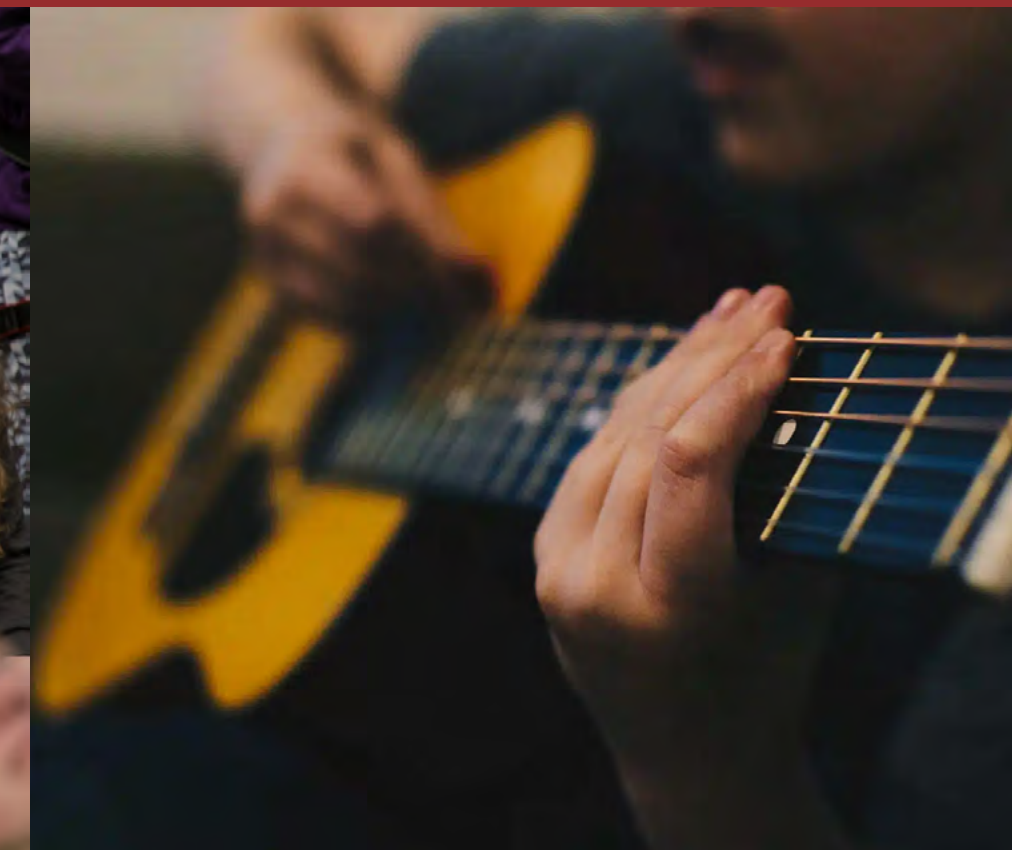



THE
MERCHANTS
HOUSE
OF GLASGOW

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



INTRODUCTION FROM THE LORD DEAN



Welcome to the 2023 Annual Review of The Merchants House of Glasgow.

This year, we continued our mission of supporting those in need within our local communities. As Lord Dean of Guild, I am proud to reflect on the positive impact we have made.

While challenges remain, The Merchants House plays a vital role. Conversations with charity partners, volunteers, and those receiving vital services reinforced the importance of our collective efforts. Fundamental to our purpose is providing grant funding to local charities and organisations. I'm delighted we awarded over £100,000 this year to address vital issues like healthcare, education, and social welfare - directly improving countless lives in Glasgow and the West of Scotland. However, the need is increasingly challenging with more and more people needing support.

In this Review you will find details of the work the House did over the year. However, the Lord Dean's duty extends beyond leading the House, it includes participation in the civic life

of the city. From the start of my term I was involved in civic events, such as the Kirking of the House at Glasgow Cathedral in June. This marks the start of the term of office of the new office bearers. The House enjoys a historic and close relationship with Glasgow Cathedral. Attendees had their attention drawn to the Merchants' Pews and a stained glass window commemorating the Merchants House - reminders of our long standing connection.

