

The Minehead Hope Centre Trust

Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1.4.24 – 31.3.25

Charity name: The Minehead Hope Centre Trust (TMHCT)

Charity registration number: 1143770

Charity's Principal Address: Minehead Baptist Church
Parks Lane, Minehead,
Somerset, TA24 8BS

1. Names of the Trustees who manage the charity

Name	Office (if any)	Date appointed
Catherine Horsfield		8 May 2018
Revd Paul McCabe	Chair	10 December 2019
Ian McLaren		4 March 2019
Beverley Munsey		4 October 2022
Elinor Nicholas		20 June 2023

2. Staffing at 31.3.25

Two part-time paid Project Workers (one having started on 18.6.24) and a team of volunteers who support us in a variety of ways.

3. Structure, Governance and Management

Type of governing document: Charitable Trust Deed (Dated 5.9.11)

How is the charity constituted? Unincorporated association

Trustee selection methods: Trustees are appointed as and when required. Criteria for appointment of Trustees are specified in the Trust Deed, and appointments are made by a resolution of the Trustees passed at a special meeting, at which at least three Trustees must be present.

4. Objectives and Activities

Summary of the purposes of TMHCT as set out in its governing document

To show the love and compassion of Jesus Christ to all those with whom it comes into contact through:

- Relieving the needs of people in Minehead and West Somerset who suffer from drug and/or alcohol abuse or homelessness and their consequences
- Promoting social inclusion for the public benefit by relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society

Summary of main activities in relation to these purposes for the public benefit

During this year, the Minehead Hope Centre Trust, which was established in 2011, has continued to run a drop in centre - known as The Hope Centre (THC) - twice weekly, supporting adults who are homeless, struggle with various addictions, or are lonely or vulnerable in any way.

The Hope Centre works towards helping clients to overcome the difficulties they are facing, and live their lives to their full potential. Hospitality, friendship and hope along with appropriate advice and support have continued to be key elements of the service. Practical support provided during the year has included a hot meal at each session, access to basic facilities (eg showers, laundry, internet, mobile phone charging, clothing), and where needed by particular individuals, emergency help such as provision of tents/sleeping pods, sleeping bags, cooking facilities, food packs etc, to relieve immediate needs.

In addition to the practical support offered, the Hope Centre team has aimed as usual to create a welcoming environment and a sense of community where everyone is accepted and valued, and whatever their circumstances, an atmosphere of hope and encouragement is engendered. This often happens through ordinary conversations over coffee, a cooked meal or a board game, through which relationships of trust can develop. Staff and volunteers have been able to provide a listening ear in order to understand individuals' needs and circumstances, and where appropriate, collaborated with other agencies in responding to these.

For some of this year, a small group of clients has continued to join with Exmoor National Park rangers monthly, to help with ground clearance work on North Hill. This has given some clients an extra sense of purpose and self-worth. In addition, one client who enjoyed helping in the kitchen, was enabled to complete a Food Safety Course, and another who had ambitions to start her own business was given a donated, reconditioned laptop to assist her in this goal.

As a Christian Charity, at each session if they choose, clients have been able to hear a short message of hope from a Christian perspective. Many have appreciated this, regardless of their faith background, and we have been able to encourage several clients who've expressed an interest, to explore or reconnect with faith more deeply.

In December a special Christmas meal was organised, with clients participating in a light-hearted nativity play, and Christmas gift bags provided for each person, contents having being donated.

Public Benefit Guidance

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

5. Achievements and Performance

5.1. Summary of main achievements

5.1.1. Use of centre

In the year 2024-25, the centre recorded a total of 2079 attendances over 101 sessions, with an average of 21 people attending each, and 84* first-time visitors over the year (*this figure includes some who attended in the past but not for the previous 6 months). Many of the

latter have been at a crisis point in their lives and in need of urgent help or advice. For others the centre has provided an anchor in their week, an important point of contact and support.

The majority of those attending (70%) were aged between 30-65 years, with 20% between 18-30 and 10% over 65 years old); 75% were male and 25% female. Most were white British (90%) with 5% white European, and 5% African Caribbean/Asian, broadly reflecting the ethnicity of the local community (according to the 2021 census figures 97.5% of the population of Minehead classified themselves as 'white').

