

# Dorset Historic Churches Trust

*Conserving the past – enriching the future*

**2024** | ISSUE 19

## ANNUAL REPORT AND REVIEW

### New Chairman of DHCT

Retired Specialist Judge of the Technology and Construction Court, David Grant, assumed the Chairmanship this month after the retirement of John Stokoe, CB, CBE, at the end of 2023.

David not only has a wealth of experience in the legal aspects of construction and conservation work, but also has a personal interest in the maintenance of listed church buildings.

“I have been a Trustee of DHCT for a couple of years,” he explains, “so I know what I am getting into. I am lucky to be taking over from John Stokoe who has led the organisation brilliantly through the Covid years and thereafter. The strength of DHCT is shown by the way that hundreds of volunteers turn out for the Ride+Stride sponsored event each September. Last year they raised over £98,000 in one day to help conserve churches in Dorset of all denominations.”

The aim of DHCT is to give grants to church conservation projects and over £100,000 has been given away in the last year, maintaining the average awarded in the last five years.

David emphasises that churches receive no financial assistance towards repairs from the central church or the government, so contributions from DHCT are especially important.



### Living Heritage

Recently, I had the privilege to preach in Westminster Abbey to over 1800 people. The thing that took me by surprise, was that it didn't phase me in the least. Anyone I told that I was to be there seemed to react with a degree of fascination, but to me, it just seemed to be another working day. Perhaps I've gone off the boil – don't answer that!

It is true that I have preached there twice before and joined in leading a number of other services there, so I suppose familiarity brings a degree of complacency. I guess that is partly the problem and the challenge with our historic churches.



I travel across Dorset and the rest of the diocese, and if there were no road signs, our myriad of churches would act like a kind of temporal sat-nav. Standing on the edge of heaven and earth, they create sacred space and common ground. England would not be England without them.

And yet, you know, as generous supporters, just how difficult it is to keep our churches open and alive, maintained and inviting. Society takes them for granted and risks taking the Christian spiritual tradition for granted. We need new local and national answers to secure the future of our beautiful historic churches and thank you for working hard to discover this way forward.

For me, part of the key to this new future must be in how we view these buildings. Westminster Abbey could easily be seen as the national mausoleum, a venue for infrequent royal occasions and a tourist attraction. But it is a living church, with a vibrant community, offering daily prayer for thousands. All of our churches need to find that enduring combination of ancient memory with living reality. Heritage must be alive, for otherwise it is simply nostalgia.

Thanks again for all you do, and there is a lot to do in this generation, but my prayer is that our vision and our energy, our giving and our sharing can match those who built our churches from scratch to create one of the greatest landscapes on earth. Thank you for being a blessing.

+Stephen, Bishop of Salisbury

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## Valete John Stokoe

In a break with tradition, the successor to Simon Pomeroy as our Chairman was not already a Trustee. John Stokoe, having completed a long and distinguished career in the Army, had already acquired a number of *pro bono* roles and been Churchwarden for Ashmore, where he led a DHCT-funded project to repair the roof.

On the principle of “If you want a job done well give it to a busy person” John seemed to fit our profile perfectly. And so it proved. He quickly established the theme for his chairmanship: small rural churches should be helped where necessary to evolve into centres for their communities using DHCT funds to install or upgrade small kitchens and lavatories.

He was a champion of Ride+Stride as an event that brought people together in a shared cause. Within the Trust, he was keen to spread the work of the charity across the volunteer Trustees so that none of them would be too heavily loaded. The Strategy Group of lead Trustees was developed as a valuable think tank to work up new ideas. These changes were skilfully and gradually introduced. However, we all had to respond quickly to the challenges of COVID. Meetings on Zoom were mastered and the tricky decision to go ahead with Ride+Stride 2020 was carefully judged. How glad we were, as it provided a great day out for families and individuals alike while raising a record figure in sponsorship.

When the Trustees reconvened in person once restrictions were lifted, we realised how much we had missed the fun of working together under John’s leadership. We had also missed the peerless flapjacks which his wife Jenny provided for each meeting. We are all very grateful for his nearly 5 years of service to the Trust and look forward to seeing him at Crawls and events in the future.



## Chairman’s Report 2023

**While one of my tasks as the new Chairman of DHCT is to prepare this report, my immediate predecessor was in post for the best part of 2023. The first thing I should do is to pay tribute to John Stokoe and thank him for all the work he did for DHCT. The Trust was fortunate to have John as its Chairman and he will be much missed.**

2023 was the second year after the pandemic when DHCT was able to get back to its main business. On the income side Ride+Stride 2023 was a success, notwithstanding the heatwave conditions which occurred on the Saturday. Indeed, some participants took the sensible course of adjourning all or part of their riding or striding to the following day when the heat was less severe. On the expenditure side, while there was a slight decline in the number of applications received, the amount of money DHCT granted remained substantial at £101,000. So all in all a good year.

There are challenges ahead. The situation of small rural churches is, of course, a matter of concern to DHCT. Jeremy Selfe and I had a recent meeting with Dr Andrew Rumsey, Bishop of Ramsbury, who has particular responsibility for church buildings in the

Salisbury Diocese. The Bishop told us that the rate of church closures has slowed down markedly, with the Church of England now endeavouring to retain a fragile church as a “fallow” church where a congregation has diminished, rather than disposing of it. That is encouraging news for a grant-making body such as DHCT, whose interest is in the preservation of the church building, while remaining mindful of the object and purpose of the building in its social context.

A relevant, and positive, “knock-on effect” of DHCT’s work in making grants to assist works of repair or maintenance of church buildings is that it supports a range of skilled trades. There is a wide public interest in having specialist roofers, stone masons, specialist plasterers and the like (to name but a few) available in the region to do the required work, which often requires a mix of technical knowledge coupled with experience. When visiting a small rural church recently to present DHCT’s grant cheque, I was struck by the number of comments about the high quality of the work that had been carried out by a local firm of builders. It was a good example of a community project.

Global warming and the general aim to achieve “net zero” by 2030-2035 is already having an impact on some of the issues which DHCT has to consider. The developing technology of boilers, and the use of air-source and ground-source heat pumps, are examples of this, and often arise in the context of the changing nature of use of a particular church.

