saints	Dorchester		£575.00
Chideock	St Giles	Lyme Bay		£570.00
Frome St Quintin	St Mary	Sherborne		£570.00
Motcombe	St Mary	Blackmore Vale		£560.00
Dorchester RC	Holy Trinity	Dorchester		£546.80
Beaminster	St Mary of the Annunciation	Lyme Bay	£1,010.00	£545.00
Batcombe	St Mary Magdalene	Sherborne		£520.00
Leigh	St Andrew	Sherborne		£515.00
Allington	St Swithun	Lyme Bay		£511.00
Powerstock	St Mary the Virgin	Lyme Bay		£500.00
Cerne Abbas	St Mary	Dorchester	£330.00	£499.00
Fifehead Magdalen	St Mary Magdalene	Blackmore Vale		£490.00
Canford Cliffs	Church of the Transfiguration	Poole & North Bournemouth		£480.00
Weymouth	Holy Trinity	Weymouth		£470.00
Hooke	St Giles	Lyme Bay		£450.00
Alderholt	St James	Wimborne		£450.00
Sydling St Nicholas	St Nicholas	Dorchester	£215.00	£445.00
Shaftesbury	St Peter	Blackmore Vale		£440.00
Bridport Unitarian	Chapel in the Garden	Lyme Bay		£435.00
Owermoigne	St Michael	Dorchester	£435.00	£430.00
Portland	St John the Baptist	Weymouth		£430.00

Parish	Church	Deanery Area	Omitted 2024	Ride+Stride Total
Kington Magna	All Saints	Blackmore Vale		£420.00
Margaret Marsh	St Margaret	Blackmore Vale		£415.00
Tolpuddle	St John the Evangelist	Dorchester		£405.00
West Knighton	St Peter	Dorchester	£320.00	£400.00
Buckland Newton	Holy Rood	Dorchester		£400.00
Milton Abbas	St James	Milton & Blandford		£400.00
Pulham	St Thomas Becket	Sherborne		£400.00
Thornford	St Mary Magdalene	Sherborne		£395.00
Fleet	Old Church	Weymouth		£390.19
Lilliput	Holy Angels	Poole & North Bournemouth		£390.00
Church Knowle	St Peter	Purbeck		£385.00
Bridport	St Mary	Lyme Bay		£375.00
West Parley	St Mark	Wimborne		£365.00
Askerswell	St Michael	Lyme Bay	£350.00	£360.00
Upwey	St Laurence	Weymouth		£357.00
Gussage St Andrew	St Andrew	Milton & Blandford		£355.00
West Moors	St Mary the Virgin	Wimborne		£345.00
Colehill	St Michael and All Angels	Wimborne		£345.00
Winterborne Kingston	St Nicholas	Milton & Blandford		£340.00
Melbury Abbas	St Thomas	Blackmore Vale		£335.00
Winterborne Stickland	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£330.00
Turnworth	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£325.00
Steeple	St Michael and All Angels	Purbeck		£320.00
Wimborne St Giles	St Giles	Wimborne		£320.00
Charlton Marshall	St Mary the Virgin	Milton & Blandford		£310.00
Swanage (Herston)	St Mark	Purbeck		£310.00
Gillingham	St Mary the Virgin	Blackmore Vale		£305.00
Loders	St Mary Magdalene	Lyme Bay	£225.00	£305.00
Ibberton	St Eustace	Blackmore Vale		£300.00
Enmore Green	St John the Evangelist	Blackmore Vale		£300.00
Tarrant Monkton	All Saints	Milton & Blandford		£295.00
Marnhull	St Gregory	Blackmore Vale		£280.00
Worth Matravers	St Nicholas	Purbeck		£275.00
Tollard Royal	St Peter ad Vincula	Milton & Blandford		£270.00
Cheselbourne	St Martin	Dorchester		£265.00
Parkstone	St Peter	Poole & North Bournemouth		£260.00
Lytchett Matravers	St Mary	Poole & North Bournemouth		£255.00
Preston	St Andrew	Weymouth		£255.00
Buckhorn Weston	St John the Baptist	Blackmore Vale		£250.00
Bloxworth	St Andrew	Milton & Blandford		£250.00
Langton Long	All Saints	Milton & Blandford		£245.00
Okeford Fitzpaine	St Andrew	Blackmore Vale		£240.00
Blandford Methodist		Milton & Blandford		£222.00

