

05673816 (ENGLAND & WALES)

CHARITY REGISTERED NUMBER: 1119592



**DIRECTORS' AND TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2022**

THE CHESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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THE CHESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Company Number: 05673816 (England & Wales)

Registered Charity Number: 1119592

Patron: The Viscount Ashbrook

Directors: E M Bennis (resigned 30th September 2021)
J M Uings
S Bartlett
G Darlington
M Blowey
D Cash
N Lightfoot
M Slack (from 2nd June 2021)

Secretary: J M Uings (resigned 30th September 2021)

Treasurer: M Slack (from 2nd June 2021)

Registered Office: 26 Sandford Road
Sale
Cheshire
M33 2PS

THE CHESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

DIRECTORS' AND TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2022

The Council of Management presents its report with the financial statements of the charity for the Year ended 31 January 2022.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The objects of the Trust are:

- 1 To promote the education of the public in fine arts, crafts, sciences and all other matters connected with designed landscapes; and
- 2 To promote the appropriate action for any or all of the following: the restoration, enhancement, preservation, conservation, protection and understanding of designed landscapes that may exist or have existed in and around the pre-1974 historic county of Cheshire.

The Cheshire Garden Trust Council of Management Trustees has adopted the *Charity Governance Code for smaller charities* and is working towards ensuring that it is fully compliant with its stipulated good practice. It acknowledges, however, that it is not possible to be fully compliant at the present time in relation to the proposed maximum length of service of 9 years. Whilst this is a matter of continual review with steps being taken to ensure a regular turnover of Trustee membership, it is necessary to retain Trustee membership beyond nine years in view of the current Trustees' considerable skills and expertise.

The Trustees have reviewed the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance. The activities of the Trust fall mainly within the Charitable Purposes: advancement of education, and advancement of arts, culture and heritage. The activities of the Trust in meeting these public benefits are described in detail below. Membership of the Trust is open to everyone and members of the public do not need to be a member of the Trust to benefit from its activities.

Appointment of trustees

The trustees who served during the year are set out on the charity information page at the front of these accounts.

Trustees are elected by the members at the AGM to serve on the Council of Management for three years. Members of the Council are restricted to two consecutive terms of three years, unless there are fewer candidates for election than places available. Council may consist of no fewer than seven and no more than fifteen members. A further three co-options may be made.

The Council of Management encourages others to stand for election and has created an information pack for new Trustees.

Organisation

The company is limited by guarantee and was incorporated on 12 January 2006. It was registered as a charity on 11 June 2007. The Trust is a member of the national body The Gardens Trust.

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Risk policy

The trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to enable regular reports to be produced so that the necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks. The following are in place:

- An annual budget is set and management accounts reported against budget at intervals through the year.
- Public Liability and Trustee Indemnity Insurance;
- Role descriptions and information packs for Council of Management members;
- Risk assessments are made prior to every event; During the COVID pandemic, meetings and events are held on-line;
- Site visit guidance notes and risk assessments for volunteers undertaking research and recording. During the COVID pandemic, precautions are in accordance with current Government requirements;
- An information pack for research and recorders which includes guidance to minimise risk;
- Training for researchers;
- A Data Protection Policy has been drafted to ensure the Trust complies with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

The Council of Management also recognises that too much responsibility rests on too few volunteers and will continue to encourage members of the Trust to serve on the Council and to volunteer for the various activities it undertakes.

Achievements and performance

Membership

Membership levels have been sustained over the last year with new members joining while others leave. The total membership numbered 165 in February 2021. A number of members are very actively involved in the various activities and a large number attend the on-line talks, which have also attracted some new members. All members receive newsletters and regular emailed news items from various sources.

Chairman

Ed Bennis filled the role of Chairman on a temporary basis up until 30th September 2021 when he resigned as a trustee. The Council of Management would like to record their gratitude to him for the sound leadership he has given to The Cheshire Gardens Trust over many years. Since 1st October 2021, the Council of Management has been seeking a suitable person who is prepared to fulfil this role.