The numbers of the Friends of DHCT remains encouragingly substantial, and they provide great support to the Trust. The annual series of Church Crawls provides an excellent opportunity to explore a particular area of Dorset, or an immediately adjacent area, such as South Somerset which was visited in 2023. The Crawls are also an excellent day out, and they enable new Friends to meet other enthusiasts! Much work goes into arranging the Crawls, which is appreciated by all.

As mentioned above, Ride+Stride 2023 was again successful and provides the vast majority of DHCT’s funds. It reminds us of the important role played by the Parish Organisers in connection with R+S. We are on the lookout for more, so if this role appeals to you, or you know someone who might like to become involved, please do let us know. They will be very welcome!

There is much to be done. Church use is changing; building and heating costs have risen significantly; but the churches remain in situ and DHCT has a worthy role to play in keeping them in good repair. Thanks to all who have given generously of their time and effort in enabling the Trust to fulfil that role.

*David Grant*



*Handover of the Chair at the October Trustees meeting.*

*Front row: David Grant, John Stokoe, Sue Bruce-Payne, Jeremy Selfe*

*Back row: Roger Blaber, Michael Warren, Tom Sweet-Escott, Nick Head, Tim Connor, Andrew Graham, Steven Norman, Tom Wickson, Andrew Rowland, Chris Waite and Tim Smith*

*(Trustees Philippa Francis and Sally-Anne Barrett were not able to attend the meeting.)*

## Honorary Secretary’s Notes

**As I sit down to pen my recollections of another year in the life of DHCT, I reckon that we have enjoyed many successes.**

The total pledges for R+S was just over £98,000 and we have paid out £104,000 in grants to 17 churches in sums ranging from £1,000 to £11,000. Our Crawls and Lecture Lunches have been fully subscribed and attended by a number of new Friends while support for our Annual Event held in Sherborne was well up on previous years.

Media coverage has been supportive and our website is receiving more visits, with a number of intriguing queries to our postbox.

On the admin side, most remittances from churches for R+S and all of the 50% repayments were made by bank transfer. Although setting up the payees has taken time and no little effort over the past couple of years by those involved, this investment will ensure greater efficiency in the future. Similarly grant payments have been made by bank transfer within a very few days of claims being submitted.

Each year we have reported that there are a few key gaps in our DAR organisation and, while 4 new Deanery Reps have been

appointed, a number of Parish Organisers have stood down and not been replaced. This perhaps accounts for why the number of churches taking part in R+S has fallen slightly for the first time. The momentum of the Trust has been sustained by DARs and POs helping each other out but we are very aware that the success of DHCT over the years can be attributed to a full team of volunteers at all levels.

Although DHCT is a secular organisation dedicated to securing the future of all our church buildings and their contents we are not immune from the decline in church attendance and in volunteering for this sort of charitable cause. Accordingly, we are planning to make the work of the Trust better known and understood across the County so that we can fill the gaps and indeed increase the number of churches participating in R+S and applying for grants.

In closing I would like to thank our webmaster Andy Derrick and his company Clevertch Solutions for supporting our website at very modest charge; their work can be seen at <https://clevertch.tv>. Our website is our shop-window and any suggestions for ways that we can improve the service it provides will be very well received.



## Ride+Stride Report 2023



*Team Frizzle, Lydlinch.*

**We are delighted to report that the 2023 Dorset Ride+Stride raised £98,250. This is £10,000 more than the 2022 total. The Trustees are so grateful for the continuing support and generosity of all those involved in the event especially in what are very challenging times. In addition Saturday 9th September 2023 was one of the hottest days of the year! As is often repeated, the work of the Trust could not continue without the income provided by this annual event.**

Now for a few statistics (2022 figures appear in parenthesis): In 2023 138 (147) parishes took part in Ride+Stride with 23 (17) raising over £1000 and 62 (52) raising £500 or over. There were some magnificent performances with St Mary, Sturminster Marshall, St Andrew, Fontmell Magna and All Saints, Hilton raising over £2000. A full schedule of results appears on pages 10-13 of this Report.

This year, the Trustees have decided to award the 2023 Morshead Trophy to St Andrew, Fontmell Magna. They last won the Trophy in 2012 and have raised over £1000 each year since at least 2016. Many congratulations to St Andrew's for this wonderful record of fundraising.

We regularly review the paper work each parish receives prior to Ride+Stride. Crucial to this exercise is having up to date data as to whom the Parish Organiser is, so we are very grateful to receive amendments. We regard the work done by the Parish Organisers as critical to the success of Ride+Stride as it enables the Trust to reach all parts of the county. The Treasurer has raised the matter of Gift Aid. On the sponsorship forms a donor is asked to indicate whether or not they wish to make a Gift Aid donation. On a surprisingly large number of the forms

this column remains completely blank with neither a yes nor no. This could be a source of additional income for the Trust at no cost to the donor. This year the column will be backlit on the sponsorship forms and we would like participants to draw this to the attention of their sponsors, if appropriate. The remittance advice form is also an important source of information for the Treasurer, and his team, helping with the reconciliation and identification of sums received. This form is sometimes not returned and therefore causes difficulties matching monies received to the totals of individual parishes. Finally, we were very grateful for the increase in the number of parishes returning their paperwork by the deadline of 31st October. This means that those who met the deadline received their "50%" in good time before the year end.

Elsewhere in this Annual Report and Review readers will find a list of all those churches which have received grants from the Trust this year. This is only possible due to the huge generosity of sponsors and the determination of participants even on the hottest of days. For the foreseeable future the protection and conservation of our churches will remain largely dependent on charitable giving. We hope that all those involved in Ride+Stride appreciate how vitally important and how appreciated your contribution is "in conserving the past – enriching the future" for all of us.

Finally huge thanks are due to Roger Blaber, Becka Brierly and Anna Butler for all they do to ensure the smooth running of the Dorset Ride+Stride. At certain times of the year the work load is quite intense but it is all carried out with good humour and not inconsiderable forensic skill!

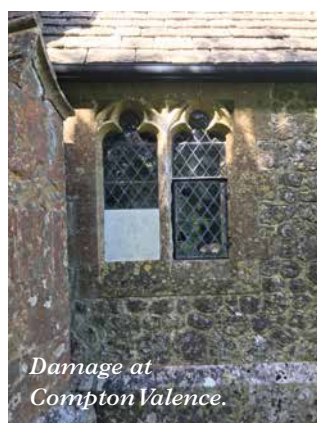
*Philippa Francis*



*Team Tuffin, Lydlinch.*

## Grants Committee Report 2023

One of the most enjoyable of the Friends Crawls last year was our first one in May when we were generously welcomed at Compton Valence. The church is a very interesting one but another issue preoccupied some of our local hosts: the broken window to the sacristy, through which thieves would never be seen making an entrance.