To the best of our understanding, the table below shows some rough estimates for the various housing situations of attendees:

Housing situation of attendees : Apr 24 – March 25	Approx %
Rough sleeping in tent/shelter/vehicle	15
Other homeless eg sofa surfing	5
YMCA interim accommodation eg Prospect / Gascony / Beach	30
Council hostel /funded hotel (eg Lindley House, Taunton, Stones or Premier Inn)	5
Housing Association tenancy	15
Other private rent flat or HMO room	20
Not disclosed/ passing through Minehead	10

5.1.2. Impact on individuals

Those who come to the Hope Centre are often facing multiple and complex issues, and their journey is not always easy or straightforward, with many ups and downs. The Hope Centre is usually only one piece of the jigsaw (see para 5.1.3), but can play a very significant role, not only in signposting to other sources of help, but in providing the continued acceptance, encouragement, and hope that individuals may lack.

The following two examples illustrate how these type of relational inputs have contributed to positive outcomes achieved for clients this year (*with names and some details changed to preserve anonymity*):

Client 1:

D lived in a Minehead hostel for a couple of years. He didn't have a job and had some difficulties in social interactions. He started coming regularly to the Hope Centre and seemed to appreciate how the staff accepted him and were willing to find some other food for him when the main meal on the menu was something he didn't like. Occasionally he would talk about the teenage daughter who he was no longer in contact with. He appreciated our support to send a photo of himself and to write a birthday card to his daughter. He also enjoyed being part of a group that would join with the Exmoor Park rangers to do physical volunteering work on North Hill. As long as we took a flask of coffee with us, he loved working in the open air.

When D lost his Minehead hostel place and became homeless, the Hope Centre kept in touch with him. We encouraged him to take the chance he was offered to move to a direct

access hostel in a rural part of the county where he could do useful work each day. We have heard he is thriving there.

Client 2:

When A first came to the Hope Centre, he was sleeping in his car having lost his job and home. We helped him engage with the Rough Sleeper outreach team and eventually he got a place in a Minehead hostel.

Subsequently, during a very unsettled period in his life, in which alcohol abuse played a part, we kept reassuring and respecting him, even when he was loathing himself. Sadly, A lost his place in the local hostel but with the support of his family and a reference from ourselves, he was offered a chance to stay at an alcohol-free residential refuge in another part of Somerset, for people recovering from a time of crisis. He subsequently sent us a message and photographs showing how happy he is there and the kind of work he was doing.

5.1.3. Strengthening partnership with other agencies

We have continued to be grateful for the expertise and support of other agencies, with whom relationships have been developing. The regular visits of professionals from some agencies has strengthened mutual trust and understanding of respective roles, especially the Rough Sleeping Outreach Team, Second Step (rehab for those with complex mental health needs), NHS Homeless and Rough Sleeper Nursing Service and Mental Health treatment teams, and SDAS (Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service). This has had tangible benefits for some individuals and our staff, as referrals have happened with greater ease, and assistance has often been on hand when crises occur.

In addition, during this year informal meetings were initiated with the manager of the local YMCA, where some of our clients are housed temporarily, and a manager/case worker from the local SEETEC Pluss Work and Health Programme. Both sessions helped to raise awareness of their role amongst staff and trustees enabling us to consider how we might work with these agencies more effectively.

Through these partnerships, and as the only day service in Minehead working with this vulnerable group, the Hope Centre has often been able to provide local and timely intervention which is tailored to the individual. Professionals from these agencies have also indicated how the Hope Centre assists them in their work with certain individuals.

Rachel Gilmour MP visited us on 21/2/25 and spent time chatting with clients, staff and trustees. She subsequently wrote about her visit in a local newspaper article.

5.2. Other**5.2.1. Staffing and recruitment**

For the first 3 months of the year (April-June '24), the centre continued to run with only one project worker (PW) – 6 months in all – due to difficulties in recruitment, which are common in education and health fields too. But fortunately a second attempt resulted in the appointment of two new project workers from mid-June. Although initially we had only planned to recruit one, it was felt a third PW was affordable at this time and would bring many benefits. Both new PWs had previously been volunteers at the centre, so were able to settle quite quickly into the role, and initially improved the level of input to clients, with a greater degree of flexibility to manage the service. Sadly within 3 months one of our new PWs resigned due to personal circumstances.

For similar reasons we also lost a few valued volunteers, but subsequently gained several new ones. Over the year, 25 different people have volunteered, supporting the PWs at drop-in sessions or other aspects of the charity's work.

As trustees we want to express our appreciation for the hard work and commitment of all our staff and volunteers during these fluctuations. It is only with their faithfulness, heart to serve, and often willingness to go the extra mile, that the service could be sustained.