Parish	Church	Deanery Area	Omitted 2024	Ride+Stride Total
Winterborne Whitechurch	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£220.00
Mappowder	St Peter and St Paul	Blackmore Vale		£200.00
Milborne St Andrew	St Andrew	Dorchester		£200.00
Wareham	Lady St Mary	Purbeck		£200.00
Walditch	St Mary	Lyme Bay		£190.00
Shaftesbury	St James	Blackmore Vale		£170.00
Tarrant Hinton	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£165.00
Stourton Caundle	St Peter	Blackmore Vale		£160.00
West Stafford	St Andrew	Dorchester	£180.00	£155.00
Sherborne	St Paul	Sherborne		£145.00
Chideock RC	Our Lady Queen of Martyrs and St Ignatius	Lyme Bay		£140.00
Bothenhampton	Holy Trinity	Lyme Bay		£130.00
Lyme Regis	St Michael the Archangel	Lyme Bay		£130.00
Beer Hackett	St Michael	Sherborne		£125.00
Parkstone	St Clement	Poole & North Bournemouth		£120.00
Wimborne Minster	St Cuthberga	Wimborne		£120.00
Milton on Stour	St Simon and St Jude	Blackmore Vale		£110.00
Sixpenny Handley	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£105.00
Tincton	St John the Evangelist	Dorchester		£100.00
Mosterton	St Mary	Lyme Bay		£100.00
Salway Ash	Holy Trinity	Lyme Bay		£100.00
North Poorton	St Mary Magdalene	Lyme Bay		£100.00
East Lulworth	St Andrew	Purbeck		£100.00
Gussage St Michael	St Michael	Milton & Blandford		£90.00
Gussage All Saints	All Saints	Milton & Blandford		£90.00
Winterborne Zelston	St Mary	Milton & Blandford		£79.00
Child Okeford and Manston	St Nicholas	Blackmore Vale		£65.00
West Orchard	St Luke	Blackmore Vale		£60.00
Horton and Charlbury	St Wolfrida	Wimborne		£60.00
Compton Abbas	St Mary the Virgin	Blackmore Vale		£50.00
South Perrott	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£60.00	£50.00
Winterborne Clenston	St Nicholas	Milton & Blandford		£50.00
Tarrant Keynston	All Saints	Milton & Blandford		£50.00
Corfe Mullen	St Hubert	Wimborne		£50.00
Glanvilles Wootton	St Mary the Virgin	Sherborne		£40.00
Radipole	St Ann	Weymouth		£40.00
Wraxall	St Mary	Sherborne		£30.00
East Chelborough	St James	Sherborne		£30.00
Bradford Peverell	St Mary	Dorchester	£90.00	
Winterborne Steepleton	St Michael	Dorchester	£450.00	
Toller Porcorum	St Peter and St Andrew	Lyme Bay	£205.00	
Broadwindsor	St John the Baptist	Lyme Bay	£280.00	

