

DEVON HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

NEWSLETTER

----- January 2024 -----
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Welcome to our New Year Newsletter. We send you all our most sincere good wishes for a healthy and peaceful New Year. We look forward to an exciting year for Devon Historic Churches Trust.

We thought you would like to hear about some of the projects that we have supported in 2023 using funds that you have helped to raise. The support of so many Parishes and individuals enables Devon Historic Churches Trust to continue to provide grants to help Devon's churches in their hour of need. In 2023 DHCT Trustees considered requests for grant funding from Parishes throughout Devon, from Barnstaple to Kingsbridge and Tavistock to Exmouth, from coast to coast in remote rural Parishes, villages and seaside. These projects covered a wide variety of repairs, maintenance and refurbishment of historic church buildings, not only for emergency fabric repairs but also projects driven by the vision of the church communities to widen the use of their church buildings, improve access and facilities, conserve timber, glazing and wall paintings, and create vibrant spaces for communities to enjoy, explore and appreciate. We helped some parishes with funding to facilitate a feasibility plan. Other projects are currently work in progress. We have been delighted to visit some of the projects completed in 2023 and learn how a grant from DHCT contributed to the project success and supported the community volunteers who demonstrate such commitment and generosity of their time, energy and skills in caring for amazing historic church buildings for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. Here are some of the 2023 completed projects, the first a National Award Winner!

National Churches Trust Award Winner! Providence Chapel Throwleigh

John Draisey, DHCT's Representative for the Free Churches, gave the Trustees the following report in August 2022, "This small Methodist (formerly Bible Christian) chapel was opened in 1839 and has been lovingly maintained by worshippers and local volunteers ever since. By August 2021 the roof (which had previously been 'turnerised') was beginning to let in rainwater; action was needed to prevent further damage to the fabric, and an application to the DHCT secured a grant of £1,000 for the necessary repairs. The local community had a wider vision for the chapel, however, and in the same year grants were received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and others to create a permanent exhibition of Chris Chapman's Dartmoor photographs. Open days and public talks were arranged and continue to attract large numbers of visitors, encouraged by the outstanding hospitality provided at the chapel."



Trustees were delighted to learn that Providence Chapel on Dartmoor was a winner in the Open Churches Tourism category. We watched the Livestream Award Ceremony held in Mercers Hall, London, where Margaret Allin, the Chapel's Senior Steward, received the Award on behalf of Providence Chapel community. NCT judges said, "We believe that churches, chapels and meeting house should be open to explore. They are remarkable sacred spaces, they are treasure houses of heritage, history and community. We want visitors to be surprised as they gaze open-mouthed at their surroundings, and inspired by engaging stories, themes and trails."

Other Devon Churches Shortlisted for NCT Awards 2023



Hatherleigh: St John the Baptist Church – one of three nominated churches for the NCT Friends Award. Built in the Early English and Perpendicular style, much of the building dates from late 15th century and early 16th century, but fabric from the medieval period survives together with earlier fittings and fixtures. The church was restored in 1884. DHCT supported Hatherleigh church with grant funding of £5,000 in 2022 towards roof and timber repairs.

Harberton: St Andrew's - A finalist for the Church Maintenance Award. The church dates from 1370. Getting a good maintenance plan, process and volunteer team in place has transformed the condition, use and community contribution of a much loved church in the middle of the village. Harberton church representatives said, "Our planned and purposeful approach to maintenance has done more than maintain the church, it has galvanised our small village community who, although not all churchgoers, love having this special piece of heritage in our midst. Together we have found so many ways to think of ways the church can add to the cohesion and support of our community; we have had so much fun raising funds which has brought our community together and set us up to provide support we never imagined might be needed." See Douglas Young's brilliant photos of this magnificent 15th century church at [Harberton Church of St Andrew Description | DevonChurchLand](#)

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One of the major church refurbishment projects supported by DHCT in recent years has nearly reached completion. DHCT awarded a grant some five years ago when the Grade 1 Listed church was re-roofed. The Modbury Team then moved ahead with a major refurbishment of the church interior.

