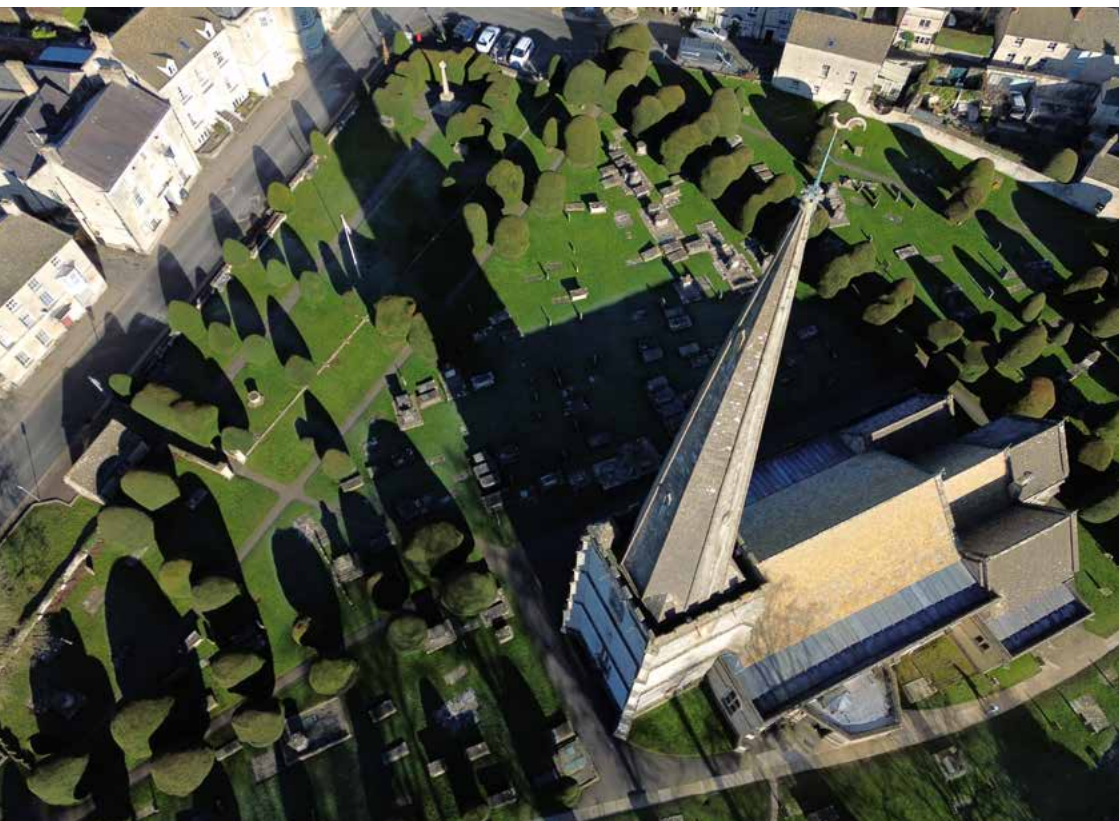


Gloucestershire
Historic Churches Trust



Helping historic churches – our living heritage

Annual Review 2023

www.ghct.org.uk



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Grant Applications

The Trust's Grants Committee
considers applications and awards
grants in June and December.

To apply for a grant, go to
www.ghct.org.uk/grants/apply
or email grants@ghct.org.uk

The Aims and Objectives of the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust

"The object of the Charity is to advance the Christian religion by the preservation, repair, maintenance, improvement, upkeep, beautification and reconstruction of churches in Gloucestershire..."
(From the Trust's Constitution)

In practice the Trust aims to achieve this object through:

- ⊕ Making funds available to help places of Christian worship of all denominations in the Ceremonial County of Gloucestershire (which includes North Bristol) with repairs and improvements
- ⊕ Assisting those responsible for the care of places used for public worship which belong to a Christian religious body

We therefore aim to:

- ⊕ Maintain a large support base whose financial support will enable the Trust to carry out its work
- ⊕ Foster an informed appreciation of the history, architecture and beauty of our churches and chapels
- ⊕ Raise substantial funds through events, including the annual Ride+Stride event
- ⊕ Cooperate with other grant-making bodies which have matching objectives

We thank our supporters for helping to make all this possible. Indeed, there has never been a more important time to give to the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust. Please continue to help us help churches!