We were happy to make the smallest grant of the year to one of the smallest of the county's parishes to ensure the window was promptly repaired.

But that is the exception to our usual work. As in many years, just over half our grants and nearly 80 % of our grant aid went to repair roofs in all areas of the county, including at Chaldon Herring and Steeple where the traditional use of Purbeck stone tiles make proper repair particularly expensive. A substantial grant to Wyke Regis will, I hope, help to end a long drawn-out and difficult project to repair their roof that has been the victim of lead theft but also of faulty workmanship in recent years.

Storm damage is a perennial problem for church buildings: in 2023 we helped at Shillingstone where, as I mentioned last year, part of the roof had collapsed and at Glanvilles Wooton. As I write I wonder what requests for help resulting from the high winds and flooding of December 2023 may be in the pipeline for us;

increasingly violent storms of the last few years will make sudden damage of this sort an ongoing anxiety.

We last visited St Nicholas, Silton in 2015. It has one of the finest decorated interiors of any Dorset church, with the nineteenth century glass matched with elegant stencilled plaster wall decoration. This photograph was taken some years ago but the plaster ornament in the ceiling has deteriorated recently, and the quality of the ornament is so good that conservation is expensive, and we were glad to help. Here, as with most of the applications we receive, we act alongside the Erskine Mouton Fund, organised by the Diocese (and, therefore, only concerned with Dorset's Church of England buildings) who have greater resources at their disposal. Churches in Dorset have abundant funds to call on when the need arises and we ended the year not having distributed all we could have done. I know that the business of application is time consuming and inevitably there will be another length of time between the application and its result, but I would urge all those whose effort ensures that our lovely buildings survive, to keep on applying.

Nick Head has been a valued and expert member of the Committee for several years, but has now felt he should retire. I am most grateful for this help in our deliberations.



## Grants Awarded 2023

### FEBRUARY

<b>Canford Magna</b>	
Updating lighting	£4,000

<b>Shillingstone – Holy Rood</b>	
Repairs to the roof	£12,000

<b>Wyke Regis – All Saints</b>	
Repairs to the roof	£15,000

### JUNE

<b>Chilfrome – Holy Trinity</b>	
Repairs to the bell-cote	£6,000

<b>Compton Valence – St Thomas à Becket</b>	
Vestry Window repairs	£1,000

<b>Glanvilles Wooton – St Mary the Virgin</b>	
Repairs to the roof	£8,000

<b>Silton – St Nicholas</b>	
Repairs to plaster	£10,000



Shillingstone north aisle scaffolding.



### OCTOBER

<b>Broadway – St Nicholas</b>	
Repairs to window surrounds	£10,000

<b>Chaldon Herring – St Nicholas</b>	
General repairs	£15,000

<b>Lyme Regis R.C. – St Michael and St George</b>	
Repair stonework around windows	£5,000

<b>Steeple – St Michael and All Angels</b>	
Repairs to the roof	£15,000



## Pedal to the Metal

**This is an Americanism – it only really works as a rhyme if one realises that Americans pronounce ‘t’ very softly as a ‘d’. It conveys the idea of ‘full steam ahead’! There have been changes to the Board of Trustees, notably the retirement of John (Chair) and the arrival of new trustees. We pause to appreciate and give thanks for all the ‘pillars’ of the past and welcome the new as we press on with our mission.**

Our church buildings are the inheritor structures to the ancient Tabernacles (Tents of Meeting). Thankfully they do not need to be moved around, but they do need maintaining and this requires all concerned to keep our ‘Pedals to the metal’ – recognising that we are only passing through, whilst preserving the past for the sake of the future.

I use the ‘pedal’ analogy because it links to *Ride+Stride* – oh how I remember that boiling hot day last year when we opted to venture out early lest the heat sap and melt our ‘metal’. It has been a wet and windy winter and here at The Minster at Wimborne we are

battling persistent dampness in West facing walls – they range in age from seven to twelve hundred years old. It is a long-term race we are in: I’m glad to be part of DHCT as we both support and encourage the preservers of our heritage.

I conclude with words of encouragement from the Bible; Romans 1:11&12

*For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you – or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.*

The Trust is genuinely wanting to meet with those we can help to share spiritual and practical assistance, not for our own sake, but for the God we all have and will serve. Thanks be to God we are able and willing to be ‘structures’ of mutual encouragement – pedal to the metal!

The Lord be our strength.

*Revd Canon Andrew Rowland*

## Restoration Case Studies 1

**Sometimes in this business one thing leads to another.**

DHCT made a grant of £10,000 in June 2023 for restoration of ceiling plaster at St Nicholas Silton, in the far north of the county. Much of the interior of this Grade 1 listed church is decorated with stencil work carried out during the Victorian era and the firm of Clayton and Bell produced the beautiful stained-glass windows typified by their brilliant luminosity.

Alfred Bell, the firm’s founder was born in Silton, Dorset in 1832.

Whilst scaffolding was in place to repair the falling plaster, investigation showed the poor condition of some of the internal roof timbers, which could not be seen from below. The church architect called in a structural engineer for further advice and he recommended that strengthening of the roof would be needed, using fabricated metal templates to reinforce several Nave trusses and blocks of green oak to repair decayed rafter feet above the church’s South Aisle.

Although the DAC was comfortable to give List B permission for the plaster work to go ahead, the strengthening of the roof timbers will require new

materials to be introduced, so a Faculty will be needed. It was therefore necessary to remove the scaffolding filling the church to allow services to resume until the Faculty has been obtained, grants applied for and the funds raised so that this second phase of the work can go ahead.

The PCC is very grateful to DHCT who have helped it look after this church so well over the decades, but in this case it is going to be necessary for the PCC to come back with a further grant application. The Trust is always happy to consider follow-on applications and realises that sometimes the full extent of problems will only be obvious once full access is arranged to high-up parts of tall buildings and work has started.