Modbury Parish Church of St George Amazing Spaces Project - Modbury Team

The Grade 1 listed church was re-roofed some five years ago but the interior needed some TLC. The project aim is to create a warm and flexible space for the whole community, a versatile and accessible space serving the needs of the community and groups including a choral group, orchestra or scout group. The church has been closed throughout 2023 while work to future-proof the historic landmark building progressed. The reordering includes a new heating system, new electrics system and the restored interior. DHCT made two awards of £5,000 over 30 months. The first award was made in 2021 towards Phase 1 groundworks and the second in October 2023 towards materials and contractors for repair of walls & ceilings. Carpentry included a new glass front door and oak frame and renovation of the choir stalls. Emma Romney, IT Treasurer, told us that, "The PCC at St George's and the Amazing Spaces Project Team are absolutely thrilled that you have been able to support them with this significant grant and we are very grateful. The money will help make the whole project affordable and of course will enable us to preserve Modbury's beautiful historic church for future generations." The project has been a long time in the making and involved numerous consultees including the Diocese, architect, archaeologists, Historic England, the Victorian Society, SPAB. The original stone in the aisles has been retained exactly where it was as some of it is believed to be of historic significance and may have been laid there during the Norman period.



Of the four bids considered by the Trustees in January 2023, two related to external fabric repairs. Churches located on the coast are particularly vulnerable to stonework erosion caused by the weather and salt-spray. St Mary's, Croyde, on the North Devon coast required some stonework repointing and guttering replacement. £1,000 was awarded and paid in March on completion of the work.

St James the Less on the South coast at Teignmouth was awarded £3000 for urgent repairs to eroded masonry at the South East (sea facing) window of the Nave. The grant was paid on completion of the work by the stonemason. Later during the year, the Trustees awarded a further grant of £1,000 towards the cost of a survey and feasibility report on the poor condition of the octagonal roof Lantern. A major fundraising challenge lies ahead before repair work can be considered.



In April, Trustees approved £12,500 to 5 Main Grant bids for funding and approved 6 Emergency/Small Grants totalling £5,800. 4 of the Main Grant awards related to the repair of stone masonry, walls, roof and bell subframe. The project at Chivelstone generated considerable discussion and interest.

Chivelstone Parish Church of St Sylvester - Wall Paintings

The Churchwarden of St Sylvester's Church, told us that in January 2022 the PCC had completed a National Lottery funded programme of restoration and renovation. The project focused on water/weather proofing the church to safeguard and preserve its medieval heritage and allow it to be used by the whole community, in the forms of open days, community events, concerts, plays etc. During the renovation work wall paintings were discovered. However insufficient funds were available to reveal the full extent of the paintings. The PCC decided to apply for further grants to uncover these early 18th Century wall paintings. A report from McNeilage Conservation provided details of the work to be done and an estimate for the work in excess of £38,400.00 including VAT. The plan was to carry out the work to reveal three paintings on the north wall of the church as the first phase of the project. The second phase would be to reveal a further painting on the south wall. The Trustees approved a grant of £2,000 towards the £2,500 Phase 1 shortfall.



In July the Trustees approved £9,300 grant funding to 4 Main Grant bids.



Rattery Parish Church of St Michael

This Grade 1 Listed building, is one of 7 churches in the Dart and Avon Mission Community. The church has a fascinating history of people and events that have influenced its architecture and fabric. The Sgraffito interior plasterwork is particularly interesting. The church community has given considered thought to how the community might enjoy greater use of the historic building. The first project in 2023 was the conservation and repair of the West door to provide a useable access and emergency exit to facilitate concerts, exhibitions and festivals. DHCT awarded £2,300 towards the project undertaken by Daniel Stewart, a specialist consultant in the conservation of historic timber. The Churchwarden, said, "Today has been a very happy day for our church. As you will see from the attached photographs our lovely 1550 West Door has now returned fully restored. It looks magnificent. The restorer has exposed the original character of wood and has provided us with an insight into 16th century wood working. Thank you for helping this restoration project become a reality."

At their Meeting in October, the DHCT Trustees approved two small grant awards of £1,000 each to two church communities who needed to upgrade heating systems. **Clayhidon Church of St Andrew** is an attractive Grade 1 listed and isolated church in a rural parish on the northern escarpment of the Blackdown Hills. The parish is sparsely populated. It had an ancient 1960s electrical central heating system powered by 5 immersion heaters which even after 6 hours, merely warmed the void above the nave. Following consultation with the Archdeacon, the Diocesan heating advisor and Nigel Pratt, the DAC secretary, the PCC appointed an approved and experienced electrical contractor to upgrade the electrical system and install an under-pew heating system. After taking into account the generous donation of £2,000 from each of two church members, Gift Aid claims and reclaim VAT through the Listed Places of Worship: VAT Grant, the PCC had a shortfall of £3,000. The DHCT Trustees were pleased to approve £1,000 towards the shortfall to help the community reach their shortfall target.