Chair's Report

Welcome ... and a farewell

During 2023 we welcomed several new members to our Council, usefully expanding our skill base. Alick Campbell, Ian Serjeant and Arthur Snell have already made significant contributions to the charity. Jim Drennan, who for many years was our key GHCT Trustee in the diocese of Bristol, has decided to stand down for health reasons. This is our opportunity to thank Jim for all he has done for GHCT.



Jim was behind our latest event, in September 2023 – the first since Covid. A large audience came to Cheltenham to hear Dr Mark Baldwin, a leading expert on the German Enigma machine. We are planning a further event on 19th September, a talk by Nicola Coldstream, author of a new book 'Churches of Gloucestershire'. Please save the date.

Your support has enabled grants to 31 churches...

During 2023 our Grants Committee approved 31 applications from churches and chapels within our region. The overall level of grants would have been higher, but several significant applications were withdrawn before coming to the Grants Committee. We expect to reconsider these soon.

Our collaboration with the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust will continue into its third year with a further generous commitment of £50,000 to be made directly to churches. Thank you, Julia and Hans.

The Ride+Stride event in September was very successful, so far raising over £50,000. In 2023 we started a project with a mapping expert to create interesting walking and cycling routes. Please let us know of any good routes that are worth sharing.

Work behind the scenes

We've recently put our accounting and paper records onto digital systems, and are grateful to David Kingsmill and Simon Ray for their management of this project.

GHCT is run entirely by volunteers. This means that virtually all of the funds we raise go to our churches; but it also means that we constantly need new volunteers to help us with our work. It doesn't require a huge amount of time, so if you would be interested in taking on a role within our friendly team, please email us on administration@ghct.org.uk.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to all our donors, volunteers, Council Members and Trustees for everything that they do to support our work with churches in Gloucestershire and North Bristol.

Colin Senior
Chair of Trustees



Statement of Financial Activities

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Income Funds £	Capital Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Income				
Donations, Legacies and Charitable Activities				
Subscriptions & Donations	31,925	–	31,925	32,476
Legacies	–	–	–	–
Grant from Diocesan Funds: Stratton Davis Bequest	10,000	–	10,000	10,000
Ride & Stride event – gross income	35,987	–	35,987	23,401
Investments	82,553	–	82,553	79,546
Total Income	160,465		160,465	£145,423
Expenditure				
Costs & Raising Funds				
Ride & Stride grants paid to churches	£14,450	–	14,450	11,365
Other fund raising costs	7,956		7,956	4,506
Grants payable to Churches	118,000	–	118,000	146,450
Other support costs	7,363	–	7,363	8,738
Total Expenditure	147,769	–	147,769	171,059
Total Income less Expenditure	£12,696	–	12,696	(25,636)
Gains/(Losses) on Revaluation Of Investments (Unrealised)	–	36,939	£36,939	(155,724)
Net Movement in Funds for Year	12,696	£36,939	49,635	(181,360)
Total Funds brought forward	(16,782)	1,834,907	1,818,125	1,999,485
Transfer	–	–	–	–
Total Funds Carried Forward	(4,086)	1,871,846	1,867,760	1,818,125

Thank you, Bledington!

In order to keep making our grants, we need your help. We'd love to make bigger grants, and more of them, but can't do that without more donations, from individuals and from churches.

The church council at St. Leonards, Bledington, near Stow on the Wold, has now made twenty-five consecutive annual donations, which is quite a milestone. Perhaps other churches can equal or beat that record? Do tell us, if so.

If your church is not currently supporting the Trust, please consider setting up a standing order. Remember, we are a volunteer-driven trust, with minimal overheads. Your donation will directly help churches like yours.

To set up a new standing order, you will need our account details:

Account name: Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust

Sort code: 30 92 06

Account number: 00543967

Lloyds Bank

▼ A photo of St Leonards, which is a fine church, largely of the late fifteenth century



Your donations in action ...

Each year we focus on a few of the projects we have supported. This year's selection takes us from a busy church in the heart of North Bristol to a very small Cotswold village. Here are four very different stories ...

Reroofing all over again

Re-roofing is a tough nut for any church. It means a lot of hard fund-raising, not for anything new or exciting ... but simply to keep the building watertight.