One of the Churchwardens, Peter Williams, describes his feelings like this: “As an enthusiastic and dedicated Rider and Strider I feel rather uncomfortable about giving money with one hand and taking it back with the other. The plaster repair project was relatively straight-forward but looking at the state of the timbers – the trusses and ties – the complexity of the repairs required is slightly unnerving. But this is a beautiful, much-loved church and it needs to be looked after. None of us would forgive ourselves if we just let the roof collapse – so we appreciate wholeheartedly the generous and enduring support of the DHCT.”



*Close inspection of the roof at Silton.*



*Not quite ready for morning service.*

## Restoration Case Studies 2

**St Nicholas of Myra at Worth Matravers near the south coast of Purbeck is currently one of the largest church restoration projects in Dorset.**

DHCT gave £11,000 pump-priming grant in June 2022, towards an initial cost estimated as £350,000 to replace the roof in its entirety. Many of the heavy Purbeck stone slates were cracked, the Victorian iron nails have been corroded by decades of sea air and the battens they cling to are largely rotten.

Covid delays, inflation and extra work becoming necessary increased this to something more like £600,000 by September 2023. The contractor, being cautious, explains that a more exact figure might only be calculated once the roof ridge tiles and a few courses of slates/stones are removed.

To approach this huge task, a very active committee under the patronage of Baron Phillips of Worth Matravers has undertaken numerous fund-raising activities. In addition to grant applications to DHCT and EMF, they have organised a literary lunch sponsored by the Oldie Magazine, open gardens, concerts, a film evening and fêtes.

This encouraged the decisive reaction – a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £249,008. A painting of the church donated by renowned local artist Nicholas Hely-Hutchinson raised £15,000.

Obtaining permission for these works has taken time. The Diocese needed to agree and grant a Faculty and the County Council has had to grant planning permission to remove a Victorian chimney, which serves a former heating system.

Hugh Cochrane, who has carried much of the responsibility from the church's side, emphasises the importance of establishing

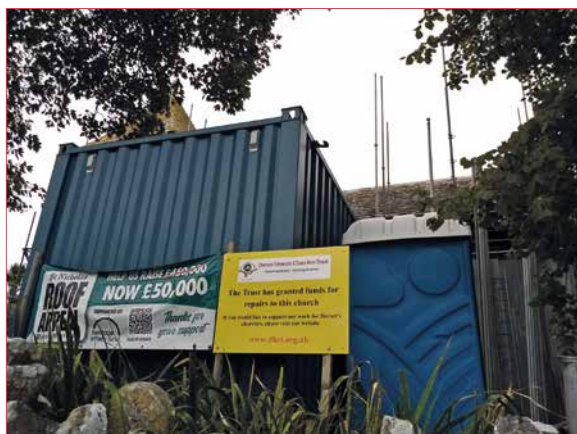
confident relationships with the church architects and the contractor.

However, by the end of October 2023 with the church fully protected, the roof stripped and the majority of the ceiling removed considerable rot in the rafters, most of which were not scheduled to be replaced, was discovered. Following a Structural Engineer's inspection early in the new year it was decided that all of the original rafters would have to be replaced. Inevitably this would entail a delay as well as additional costs and the need to apply to the Diocese for an amendment to our Faculty. With the superb support of our architects and following consultation with the Diocesan office and Historic England we were able to put forward a revised specification and in just over a month we received the amendment required to continue the project.

They now need to raise a further £73,000 to complete the project. Fundraising activities including the application for grants from charitable organisations continue and, as always, all donations would be greatly appreciated.

Mr Cochrane points out: "Although the church itself dates from around 1100, the present roof was erected in about 1870 and many villagers felt that it was their duty to take on the responsibility of ensuring that the Grade 1 listed building was set up for the next 150 years of its life. This is challenging, of course, but the alternatives are complex themselves – and ultimately unthinkable. In the end it is easier to take on the task of restoration than to allow a significant piece of Dorset heritage to hide behind protective hoardings and crumble away."

DHCT is proud to play a part in helping this project to completion.



*Works at Worth Matravers led by Hugh Cochrane.*



## Marketing and Communications Report 2023

**Publicising the activities of the Trust is always a pleasure. We are proud of the work that we do to support the hard-working people who have taken on themselves the responsibility of looking after Dorset's church buildings. These structures, often listed as being of architectural and historical interest, are vital parts of the county's heritage. We are conscious that churches are a key part of the county's history and culture and that the widest possible public need to be reminded of their importance and not take them for granted.**

We have been able to report on a very successful Ride+Stride last September, which is the motor that drives all we do. As a result of raising nearly £100,000, we can continue to make grants for projects and to announce how they have progressed. Images of churches unexpectedly covered in scaffolding emphasise to people what we do and remind everyone that all buildings, some dating back many centuries, require periodic renewal and restoration.

We have also welcomed a new Chairman this year and images of David Grant appeared in various publications, together with appreciations of the work of his predecessor John Stokoe over recent years. John has been a wise and imaginative friend of the Marketing and Communications group, bringing a great depth

of experience from the commercial career he followed after distinguished service in the Army. We thank him and hope to keep in touch in the future.

The Honorary Secretary and Mr Andy Derrick have also been invaluable in maintaining and updating the DHCT website. That may have started as something we felt we ought to be doing, but it has become a vital communications tool both with the world at large and between officers and members of the Trust. It is remarkable how we have become reliant on something that may have seemed an ornament at first.

2023 has seen many aspects of the Trust's work return to the pre-Covid normal. We have been lucky to welcome Sir Andrew Graham to this group as he brings experience and enthusiasm and fresh thinking. It must be made clear that we are all amateurs at this kind of work, but that the range of experience we bring is a positive blessing. We avoid any hint of hard-bitten professional cynicism and remain enthusiasts in different fields and in contrasting ways. Some DARs, notably Shaun Leavey in Sherborne, have also been quick to spot opportunities for advancing the name of the Trust – for which activity we are very grateful.

Thank you to all who have contributed in any way, and who have written about their work in this publication.

## Heritage at Risk?

**Although the Report looks back to 2023, The National Churches Trust has just launched "Every Church Counts", a campaign to keep churches open. We are very happy to look forward and support this initiative.**

When the Communist authorities started to rebuild the centre of the war-ravaged city of Warsaw in 1946, they chose the very costly option of restoring the churches, palaces and fine town houses to their former glory rather than settling for the shoddy tower blocks that were being built all around the city suburbs. In a recently broadcast TV programme, the art historian Dan Cruickshank, re-visiting the city where he grew up as a small boy, wondered why. The documents from the time were clear: "Without history, there is no present and without the present there is no future". Clearly, we must not stretch the parallel too far but the steady erosion of the heritage and history that is embedded in so many of our parish churches should cause concern for the future of our rural society.

