

SUSSEX HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

ROTTEN ROW HOUSE, ROTTEN ROW, LEWES, EAST SUSSEX BN7 1TN

Registered Charity No 282159

Co-Presidents: the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, the Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex,
the Bishop of Chichester, the Bishop of Arundel and Brighton

Hon Chairman: Mr Christopher Whittick DL, MA, FSA, FRHistS

Dear Friends

Sussex Historic Churches Trust – Ride and Stride 2024

I am writing to you thanks to the kindness of Church House, which has kindly agreed to distribute messages directly to parishes on the Trust's behalf.

You will all be familiar with the Sussex Historic Churches Trust, which in 2023 made grants totalling £87,500 to fourteen places of worship across the county.

Our ability to provide such assistance relies directly on the success of Ride and Stride, our annual fundraising event, which this year will take place on Saturday 14 September.

The Ride and Stride model means that 50% of the sums raised goes straight back to the church nominated by the participants, and 50% augments the Trust's funds, allowing it to make grants.

Until 2023, the event has been run by three tiers of County, Divisional and Area organisers, who have distributed the necessary forms and paperwork by hand. Largely owing to the age of the people involved, this system has become hard to sustain, and what is more the amount of paper – over ten thousand sheets – and the mileage involved is becoming increasingly difficult to justify on environmental grounds.

This year, following the lead of our neighbouring Trusts, we will be communicating directly with parishes, first to establish your level of participation in the event, then to provide ideas and assistance with means of fundraising which do not involve cycling or walking, and finally to distribute this year's forms.

We very much hope that with your help we can significantly increase the number of parishes taking part in the event; there are 465 churches in the diocese, but in 2023 significantly fewer than 20% took part. Between them they raised £23,000, half of which has been returned to parishes. In comparison, our neighbours in Kent raised £135,000 in 2022, enabling them to distribute £136,000 in grants.

There is huge scope to improve our performance in Sussex, which will have a profound impact on our ability to help parishes, and provide a direct and immediate return to those who are able to take part.

Meanwhile I would encourage you to write to me, rather than to Church House, at whittickpalmer@gmail.com – to discuss any aspect of what we have in mind for the future of fundraising for the [Sussex Historic Churches Trust](#).

Yours sincerely

Christopher Whittick, DL MA FSA FRHistS Chair of Trustees

Sara Stonor, DL Vice Chair of Trustees`