At St Mary's, Painswick the work was especially unwelcome, as the roof that was coming off was barely halfway through its intended life. What had gone wrong?

Back in the 1970s, it was decided to reroof most of the church in artificial Cotswold slates. Not, let it be said, to save money, but because the architect at the time believed that these slates would perform better than natural stone slates, on the rather shallow slope of the nave roof. Alas, they didn't perform at all well, and the parish was faced with the massive task of reroofing all over again, a job which was completed in 2023.



To make matters harder for the parish, there could be no salvage rate. Normally a fair proportion of natural stone slates can be re-used. These failing concrete slates were valueless.

◀ The new roof nearing completion (see also front cover, which shows the finished work)



▲ Roofer, Lewis Dowdeswell, with his colleague, Kenzie Stephens, stripping the north nave slope

Curiously, in the 1990s, there was much debate over the rights and wrongs of using artificial stone slates on Cotswold churches, but the main issue in those days was the bland and uniform appearance, compared with quarried natural stone slates. Almost no one questioned the life expectancy of the artificial product... which for Painswick, has proved a very costly disappointment.

We were happy to make a grant of £10,000 towards this major project.

An exemplary reordering in Bristol

St Saviour & St Mary, Cotham, Bristol, started life in 1843 as Highbury Congregational Chapel, and was the first commission for its architect, William Butterfield, though much altered and enlarged later. It became an Anglican parish church in 1975.

We were pleased to help with a grant of £10000 towards extensive reordering, and this has been completed to a high standard. The aims of the project covered familiar ground: better welcome and accessibility, better loos, new kitchen, improved visibility and flexibility for the worship space, an area for small quiet gatherings, improved lighting and storage. Many urban churches are having to go through a similar process, as they seek better ways of serving their local community.

What ensured success here was careful planning. A small but highly motivated group met monthly, managing to avoid what was described by the planning group as “scope creep”. Their advice for other projects: “stay focussed on your needs and outcomes and don’t be seduced by all the nice things you could do”. Or to put it bluntly: “Sorry, No Extras”. Easy to say, harder to achieve!



▲ *St Saviour & St Mary, Cotham*



▲ *The chancel floor
... uncovered once more*



▲ *The reordered west end*

Poor quality 1970s partitioning was removed, and good features such as the tiled floor in the chancel were revealed afresh. The scheme also addressed changes in parish life brought about by Covid.

This is a church which is truly rooted in its local community. Its values are thoroughly inclusive, and offer a tradition of creativity, with a contemplative background. The church and halls are used by a wide range of groups, not least the monthly and very eclectic live music performances hosted by the Cotham Club, one of which is seen here.



▲ *Music at Cotham*

A Tale of Three Towers

The poster for the dedication was worded cautiously: the occasion would be “perhaps unique”. You bet it was unique!

Three neighbouring parish churches, Hartpury, Corse and Staunton had each completed rehanging their bells, and all three rings were to be rededicated on the same day, 8th November, 2023.

This was the remarkable culmination of a plan worked out between the three parishes. The project team was led by the indefatigable but self-effacing Jim Chapman, who has delivered numerous innovative projects over the years at St Mary's, Hartpury.



The work at all three churches was carried out by Taylors of Loughborough. It was a fairly straightforward overhaul of bells at Corse, but a much more complex rehanging at Staunton, where the bells had been virtually unringable for fifty years. At Hartpury an even bigger project, with the ringing floor relocated, a new training area established, and three brand new bells. Both at Hartpury and at Staunton there are now ‘training bells’, where beginners can master the art of bell handling, without disturbing the neighbours.

It was a great idea to rededicate all three sets of bells in sequence. Bishop Rachel led three quite short services: in each case the bells were rung for a celebratory five-minute ‘touch’, and then on to the next church. Each service contained different readings, reflections and music, including hymns inspired by ringing. Lunch followed in Hartpury's Old Chapel, next to St Mary's, after which the bells in each church were in turn put thoroughly through their paces. It was indeed a unique celebration: no “perhaps” about it.

As a Trust, we were delighted to make grants totalling £21000 towards this splendid trio of tower projects.

▼ *Ringers, wardens, bishop and parish priest pose for the camera at Corse*



Little Barrington: a copybook conservation project

Many Gloucestershire churches possess a collection of table tombs, which for the well-to-do were a popular form of memorial from about 1650 to about 1830.