The National Churches Trust has recently launched a campaign entitled "Every Church Counts" to stress the cultural value and social purpose of church buildings and crucially to offer a six point plan to stem the flow of closures. First, the NCT recommends a network of professional support officers to help over-worked volunteers. Congregations and faith groups should be supported to adapt their buildings so that they can provide immediate response to flooding or other emergencies. Third, the NCT has calculated that the annual maintenance bill for churches in the United Kingdom is about £150M and it is

calling for a ring-fenced fund of public money – say £50M per annum – to support local fund-raising efforts. The Department of Culture Media and Sport should commission a study into how to make our church heritage better known and more accessible. Fifth, churches should be open for all and not routinely locked in daytime hours except for Sunday services. Finally, success in these endeavours should be promoted in the media to achieve a momentum for change.

You will note that much of this is what we in DHCT have been quietly promoting over the 64 years of our existence. The Bishop of Ramsbury, Rt Revd Dr Andrew Rumsey, who is the lead for church buildings in the Diocese of Salisbury, has very similar thoughts. In a recent briefing to the Trustees, he laid out how the Diocese is addressing the heritage challenge facing us. The centre of his message is that, in the past, the closure of a church has been a binary decision – open or closed. He is advocating the idea of furloughing a church to relieve the hard-pressed congregation for a few years while the community decides if and how to re-open their cherished building under new arrangements. He stressed the need for making the case for more funding for Diocesan Heritage Officers, the first of these are being funded by the Church Commissioners, but they will be too thinly spread to make the difference needed. There is clearly a debate at all levels and the NCT and Diocesan websites are among the places to go to keep up with developments – and, dare one say, progress.

*Jeremy Selfe*



## Friends of Dorset Churches Summer Crawls, 2023

**In summer 2023 the Friends were able to enjoy a full programme of Church Crawls in different parts of the county – and even across the border in Somerset.**

In May we travelled westwards to Compton Valence, Loders, Powerstock and Chilcombe, and then in June northwards to Fifehead Magdalen, Stour Provost, Todber and Marnhull.

The July crawl saw members heading southeast to Lychett Matravers, Winterborne Tomson, Bloxworth and Corfe Mullen. Finally, we ventured into foreign parts to visit Brympton D'Evercy, Stoke sub Hamden, East Coker and Sutton Bingham. Each of these churches provided as much interest as is promised by their romantic and uncompromisingly English names.

The chief aim of each day is to investigate the way that local masons, since late Saxon times, have interpreted and imagined the architectural and religious fashions prevailing at each period of history. These are explained and discussed with great authority, but also wry humour, by Dr Tim Connor, our resident expert architectural historian.

Crawls, though, have many other important functions. Church buildings – often the most significant structure in any place – illustrate and illuminate local history, especially the stories of local families who were very often involved in their building. Dorset being a county of many great estates, the way the fortunes

of churches relate to the fortunes of great houses is also often interesting.

Crawls are also social events. While seeing parts of the county Friends may have no other reason to visit, they also meet people they might not encounter otherwise – and are often able to find like-minded people with shared interests with whom they can enjoy the day.

A small team make all this possible. Sue Bruce-Payne and Kate Lear pick out and reconnoitre the churches and Tim Smith is master of the technology required to maintain communication. While each Crawl may not exactly have a theme, churches need to be reasonably near each other. Parking, in villages designed for the horse and cart, needs to be considered, as do the options for loo breaks and proximity of tea rooms and pubs which can provide refreshments. Many Friends prefer to bring a picnic and be independent, but that is a matter of choice. The tomb top tea in the shade of ancient yew trees is quite a tradition.

DHCT Church Crawls combine learning and fun in proportions decided by each 'crawl'.

We look forward to meeting again in 2024 and welcoming you along. Details will be found on the Friends pages of our website ([dhct.org.uk](http://dhct.org.uk)).

## DHCT Annual Event 11th October, 2023 St Mary's Church, Sturminster Newton

**40 Friends of Dorset Historic Churches Trust gathered at St Mary's Church in Sturminster Newton on 11th October for their annual meeting.**

St Mary's is a church full of interest, especially for its stained glass which was the subject of an absorbing talk by local resident and researcher Sarah Sexton, who is nearing the completion of a book on the windows at St Mary's. She revealed a considerable depth of information about the origins and designs of the glass, especially the Harry Clarke window, installed in memory of Roma Spencer Smith. This is nationally admired, and described as "awe-inspiring" and "rare and exceptional". Members were able to move round the building and get good, close-up views of all the windows discussed.

Contrasting interest was provided by St Mary's Director of Music, Sir Peter Newson-Smith, who entertained the Friends with an organ recital of works from the seventeenth century to the present time. This was very successful in showing off the capabilities of the instrument, which seems ideally suited to accompanying services in the church.

After an excellent buffet lunch in the church hall catered for by Dorset Delights, Dr Tim Connor, the Trust's architectural historian, revealed the fruit of his researches at the Dorset History Centre into the life of Sir Owen Morshead, who founded the DHCT in 1960. Sir Owen retired to Sturminster Newton, and as members gathered round his memorial plaque in the church, Dr Connor reviewed his highly decorated military career in the First World War, his work as Librarian at Windsor Castle and his involvement in the growing movement to preserve buildings of historic importance in the mid twentieth century. As the first Chairman of the Trust, Sir Owen served until 1971, seeing DHCT on its path to becoming the successful conservation charity it is now.

At the end of the day, Jeremy Selfe, deputising for the chairman, thanked the speaker, the organist and the caterers, and especially the organisers Mike Warren and Tim Smith.

The Event concluded the Friends activities for 2023, but a new programme is being planned for 2024. Keep an eye on the website [dhct.org.uk](http://dhct.org.uk) for details as they become available.