It would be a disservice not to honour my predecessor, May Storrie CBE, the trailblazing first woman to hold the office of Lord Dean. Tragically, May passed away mere hours before her tenure was to end in May 2023. May was keen to position The Merchants House as a modern, relevant charity, supporting those truly in need, directing grants to food banks, mental health organisations, and community groups. As Lord Dean, she established the Legacy and Philanthropy Committee, which has already raised substantial funds. Although May could not attend the Valedictory Dinner held in her

honour days before her passing, her family and friends gathered to celebrate her remarkable life and legacy.

For over 400 years, The Merchants House has remained dedicated to philanthropy and service. This spirit continues today and I wish to thank my fellow directors and the staff of The Merchants House of Glasgow for their efforts to advance the causes we support.



**Andrew McFarlane,
Lord Dean of Guild**

GRANTS COMMITTEE

It has been a busy year for the grants committee, with over **£100,000** in funding awarded to support charities and organisations across Glasgow and the West of Scotland.

This significant contribution underscores the House's commitment to make a positive impact on the local community, and is an indication of how important this charitable work is to our members.

This year we adapted our strategy and considered applications annually, rather than quarterly. This approach meant a more equitable distribution of available funds. Our focus has continued to be on supporting groups who tackle food and fuel poverty, those who encourage social inclusion, and those who promote healthy living, reflecting our dedication to addressing the diverse needs of the community. We aim to empower local charities who are addressing critical issues in Glasgow, improving people's lives and experiences.

We are incredibly grateful to all members of the House whose donations and legacies help us make a difference. I hope you too will be inspired by some of the stories of support in this document and on our social media channels. If you would like to support our grant giving you can do so by making a donation through our website.



Tony McElroy,
Chair – Grants Committee



THE GOVAN PANTRY

A grant of **£10,000** to Govan Home and Education Link Project (Govan HELP) is helping them to run The Govan Pantry, which provides food and essential items for a weekly membership fee of £3.

Membership has now grown to over 3,000, with the service being a lifeline for local families. The grant is specifically to cover Volunteer expenses and delivery costs and will allow the pantry's food supply to be topped up for the year.

Viv Sawers, Chief Officer, said "Govan HELP is delighted to be awarded grant funding from the Merchants House which will support the continued running of The Govan Pantry. We are very grateful for this support which will ensure the continued delivery of this valuable service for the community of Govan."

Govan HELP is a charity which supports families with children in the Govan area of Glasgow. They build the resilience of parents and children, helping families to overcome problems and make positive changes to their lives.



EPILEPSY SCOTLAND YOUTH WORK

Epilepsy can be tough on young people, their family, and carers too, which is why the Merchants House have awarded a **£3,500** grant to support Epilepsy Scotland's youth work in Glasgow.

Support from Epilepsy Scotland can be life changing. They provide a safe space for young people to meet others who have epilepsy, helping them to feel less alone and proven to improve their overall wellbeing.

One parent said:

“When all other friends deserted her, the youth group and workers made her feel part of a friendship group and for that I am extremely grateful.”

A representative said:

“Without vital funding from local organisations like the Merchants House of Glasgow, Epilepsy Scotland would not be able to provide activities, adventure weekends, one to one, peer led and group support for young people coping with the multitudes of difficulties that a diagnosis of epilepsy can bring.



RICHMOND'S HOPE

A grant of **£10,000** will support bereaved children and young people between the ages of 4 and 18.

At the heart of the Richmond's Hope programme of support are specialised grief activities and therapeutic play, which helps bereaved children and young people improve their mental health and wellbeing by working out their grief through verbal and non-verbal ways.

Rebecca Amiel, Fundraiser, said "the funding from the Merchants House of Glasgow will help provide one to one sessions for 150 children and young people in Glasgow and the West of Scotland as well as providing advice and support to families affected by bereavement. The generosity of Merchants House of Glasgow has been vital in enabling our sessions to continue so that children and young people experiencing bereavement can keep getting the tailored support they need during this challenging time."