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DIRECTORS' AND TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2022

Activities

The current high support of 'live' events indicates the value/appreciation which members place on them. The following items are in our plans for 2022:

- To continue our usual activities with a special emphasis on developing skills among the membership to help with both the Conservation & Planning and Research & Recording demands as there is a lack of active members in these areas.
- To fund tree planting to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and advertise the CGT.
- To continue the Bursary Scheme and extend our support to wider (school age) groups.
- To continue the aims set out in the Strategic Review 2019.
- To be supportive of the recently formed Professional Gardens' Network for Cheshire.

Progress on these has been delayed, partly due to the exceptional COVID restrictions in place.

Strategic Review

This forward-thinking Review circulated in 2019 arrived at a series of recommendations for action.

Of these, the aims for the Website have been fully achieved and Council of Management meetings have been restructured. The aims for Events and the Bursary have, of necessity, been partially limited due to COVID restrictions.

However, the remaining aims; replacements of Leadership roles, increasing Council of Management members, increasing active Trust Membership and recruiting more assistance with Conservation & Planning activities, all rely on success in growing and diversifying our Membership and involving them directly in these essential activities of the Trust.

In 2021, the roles of Chairman and Treasurer both became vacant but only the Treasurer was replaced. In addition to finding a new Chairman, we will need to identify a replacement Trust Secretary and Newsletter Editor in the near future. Pursuing these aims has been especially difficult over the past two years but it is hoped that more members will be able to step up to help us maintain momentum in the months to come

Events

In the early months of 2021 with the imposition of COVID restrictions and the continuing uncertainty of meeting face-to face, the Events Group decided to extend the series of talks delivered through the medium of zoom by three further talks between April and June 2021 as follows:

- April: *Sheer Folly- weird and wonderful Garden buildings*, delivered by Caroline Holmes, the popular garden historian
- May: *Island Gardens- Journeys around the British Isles* by Jackie Bennett , writer and editor

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- June: *Beth Chatto: A Life with plants*, by social historian Catherine Harwood, based on her authorised biography.

All these talks were again popular with between 40 and 70 members and guests joining each event. Recordings of the talks were made available for a limited period for those who were unable to attend at the prescribed time.

By June with the easing of restrictions, the Events Group was pleased to be able to arrange four successful garden visits over the summer and autumn months, allowing members at long last to meet together in beautiful garden settings.

- July: Tattenhall Hall, a garden visit originally planned for 2020, where the owners were so pleased to guide us round the lovely garden.
- August: Sandymere, a visit and social gathering to John Timpson's beautiful garden at Cotebrook. Following the stroll around the garden, new members were pleased to meet other members over afternoon tea whom they had only seen through a zoom screen to-date! The Events Group is grateful to John Timpson and head gardener, Rachel Pemberton, for the success of this event.
- September: A visit to Sue Beesley's lovely Bluebell Cottage Gardens, outside Warrington.
- October: Norton Priory Museum and Walled Garden, a timely visit in autumn with the National Collection of Tree Quinces on display.

May 2021 saw the opening of the magnificent RHS Bridgewater gardens at Worsley. The Events Group had hoped to organise a CGT visit but it decided that as many were making their own arrangements to visit, a group visit should be postponed for a while until the extensive garden is more advanced.

In the autumn the Gardens Trust and other GT branches held many interesting zoom talks, details of which were made available to members. A further series of three CGT zoom talks were organised in the first three months of 2022 as follows:

- January: Mick Brown, Production Garden Manager at Chatsworth, gave a comprehensive and well-illustrated talk about the development of the garden at Chatsworth over the centuries, including recent projects.
- February: Stephanie Knoblich, writer and journalist, who lives in the south of France, gave a delightful talk *The Cote d'Azur- an exotic paradise for English Garden lovers*. This zoom talk was the first one where we had ventured overseas for our speaker. We are hoping to further this development in any future zoom talks.

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- March: Anthony Tavernor, *The Discovery and Development of the Garden at Plas Cadnant*, spoke eloquently on his perseverance to restore the beautiful varied garden.

Accounts of all talks and garden visits appear in articles in our Newsletters that can be viewed on the Website- see Gallery tab/Events page.

