

Windsor Hill Wood – Trustees Annual Report 2019-2020

Charity's name: Windsor Hill Wood

Registration number: 1174810

Address: Rock House, Windsor Hill Lane, Windsor Hill, Shepton Mallet, BA4 4JE.

Contact details: www.windsorhillwood.co.uk / contact@windsorhillwood.co.uk / 01749 347377

Trustee names and Principal offices:

Renny Gye (Chair)

Susan Crisfield (Secretary, appointed November 2020)

Pete Dennis (appointed September 2019)

Jane Hull

Anne Martin (appointed November 2020)

Virginia Membrey

George Fox (resigned March 2020)

Rebecca Sutton (resigned November 2020)

Treasurer: Richard Porter (appointed September 2019)

Independent Examiner: Nick May FCA

Bankers: Lloyds Bank Plc

About Windsor Hill Wood

Windsor Hill Wood is a family-based community, set in a woodland smallholding, offering Christian hospitality to many regardless of race, religion or absence of religion, gender or sexual orientation. It aims to create a supportive environment for people going through tough or uncertain times, offering them the chance to rediscover peace, silence and acceptance amidst the beauty and simplicity of the woods.

The community is small scale, generally hosting up to 4-5 long term guests at once. At times, residents are a mix of long term plus 1-2 short term guests. Chris Thompson, our Warden and his wife Katharine, who is Volunteer Assistant Warden live on site with their two sons. (In 2020 another Volunteer Assistant Warden joined the team). The Wardens take advice as appropriate from the Trustees and other professional advisers, as well as undertaking regular supervision. They meet the Chair of Trustees twice a year for a formal review.

Windsor Hill Wood is located in an old quarry, now with a surrounding of woodland. It comprises the old quarry house (Rock House) where the wardens and their family live, along with individual accommodation for guests in shepherds' huts. Rock House and Windsor Hill Wood grounds are rented by the charity from the owners on a 5-year lease.

The aim of the charity is to create an accepting environment for people going through tough or uncertain times, through a shared rhythm of life and development of community, focusing on hospitality, eating together, manual labour and reflection. All the tasks necessary for Windsor Hill Wood to function are shared by all who live there. These include cooking, cleaning, growing food, caring for the animals and managing the grounds.

The daily husbandry of animals, site management and gardening provide an important focus for Windsor Hill Wood and informal rehabilitation of guests. The livestock include a growing flock of sheep, which produced lambs in the spring, goats, chickens which provide eggs, and pigs reared for meat. A limited level of woodland management has taken place, with the key objectives being to provide a therapeutic environment, to ensure a supply of wood for the biomass boiler and to maintain biodiversity.

The site is also used by the Holly and Hawthorn Forest School. The Forest School runs weekly 'Parent and Toddler' sessions during term time plus sessions for older children during the school holidays. This enables younger members of the local community to learn together in an outside environment, with confidence and independence, whilst developing better physical and mental health.

The lockdown of 2020, as a result of the Covid19 pandemic, affected the running of WHW mainly in terms of the ability to accept short-term guests and volunteers. Long-term guests remained living on site and the rhythm of the day was able to continue. Steps were taken to ensure that the site was Covid compliant and trustees continued their regular meetings but online.

The Public Benefit of Windsor Hill Wood

Our Charitable Objectives:

Relief of those in need, hardship and distress

The preservation and promotion of mental and physical good health

Advancement of the Christian religion

Fulfilling our objectives in 2019-20

In a Trustee evaluation of Windsor Hill Wood (Autumn 2019) it was noted that WHW has helped guests move forward in their lives. The setting and rhythm of life and work is essentially considered safe and beneficial. This is evidenced both by statements from guests themselves and the positive impact is also recognised by local partner organisations.

- **Relief of those in need, hardship and distress**

Guest - "At Windsor Hill Wood, they always make it possible for you to stay, whatever background you come from and whether or not you can make a financial contribution. Your financial situation doesn't matter because the hardship fund is used for those who have no money."

- **The preservation and promotion of mental and physical good health**

Guest - "Windsor Hill Wood is the one place I feel safe"

Guest - "The practical aspect of the life here attracted me. I wanted to be in a small community. The extended family system used here works really well. We have our differences, but you learn to accept others and grow personally. I came here at the start of 2019 and I've been sober for seven and a half months now and preparing myself to get back to normal life."

Guest - "My mental health means I fairly regularly struggle, maybe every few months, and I hate mental health crisis services they just don't work for me at all. I thought in those times WHW would be a good place to go. I found the rhythm of the day very sustaining. Something about meaningful occupation that directly impacted the people around me, and quiet company that meant I could just get on and do things whatever was happening in my head"

- **Advancement of the Christian religion**

Windsor Hill Wood is open to all, regardless of religion or absence of religion. The Wardens and Trustees are Christians and so the daily and weekly rhythm of Windsor Hill Wood includes moments for reflection and silence as follows:

Feedback from partner: "The way of the world today is either to ignore or try to 'fix' problem people so we don't have to bother with them. WHW reminds and inspires us to care better, encourage more genuinely, share our lives more generously and to love truly. I've long maintained that the guests are there to teach us to be better Christians."