Children who come to Richmond's Hope are supported by dedicated specialist bereavement support workers for an average of 12 sessions.





THE CROFT VISITORS CENTRE

The Croft Visitors Centre received **£5,000** funding to support families visiting HMP Barlinnie.

The grant will help those visiting to reduce their anxiety and allow them to feel good at this difficult time in their lives. They aim to support families in the prison and the community to access a programme of social activities they may otherwise be unable to participate in due to the financial impact they face.

Margaret Muir, Manager, said:

“Many thanks for the award of £5,000 to the Croft Visitors Centre. We are absolutely delighted to be able to support our families health & wellbeing with this award.”

The Croft was set up as a Visitors’ Centre for HMP Barlinnie in 2012. Staff welcome visitors and support them to have a better visit. This includes giving people information about visit procedures, how to claim travel expenses and the additional support that is available.



SCOTTISH **MUSIC CENTRE**

Musicares is the first national music mentoring project designed for care experienced young people in Scotland. A **£3,000** grant is enabling the **Musicares** project at Govan High Inclusion Base, due to finish in 2023, to continue throughout 2024, demonstrating the impact of our work.

Govan High Inclusion Base caters for young people with social and emotional needs, encouraging them to re-engage with mainstream education. Musicares uses music as a therapeutic tool to raise the confidence and wellbeing of these participants.

Stephen Ogston, Head Teacher Govan High Inclusion Base, explained the significance of the programme: “One of the young people who worked with the tutors achieved an A in National 5 Music which is the highest level of grade achieved by a young person placed here since the provision opened. The work of Musicares definitely played a significant role in this. It’s really good to know that this work can continue – in Govan and everywhere else.”



RENFREWSHIRE **STROKE** **AND DISABILITY ART** **THERAPY GROUP**

This social group, who meet in Paisley, enjoys art with a qualified instructor as part of their therapy.

Membership is open to anyone who has had a stroke and their family and carers. An award of £2,000 will ensure the viability of the group, enabling them to expand their horizons and be in a position to offer their services to a wider audience within Renfrewshire and surrounding areas.

Allan Stewart, Chairman, said “May we firstly record our appreciation for the generosity of Merchants House in awarding us a grant to further our objectives in providing a rewarding and creative art therapy group for stroke and other disabled individuals.”

Allan continues “We are often surprised by the latent talent uncovered! We have however, like many charitable organisations, been faced with financial challenges especially in respect of material costs which have risen considerably.”

PROPERTY AND CAPITAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

When our predecessors built the present Merchants House, they not only established a meeting place and administrative centre but also a lasting heritage. Spread across six expansive floors, the property offers more space than the House requires, allowing us to lease portions to third parties. Among these tenants is the Chamber of Commerce, which has been in the building for over a century and remains a vibrant presence today!

The revenue generated from our tenants not only helps cover operational costs but also bolsters our charitable giving. Over the years, we've carefully maintained and refurbished the building, ensuring it remains a symbol of our heritage as well as fit for purpose office and events space. However, as time progresses, major upgrades become necessary. Currently, we're focused on enhancing accessibility. The committee is actively engaged in exploring the feasibility, logistics, and financing of these essential improvements.

In 2023, we successfully completed a project aimed at addressing some long standing issues, providing us with exciting opportunities for future use of the building and revenue generation. As we embark on these improvements, we're committed to preserving the spirit and heritage of the Merchants House while ensuring it remains a dynamic and welcoming space for all.



Steven Morris,
Chair- Property and Capital Projects Committee



LEGACY AND PHILANTHROPY COMMITTEE

The relatively new Legacy and Philanthropy committee has enjoyed a number of successes this past year. Not least have been the wonderfully generous and substantial gifts from Lord Dean May Storrie CBE and Elizabeth Kennedy. Their names will appear on our donors' board in the hope of encouraging similar philanthropy. We are very grateful.