## Ride+Stride Results 2023

Parish	Church	Deanery Area	Ride+Stride Total
Sturminster Marshall	St Mary	Wimborne	£3,418.00
Fontmell Magna	St Andrew	Milton & Blandford	£2,580.00
Hilton	All Saints	Dorchester	£2,332.92
Silton	St Nicholas	Blackmore Vale	£1,835.00
Wyke Regis	All Saints	Weymouth	£1,763.85
Sherborne	Abbey Church of St Mary	Sherborne	£1,705.23
Leigh	St Andrew	Sherborne	£1,705.00
Piddlehinton	St Mary the Virgin	Dorchester	£1,625.34
Ashmore	St Nicholas	Milton & Blandford	£1,600.00
Broadwey	St Nicholas	Weymouth	£1,460.00
Wimborne Newborough	St John	Wimborne	£1,355.00
Spetisbury	St John the Baptist	Milton & Blandford	£1,291.00
Frome St Quintin	St Mary	Sherborne	£1,260.00
Whitchurch Canonicorum	St Candida and Holy Cross	Lyme Bay	£1,200.00
Litton Cheney	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£1,194.46
Chettle	St Mary	Milton & Blandford	£1,125.00
Chideock	St Giles	Lyme Bay	£1,115.00
Blandford RC	Our Lady of Lourdes & St Cecilia	Milton & Blandford	£1,114.00
Over Compton	St Michael	Sherborne	£1,107.00
Melbury Osmond	St Osmund	Sherborne	£1,045.00
Dewlish	All Saints	Dorchester	£1,010.00
Beaminster	St Mary the Annunciation	Lyme Bay	£1,010.00
Godmanstone	Holy Trinity	Dorchester	£1,000.00
Evershot	St Osmund	Sherborne	£972.00
Witchampton	St Mary, St Cuthberga & All Saints	Wimborne	£942.09
Tarrant Gunville	St Mary	Milton & Blandford	£935.00
Stourpaine	Holy Trinity	Milton & Blandford	£934.85
Motcombe	St Mary	Blackmore Vale	£895.74
Radipole	St Ann	Weymouth	£846.00
Wareham	Lady St Mary	Purbeck	£840.00
Holwell	St Laurence	Sherborne	£810.00
Woodsford	St John the Baptist	Dorchester	£800.00
Winterborne Houghton	St Andrew	Milton & Blandford	£785.00
Dorchester	St Peter	Dorchester	£754.00
Corfe Castle	St Edward the Martyr	Purbeck	£740.00
Tolpuddle	St John the Evangelist	Dorchester	£737.00
Tarrant Rushton	St Mary	Milton & Blandford	£720.00
Stoke Abbott	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£713.45
Canford Magna	Parish Church	Wimborne	£700.00



Parish	Church	Deanery Area	Ride+Stride Total
Wool	Holy Rood	Purbeck	£696.00
Wimborne Minster	St Cuthberga	Wimborne	£688.50
Sixpenny Handley	St Mary	Milton & Blandford	£681.00
West Lulworth	Holy Trinity	Purbeck	£680.00
Lytchett Minster	Lytchett Minster	Poole & North Bournemouth	£650.00
Charminster	St Mary the Virgin	Dorchester	£649.00
Hazelbury Bryan	St Mary and St James	Blackmore Vale	£641.50
Tarrant Hinton	St Mary	Milton & Blandford	£621.00
Canford Cliffs	Church of the Transfiguration	Poole & North Bournemouth	£610.00
Puddletown	St Mary the Virgin	Dorchester	£585.00
Fifehead Magdalen	St Mary Magdalene	Blackmore Vale	£575.00
Powerstock	St Mary the Virgin	Lyme Bay	£570.00
Alderholt	St James	Wimborne	£565.00
Bradpole	Holy Trinity	Lyme Bay	£560.00
Broadmayne	St Martin	Dorchester	£550.00
Sturminster Newton	St Mary	Blackmore Vale	£535.00
Winterborne Steepleton	St Michael	Dorchester	£530.00
Owermoigne	St Michael	Dorchester	£525.00
Burton Bradstock	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£525.00
Warmwell	Holy Trinity	Dorchester	£520.00
Steeple	St Michael and All Angels	Purbeck	£520.00
Oborne	St Cuthbert	Sherborne	£510.00
Dorchester RC	Holy Trinity	Dorchester	£509.40
Cranborne	St Mary and St Bartholomew	Wimborne	£495.00
West Parley	All Saints	Wimborne	£495.00
Upwey	St Laurence	Weymouth	£490.00
Buckland Newton	Holy Rood	Dorchester	£488.00
Weymouth	Holy Trinity	Weymouth	£488.00
Chaldon Herring	St Nicholas	Purbeck	£486.00
Chetnole	St Peter	Sherborne	£480.34
Stourton Caundle	St Peter	Blackmore Vale	£480.00
Kington Magna	All Saints	Blackmore Vale	£465.00
Cerne Abbas	St Mary	Dorchester	£460.00
Winterborne Kingston	St Nicholas	Milton & Blandford	£455.00
Farnham	St Laurence	Milton & Blandford	£450.00
Iwerne Minster	St Mary	Milton & Blandford	£440.00
Lydlinch	St Thomas Beckett	Blackmore Vale	£430.00
Broadoak	St Paul	Lyme Bay	£430.00
Purse Caundle	St Peter	Blackmore Vale	£420.00
Langton Long	All Saints	Milton & Blandford	£405.00