Daily rhythm

Each day we have a one minute check in at 9am in which each person expresses how they are feeling, using one word. A few sentences may be read from devotional material and then the working day begins. At 12.30pm people can choose to gather at the chapel for 15 minute midday prayer (mainly silence). Those who do not attend are asked to respect the silence and not use electronic devices during this time. Lunch and Supper are eaten together.

Weekly rhythm

The joint working days are Monday to Thursday, and on a Wednesday guests are joined by volunteers from the local area. There is an evening Community Meeting each week, just after the evening meal, and a well-being meeting every Thursday morning. Most weeks there is a group Art therapy session with a psychotherapist available to the guests.

A weekly Bible Study is also open to guests, who have shared in leading the study. Guests can also choose to accompany the Volunteer Warden's family to the local church in Shepton Mallet.

Assessment of what we achieved this year

Guest numbers

Windsor Hill Wood offers hospitality to both long term and short term guests. The long term stays are the focus of the work at Windsor Hill Wood, allowing appropriate time for guests to become part of the rhythm of life and community, to have time away from their challenging situations and to have time for a certain level of recovery. However having short term guests, if space allows, supports a healthy and fresh dynamic and can also provide significant times for those guests to reflect on their next steps.

2017-18	Number of guests	Average length of stay
Long term (> 1 month)	7	24 weeks
Short term (< 1 month)	18	1 week (7 nights)

2018-19	Number of guests	Average length of stay
Long term (> 1 month)	9	39 weeks
Short term (< 1 month)	24	1 week (7 nights)

2019-20	Number of guests	Average length of stay
Long term (> 1 month)	9	32 weeks
Short term (< 1 month)	17	1 week (7 nights)

We have also supported 5 guests to attend counselling sessions during their stay. There is has been provision at WHW, by an outside therapist, of a 12 week Art therapy for each cohort and one Trustee has been sharing her understanding of Non Violent Communication. WHW signposts and supports guests with benefits and other life admin e.g. referrals, housing, budgeting etc with the longer term aim of equipping guests for more independent living

Occupancy Rate

Windsor Hill Wood had an occupancy rate of 77% in 2017/18, 89% in 2018/19 and 75% in 2019/20. It is open to a maximum of five guests most nights of the year, with a short closure at Christmas and up to two weeks in the summer.

Wider Community Engagement

In a Trustees' evaluation during the year, including seeking 3rd party feedback, it was confirmed that all the activities which happen at Windsor Hill Wood for non-residents were valued by those attending – particularly those that visit regularly. The supported nature of activities help people to feel safe and engaged with the natural world (which has recognised physical and mental health benefits) whilst being part of a community. These benefits are recognised both by immediate participants and also by those partner organisations who are

referring others. The interaction between some of these activities and guests can help connection to the wider community

Volunteer engagement

Windsor Hill Wood welcomes volunteers, both regular and one-off volunteers. There is a regular Wednesday volunteer work party in the woods and grounds, attended by around 10 people each week. In all around 20 people volunteered on Wednesdays in 2019/20. On top of that there are opportunities for groups to come as volunteers for one-off or irregular visits. 5 Volunteers have also helped look after the site and the animals during annual closures.

Dates (by Quarter)	Volunteer numbers (individuals in period)
2018- 19	42
Total for FY 19/20	39
April -June 2019	20
July-Sep 2019	16
Oct-Dec 2019`	16
Jan – Mar 2020	18

Some volunteers have very significant challenges and vulnerabilities, often being referred by local NHS services and crisis charities. 2 volunteers have seen WHW as a viable alternative to being sectioned

An NHS service, “Mendip Mental Health Connections” who refer people to Wednesday volunteering, notes that:

“It is very welcoming and friendly and offers a safe and nurturing environment for people who are low in confidence or suffering from anxiety or low mood. It's important that the area has somewhere like this for people to engage in outdoor activities with a bit of support”

Learning

This last year has also seen Windsor Hill Wood offer formal learning opportunities for both guests and others from the local community, funded by Somerset Skills and Learning. The most visible form of this skills development was a course on how to build a Shepherd's Hut, which was completed during this year. The “Woods for Well-Being” course was run on both a Wednesday and a Saturday with a total of 51 learners attending. A small number of permaculture days were also run as courses by one of the guests.

Dates (by Quarter)	Learner numbers (SSAL contract)
Jan – Mar 2019	20
Total for FY 19/20	51
April -June 2019	27
July-Sep 2019	0
Oct – Dec 2020	9
Jan – Mar 2020	15

The funder of these courses, Somerset Skills and Learning, considers that: *“Windsor Hill provides an excellent safe and therapeutic environment for individuals to recover from trauma, addiction, mental health and other issues caused by the stress of everyday life. It offers individuals meaningful activities that connect them to the natural environment, building relationships and reducing loneliness. The staff are supportive, empathic but also maintain firm parameters that are required to deliver this type of project. Equality, diversity and respect are embedded into the delivery of this work. It offers a unique opportunity and service to the local area. No other organisation either statutory or third sector offers this provision. It helps rehabilitate individuals so they can progress and become participants in the local economy and wider society.”*

A Shepton Mallet Town Councillor said:

“Multiple Wednesday volunteers have said to me over the last few months that coming to WHW on a Wednesday is the high spot of their week and is something that they really look forward to.”