We have hosted a number of small evening events for both existing members and others. This has allowed invited recipients of our grants to express the huge difference the Merchants House has made to their charities. It has also helped to spread the word about the scale and range of grants and has both encouraged some regular donors to increase the amount they give annually, as well as prompting some new small donations from non members.

The Regular Giving scheme has provided funding in this past year for Rutherglen Community Carers (Home Respite Services), Govan Community Project, The Croft Visitor Centre, Scottish Music Centre and Richmond's Hope.

These kind members who donate really are making a difference to the lives of many and are often helping quite small charities, where our support makes such a big impact.

We are currently planning a breakfast seminar for private client solicitors in the city. We hope to persuade this influential professional group that our charity might be of much interest to their clients.

We also expect to play an active role in the autumn 'Doors Open Day' which offers such a good opportunity to meet new prospective members and indeed donors.

On the legacy side, a number of directors have made known their intention to include the Merchants House in their wills and we continue to welcome others to this growing group.

Through these initiatives we continue to foster the spirit of philanthropy which has always been a hallmark of our venerable charity, serving the city and its surrounds.



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Campbell Armour,
Chair - Legacy
and Philanthropy
Committee



MEMBERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Public awareness of the Merchants House continues to grow steadily. In 2023 we witnessed a significant increase in the House's social media following. Our social media strategy is driving traffic to the website, with an increase in website views to approximately 12,000 per month.

We were delighted to take part in the Glasgow Doors Open Day Festival again this year. We threw open our doors on Friday 15th September and welcomed around 100 visitors, many of whom had never been before. They had the chance to explore our historic venue, including the magnificent Grand Hall, Director's Room and Lord Dean's room, and to discover the nature and extent of our charitable giving. As a result of these efforts, as well as in-House events, we are delighted to see a continuous rise in membership numbers.

One of the year's highlights was undoubtedly

the sell-out Christmas Concert, where the children of St Denis' Primary School delighted us with an evening of festive entertainment worthy of a professional stage. It was the perfect conclusion to a year that saw the House become even more relevant to the people of and visitors to Glasgow.



Frances McMenamin,
Chair – Membership and Development Committee

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2023

The Finance Committee plays a crucial role in managing the House’s financial position through rigorous budgeting and management account activities.

