

The Corporation of Winchelsea

Registered Charity No. 1192506



ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2022**

THE CORPORATION OF WINCHELSEA

Registered Charity Number 1192506

Annual Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

Introduction

1. The Corporation of Winchelsea was saved under s.14 of the 1883 Municipal Corporations Act and subsequent amendment to that Act under various Charity Acts. It was entered on the Charity Commission's Register of Charities on 24 November 2020.
2. Its objects are:
 - a. To preserve the historic traditions associated with the role of Winchelsea as an Ancient Town of the Cinque Ports Confederation.
 - b. To promote the preservation and maintenance of the historic Court Hall and town gates of Winchelsea and any other land and properties therein, in its charge.
 - c. To hold the Court Hall and the three town gates (New, Ferry and Strand) as designated land for the purposes of the Charity.
 - d. To oversee the state of the Court Hall and three town gates ensuring they are preserved for the public benefit, working with other agencies to maintain their appearance.
 - e. To maintain and manage a museum for the public benefit providing a record of the Town of Winchelsea and its people.

Governance

3. Its governance document is a Scheme approved by the Charity Commission. Led by a Mayor who fulfils its ceremonial functions, its governing council comprises of up to 12 additional Trustees. It meets 6 times per year and is supported by sub-committees dealing with the Museum, fabric and strategic matters. It has 3 officers, namely a Town Clerk, a Chamberlain and a Sergeant-at-Mace. Periods of office for all those covered by this paragraph span one year and are renewable.
4. The following formed the Executive Board of the Corporation in 2022, acting also as Trustees of the Charity and having the ancient title of Jurat:

David Merrifield (Mayor and Chairman from 18th April 2022)

Anthony Moore

Michael Melvin

John Rodley

David Page (Mayor until 18th April 2022)

Robert Holland

Carol Scoines

Berenice Scott

Peter Cosstick

Stephen King

Rosemarie Roberts

John Clarke (from 18th April 2022)

Principal address: The Court Hall, High Street, Winchelsea, East Sussex, TN36 4EA

Website: www.winchelsea.com

Meeting the Public Benefit

5. With the final lifting of Covid restrictions during the first quarter of 2022, it is encouraging to report increased usage of the Court Hall including the resumption of the Summer Art Exhibition and an increase in footfall through the Post Office and Museum. During 2022 the Court Hall was used on approximately 150 occasions compared to 110 last year. The main user was the Post Office which largely opened twice each week providing a valuable service to Residents. Over the same period, annual visitors to the Museum increased to 1,462 being the greatest number on record. In the previous year attendance was badly affected by periods of lockdown, which resulted in there being just 585 visitors to the Museum. Over the closed period further enhancements were made to the displays and a new glass and oak frame was made for the large table. A generous bequest from the late Freeman and former Mayor Lt. Col. Henry Dormer financed the project which provides a further valuable display area. We have attached a brass plaque in acknowledgement. Considerable work was done in organising the new free publication “Discover Winchelsea” which has been financed by the Corporation and through advertising by local businesses. Although it is early days, the indications are that this has boosted visitor numbers to the Town, attractions, events and local business.
6. With regards to care of properties in the charge of the Corporation our Long-Term Agreement with Zurich Insurance was confirmed which provides cover up to 2026. For 2022 a reduced premium was negotiated whilst still providing the same level of cover. Removal of vegetation growing on the three Town Gates was undertaken by Hawk Abseiling.
7. Mayoral activities, both within the Town and with the wider Cinque Ports Community, have returned to pre pandemic levels and between the Mayoring on 18th April and the year end the Mayor attended 75 events. For the first time the Mayoring Ceremony was conducted in two locations. The Mayor was sworn in, in the Court Hall as tradition demands, and the rest of the ceremony took place in St. Thomas’ Church. The much larger seating capacity of the Church allowed an open invitation to be made to all. In celebration of her late Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee in June, a weekend of events was arranged and led by the Corporation. This began with the lighting of the Winchelsea beacon and concluded with the Jubilee Picnic. Following the sad death of her Majesty, the Mayor, on 11th September, read the proclamation of the Accession of King Charles III to assembled residents of the Town. Further tragic news ensued on 6th November with the announcement of the death of The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. To represent the Town, the Mayor and Mayoress attended the funeral. St. Thomas’ School created a Christmas window in the Court Hall, for public viewing throughout December. The Corporation instigated a new award recognising local service to the community. Certificates, this year, were presented to the New Inn and The Little Shop.
8. In addition to its expenditure on normal running costs and statutory inspections, the major projects undertaken or commenced this year on Corporation property were:
 - a. Vegetation removal from the three gates
 - b. Installation of new heaters in the Court Hall

Finance

9. This year income streams have recovered well with a substantial improvement in “Events and Projects” and “Museum sales” being recorded. This has resulted in a net surplus of £3,180 for the year compared to a deficit of £4,695 in 2021. For next year a surplus is again expected.

10. The Accounts attached to this report show the existing investments and reserves. The Corporation is grateful for the support of the Friends of the Ancient Monuments and Museum and the Millennium Artefacts Committee and to many members of the community for their support this year. Although the Corporation has no fixed income stream or revenue raising powers, the collection of the King’s Dues in the form of donations has provided a useful sum of £563 this year compared to £606 in 2021, to include Gift Aid. Corporation reserves are vested in a Bond designed to cover one year of expenditure, plus that required to meet arising capital projects when necessary. A reserve fund also exists to cover unexpected commitments to the Museum.