CONGRATULATIONS! and THANK YOU!

New Year is traditionally a time to reflect on past achievements. This Newsletter is an opportunity to thank and acknowledge all those supporters who are inspirational in fund raising for DHCT. As at 3 January 2024 the Trust received a total sum of £33,568 (including Gift Aid) from the 98 parish church communities and individual donors who took part in the Devon Historic Churches Day in September 2023. From this amount we were able to return £11,549 directly to the parish churches where communities had taken part in active fund raising. In true 'Award' winning style, the top three fund raising achievers to date are:-

St Gregory's Harpford £1,412.68 - Well done Hendrik and Jo. That is an amazing amount of £££



Our indomitable DHCT Honorary Treasurer/ Trustee told us, *"On the hottest day of the year Jo and I cycled 30+ miles and got round about 30 churches and chapels in East Devon, with a bonus sighting of Hayes Barton, birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh. Thank you to all of those who have already contributed, no matter whether or not you succeeded in mentioning Harpford. As a friend of mine noted: everyone loves these churches whether they worship in them or not."* Hendrik was surprised at the amount of sponsorship money raised and in true Hon Treasurer mind set invited friends and supporter donors to use [Devon Historic Churches Trust - JustGiving](#) *"Donating is just a click away."* (The photo is of Hendrik setting off in an earlier 'Ride and Stride' year.)

Bigbury, Ringmore and Kingston PCC - £1,382

David Scott, DHCT's Woodleigh Deanery Representative, decided to 'Drive and Stride' on the hottest day of the year. He designed an attractive poster and planned well in advance to promote his sponsored challenge. He started at Aveton Gifford church at 1000 a.m., visited eight churches and two weddings in the Modbury Mission Community on 9 September 2023. Congratulations David on raising the second highest amount of funds.

CONGRATULATIONS to St Hiertha, Chittlehampton - £1,300



Chittlehampton Church is one of the nine churches in the South Molton Mission Community. This amazing amount of £1,300 was raised by sisters, Averil Stacey who is current Churchwarden and Carole Henderson-Begg a former Churchwarden. They walked **100 miles** around North Devon over 16 days, visiting 5 churches. Here is a photo of them on the Tarka Trail. Carole told me that the 50% returned to St Hiertha Church will be spent towards LED lighting in the church. Carole is already planning DHCD September 2024 fundraising! Thank you ladies, for an inspirational expedition.



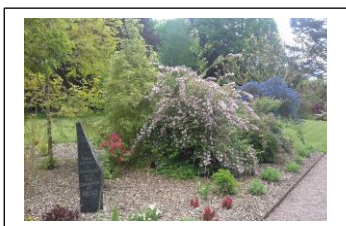
So, whether walking, cycling or driving, please do start planning your fundraising event for 2024. When you help us raise funds you will have the satisfaction of knowing that everything you give will be gratefully received and faithfully applied. Your contribution will help to ensure the survival of a significant part of Devon's heritage in a beautiful landscape.

FUTURE EVENTS 2024

Bishop's Palace Garden at Exeter

We have included in the DHCD total of £33,568 (above) the Bishop's Palace Open Garden event held on four Sundays in March and April last year. This was a new fundraising venture for DHCT, kindly hosted by Bishop Robert Atwell, organised by our Fundraising Secretary, Claire, with the support of Trustees and Deanery Representatives. We were thrilled at the number of people who attended and enjoyed the secluded and delightful gardens in the heart of Exeter city. Over the four Sundays the Trust raised £4,511 as well as some generous individual and JustGiving donations. We are so very pleased to report that DHCT has been granted permission by Acting Bishop of Exeter the Rt Rev'd Jackie Searle to allow us to run a similar event in 2024. Look out for adverts and posters on our website and the Diocesan Newsletter. The dates are:

Bishop's Palace Open Garden 2024. 17th March, 24th March, 14th April and 28th April. Admission 2 - 4.30 pm. Light refreshments available. Accessible gravelled paths. Limited blue badge parking requires prior arrangement.