Late results received: St Cuthbert Osborne £650 and All Saints Hampreston £60

Treasurer's Report

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT for the year ended 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Voluntary Income		
Donations and Legacies	46,098	50,427
Friends, Individuals and Trusts	8,525	8,480
Parochial Church Councils	520	730
	£55,143	£59,637
Activities for generating funds		
Ride+Stride previous year	650	1,223
Ride+Stride current year	100,219	89,658
50% return to churches	-42,192	-41,055
	£58,677	£49,826
Gift Aid	16,137	15,553
Friends Events	1,623	2,899
Sale of notecards	123	310
	£76,560	£68,588
Investment Income	£10,042	£11,410
Bank Interest	£10,677	£7,845
Total Receipts	£152,422	£147,480
PAYMENTS		
Ride+Stride		
Honoraria	1,350	1,800
Brochures and Publicity	304	1,888
Printing and postage	1,557	356
Bookkeeping	1,523	663
Administration	1,618	0
Presentation	120	0
	£6,472	£4,707
Grants	£119,608	£113,722
Support Costs		
Anniversary Event	1,661	0
Annual Report	1,998	1,359
Postage, stationery and travel	166	528
Marketing and Website	500	438
Insurance	450	450
Just Giving Fees	552	515
Bookkeeping	313	343
Meetings	740	942
Bank Charges	172	795
	£6,552	£5,370
Governance		
Independent Examiner	2,100	1,674
Total Payments	£134,732	£125,473
Net Movement in Cash Funds	£17,690	£22,007
Sale and Purchase of Investments	£0	£60,000
Overall Movement in Cash Funds	£17,690	£82,007
Cash Funds Last Year End	£293,224	£211,217
Cash Funds This Year End	£310,914	£293,224

	2025	2024
	£	£
ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
Cash Funds		
Lloyds Bank	78,917	51,310
Nationwide	0	100
CBF Deposit Account	231,997	241,814
	£310,914	£293,224
Investments		
CBF Investment Fund	268,635	279,821
COIF Charities Global Equities Fund	88,409	93,558
	£357,044	£373,379
Total Assets	£667,958	£666,603
Grants Awarded Not Yet Drawn Down	-189,300	-158,328
Total Assets Less Liabilities	£478,658	£508,275

Accompanying this Report are the accounts for 2025, which reflect another highly successful year for the Trust. Our financial position remains strong, enabling us to continue fulfilling our core mission of supporting the preservation and repair of Dorset's historic churches.

Ride and Stride once again proved to be a tremendous success and a cornerstone of our fundraising efforts. An impressive £100,000 was raised overall, exceeding the total achieved last year. After the return of 50% to participating parishes, this provided a very welcome net contribution of £58,000 to the Trust's funds. In addition, £16,000 was reclaimed through Gift Aid, further enhancing the impact of this outstanding effort. These results are a testament to the enthusiasm and commitment of all those who took part and supported the event.

We were also again fortunate to receive several significant donations and legacies, totalling £46,000. The continued generosity of our supporters, including those who choose to remember the Trust in their Wills, plays a vital role in sustaining and strengthening our work.

During the year, grants amounting to £120,000 were paid to churches to assist with essential repair and preservation projects. In addition, a further £184,000 in grants have been granted and will be drawn down as projects are completed.

At the year end, the total value of investments and deposits held with our fund managers, CCLA Investment Management Ltd, was £589,000. Our investment strategy continues to focus on achieving the best possible returns while maintaining a prudent and carefully managed level of risk.

The costs of running the Trust have remained broadly stable, ensuring that the maximum possible proportion of our income continues to be directed towards grants.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our bookkeeper, Becka Brierly, whose dedication and expertise are invaluable to the Trust.

Roger Blaber
Honorary Treasurer

President: HM Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset
Mr Michael Dooley FRCOG, LVO

Vice-Presidents: The Lord Bishop of Salisbury
The Bishop of Sherborne
The Archdeacon of Sherborne
Sir Philip Williams Bt.
G A L-F Pitt-Rivers OBE
Mrs V L-F Pitt-Rivers CVO
The Viscount Hood
Major-General J O C Alexander CB, OBE
R D Allan
P F Moule

Chairman: His Honour D E B Grant

Trustees: Mrs S-A Barrett
R B Blaber
Dr T P P Connor
Mrs S Diment
Sir Andrew Graham Bt. CB, CBE
His Honour D E B Grant
Mrs L Jones
S D Norman
Mrs D Priddy
The Reverend Canon A J W Rowland
J A M A Selfe
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Mrs Eve Baker (from 1 June 2025)
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