

SHREWSBURY CHRISTIAN CENTRE ASSOCIATION

TRUSTEES' REPORT **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 September 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

The Shrewsbury Christian Centre Association - A Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered by the Charity Commission for England & Wales, No 1163476

The charity is better known locally as The Shrewsbury Ark.

The principal address is that of the Shrewsbury Ark - 32 Castle Foregate, Shrewsbury SY1 2EH.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Shrewsbury Christian Centre Association (registered Charity no 1163476) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation first registered on 8th September 2015 whose objectives, set out in its Constitution adopted on 22nd June 2015, are to relieve persons in necessitous circumstances by the provision of:

The objectives of the charity are to relieve persons in necessitous circumstances by the provision of:

- (i) A Care Centre for the needy;
- (ii) When appropriate, additional day and night facilities with the aim of offering practical Christian concern for the needy;
- (iii) A Night Shelter for homeless people.

The charity has only been operating as a CIO since 2015, but in its unincorporated form (Charity Registered No 501881, now wound up) the charity has been in existence since 1973.

SHREWSBURY CHRISTIAN CENTRE ASSOCIATION

TRUSTEES' REPORT **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Significant activities

In the 12 months under review, the Shrewsbury Christian Centre Association (SCCA) has continued to operate The Shrewsbury Ark, as direct-access drop-in centre for homeless and vulnerable people close to the Town Centre in Shrewsbury. The Shrewsbury Ark delivers the first of the charity's three objectives and contributes to delivery of the second. The charity does not at present run a Night Shelter.

The premises of The Shrewsbury Ark are open daily on weekdays

Since November 2023 all facilities are offered to individuals on a referral basis with priority to those rough sleeping, and those referrals can include the following categories

1 -homeless and vulnerable people, including rough sleepers; to offer help and advice, work with Housing Agencies and Shropshire Council to find homes for the homeless and to continue to support those who have been so helped, as they settle in.

2 - those who feel excluded from society, or who have difficulty with day-to-day necessities, for whatever reason.

3 - ex-offenders to find a welcome "on the outside" and to re-establish themselves in the community without re-offending.

For all referrals the Support workers will liaise with local Drug, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Teams, local Mental Health Teams and Shropshire Council RESET team to provide appropriate services

In partnership with the local Primary Care Trust, we make medical advice available to those for whom GP Surgeries may appear unwelcoming or judgmental.

We offer limited meals to those referred who have no other source of hot food, together with snacks and beverages to anyone who needs them. The Ark also provides shower and toilet facilities, laundry facilities, access to a phone and IT, and a poste-restante address for mail. Above all, however, The Ark offers non-judgmental care and support to those referred to us

SCCA was founded in 1973. It ran then, and still runs, on Christian principles but there is no discrimination against any who wish to use the charity's services on grounds of religion (or lack of it) or any other diversity. This policy of non-discrimination applies equally to paid staff and volunteers.

Public benefit

Taking account of the Charity Commission's guidance the Trustees have no doubt that The Ark, being a unique service in the Town and surrounding area, provides a significant and proven Public Benefit.

SHREWSBURY CHRISTIAN CENTRE ASSOCIATION

TRUSTEES' REPORT **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities - The Shrewsbury Ark

During the year to September 2023 The Ark day centre continued to serve clients who's needs vary widely, from those simply seeking shelter, warmth and sustenance, through those needing a shower and toilet facilities to those with chronic problems that have defied the support and assistance offered elsewhere. Many have an intense dislike of bureaucracy and officialdom; an alarming number have problems of literacy which makes completing official forms difficult; and a high proportion have health issues resulting from addiction, alcohol and/or inadequate living conditions. The daily routine allowed the staff to engage closely with those who have real and current problems in their lives and the will to address them, whilst still offering a welcome, friendship and support to all.

The weekly visit by a local GP has continued which enables many clients to receive medical advice and treatment that they simply would not have sought before.

The additional RESET service – a multi-disciplinary team funded by Shropshire Council -have continued to provide support to some of our clients and for part of the year were based at The Ark.

The wider range of health and care agencies continue the arrangements to deliver their services to our clients on our premises, where the clients are more comfortable and where they are more likely to keep their appointments.

During 2023 we continued to see large numbers of clients in all categories attending the day centre, putting a very real strain on all our employees, volunteers and The Arks services. In the later part of summer 2023 there was a large increase in violence and threats from and with some of those wanting to use The Ark, possibly associated with certain types of substances circulating.

In consultation with the Police, Shropshire Council and other involved agencies, and for the safety of employees, volunteers, other clients and the public, the Trustees agreed initially to the Operations Manager request to provide unformed security on the day centre, and subsequently to a closure of the day centre. It was agreed that a closure of a minimum of one month was needed, during this time rough sleepers only would be seen daily elsewhere.

Following detailed consultations between staff members, volunteers, trustees and all agencies involved it was agreed that upon reopening there would be a referral only service. This would allow numbers to be controlled and to ensure that those most in need were able to use The Arks services – initially the referrals would only be for verified rough sleepers. During this time the staff and volunteers underwent training as well as cleaning and updating the ground floor and preparing and agreeing the protocols for reopening. All agreed that security would continue to be provided on reopening to ensure continued safety.

