

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Charity name: Discovering Old Welsh Houses Group

Charity registration number: 1131782

Objectives and Activities

<p>Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document</p>	<p>The Charity's objectives are: to advance the education of the public in general (and particularly amongst professional and amateur historians, architects and archaeologists and local communities) on the subject of pre-1700 buildings in north Wales, where possible using dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) & architectural recording; to promote research into the history of such buildings by volunteers and specialists for the public benefit in all aspects of that subject; and to publish the useful results. Our vision is "celebrating Welsh Heritage through the study of traditional houses and the lives of the people who lived in them".</p>
<p>Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.</p>	<p>Main activities: i) Newsletter: this bilingual quarterly publication informs members of activities & projects planned & undertaken & grants received and Branch members also share their recent work. This is an important way in which the charity shows what has been achieved in relation to our mission.</p> <p>ii) Website: this site has been updated and is very well used by interested people all over the world.</p> <p>iii) Study Tour: These are now usually organised on alternate years; however, due to Covid-19, no study tour was arranged for 2021-2022.</p> <p>iv) Branches: due to Covid-19, members of the Anglesey, Caernarfonshire (formerly Snowdonia), Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire (formerly NE Wales) & Merioneth branches have not been able to meet monthly to follow both Group priorities and their local interests within the charity's objectives. Instead, from October 2020 monthly Zoom talks have been held & have been well attended. These have continued on Zoom & a few Branch meetings have also been held out of doors. See 'Other optional information' for details.</p> <p>v) Outreach & publicity: this normally takes place through an annual lecture, use of the media, the website and outreach events. This year Covid-19 resulted in cancellations of these events which normally generate considerable interest and are considered an integral part of furthering our charitable purposes. The annual lecture was given using Zoom.</p> <p>vi) Seeking additional old buildings to study: Members normally visit and research such buildings across north Wales inviting the householders to become involved and give written permission for their house to be assessed, sampled, recorded or researched. This year very few such visits were possible due to Covid-19 but considerable online research was undertaken.</p> <p>vii) Raising funds: through seeking grants & fund- raising events in order to undertake additional dendrochronology, building recording, research and publications. One anonymous donation was received (checked for validity). No fund- raising events were held this year.</p>
<p>Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit</p>	<p>It is confirmed that this is the case.</p>

Additional information

Policy on grant making	Grants are not made to others.
Policy on social investment including program related investment	N/A
Contribution made by volunteers	Volunteers / members undertake and freely contribute a considerable amount of time & expertise to the activities of the charity, especially in leadership roles, house visits and house history research.

Achievements and Performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	<p>i) Membership: At the end of the financial year there were 246 paid up members.</p> <p>ii) Publications: “Discovering the Historic Houses of Snowdonia”, a bilingual book illustrating the important outcomes of the charity's earlier work was prepared jointly with the RCAHMW and was launched in December 2014. Copies continue to be sold and the income added to the Charity's funds. On alternate years the Denbighshire Branch publishes a “Cynwyd Scrapbook”; the 50 page 2021 edition contains illustrated documentary records & accounts of oral history & is valued by the local community.</p> <p>iii) Projects: The Denbighshire branch has been awarded a £1,000 Tesco “Bags of Help” Community Fund grant towards a local history project which has now been delayed due to Covid-19. The Conwy Branch has been awarded a £1,166 Tesco “Bags of Help” Community Fund grant towards a local history project now been delayed due to Covid-19.</p> <p>iv) Grants: A Marc Fitch Fund grant for £2,250 was received to help fund a Houses Management Database Project which will enable the digital collation of information on all houses visited as part of the Groups research activities. This grant continues in 2022.</p> <p>v) Completed work is published digitally on our website (discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk), and is available on <i>Coflein</i> - the RCAHMW website, <i>Archwilio</i> and the Welsh Heritage Environment Records (HER) & in local Archives / Record Offices.</p> <p>vi) Consolidation of previous research: Started in previous years, this is being developed and is becoming our major focus. This important new phase of activity will inform our future planning. It will, for a time, result in fewer of our traditional activities, which, in any case, have been virtually closed down by Covid-19.</p> <p>vii) House visits: Due to our new focus and the impact of Covid-19, very few house owners were contacted / visited in 2021-2022.</p> <p>viii) Dendrochronology: Again, due to Covid-19 and the charity's new focus, no dendrochronology was undertaken in 2021-2022.</p> <p>ix) Architectural Recording: In 2021-2022 no architectural recording was undertaken due to Covid-19.</p> <p>x) House History & other Research: This continues at a number of houses as part of each of the above projects & branch activity.</p> <p>xi) Accountability: The charity continues to share its achievements widely & give opportunities for others to participate in our charitable purposes through the website, but without the normal range of activities. The charity continues to manage its resources responsibly showing good stewardship through the roles of trustees & branches and through externally examined accounts adopted by the trustees.</p>
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Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	The charity remains in a healthy financial position with £6,841.39 available for running of the organisation centrally. In addition, the charity holds £2,402.61 in grant funds - these can only be used for the purpose for which they were granted. £410.81 is held in non-monetary assets (books and equipment). Branches have £1,850.32 available held both centrally and locally.
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	The reserves are held to cover any sudden drop in subscriptions or other income so that all invoices in a financial year can be covered.
Amount of reserves held	£1,000
Details of fund materially in deficit	None
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	None