Such tombs are often attractive and interesting, but they are also expensive to maintain and can become dangerously unstable. There are grants for repair of good quality churchyard memorials, but there are always competing projects, and tombs are not very high up the list of priorities for most churches.

At Little Barrington, an excellent repair project has recently been completed, and GHCT was glad to support this. The work was done by Graham O'Hare of Stroud who has a wealth of experience of this work. The other key person was Jackie King, the project secretary, whose grant applications were exemplary. She has proved that where there's a will (and some good organisation) there is usually a way.

Rather amazingly, the project featured at a building conservation conference in New Zealand! Adam Klups, secretary of Gloucester Diocesan Advisory Committee, and a member of our Council, submitted an authoritative write-up of the project, from which these pictures have been taken.



▲ *An unstable tomb is an obvious safety hazard*



▲ *A lifting gantry in use on a table tomb*

Stone conservator Graham O'Hare at work



Our Grants to Churches in 2023

Alveston St Helen	Repairs to organ £2,000
Ampney St Peter St Peter	Reroof N aisle and tower £5,000
Avonmouth St Andrew	Architect's scheme for mezzanine floor £2,000
Bishop's Cleeve St Michael & All Angels	Repair and restore stone floor £500
Cheltenham St Luke	Glazing repairs £5,000
Cam Quarry Chapel	Create accessible loo, kitchen etc £15,000
Cinderford St Stephen	Repairs to floor following water damage £2,000
Cranham St James the Great	Conservation of triptych £3000
Downend Christ Church	Structural repairs to bell tower £8,500
Fretherne St Mary	Repairs to tower masonry £10,000
Hardwicke St Nicholas	Repairs to bell headstocks £500
Kingswood (Bristol) Congregational	Urgent repairs to roof £1,000
Longney St Lawrence	Create area for educational use etc £7,000
Lydbrook Baptist	Renovation of former school room £4,000
Marshfield St Mary	Install new electric heating system £4,000

Minchinhampton Holy Trinity	Rebuild organ (top-up grant) £2,500
Nailsworth St George	Reorder chancel and create children's area £7,000
Norton St Mary	Restoration of bells and tower £6,000
Oxenhall St Anne	Masonry repairs to lychgate £1,000
Redbrook St Saviour	Repairs to porch, nave walls and W gable £4,000
Saintbury St Nicholas	Repairs to War Memorial and gable cross £4,000
Southmead St Stephen	Repairs to roof £1,500
Stanley Pontlarge St Michael	Renew N nave roof £8,000
Stanton St Michael & All Angels	Create vestry and servery in N transept £5,000
Staunton (Ledbury) St James	Restoration of ring of six bells £6,000
St Paul's, Bristol St Agnes	New sound system £2,000
Syde St Mary the Virgin	Reroofing N side of church £10,000
Tarlton St Osmund	Repairs to roof, masonry, bell etc £1,500
Tewkesbury Abbey St Mary	Fire prevention and safe access works to roofs £1,500
Tormarton St Mary Magdalene	Reordering (renewal of lapsed grant) £10,000
Twynning St Mary Magdalene	Conservation of clock £1,000
Willersey St Peter	Repairs to roofs, timbers and masonry £2,000

Ride+Stride 2023

What a difference a year can make! In 2022, Ride+Stride raised £30,508. This year the total will be in excess of £50,000. Ride+Stride is a significant fund raiser both for the Trust and for the churches and chapels that support the event. 50% of the money raised is returned to participating churches/chapels and the remainder added to the Trust's funds for supporting grant applications.

In 2023, 124 churches and chapels registered to take part with teams or individual riders and striders, organising special events, or pledging to be open for visitors. Thanks to local organisers we were able to post some interesting Gloucestershire and North Bristol cycling and walking routes on the website. There was an increasing number of special events combined with Ride+Stride: sponsored breakfasts, coffee mornings, cream teas, Heritage weekends, village festivals with guided tours for visitors, and exhibitions of local interest and craft work. These innovative fund raisers illustrate the diversity of things to do on Ride+Stride day in addition to visiting fascinating historic and more contemporary churches.