Parish	Church	Deanery Area	Ride+Stride Total
Wyke Regis	St Edmund	Weymouth	£400.00
Uploders	Methodist Chapel	Lyme Bay	£387.00
Corscombe	St Mary	Sherborne	£385.00
Poole URC	Skinner Street	Poole & North Bournemouth	£380.00
Charlton Marshall	St Mary the Virgin	Milton & Blandford	£370.00
Affpuddle	St Laurence	Purbeck	£370.00
Melbury Abbas	St Thomas	Blackmore Vale	£365.00
Sydling St Nicholas	St Nicholas	Dorchester	£360.00
Colehill	St Michael and All Angels	Wimborne	£340.00
Wimborne St Giles	St Giles	Wimborne	£340.00
Chalbury	All Saints	Wimborne	£336.00
Gillingham	St Mary the Virgin	Blackmore Vale	£335.00
Marnhull RC	Our Lady	Blackmore Vale	£330.00
Mappowder	St Peter and St Paul	Blackmore Vale	£323.00
Dorchester	St Mary the Virgin	Dorchester	£320.00
West Knighton	St Peter	Dorchester	£310.00
Marnhull	St Gregory	Blackmore Vale	£300.00
Yetminster	St Andrew	Sherborne	£300.00
Longburton	St James	Sherborne	£295.00
Dorchester UC		Dorchester	£291.00
Cattistock	St Peter and St Paul	Sherborne	£290.50
Poyntington	All Saints	Sherborne	£285.00
Shaftesbury	St Peter	Blackmore Vale	£275.00
Swyre	Holy Trinity	Lyme Bay	£270.00
Bothenhampton	Holy Trinity	Lyme Bay	£270.00
Parkstone	St Peter	Poole & North Bournemouth	£265.00
Hinton St Mary	St Peter	Blackmore Vale	£260.00
Buckhorn Weston	St John the Baptist	Blackmore Vale	£260.00
Askerswell	St Michael	Lyme Bay	£250.00
Batcombe	St Mary Magdalene	Sherborne	£250.00
Church Knowle	St Peter	Purbeck	£245.00
Beer Hackett	St Michael	Sherborne	£245.00
Shipton Gorge	St Martin	Lyme Bay	£230.00
Blandford Forum	St Peter and St Paul	Milton & Blandford	£230.00
Tarrant Monkton	All Saints	Milton & Blandford	£228.00
Ibberton	St Eustace	Blackmore Vale	£220.00
Worth Matravers	St Nicholas	Purbeck	£215.00
Shaftesbury	St James	Blackmore Vale	£210.00
Okeford Fitzpaine	St Andrew	Blackmore Vale	£202.05
Walditch	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£200.00



Parish	Church	Deanery Area	Ride+Stride Total
Kingston Lacy	St Stephen	Wimborne	£200.00
Chideock RC	Our Lady Queen of the Martyrs and St Ignatius	Lyme Bay	£196.00
Tollard Royal	St Peter ad Vincula	Milton & Blandford	£195.00
Winfrith Newburgh	St Christopher	Purbeck	£190.00
Enmore Green	St John the Evangelist	Blackmore Vale	£180.00
Tincleton	St John the Evangelist	Dorchester	£170.00
Milborne St Andrew	St Andrew	Dorchester	£165.00
Salway Ash	Holy Trinity	Lyme Bay	£160.00
Wimborne RC	St Catherine	Wimborne	£160.00
West Chelborough	St James	Sherborne	£157.50
Compton Valence	St Thomas Becket	Dorchester	£150.00
Shapwick	St Bartholomew	Wimborne	£150.00
West Stafford	St Andrew	Dorchester	£140.00
Bere Regis	St John the Baptist	Purbeck	£140.00
Compton Abbas	St Mary the Virgin	Blackmore Vale	£130.00
Mosterton	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£112.00
Catherston Leweston	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£110.00
Milton on Stour	St Simon and St Jude	Blackmore Vale	£100.00
Dorchester Baptist	Dorford Centre	Dorchester	£100.00
Lyme Regis	St Michael the Archangel	Lyme Bay	£100.00
East Lulworth	St Andrew	Purbeck	£100.00
Thornford	St Mary Magdalene	Sherborne	£100.00
Winterborne Whitechurch	St Mary	Milton & Blandford	£97.00
Blandford	Methodist	Milton & Blandford	£82.00
Margaret Marsh	St Margaret	Blackmore Vale	£80.00
Poole URC	Skinner Street	Poole & North Bournemouth	£65.00
Fleet	Holy Trinity	Weymouth	£60.00
South Perrott	St Mary	Lyme Bay	£50.00
Chilfrome	Holy Trinity	Sherborne	£50.00
Preston	St Andrew	Weymouth	£50.00
East Chelborough	St James	Sherborne	£40.00
Netherhay	Methodist	Lyme Bay	£25.00
Parkstone	St Clement	Poole & North Bournemouth	£20.00
Tarrant Keynston	All Saints	Milton & Blandford	£10.00

**Note:** A small number of churches did not send in their remittance form by 31st October 2023 and also made late payments of cheques. We regret that their result may not have been included here.

# Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present the accompanying accounts for 2023 which show that the Trust continues to thrive and to perform its primary function of providing grants to help preserve Dorset's historic churches.

The funds raised by Ride and Stride of £90,000 exceeded our expectations and represents a considerable achievement on the part of the parishes and individual Riders and Striders. A further £8,500 of Gift Aid from HMRC has been received after the year end, bringing the total raised to an impressive £98,500. It is worth noting though that if more sponsors were able to tick Gift Aid on their forms, that we could boost our fundraising by several more thousands of pounds. After expenses and the return of £39,000 in respect of participating parishes 50% share of fundraising, the Trust has benefited from a net contribution to its funds of £54,500 (£46,000 this year and Gift Aid in 2024 of £8,500).

Whilst Ride and Stride remains our principal source of income, our funds have been boosted this year by some generous donations and bequests. We are not however complacent that Ride and Stride will always be as successful as it has been in the past few years and the generosity of donors and those who remember us in their wills will always be a valuable contribution to our funds. We remain as always indebted to the financial support provided by the Friends.

£104,000 in grants were made during the year and there are further grants of £149,000 which have been approved and are awaiting payment.

As at 31 December, the value of investments in the CBF Investment Fund had risen 9% to £332,000. In 2022, £210,000 of investments were sold in accordance with the Trust's investment strategy whereby a tranche of assets from the CBF Investment Fund were to be reinvested in high interest deposits and funds deemed to represent a lower risk profile in the current economic climate. Subsequently, £84,000 has been reinvested during 2023 in the COIF Charities Global Equities Fund.

The costs of running the Trust have remained broadly the same.

Lastly, I must again acknowledge the invaluable assistance given by our bookkeeper Becka Brierly, not only in maintaining our financial records but also providing comprehensive data and analysis of the Ride+Stride results.

*Roger Blaber*

## Leaving a bequest in your Will

A gift in your Will can help us to continue the vital work of protecting Dorset churches for the future. A bequest is not liable to Inheritance Tax and is an efficient way for people to donate more to the Trust than their current circumstances permit. If you decide to leave a legacy to the Trust, you should seek professional legal advice. In the first instance, the Chairman or Hon Secretary will be pleased to take questions and offer guidance. Their contact details are on the back page of this report and also on the Trust's website. The Trust's Charity Number is 282790.

Thank you.

