

# Garrett's Charity Annual Report December 2023

Annual Parish Meeting, Heighington

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

## Background

Garrett's Charity dates back to around 1620 when Thomas Garrett a local man left money and land in his will for the founding of a boys' school in the private chapel he had owned in Heighington, which has late Norman origins. The buildings we know as the Heritage Rooms today were built in 1865 as a major refurbishment and expansion of the premises and these housed the village boys' school until 1976. Both the chapel and Heritage Rooms continue to be owned by Garrett's Charity. It is unusual for a functioning community chapel to be under independent charity ownership, which makes this building in the heart of our community both distinctive and special. The premises are grade II listed (No. 1360209).

Whilst the charity is very old, the current governing document was registered with the Charity Commission in 1995 and slightly amended in 2020 to allow for co-option of two additional local residents onto the local Trustee board. The governing document now allows for nine Trustees: two nominated by the Parochial Church Council of Washingborough with Heighington; two nominated by Heighington Parish Council; four co-opted residents of Heighington and, ex officio, the Rector.

The charity maintains The Thomas Garrett Heritage Rooms and St Thomas' Chapel of Ease for the benefit of the community. It promotes both education and inclusion through use of the premises.

During 2023 we said goodbye to three Trustees. Mick Bowbanks retired as Churchwarden and stood down as a Trustee. Mick had served on the charity for many years and we wish him well in his retirement. The PCC elected Chris Sprigg to be one of their nominated trustees and his skills are already being put to good use. Neil and Michelle Hunter also resigned due to work and family commitments. They had both contributed a great deal and we wish them well in their ventures. Thus, there are two vacancies on the board of trustees for co-opted residents of the village of Heighington. The skills we particularly need are those associated with social media, marketing and grant funding.

## Finances

The modest capital funds of the Charity are invested in COIF Charities Ordinary Investment Fund. During 2023 it was necessary to draw on these funds in order to settle the outstanding bill with Anglian Water (Wave) which arose from a substantial water leak discovered in January 2022. The remaining capital still provides valuable income and an emergency reserve for the charity. The charity no longer owns other land, which we presume was largely sold off to fund the works in 1865 and ongoing maintenance.

The charity's main source of income is from hire of the Heritage Rooms to community groups. The Friends of the Garrett's Charity manage the bookings on a day-to-day basis on behalf of Garrett's Charity. The activities undertaken there include glass making, felt work, needlework, art groups, woodcarving, coffee mornings, drama, dance, willow weaving, Tai-Chi, and a community choir. These activities reflect the educational emphasis of the original benefaction.

Donations from the community include regular gifts and a cash collection box at Anderson's butchers. A substantial donation was received from an individual. The charity is registered with HMRC for Gift Aid and has registered on digital giving platform: crowdfunder.com. A leaflet has been produced to encourage legacy giving. The 100 Club has proved successful, and despite the weather the Grand Prize Draw at Heighington Christmas Festival in December 2023 made a profit of £1,030.00, the only cost incurred was printing of the tickets as all prizes were donated. The Friends of Garrett's Charity hosted a Car Boot Sale in June 2023 and Arts & Crafts Exhibition in October 2023 both were well attended bringing together old friends and new visitors into the Heritage Rooms which created a vibrant social atmosphere. Similar events are planned for 2024.

There was a small operating loss over the year attributable to the water leak mentioned previously. Now that that is settled, we look forward to building reserves although the cost of heating is set to rise by 33% to £5,600 pa with the expiry of a fixed term contract in March 2024.

The Annual Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 were examined by Mr C M Green and found to be sound. We thank him for his help. The Annual Return has been submitted to the Charity Commission.

#### Future Plans

A grant from Heighington Parish Council allowed for a surveyor to inspect and prepare a report on the condition of the building. The most significant item highlighted in the report is the condition of the roof and the Trustees are making this a priority. We expect to work through three phases of roof repairs and anticipate the total cost will be around £45,000. One section of roof has already failed and is causing significant damp to a section of wall. Once we are confident the building is watertight, we will be able to look at implementing the next phase of the larger refurbishment plan which makes the interior space both more comfortable and efficient and thereby promote and sustain further community use of the premises, including the chapel.

We are currently researching potential grant funders. However, a substantial sum will still need to be raised by the community. We are hopeful that the local community will rally together to secure the future of this valuable and distinctive historic asset at the heart of the village.

Thank you

The Trustees are grateful to the Friends of Garrett's Charity for their support and particular thanks go to the Friends Management Committee for their dedication.

Trustees:

C R Oxby

D E Chantler

C J Dunning

C Sprigg

G J Chard

N J Eyre

L D Brabin-Smith

Declaration

The trustees declare that the report above was approved at a meeting of the trustees on 13th February 2024.