The £50000+ total raised by R+S 2023, which includes Gift Aid, also includes money received after the year end. St. Peter's, Southrop was the top fundraiser raising an amazing total of £2,680, followed by St. Gregory's, Cheltenham raising £2,202. £14,618 was returned to participating churches and chapels. Generally, participants increased their individual totals and this has produced the excellent result for 2023.

GHCT is extremely grateful to all who took part in 2023 and we look forward to a successful event in 2024.



▲ You don't have to cycle or walk! Period costume welcomers at Christ Church URC, Nailsworth



▲ The team at Westbury on Trym



Ride+Stride will take place on Saturday 14th September 2024.

Remember that 50% of the funds raised are returned to participating churches or chapels and creating a JustGiving page is a convenient way to collect sponsorship/donations.

To take part, set up a JustGiving page and all the documents you will need are available at www.ghct.org.uk/ride-and-stride

▼ Fen Marshall from Tortworth visits St Michael's, Hill





Our historic churches need YOU!
Here are three ways you can help ...

Temple Guiting, St Mary. Royal Arms of 1742

1 Your donation will make a real difference: either a one-off gift, or a regular amount. Just Giving is a simple way to give, and if you can Gift Aid too, your gift will be worth 25% more. Or if you prefer, you can set up donations direct to our bank account. You can find the details at www.ghct.org.uk/donate

2 Or you could make a legacy to GHCT

The Trust is enormously grateful to those who have left the legacies that ensure that we can carry on supporting our churches in the future. If you'd like to know more about this way of giving, please turn to page 23.

3 Or could you be part of the GHCT team?

We have no employees, and rely almost entirely on the time and expertise of our volunteers. Will you help us to conserve our historic churches and chapels for future generations to enjoy?

Volunteering doesn't have to take up that much time. Here are a few areas where we can use your help:

- ⊕ **Events:** We put on occasional events, and need help with planning, promotion and organising.
- ⊕ **Ride+Stride:** We need help with promoting and organising our annual fundraising event. (And you don't have to be a cyclist or a walker to help with Ride+Stride!)
- ⊕ **Communications:** Do you enjoy putting a few words together? Help us promote our work on social media, through our newsletters and on our website.
- ⊕ **Website Monitoring:** Do you work with websites? Could you help us to sharpen up our message?

These are just a few ways in which you could help if you have a passion for our churches. Please get in touch as we are sure we can put your enthusiasm and experience to work. Email us on administration@ghct.org.uk

All the work of the Trust is voluntary, but we pay necessary expenses and mileage to any volunteers who claim them.

www.ghct.org.uk/support/volunteer

St Alban, Stroud



Please remember GHCT in your will

After providing for those you love, leaving a gift in your will is a wonderful way to make a lasting difference to a cause you care about. A legacy to GHCT will help secure the future of historic churches and chapels in Gloucestershire and North Bristol, for the inspiration and enjoyment of future generations.

Over the years our churches have benefitted greatly from generous supporters who have remembered the Trust in their wills. These legacies have been credited to our endowment fund and, as that grows, they ensure that GHCT will have the resources to continue helping our churches long into the future.

When you are making your own will, please consider a bequest to GHCT and, through us, to the 630 churches that we serve.

Leaving GHCT a legacy could be easier than you think!

You can easily amend your will by using the sample Codicil wording on our website at www.ghct.org.uk/support/legacies

Or you may like to know about the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) Legacy Service.

CAF offers a flexible way to leave one gift in your will to benefit as many charities as you like. And you can revise your choice of charities at any time. CAF also offer advisors who can help you select charitable causes that are important to you, such as GHCT.

▼ *Detail of C12 lead font, Sandhurst*





A prayer for the work of the Trust

Heavenly Father, we thank you for all the churches
we serve where your word is proclaimed week by week.

We pray for all the people who look after them and
who use them to extend the work of your kingdom.

We thank you too for the generosity of all those
who have given money and effort to build up the funds
now set apart for the work of the Trust.

Grant us your wisdom in our decisions and your
special blessing on the congregations in those places
where our grants are being sought.

Amen.



We are grateful to all who have supplied photographs for the Annual Review.
A full list of photo credits appears on our website at www.ghct.org.uk

The Editor of the Annual Review is Jonathan MacKechnie Jarvis

Design Sugar Ink Creative
Print YZ DESIGNS



Gloucestershire
Historic Churches Trust



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