FAREWELLS and RECRUITMENT

Lt Cdr Barry Tuke RN. We could not end this Newsletter without acknowledging the service and commitment of Trustees who retired from the Board during 2023. In 1996 Lt Cdr Barry Tuke RN is recorded as Chairman of DHCT's Area Committee for Honiton and District and has been one of our very-long serving Trustees. He has been a regular attendee at Trustees' Meetings and fundraising events as well as an Assessor of church projects in the Honiton Deanery. The Trust is grateful for his many years of service to the work of Devon Historic Churches Trust and wish him and Trish well in their retirement years.

RETIREMENT FROM OFFICE

John Mills CPFA was appointed as Honorary Secretary of DHCT in 2011. Although he remains as a Trustee, his failing health has led to his retirement from an Officer role with the Trust. John was welcomed to his first solo meeting as the Honorary Secretary to the Board of Trustees by Lady Anne Boles in 2010, on the retirement of John Malleson. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, John demonstrated his commitment to his new role and responsibility in the charity sector by gaining a Distinction in Charity Accounting and Finance. John was also able to advise Trustees on funding available to historic church projects from the Landfill Tax Credits Scheme, through his appointment to one of the two Steering Groups of local Environmental Bodies. He represented DHCT at National Churches Trust Conferences and Churches Trust Forums. In 2016 he revised the grant application form and was primary contact for grant applicants. He advised Trustees on their roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures. In 2015, John initiated and undertook the vast amount of work involved in the transfer of DHCT's charitable trust governance status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Charities Act 2011). This was a five-year long exercise involving research, consultation with Trustees, legal and financial advisors, Charity Commission approval, culminating in signature of the new Constitution by Trustees and then Charity Commission registration in 2020. The Trustees are indebted to John for his commitment, due diligence, professional skills, knowledge and integrity. We are so grateful to him and wish him well in his retirement from office.

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TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

Since the retirement of John Mills CPFA from the role of Honorary Secretary in 2023, and the loss of Judith Kauntz in 2022 as Vice Chair and County Fundraising Organiser, a huge work load has been placed on the shoulders of Lady Mary Burnell-Nugent as Chairman and Hendrik Vollers as Honorary Treasurer. In early 2023 Trustees, Charlie Hutchings and Lee Ann Martin, offered to act as Joint Acting Hon Secretaries until an Honorary Secretary/Trustee could be appointed. The Chairman and Officer Trustees are unanimous in their gratitude to Claire Sherlock, the Trust's Administrative and Fundraising Secretary, for providing continuity and stability in the day- to-day administration of the Trust not only for the annual fund raising event but also grant applications, meetings and banking, especially during the recent incredulous, time consuming and unacceptable behaviour of Barclays Bank. Claire continues her commitment to DHCT in this administrative role. At Meetings held during the past two years, Mary Burnell-Nugent has invited Trustees to introduce or recommend potential candidates for recruitment to the Board of Trustees. with a view to taking on the role and responsibilities as Honorary Secretary/Trustee. We now need to take a step forward toward recruitment of Trustees who will take an active role in the Trust's activities and strategic plans, particularly the development of a new website. The Trust Officers will be advertising vacancies in an early 2024 Diocesan Newsletter 'Roots and Shoots'. If you would like to introduce or recommend someone or discuss the Trustee vacancy in confidence, please contact the DHCT Chair, Lady Mary Burnell-Nugent, by email only with a brief c.v., at sheepham@btinternet.com

DEVON HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST - FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

DHCT is indebted to Friends and Supporters who are so generous with annual donations, regular monthly donations or supporting fund raising parishes seeking sponsors. At the beginning of a New Year, please consider renewing your annual, monthly, sponsor donation. The easiest way to do this is by using the JustGiving portal or QR Code. Use the 'Friends Application and Donation Form' on the DHCT website to add/update your name and contact details to our circulation list and receive regular Newsletters. OR, the DHCT Just Giving website is, as our Hon Treasurer says, just one click away! [Devon Historic Churches Trust - JustGiving](#) *I have just done it!! Happy New Year to you all.*

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From your DHCT Newsletter Editor: Lee Ann Martin, Trustee, Devon Historic Churches Trust
underhayes01@outlook.com Tel/text: 07552302293. Please do send me photos and quotes telling me about your successful projects, for inclusion in our next Newsletter.