Research and Recording

Research and recording activities proceeded with a combination of zoom, live meetings and site visits. During the year four new members joined the group and twelve reports were issued. We have continued to attend the Cheshire West and Chester Heritage Forum and to expand our network of contacts most notably in Bollington where a number of sites are being researched, and with the Sandstone Ridge Trust where we are a partner organisation. Members of the Sandstone Ridge Trust are particularly interested in picturesque walks along the ridge, and an initial shared visit was made to explore Barnhill. Other activities have included a map regression exercise, contributing to the Historic Landscapes Assembly, and giving a lecture on Caldwell's Nurseries to the Garden Trust's online lecture series. We were invited to Lymm Hall where the new owner has taken a great interest in the Kemp landscape, and visited Marbury Park to discuss the Local Listing Project with Dr James Dixon Heritage Officer Cheshire West and Chester and Moya Watson of the Cheshire Historic Environment.

Caldwell's Nurseries Project

The Website continues to be used on a regular basis. Plans to make it more accessible via mobiles and tablets have not proceeded as planned but hopefully will do so in future.

There are currently no plans for further transcriptions (which would require a new way of entering and displaying data) but there are plans for making the current transcriptions more usable. These are dependent upon events at the designer company.

Meanwhile the information transcribed to date is being used to explore the world in which the nurseries worked. It is hoped that this will eventually lead to a new book being published.

Planning and Conservation

This year CGT received and reviewed 69 applications and commented on 41.

Area Breakdown as follows:

Cheshire East – 40

Cheshire West & Chester - 20

Stockport - 2

Trafford - 1

Warrington - 1

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Wirral - 3

plus National Consultations - 2

Included in these figures are:

Neighbourhood Development Plans - 7

Local Development Plans - 6

Direct Invitation to CGT for a Pre-application Consultation - 1

We are grateful to those whose local knowledge, expertise and willingness to contribute has enabled this level and quality of response. However the current situation, where a small core of members undertakes the activity is unsustainable. We are concerned that we have failed to engage our membership, and others, in what is a core activity of Cheshire Gardens Trust. Our concerns have been shared with the Gardens Trust.

Members can view details of our Planning-related activities and read the submitted responses on our website: Conservation tab/Planning Log page.

Networking

During the pandemic, networking was generally restricted to on-line communications. This included advertising for and joining with other County Garden Trust's and Cheshire organisations' talks and connecting with non-members via CGT talks.

Newsletter

Cheshire Gardens Trust Newsletter production has continued during the year with four issues plus one additional 14-page Spring issue during the lockdown restrictions of early 2021. It is distributed as a circulated link by email and it continues to be available online on our website. A printed copy is also posted to members who require a hard copy.

To assist the Editor, the Newsletter Support Group (NSG), currently Isabel Wright, Patricia Hazlehurst, Freyda Taylor, Liz Roberts and Monica Walker was formed and now meets quarterly to discuss content and plan the next issue. This has been helpful in widening the scope of the Newsletter by the inclusion on a more regular basis of important Conservation and Planning consultation reports, more areas of interest such as garden designers, and the reporting on interesting findings from the Research & Recording Group.

The NSG has thought about the core aims of CGT and how we ensure that these are reflected in the Newsletter. In order to do this the group has contacted around a third of the membership to undertake a survey of the readership. We have been pleasantly pleased with the response and it has helped our understanding of how members read the newsletter (e.g. on computer, tablet, phone etc. or hard copy) and the subjects they like to read about. It's gratifying to get comments such as "greatly appreciated during the Pandemic"; "high standard

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of presentation”; “it’s an excellent read with variety”; these are all statements that brought joy to the Editor and the NSG.

One of the early results of the survey has been to reduce the length of the Newsletter and shorten articles to help members reading online. We have decided to edit more actively by shortening events reports, and alternating series like those about Cheshire Parks and Head Gardeners. Members have also suggested a number of ideas for future topics, which we will consider over the coming months. We will also try to report regularly on the activities of the various groups, namely Events, Newsletter Support Group, Conservation & Planning and Research & Recording in forthcoming issues.

Website

Progress has been made throughout the past year with numerous adjustments to make the site easier for the administrators, although CGT members will not notice these changes. We have started to investigate how on-line payments bookings and membership fees can be made via the Website for those that would prefer this. We also found that younger members would prefer direct booking and confirmation rather than using cheques and the post.