Looking Ahead

11. The Corporation’s priorities for 2023 will be to:

- a. Continue to promote Winchelsea to attract visitors, support business and enhance visitor experience to the Museum by widening opening times and installing additional information boards.
- b. Carry on with investigation of issues relating to property ownership, including Registration of the Court Hall and possible sale of the land owned by the Corporation at Becket and Greyfriars.
- c. Pursue restoration of the Court Hall door and stone surround.
- d. Arrange re-pointing of the West wall of the Court Hall.
- e. Deal with the guttering along the North wall of the Court Hall.

12. In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge and thank all those who have assisted the Corporation during the year. These include the Freeman and Jurats of the Corporation and extends to those who have helped in the Museum, those who look after the cleaning of the Court Hall and those who maintain the gardens. I would also wish to acknowledge the help of the local authorities with whom we deal, namely East Sussex County Council, Rother District Council and Icklesham Parish Council and our local Ward Councilors, for their support. Their help and support are much appreciated.

David Merrifield

Mayor

For and on behalf of the Corporation of Winchelsea

Statement of Independent Inspection of Accounts

For the Year Ended 31 December 2022

I was asked to undertake an independent review of the accounts for the Winchelsea Corporation for the year 1st January to 31st December 2022. I was given the excel spreadsheet, split down into five areas plus the year end accounts. It was agreed that all the supporting documentation, such as receipts and invoices, would be available if required.

I undertook a review of the numbers and checked all of the formulae and raised several points, emerging from my inspection, and discussed these with the Treasurer. I am happy with the answers and can confirm the accounts for the calendar year 2022.

Jeremy R Naylor

CORPORATION OF WINCHELSEA

Registered charity number 1192506

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 December 2022

	General fund	Museum fund	Ancient Monuments fund	Capital fund	Total funds	2021 Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts						
Grants received	2,667	600	0		3,267	3,579
Hire of Court Hall	520				520	185
Sale of Town Guides	400				400	600
Queen's dues and rents	563				563	606
Donations	2,610	1,566	0		4,176	4,163
Events and projects	3,784	1,037			4,820	1,823
Electricity recovery	30				30	86
Museum Sales		1,646			1,646	425
Museum Admissions		4,336			4,336	1829
Discover Winchelsea	600				600	
Interest received	753	0		0	753	1,215
Total receipts	11,926	9,185	0	0	21,111	14,511
Payments						
Repairs and maintenance	5,537	0	0		5,537	5,330
Utility costs	704	235			939	851
Events and project costs	835				835	4,801
Discover Winchelsea	1,173				1,173	
Insurance	1,271	1,270			2,541	3,539
Donations	1,593				1,593	
Fees and subscriptions	941	86	5		1,032	1,170
Staff and mayoral costs	1,400				1,400	1,300
Regalia Costs	525				525	
Exhibits		917			917	152
Gift shop purchases		1,229			1,229	0
Support costs		118			118	903
Alarm	0	92	0		92	372
Total payments	13,980	3,947	5	0	17,931	19,206
Net receipts/(payments)	-2,054	5,238	-5	0	3,180	-4,695
Funds at 1 January 2022	11,180	9,242	8,027	57,011	85,460	90,155
Transfers		0	-8,022	0		0

	General fund	Museum fund	Ancient Monuments fund	Capital fund	Total funds	2021 Total funds
Funds at 31 December 2022	9,126	14,480	0	57,011	88,640	85,460

CORPORATION OF WINCHELSEA

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Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 2022

			2022	2021
			£	£
Current assets				
Bank balances				
Current accounts			26,294	23,096
Deposit accounts - United Trust Bank			62,346	62,346
			88,640	85,442
Unrestricted Funds (note 2)				
General Fund			15,644	11,156
Museum Fund			10,650	9,242
Ancient Monuments Fund			0	8,033
Capital Fund			62,346	57,011
			88,640	85,442

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Basis of Preparation. The accounts are presented on a receipts and payments basis, as permitted by s.133 of the 2011 Charities Act. This is the second year in which the Corporation has operated as a charity registered with the Charity Commission. It has also been recognised as being eligible for Gift Aid by HMRC and has enrolled in that scheme. Gift Aid reclaimed for this year is £306.
2. Funds. All funds are unrestricted but have been designated by the Trustees for the purposes described. The Trustees may designate the funds for other purposes at their discretion.
3. Corporation Property. No value is included in the balance sheet in respect of property and land owned by, or in, the Corporation's charge, exhibits in the Museum and associated stock, or regalia owned by the Corporation.
4. The Ancient Monuments' Fund. This was established by public appeal in 1983 with the aim of providing additional income for the maintenance of the Court Hall and the three gates. That purpose continues but the monies held in the Ancient Monuments' Fund has now been amalgamated with the General Fund and there is now one account for Winchelsea Corporation.
5. The Capital Fund. This was established in 1994 following the sale of Corporation land in Winchelsea. Its purpose is to provide funds for the day to day running of the Corporation from the interest generated. As the Corporation cannot raise revenue, other than by voluntary donations, this capital sum also acts as the Corporation's reserve, with no restriction on use. It was invested in a 2 year Charity Bond in 2021

- 6. Projects, R&M.** Includes works undertaken on Museum, Town Well and Ferry Gate in accordance with the objects of the charity.

The Financial Statements were approved by the Trustees:
7th March 2023