

ASHRAM COMMUNITY TRUST

AGM 18th October 2025

FINANCIAL REPORT

The accounts for financial year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 include all the accounts held by Ashram Community Trust. They were approved by the Trustees on 26th July 2025.

At the start of the financial year (1/4/24) total funds were **£611158** - unrestricted funds (property £338596 and cash £271100) and restricted £1462. At the end of the financial year (31/3/25), total funds were **£499580** - unrestricted funds (property £177207 and cash £320761) and restricted £1612.

Income of £49262 for 2024/25 came from membership (£2412), rent (£33446), weekends (5873), investment (£7531) and restricted giving (£1100).

Expenditure of £118694 for 2024/25 was for grants (£75660), property running costs (£29268), weekends (£9332), ACT administration (£3484) and restricted giving (£950).

Grants were given to Church Action on Poverty (£55452) and Luther King House (£20,208) for grassroots theological education.

For a few years, ACT reserves have been supporting the costs of the weekends. This year £10,000 from the sale of Andover Street was transferred to the weekends fund, this being a loan to Andover Street from the Opportunities Fund when the property was purchased. It was later agreed to close the Opportunities Fund and transfer the proceeds into the weekend's fund. The Weekends Fund at 31/3/25 stood at £4654.

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES, APRIL 2024 –MARCH 2025

Objectives and activities

The Charity's objectives are the promotion of any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of Sheffield and in such other areas as the Charity may from time to time determine; and in particular the advancement of the Christian religion, the advancement of education, the promotion of religious and educational study and research and the publication of the results of all such study and research; and the relief of poverty, sickness, affliction and distress.

In furtherance of the above objectives, but not otherwise, the Charity may exercise the following powers:

(i-viii are the standard powers of a charitable company) (ix) provide facilities for religious fellowship and training. (x) procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or any other documents, (xi) arrange and provide for, or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures and classes, (xii) establish residential communities for persons directly engaged in the furtherance of the purpose of the aforesaid, (xiii) promote, encourage or undertake experimental work.

REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHARITABLE COMPANY

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Providing facilities for religious fellowship: Two Weekend Conferences were held: in May at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, and in October at Foxhill, Frodsham in Cheshire. Day meetings held in July and in February were by video conference. The regular gatherings online, open to all-comers, which had been started in June 2020 continued to meet fortnightly. The branch in London continued its practice of holding monthly meetings, alternately on line and in person. The North-West England branch meets occasionally in person but mainly by video conference. The online meetings were valued by participants who were geographically remote or in poor health, while the meetings in person were valued by those unable to participate in the online meetings because they lacked access to IT. Most of these meetings were attended by associates and non-members, thus providing a public benefit.

Publications: 'ACT Together', containing articles by Community members and friends, was published in May and October.

Residential communities: Two of the Community's houses in Sheffield were sold. One being to a charity providing accommodation for asylum seekers. The remaining two houses in Sheffield continue as residential communities. Work continued on the refurbishment of accommodation within the Burngreave complex.

Relief of poverty etc.: All members were asked to give a day's income to the annual appeal, which this year went to The Four Homes of Mercy, a charitable organisation in Bethany, Palestine, that provides care and support for individuals with severe multi-sensory challenges, particularly children. A grant was also made from the Wider Service Fund to the Four Homes of Mercy as well as to the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust to maintain a wood in memory of one of the community's members. The Burngreave community rooms have started to be used again to provide a meeting place for local people, with activities such as a men's mental health cafe, language classes, women only craft and education activities and a free community meal. Following on from discussions started last year, we were able to give grants using surplus money from previous property sales of properties to a project undertaking grass root theological education and distance theological education for the majority world.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The 5 year plan of the trustees, following consultation with the membership, is to dispose of all our property, taking due regard to the interests of remaining tenants, and involving other charities where possible. During the year 2 of the properties were sold according to the agreement reached last year.

Detailed procedures for disposing of further funds as they become available were agreed at the national gathering in October 2024, with two categories of projects for which applications could be made on the agreed application form: Projects/organisations proposed by members and associates of Ashram and Organisations working with people in housing need. Conversations have begun with a local Sheffield network as to whether an agreement can be reached for them to use the Burngreave property, and with a Housing Association regarding giving to them the Rock Street property. When all remaining assets have been disposed of, the company and Charity will be wound up.