Additional information

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Sources of funding for projects will vary according to the focus, geographical location and size of each proposed project.
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	N/A
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Due to Covid-19 the charity faces likely modifications in the way it operates, especially with the current lack of opportunities for meeting together and the current closure of archives & libraries. The new focus and grants supporting it alleviate risks to the future of the charity. Some outdoor activities are now being arranged.
Other	In our planning for 2021-2022 the charity is fortunate that it is currently undertaking i) a major grant aided collation of all previous visits, research and results which can be undertaken online and ii) major desktop / online research into pre1700 houses across all parishes. This will enable many members / volunteers to continue active involvement whilst the Covid-19 situation continues. Social gathering will be resumed as and when it is safe to do so. Meanwhile regular email / postal contact is being maintained.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:	None
Type of governing document	Constitution
How is the charity constituted?	Unincorporated charity
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Trustees are elected at the June AGM and may stand for re-election. The Trustees may appoint any members who are willing to act as Trustees if vacancies arise between AGMs. Members may be co-opted by the trustees during the year, attending trustees' meeting but having no vote. The Trustees may allow members to observe Trustees' meetings, but those members are not permitted to vote.

Additional information

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Agreed policies & procedures have been adopted for the induction & training of trustees.
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	The charity is controlled by its governing document, a revised constitution adopted on 21 June 2013 , and constitutes an unincorporated charity. All trustees gave their time voluntarily and received no remuneration apart from travelling @ 45p per mile and other out of pocket expenses. Trustees' meetings are held quarterly. Smaller groups of trustees meet as necessary and focus on Governance (Executive, Admin & Finance committees), Research (including database management) and Outreach (including IT /Website, PR, Publications, Newsletters, Events & Study Tour). These meetings report back to the trustees' meetings. Minutes are kept for all meetings. The trustees regularly review all policies including safeguarding governance and management arrangements. This year the secretary has worked a weekly average of over 21 hours and has driven only 109 miles undertaking her work compared with 1,745 miles in the last pre Covid-19 year, thus saving time and money. The reduction in mileage and hours worked was due to the impact of Covid-19 and was also part of a deliberate plan to share more of the workload with trustees and branch secretaries.
Relationship with any related parties	The charity has excellent working relationships with organisations active in related fields. These normally include joint meetings, information exchange, sharing of speakers etc.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Discovering Old Welsh Houses Group
Other name the charity uses	Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig
Registered charity number	1131782
Charity's principal address	c/o Bryn y Bedd, Nantgwynant, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 4NL.

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Date of Appointment
Mr Richard Cuthbertson, MBE	Chairman	December 2008
Mrs Margaret Dunn	Secretary	December 2008
Mr Peter Masters	Group website manager; Anglesey & Caernarfonshire branches sec	December 2011
Mrs Rosemary Brotherton	Treasurer	Co-opted April 2021; App June 2021
Mr John Townsend	Treasurer till April 2021	Co-opted June 2011; App June 2013 remains a trustee
Dr Wally Barr	Flintshire branch sec	Co-opted Sept 2012; App June 2013
Ms Zoe Henderson	Group Membership Secretary till December 2021	Co-opted Sept 2012; App June 2013; Resigned as membership secretary in December 2020, remains a trustee
Mrs Janice Dale	Denbighshire branch sec	Co-opted Sept 2012; App June 2013
Mrs Ann P Morgan	Conwy branch sec	June 2013
Dr Martin Cherry	Research; Merioneth branch sec	June 2014
Dr Shaun Evans		June 2017

Ms Eleanor Carpenter		June 2017
Ms Jane Parry-Evans		June 2019
Mr Terry T P Williams	Newsletter Editor	June 2020
Mrs Gill. Jones	Conwy branch sec	June 2021

Additional information

Corporate trustees – none

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity - none

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others – none

Exemptions from disclosure - none

Other optional information

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, the AGM & Public Lecture on the 27th June 2021 were held on zoom. It is intended to hold the AGM for 2021-2022 and the Annual lecture on 22nd June 2022 on Zoom. We have taken notice of the advice given by the Charity Commission on the impact of Covid-19 and have complied with our Constitution as far as possible. Trustees were reappointed and the 2021-2022 Annual Report together with the Annual Financial Report were completed and agreed by the trustees. The membership has been informed of the trustees' decisions so that the trustees are demonstrating good governance.

Our officers, branch secretaries and others are maintaining online and phone contact to ensure the good management of the charity during these unprecedented times. Newsletters and other communications continue to be circulated to members. Since April 2021 the following DOWH Members' Zoom Meetings have been held during the pandemic:

2021 April: From Wales to Birmingham, from Birmingham to Wales - the Journey.

2021 May: Interpreting a Country House.

2021 June: A history of the people who lived at Plas Penmynydd.

2021 July: Discovering Old Welsh Houses – Past, Present and Future.

2021 September: Discovering historic Wall Paintings in Wales.

2021 October: New Insights from Dendrochronology on the houses of North Wales.

2021 November: Ty Du, Bishop Goodman's house in Llanberis.

2021 Dec: Poldark comes to Abersoch. A look at the Lead Mines at Bwlch Tocyn.

2022 Jan: The Mysteries of Tree-Ring Dating: explaining the science of dendrochronology.

2022 Feb: Welsh Houses in the Hearth Tax 1662-1664.

2022: Feb: The Homes of our Ancestors 50,000,000 years ago to 1400 A.D.



2022 March: Bees and Bee Keeping before the modern hive (1851).

Since September 2020 the Executive committee meets monthly and the trustees meet quarterly on Zoom.

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Richard Cuthbertson	Margaret Jane Dunn
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	Secretary
Date	24 May 2022	