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Receipts</b>		
<b>Voluntary Income</b>		
Donations and Legacies	23,378	7,249
Friends, Individuals and Trusts	7,735	8,702
Parochial Church Councils	1,053	1,022
	<b>£32,166</b>	<b>£16,973</b>
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>		
Ride+Stride previous year	580	1,456
Ride+Stride current year	90,360	78,911
Gift Aid	8,096	8,891
Friends Events	2,025	1,475
Sale of notecards	199	23
	<b>£101,260</b>	<b>£90,756</b>
<b>Investment Income</b>	<b>£9,625</b>	<b>£10,494</b>
<b>Bank Interest</b>	<b>£5,475</b>	<b>£2,855</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>£148,526</b>	<b>£121,078</b>
<b>Payments</b>		
<b>Ride+Stride</b>		
50% return to churches	39,336	36,042
Honoraria	1,800	1,350
Brochures and Publicity	2,096	240
Printing and postage	518	1,750
Bookkeeping	1,200	1,000
Administration	-	500
	<b>£44,950</b>	<b>£40,882</b>
<b>Grants</b>	<b>£104,000</b>	<b>£103,000</b>
<b>Support Costs</b>		
Annual Report	3,465	2,690
Postage, stationery and travel	670	527
Marketing and Website	159	267
Insurance	450	450
Just Giving Fees	562	562
Bookkeeping	635	1502
Meetings	326	138
Bank Charges	377	420
	<b>£6,644</b>	<b>£6,556</b>
<b>Governance</b>		
Independent Examiner	1,607	1,457
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£157,201</b>	<b>£151,895</b>
<b>Net Movement in Cash Funds</b>	<b>(£8,675)</b>	<b>(£30,817)</b>
<b>Purchase and Sale of Investments</b>	<b>(£84,000)</b>	<b>£210,000</b>
<b>Overall Movement in Cash Funds</b>	<b>(£92,675)</b>	<b>£179,183</b>
<b>Cash Funds Last Year End</b>	<b>£303,891</b>	<b>£124,708</b>
<b>Cash Funds This Year End</b>	<b>£211,216</b>	<b>£303,891</b>



## Cash Funds on Deposit decreased by £93,000 in the Year – this analysis of receipts and payments explains why

	2023	2022
	£	£
<b>Net Receipts</b>		
Donations	32,000	17,000
Ride+Stride	46,000	39,000
Gift Aid	8,000	9,000
Events	2,000	2,000
Bank Interest	5,000	3,000
Investment Income	10,000	10,000
Sale of Investments	-	210,000
	<b>£103,000</b>	<b>£290,000</b>

### Payments

Support and Governance	8,000	8,000
Grants	104,000	103,000
Purchase of Investments	84,000	-
	<b>£196,000</b>	<b>£111,000</b>

### Assets and Liabilities

#### Cash Funds

Lloyds Bank	56,382	70,124
Nationwide	25,100	25,100
CBF Deposit Account	129,734	208,667
	<b>£211,216</b>	<b>£303,891</b>

#### Investments

CBF Investment Fund	332,373	303,791
COIF Charities Global Equities Fund	88,580	-
	<b>£420,953</b>	<b>£303,791</b>

<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>£632,169</b>	<b>£607,682</b>
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#### Grants Awarded

Not Yet Drawn Down	<b>-149,000</b>	<b>-146,000</b>
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<b>Total Assets Less Liabilities</b>	<b>£483,169</b>	<b>£461,682</b>
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## Obituary – Robert Sharpe

Born in August 1934 Robert Sharpe had a long career as a partner in one of the top firms of chartered accountants long before his involvement with DHCT. He was also associated for many years with the development of St Albans School where his financial and commercial knowledge was invaluable. It was slightly ironic that Robert brought to DHCT vast knowledge of global finance, but as a Deanery Area Representative (DAR) found himself dealing with church grant applications that seldom went beyond four figures!

He undertook the DAR role for a huge rural area that on his retirement necessitated two people replacing him. As a DAR he combined considerable efficiency with a great charm of manner. Whilst no churchwarden could get an outdated or incomplete set of church accounts past him when submitting a grant application he became a good friend to his many Parish Organisers. He believed in the personal touch, and went to great lengths to deliver DHCT material to Parish Organisers in person (often with his wife Gill accompanying him).

Although very ill he had made a point of giving a generous donation to the Abbey's Ride+Stride fund-raising which was so very characteristic of his generosity with his giving, his time, and his expertise. His funeral last year was in Sherborne Abbey – where he regularly worshipped with Gill – and was extremely well attended. DHCT were extremely fortunate to have had such a loyal and active supporter.

## Donations and Legacies

**We acknowledge with thanks a number of gifts made during the year, including:**

- Estate of the late Miss Bailey
- Estate of the late Mr Ian Lennox
- Mr D B Lynham
- Estate of the late Captain Nigel Thimbleby
- The Adrian Swire Charitable Trust
- The Church Tent at the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show

## Ride+Stride 2024 takes place on Saturday 14th September

To register as a participant or request a sponsorship form,  
contact your Ride+Stride parish organiser  
or visit [www.dhct.org.uk](http://www.dhct.org.uk) and follow the links to Ride+Stride

# Directory 2024 .....

**President:** HM Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset

**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  
Mrs S Bruce-Payne  
Dr T P P Connor  
Mrs P S Francis  
Sir Andrew Graham Bt. CB, CBE  
His Honour D E B Grant  
S D Norman  
The Reverend Canon A J W Rowland  
J A M A Selfe  
J T Smith  
T Sweet-Escott  
C Waite  
M W M Warren  
T J Wickson

**Hon. Secretary:** J A M A Selfe  
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Dorchester DT2 8DN  
T: 07791 980086 E: jeremyselfe@hotmail.com

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**Hon. Webmaster:** A Derrick  
E: webadmin@mg1.dhct.org.uk

**Grants Secretary:** Mrs S Bruce-Payne  
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**Hon. Secretary to the Friends of Dorset Churches:**  
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**Ride+Stride Administration:** Mrs A Butler  
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**Registered Office:** Suite 1, Mey House, Bridport Road,  
Poundbury DT1 3QY

**Bankers:** Lloyds Bank plc  
1-2 High Street West, Dorchester DT1 1UG

**Independent Examiners:** PKF Francis Clark, Chartered Accountants  
Towngate House, 2-8 Parkstone Road,  
Poole BH15 2PW

## Deanery Area Representatives:

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**Lyme Bay:** Vacant at the time of going to press.

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