

Garrett's Charity Annual Report December 2024

For presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting, Heighington

Monday 28th April 2025

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. The funds to build the school rooms came from the former Thomas Garrett Apprenticing Charity and the former Sir Edward Clarke's Charity which both had educational purposes in their objects. The new schoolrooms 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). 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.

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 and now allows for nine Trustees.

During 2024 further work on revising the governing document to more accurately reflect the current use of the Heritage Rooms as a community building has been ongoing. This does not affect the operation of the Chapel.

In 2024 Nichola Briscoe was co-opted as a Trustee and is already contributing a great deal. There is a vacancy for a co-opted resident and one of the PCC nominated posts remains vacant.

Finances

The charity's main source of income is from hire of the Heritage Rooms to community groups (up 20% to about £7,300 in 2024.) 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. The charity is registered with HMRC for Gift Aid and has registered on digital giving platform: crowdfunder.co.uk. Legacy giving is encouraged. The 100 Club has proved successful. Once again, the Friends of the Garrett's Charity hosted a Car Boot Sale in June and Arts & Crafts Exhibition in October. Both events were well attended bringing together old friends and new visitors into the Heritage Rooms which created a vibrant social atmosphere.

During 2024 we also explored other fundraising activities. An aluminium recycling scheme was set up in May and processed around 9,500 cans or 119kg in the year. Whilst the funds raised are modest it is a good way to engage people in the work of the charity. The Smarties Challenge has been very popular generating over £220 from 26 filled tubes. Overall income was up 41% to £18,700 in 2024 and costs were around £10,000; so we managed to make a surplus in the year which will help with ongoing maintenance priorities.

Participation in the Village Event in July and the Heighington Christmas Festival helped further raise the profile of the charity.

The modest capital funds of the charity are invested in COIF Charities Ordinary Investment Fund which provides valuable income and an emergency reserve for the charity.

The Annual Accounts to 31st December 2024 were examined by Mr C M Green and were found to be sound. We are grateful for his help. The Annual Return has been submitted to the Charity Commission.

Roof Appeal

The Quinquennial Report undertaken in 2023 highlighted the poor condition of the roof. A Listed Building Application to reroof the building and insulate the internal ceilings was submitted to NKDC and approved in December 2024. The scheme will be undertaken in three phases commencing with the chapel where one section of the roof has already failed and is causing significant damp to a section of the internal wall. The first phase is estimated to cost £60,000 to £70,000. A grant from the Michael Cornish Foundation has already been secured and other grant funders have been identified. Nevertheless 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 distinctive historic asset at the heart of the village.

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

Trustees:

D E Chantler

C J Dunning

G J Chard

N J Eyre

N J Briscoe

C R Oxby

L D Brabin-Smith

Declaration

The Trustees declare that this report was approved at a meeting of the Trustees on 11th February 2025.