Engagement with the wider community by the charity and its guests

Part of the rehabilitation of the guests is through informal engagement with the wider community. Windsor Hill Wood has engagement in the local community as a charity, but also through individuals living and staying at Windsor Hill Wood being part of other local activities.

Local community organisation (2019-20)	How WHW and its guests have engaged	Scale
Fareshare	WHW benefits from receiving food	Weekly
St Peter and St Paul's Church, Shepton Mallet	The Wardens attend this church and a number of guests have also been part of this community whilst staying.	Weekly
Holly and Hawthorn Forest School	Run weekly and holiday forest school sessions	Weekly
Neighbouring business	Provides services and work experience	Weekly
Mendip Mental Health Connections	Refer clients who would benefit from going to WHW on volunteer Wednesdays.	Weekly
Elim Connect Centre	WHW offers accommodation to some people who have been supported by Elim Connect Centre	As needed
Crisis Ministries Bristol	Refers clients to WHW and occasionally takes groups down for visits / volunteering days	Occasionally
Somerset Skills & Learning	Provide funding to enable Windsor Hill Wood to provide learning	Monthly

	opportunities to their service users and the wider public	
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This table demonstrates significant relationships maintained over the year: Mendip Mental Health Connections, Elim Connect Centre, Crisis Ministries Centre and Somerset Skills and Learning.

When 6 partner organisations were asked to score their working relationship with Windsor Hill Wood on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is poor and 5 is very good, **the average score was 4.65/5.**

Next steps for guests

There is no formal requirement for Windsor Hill Wood to keep in contact with its guests once they move on. However, the Wardens continue to provide significant ongoing support to some former guests via phone calls, invitations to meals and other aspects of community life at WHW.

Over the year, around 35% of guests have moved on to their own housing and work, 15% left to live with their family, about 30% have left without firm plans of where they would be living and 20% had long-term housing without work.

A partner from the local Elim Connect Crisis Centre said that *“I believe that WHW continues to offer a place of sanctuary to its guests from which they move on largely more healthy, functional and able to contribute positively to society.”*

Role and activities of Trustees in 2019/20

We have continued to meet quarterly and ensure active governance. We assessed a range of topics during the year, ranging from approaches to challenging behaviour through to health and safety, addressed through either new or revised policies. We assessed progress of the Charity, in light of the proposal from the site owner for the charity to purchase it from them. The Trustees took the decision that the Charity should take steps to purchase the property.

The Ground Rules, Licence to Reside and Application Form have been updated to give greater clarity about which issues can be supported by WHW and which cannot, to help applicants decide whether WHW is the right place for them. We ensured further Continuing Professional Development for the Wardens. During this year we also started the journey to recruit a Deputy Warden.

Renny Gye

Chair of Trustees

January 2021



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Windsor Hill Wood

1174810

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date
01/04/2019

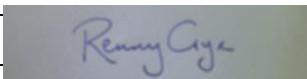
To

Period end date
31/03/2020

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	33,847	-	-	33,847	48,234
Residents Contributions	21,519	-	-	21,519	22,937
Feed-in Tariff	3,827	-	-	3,827	4,787
Other income	7,927	-	-	7,927	6,217
Interest	23	-	-	23	16
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	67,143	-	-	67,143	82,191
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	67,143	-	-	67,143	82,191
A3 Payments					
Rent & Council Tax	24,259	-	-	24,259	24,145
Utilities	2,334	-	-	2,334	2,045
Forestry, agriculture & animals	3,035	-	-	3,035	2,684
Volunteer Costs	12,177	-	-	12,177	9,856
Subsistence	6,554	-	-	6,554	5,928
Equipment and Supplies	3,477	-	-	3,477	1,348
Vehicles & Travel	6,148	-	-	6,148	2,208
Professional Fees	10,463	-	-	10,463	2,200
Repairs & Maintenance	4,990	-	-	4,990	768
IT expenses	781	-	-	781	558
Insurance	963	-	-	963	821
Training	790	-	-	790	250
Other expenses	183	-	-	183	1,054
Sub total	76,154	-	-	76,154	53,865
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	76,154	-	-	76,154	53,865
Net of receipts/(payments)	(9,011)	-	-	(9,011)	28,326
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	51,983	1,512	-	53,495	25,169
Cash funds this year end	42,972	1,512	-	44,484	53,495

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at Bank	42,960	1,512	-
	Petty Cash	12	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	42,972	1,512	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	Motor Vehicle	Unrestricted	3,795	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		Renny Gye	20/01/2021	



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Windsor Hill Wood

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2020

Charity no

1174810

Set out on pages

1 and 2 of Receipts and Payments Accounts (CC16a)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2020.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

20/1/2021

Name:

Nicholas May

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body:**

FCA

Address:

15 Collett Avenue, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5PL