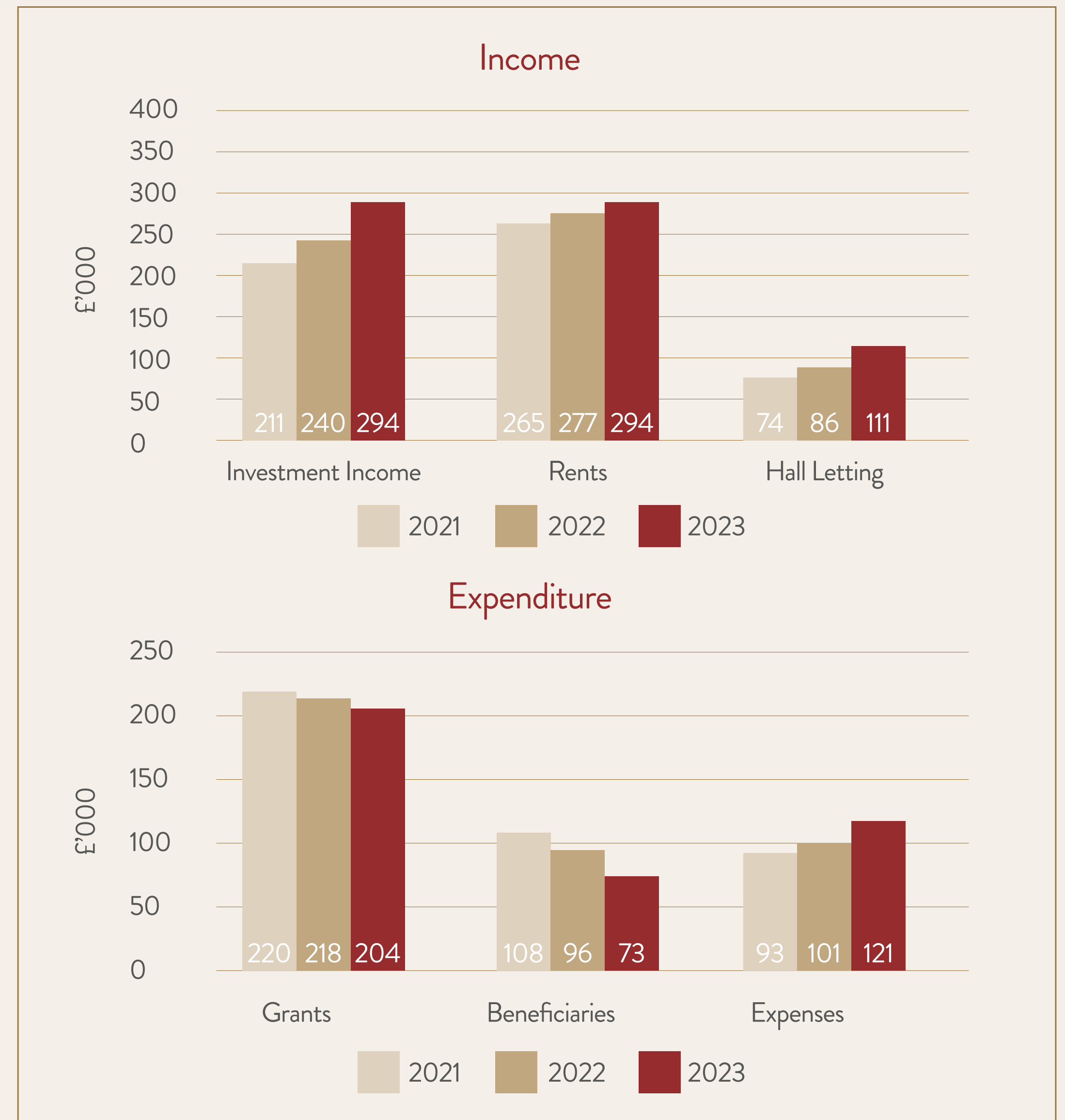
Income from the three main sources increased across all principal areas, reaching pre-pandemic levels. However, the ability to rent office space and grow this important revenue stream remains subdued, and investment is required to enhance the House’s attractiveness.

The Committee continues to collaborate closely with the Property and Capital Projects Committee on potential developments of the House premises. This joint effort aims to maintain a sound financial position and secure long-term income growth from the premises.

The Investment Sub Committee worked closely with the Investment Managers to review the House Portfolios. Each portfolio saw growth aligning with the long-term objectives set within the policy mandates.



Kerr Luscombe,
Chair - Finance Committee



FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT...

The Merchants House, at its present site on the corner of Glasgow's famous George Square, represents a beacon of hope in troubled times.

One of our core objectives has always been to help those local charities who do so much good in Glasgow and its surrounding area. The city, in common with many others, contains many such charities, which in these stringent times rely on financial support to continue and expand their essential work within the community.

These grants are only possible thanks to the generous legacies of our forebears. The many inscribed boards around the Grand Hall are visible testaments to this past generosity. These legacies have, in turn, allowed us to occupy the Merchants House, from which we derive further rental income to distribute as grants. We are lucky to have received very kind and thoughtful legacies given over the last few years. This vital continuing philanthropy allows us to continue to help the most deserving local charities.

We invite you to join this philanthropic group of predominantly former directors, members, and other supporters of the Merchants House. If you have already made provision in your will to leave a legacy, then we are most grateful to you.

However, if you would like to discuss how you can help by considering a legacy in your will, then please get in touch with us to discuss further or arrange a meeting. We would love to hear from you.



Please contact:

Craig Vickery, Chief Executive, at
Craig.Vickery@merchantshouse.org.uk
or phone on 0141 221 8272 if you have any
questions or require further information.