

Dorcas Charitable Trust – Annual Report & Statements

Strategic Director:	Kirsty Larkins, Director, Service Delivery	
Service Manager:	Tim Cook, Locality Team Manager	
Lead Officer:	Tim Cook, Locality Team Manager Emily Wilce, Finance Specialist	
Contact Details:	tim.cook@southsomerset.gov.uk emily.wilce@southsomerset.gov.uk	or

Purpose of the Report

To update members of the Area South Committee who collectively act as trustees for the Dorcas House Trust and to approve the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts.

Public Interest

Dorcas House Trust (otherwise known as Portreeves or Corporation Almshouses) is a registered Charity, No. 235337 and is regulated under Charity Commission Schemes dated 3rd September 1973 and 1st February 1978. The Area South Committee acts as Trustees of the trust.

Recommendations

- (1) To approve the Annual Accounts for the Dorcas House Trust
- (2) To note the update in the annual report

Background

Dorcas House Trust (otherwise known as Portreeves or Corporation Almshouses) is a registered Charity, No. 235337 and is regulated under Charity Commission Schemes dated 3rd September 1973 and 1st February 1978.

As a local authority SSDC is required to demonstrate compliance with the underlying principles of good governance and that a framework exists to demonstrate this. One of the principles is accountability and by preparing and publishing the annual Statement of Accounts the Council achieves this objective.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 came into force on 31 March 2011. The Dorcas House Statement of Accounts needs to be evidenced by the Chair of Area Committee South signing and dating the balance sheet and the annual report.

Dorcas House was located in Preston Grove, Yeovil. The land on which it sat was conveyed to the Borough of Yeovil by means of a Deed of Gift on 30th May 1910 as a



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site for an Almshouse. The trusteeship is vested in South Somerset District Council and delegated to the Area South Committee.

The Council was under obligation to erect an Almshouse. Once built, Dorcas House was only to be used for poor women inhabitants of the Parish of Yeovil. In more recent years SSDC applied to the Charities Commission to have the covenants changed to allow women and their children to reside in the property.

Concerns regarding the ongoing cost of maintaining and managing the building in future years, together with the unsuitability and inflexibility of the accommodation prompted the trustees to consider alternative options to meet the objectives of the trust.

Following advice from the Charities Commission that the Trustees were permitted to sell and re-provide without the need for formal permission, the property was sold in October 2013 producing a net capital receipt of £371,572 and in addition investments were realised for a sum of £52,032. Together with the cash balance there is now a capital fund of £452,937 for replacement properties.

Current Situation

The intention has always been to seek replacement properties for the charitable foundation as opportunities arise within the settlement of Yeovil –as part of the obligated affordable housing on a qualifying site or as an adjunct to traditional housing association homes on an infill site. Unfortunately none of the proposed schemes explored to date has come to fruition. Once alternative provision has been completed, the original terms of the Dorcas House trust will continue to apply to the new accommodation.

Governance

The governance arrangements will be reviewed and changes will be needed in light of Local Government Review.

Financial Implications

Dorcas House draft statement of accounts details the financial position of the charity as at 31st March 2022 and is submitted at Appendix A for approval by Area South Committee at this June 2022 meeting. Grant Thornton, the District Auditors, will not review separately the annual Statement of Accounts and supporting working papers as the turnover is below £25k.

Council Plan Implications

Include links to Council Plan 2020 – 2024 – which can be found on the staff portal at this link: [Council Plan | South Somerset District Council](#)

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications



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Re-investment of the proceeds of sale will be used for property that will be built to modern standards, which will be more energy efficient.

Equality and Diversity Implications

<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	Yes
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	No
<i>If an EIA was not required please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>If an EIA was required please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
Additional Comments	
The nature of the Charitable Trust dictates the client group whose needs are met by this provision. The purpose of the report is to agree the annual report and accounts to comply with Charity Commission rules. No changes which could negatively impact on those with protected characteristics are being proposed.	

Background Papers

None