5.2.2. Prayer

As a Christian charity, prayer has continued to underpin our activity, whether it be briefly before each session, with staff and those volunteers who choose to join in, within our trustee meetings, or more focused monthly prayer meetings to which all staff and trustees are invited. These have often been encouraging times. When the difficulties and challenges (for individuals we support, or the charity) have felt overwhelming, we have frequently been reminded that we are not alone in tackling them, and that there is one who is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, shown especially through particular answers to our prayers. We continue to seek God's guidance in the day to day challenges and longer term direction of the project, and give thanks for all His provision this year.

5.2.3. Policy work

From January '25, we began a more in-depth review of our HR policies and documentation, with a view to updating and supplementing these where needed. Recognising the gaps in our own knowledge and expertise in this area, we have been working with RootsHR consultancy (on a subscription basis), to ensure these policies etc are legally compliant, and in line with good practice. RootsHR are themselves a social enterprise, recommended for small voluntary organisations by NCVO (The National Council for Voluntary Organisations). This has been an important learning process in itself, and it has also given us access to HR advice when needed. This work will continue into 2025-6.

5.2.3. Training undertaken

We have continued to strengthen our training programme to refresh and/or increase the skills and confidence of our staff, volunteers and trustees. During this year the following training has been organised and undertaken by various members of our team:

- Food Safety & Hygiene
- Safeguarding
- Suicide Awareness
- Managing Conflict
- Good practice in Volunteer Management

5.3. Fundraising and other donations

This year we have benefited from grants from The City Charity Trust, The Albert Hunt Trust, Tesco Stronger Start Scheme (a shoppers voting scheme), and a 3rd and final payment (of a 3-year grant) from the Yapp Charitable Trust.

In addition, regular and one-off donations from individuals have continued to make an important contribution, along with two fundraising events (a Plant Sale and Craft Fair), and jar donations (for loose change) which some individuals chose as a means of supporting the Hope Centre. As in previous years, the events have also helped us to raise the profile of the Hope Centre in the community.

We have been grateful too for continuing regular donations of food from Alcombe Co-op, Greggs, and the West Somerset Food Cupboard. These not only contribute to the communal meals at the Hope Centre, but also help to support those clients who may be struggling financially, and reduce the amount of food waste within the local community through using or distributing some unsaleable, but still edible products. Appeals at Easter and Christmas for gift bag items for our clients were also met with generosity by local churches and individuals.

Our sincere thanks to all who have supported us financially or in kind, or contributed to fundraising in any way, and also to our voluntary treasurer for all her hard work behind the scenes.

6. Financial Review

6.1 Review of TMHCT's financial position at 31 March '25

Our overall income was less than last year, with expenditure exceeding income by -£4,094 for a variety of reasons. Some notable differences in expenditure from the previous year were: an increase in payroll costs for the reasons described above (Par 5.2.1); a greater investment in training; the start of our subscription for HR consultancy, and an increase in rent (although this is still lower than the standard hourly rate charged by the church for room hire). However, due to a surplus of income over expenditure in 2023-4 (which was a particularly fruitful year in fundraising) the total bank balance at 31.3.25 was £24,079. Of this sum, £326 was regarded as restricted funds for use on the North Hill project.

6.2 Statement on TMHCT's policy on holding reserves

As we do not receive any statutory funding and are dependent on individual donations, events and funding from Charitable Trusts, our annual income can be unpredictable, as the last two years have shown. The main financial risk to the charity is not raising sufficient funds to cover staff wages and other core costs. Holding reserves is therefore necessary and we hold a minimum of 3 months of anticipated expenditure in reserve to ensure stability in the service.

7. Future plans

The trustees have identified a need to create a new, part-time manager post for the Hope Centre. The aims of such a post would be to enable us to strengthen the support already provided to staff and volunteers, assist with project development, and build our links within the community. Work has begun to think this through, and prepare financially, with the aim of recruiting in the coming year.

This would also contribute to our continuing aim of strengthening partnerships with other agencies with a view to increasing our understanding of respective roles and how best to work together in our clients' interests.

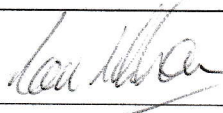
We will continue to review and update our HR policy documents with the assistance of RootsHR, and work with staff towards implementing these. As the law is changing regularly, this is essential to ensure continued compliance in managing and supporting our staff, and a robust framework for good practice.

We will also be seeking to recruit additional trustees to support the charity.

8. Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above:

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	PAUL - C. MCCABE	IAN V. McLAREN.
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	CHAIR	TRUSTEE.
Date	20 JANUARY 2026	