We have a collection of hundreds of photographs of parks, gardens and CGT events but no central system which allows us to use them easily for the website, newsletters, posters, Research and Recording, etc. We have consulted with Roxbury, our IT/website developers, and they have recommended using Dropbox rather than a custom piece of software that they could produce. As a result, we are investigating the use of Dropbox for the extensive library of photographs which we have built up. We also welcome contributions of photos from both members and non-members, these will be gratefully received via info@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk These could include local parks, people, activities, special features, problems, etc.

We would like to enlarge our record of locally valued Public Parks to broaden the knowledge of Cheshire residents and to give our support to the many hardworking Friends of Parks Groups. Information, and updates, including photographs, from Members are always welcome on this subject and indeed on any of the other topics featured on the Website which is CGT's important public face. We can include this information in *Latest News* on the front page of the website, and/or members can place this information on CGT's Facebook page.

Bursary

Although the Strategic Review identified the Bursary Scheme for further support and development, it was not possible to make an award in the year ending January 2022 because of the COVID restrictions and their impact on aspects such as travel. Due to the more straightened financial circumstances currently being experienced by both educational institutions and many horticultural students, discussions are underway with Ness College to investigate ways in which the scheme can be modified to enable the scheme to continue to provide much needed support with the successful recipients feeding back the results of their research to CGT members. The scheme may be extended to other interested institutions within Cheshire.

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Volunteers

Joy Uings and Nick Lightfoot have both announced their intention to stand down from the Council of Management at the time of the next AGM on 20th June 2022. It is essential to the future continuation of Cheshire Gardens Trust that new members put themselves forward to join the Council of Management.

Maintaining our activities requires the input of our many volunteers. However, we are very aware that some have been undertaking their roles for more than a decade and unfortunately that means we are getting older! It is important that the Trust is refreshed by the different ideas and experiences of younger members. Everyone can help, whether occasionally or for longer periods. Please allow our older volunteers to take a step backward – they will still be around to offer support.

Financial review

The Trust made a loss of £447. This was due to the continuing effect of the COVID pandemic and follows the loss of £1,943 reported in the previous year (ending 31/01/2021) for the same reason. In normal years we have excess income from Events, but with fewer ticketed events this year, as with last year, Events showed a net shortfall. However, we still have substantial reserves to cope with this loss, with our year end funds standing at £16,401. The detailed figures on pages 11 - 14 show that our total expenditure reduced – a significant factor being reduced expenditure on the website – and our income increased, due to increases in subscriptions and income from Events.

Reserves policy

The Trust's Unrestricted Funds, which are the free reserves of the Trust, were £16,401 as at 31st January 2022. As a charity we should maintain free reserves at a level no less than approximately six months unrestricted expenditure to provide sufficient funds to meet operational costs and to fund the next two events of the Trust. Unrestricted funds were well above this level throughout the year.

The free reserves have built up from past surpluses on running Events with the objective of being able to fund the aspirations of the Strategic Review, in particular providing Bursaries and support for the Research & Recording and Conservation & Planning activities.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the financial Year and of its surplus or deficit for the financial Year. In doing so the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

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- state whether the policies adopted are in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and with applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in existence.

The trustees (Council of Management) are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enables them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the Council of Management on 16th May 2022

David Cash

David Cash, Trustee

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BALANCE SHEET AT 31 JANUARY 2022

| | Note | 2022 | | 2021 | |
|--|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Current assets | | | | | |
| Debtors and prepayments | 3 | 0 | | 30 | |
| Bank Accounts | | 16,688 | | 17,168 | |
| | | <u>16,688</u> | | <u>17,198</u> | |
| Creditors | | | | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | 4 | 287 | | 350 | |
| | | <u>287</u> | | <u>350</u> | |
| Net current assets | | | 16,401 | | 16,848 |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | | <u>16,401</u> | | <u>16,848</u> |
| Net assets | | | <u>16,401</u> | | <u>16,848</u> |
| Capital funds | | | | | |
| Unrestricted funds | | | 16,401 | | 16,848 |
| | | | <u>16,401</u> | | <u>16,848</u> |
| Total funds | | | <u>16,401</u> | | <u>16,848</u> |

For the year ending 31/01/2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The Members have not required the Company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the trustees on 16th May 2022.