The Day centre reopened on 20th November 2023 and since then has had marked successes with those clients genuinely requiring the support and with support from staff and volunteers who have the time to spend on activities that can move them forward.

As outlined above this has been a difficult period of time, especially for the staff team and in September 2023 our Operations Manager decided it was time to move on. The trustees took some and work with a charity consultant provided by the Cranfield trust to look at how best to structure the charity staff going forward into 2024.

We are especially grateful this year to our staff team and volunteers in particular our then Deputy Manager Rose who stepped up during the latter part of the year to lead the changes to the service,

SHREWSBURY CHRISTIAN CENTRE ASSOCIATION

TRUSTEES' REPORT **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Outreach

The Charity until mid-2023 provided a rapid response service to reports of people sleeping rough in the area in and around Shrewsbury on behalf of and initially funded by Shropshire Council. This service made a substantial contribution to easing the lot of those sleeping rough, and its value has been widely recognised. From Mid 2023 Shropshire Council are funding and providing this service direct through its own Rough Sleepers team and RESET

The Arks Support workers have however continued to support past and present clients of The Ark who have been housed in independent accommodation and concentrate on supporting them remotely and at the Ark, with facilities to ensure that where possible clients are able to continue to stay in their accommodation.

The Ark Charity Shop

The purpose of the Ark Shop is to underwrite SCCA's charitable objectives and has provided an income stream which helps to fund our services to our clients. In the year under review the Shop continued to operate under difficult trading conditions however generated a small surplus of £639 from a gross income of £34233.

The Trustees remain extremely grateful for the work of the Shop Manager and her volunteer staff for their invaluable contribution; where it generates a stock of clothing suitable for The Ark's clients and also provides a second focus for the charity in the Town Centre.

SHREWSBURY CHRISTIAN CENTRE ASSOCIATION

TRUSTEES' REPORT **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

It has been pleasing to see a continued increase in overall income, particularly in the generous donations of the public as well as the grant received to purchase the car park, In difficult financial times there is more demand from all charities on grant making bodies, trusts and also on our local council

There is still the impact of increased utilities costs on both the shop and the Day Centre, and the new premises has also led to an increased cleaning bill as contractors have been needed to maintain all the areas. As highlighted in the Trustees report, our priorities are now to stabilise and maintain our financial position, controlling expenditure and to continue to source funds in order to deliver our day-to-day services.

Reserves

We have continued our reserve policy of at least £55,000 during this year, which has been met, and will be reviewed in the year to Sept 2024. The free reserves held at the year end were £58,982 (2022: £59,816).

Sustainability

The Trustees are satisfied that the present activities of the Charity represent a viable and sustainable project for the foreseeable future provided, of course, that donations and grants continue to be received at more or less the present rate, and provided that no extreme and unexpected financial commitments arise. Sufficient funds are available as Reserves (see previous paragraph) to act as a buffer should unexpected financial tribulations affect the Charity. We will continue to maintain a regular and careful review of income and expenditure throughout the year, so that appropriate steps can be taken to increase the former, and/or reduce the latter, if it appears necessary. Plans for the future (see below) need to be seen in this context.

FUTURE PLANS

As outlined above during late 2023 our approach has changed to a referral basis and this continues to provide results for our clients with successes leading to more 'categories' of client being opened up.

The staff structure changes to include an overall Charity Director and Charity Coordinator in 2024 meaning that each of the shop and day centre managers can concentrate on their own areas, with the new roles overseeing both and the operation of the charity as a whole.

At present there are no plans to create any extra building changes within the Ark.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("CIO") first registered on 8th September 2015 under a constitution approved by the Charity Commission and adopted by the membership of the previous (unincorporated) SCCA at a General Meeting on 22nd June 2015

The charity has only been operating as a CIO since 2015, but in its unincorporated form (Charity Registered No 501881, now wound up) the charity has been in existence since 1973.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The Chairman of Trustees is appointed by Churches Together in Shrewsbury; other Officers and Trustees are elected at a General Meeting. Additional Trustees may be co-opted by the Committee to take advantage of particular skills and qualifications. The charity enjoys the patronage of Rt Rev'd Sarah Bullock (Bishop of Shrewsbury), of Rev'd Christopher Walker (former Chairman), and of Marcus Bean and his wife Jenny.

SHREWSBURY CHRISTIAN CENTRE ASSOCIATION

TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Decision making

The purposes for, and the policies adopted by, the charity are set and their implementation is supervised by a small number of dedicated volunteer Trustees, all of whom take an active interest in the services provided by the Ark; indeed, some Trustees also volunteer on the "shop floor". Day-to-day activities in the Ark and the Shop are managed by the respective Managers who direct and supervise their staff and volunteers.

The charity's principal project is the Shrewsbury Ark which incorporates a Day Centre for homeless and vulnerable people close to the Town Centre of Shrewsbury. The Shrewsbury Ark Shop raises charitable funds for the Ark.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

The trustees (who are also the directors of Shrewsbury Christian Centre Association for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Mrs E J Bell - Trustee