Martin Slack

Martin Slack
Trustee

David Cash

David Cash
Trustee

The annexed notes form part of these financial statements.

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2022

| | Unrest'd Funds 2022 | Total Funds | <i>Unrest'd Funds 2,021</i> | <i>Total Funds</i> |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | £ | £ |
| Incoming resources | | | | |
| Incoming Resources from generated funds: | | | | |
| Voluntary income | 1,200 | 1,200 | 750 | 750 |
| Activities for generating funds | 2,051 | 2,051 | 1,735 | 1,735 |
| Investment income | 1 | 1 | 7 | 7 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total incoming resources | 3,252 | 3,252 | 2,492 | 2,492 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Resources expended | | | | |
| Costs of generating funds | 1,108 | 1,108 | 2,890 | 2,890 |
| Charitable activities | 1,921 | 1,921 | 831 | 831 |
| Governance costs | 670 | 670 | 714 | 714 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total resources expended | 3,699 | 3,699 | 4,435 | 4,435 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Net movement in funds | -447 | -447 | -1,943 | -1,943 |
| Total funds brought forward | 16,848 | 16,848 | 18,791 | 18,791 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total funds carried forward | 16,401 | 16,401 | 16,848 | 16,848 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

Details of Incoming resources and Resources expended are given in the notes to the financial statements.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2022

1. Accounting policies

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention (as modified by the revaluation of certain assets) and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

Cashflow statement

The Company has taken advantage of the exemption from the requirement to produce a cashflow statement on the grounds that it is a small company.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the SoFA when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with use of the resources.

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|--|------|------|
| | £ | £ |
| 2. Investment Income | | |
| Interest | 1 | 7 |
| | = | = |
| 3. Debtors and prepayments | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year: Prepayments and Accrued Income | - | 30 |
| | = | = |
| 4. Creditors | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year:- Accruals and Deferred Income | 287 | 350 |
| | = | = |

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2022**

5. Incoming resources

| | 2022 | 2022 | 2021 | 2021 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Voluntary Income | | | | |
| Income from events and workshops | 960 | | 590 | |
| Donations and Grants | 240 | | 160 | |
| | <u> </u> | | <u> </u> | |
| | | 1,200 | | 750 |
| Activities for generating funds | | | | |
| Book and plant sales | 172 | | 43 | |
| Membership subscriptions | 1,879 | | 1,692 | |
| | <u> </u> | | <u> </u> | |
| | | 2,051 | | 1,735 |
| Investment income | | | | |
| Interest | 1 | | 7 | |
| | <u> </u> | | <u> </u> | |
| | | 1 | | 7 |
| | | <u> </u> | | <u> </u> |
| Total incoming resources | | 3,252 | | 2,492 |
| | | <u> </u> | | <u> </u> |

6. Costs of generating funds

| | 2022 | 2022 | 2021 | 2021 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Membership stationery & postage | 149 | | 79 | |
| Newsletter stationery and postage | 393 | | 481 | |
| Publicity | 285 | | 2,179 | |
| Miscellaneous expenditure | 281 | | 151 | |
| | <u> </u> | | <u> </u> | |
| | | 1,108 | | 2,890 |
| | | <u> </u> | | <u> </u> |

THE CHESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2022

7. Charitable activities

| | 2022 | 2022 | 2021 | 2021 |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Research and recording expenses | 384 | | 120 | |
| Caldwell Project | 34 | | 284 | |
| Conservation and planning expenses | | | - | |
| Event & workshop expenses | 1,423 | | 427 | |
| Miscellaneous Charitable expenditure | 80 | | - | |
| | _____ | | _____ | |
| | | 1,921 | | 831 |
| | | ===== | | ===== |

8. Governance costs

| | 2022 | 2022 | 2021 | 2021 |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Returns and Registration Fees | 48 | | 48 | |
| Council Meetings | - | | - | |
| TGT Subscription and Insurance | 613 | | 626 | |
| AGM | 9 | | 40 | |
| | _____ | | _____ | |
| | | 670 | | 714 |
| | | ===== | | ===== |

9. Related party transactions

All directors are volunteers and receive no remuneration or other financial reward from the Trust.