

Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust

Charity No 1075736

Trustees' Annual Report For the Year ended 28th February 2013

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Wendy Johnson
R John Longstreeth
Graham Mowbray (Treasurer)
Mark P Robbins
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Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust

Charity No 1075736

Trustees' Annual Report

For the Year ended 28th February 2013

The Trustees of the Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust present their Annual Report for the year ended 28th February 2013. The report has been prepared taking into account the guidance from the Charity Commission that the Charities Act 2011 requires all registered charities to prepare a Trustees' Annual Report, and in particular, the checklist for the simplified annual report for small charities set out in table 11 of appendix 5 of the Charities SORP (2005).



The Entrance to the Millennium Green, showing the Notice Board and the boardwalk round the moat

Structure, Governance and Management

The Trust is an unincorporated charity, set up by a Declaration of Trust dated 17th March 1999, and whose principal asset is approximately 8.7 acres of public open space divided into two fields (“the Millennium Green”), the deeds of which are vested in the Official Custodian of Charities.

The Millennium Green has an historic moat and fish ponds, “ridge and furrow” landscape and a variety of natural habitats as well as communal areas, all maintained for the benefit of the inhabitants of Inkberrow and the surrounding area. A large part of the first field is covered by a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) designation under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, with management via English Heritage. In addition, the archaeology of the whole site is protected under a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement with Natural England, which started in 2009 and runs for 10 years until 2019. This is primarily to protect and improve this grassland - the Millennium Green is designated a Special Wildlife Site for its relict neutral lowland wildflower grassland.

The Trustees whose names are listed on page 1 are responsible for the management of the Millennium Green. Trustees serve for four year terms and may be reappointed. New Trustees are sought by the existing Trustees, in line with paragraph 6.4 of the Trust Deed, with one Trustee being appointed by Inkberrow Parish Council.

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the Charity as set out in its governing document are to provide and maintain an open space to be known as the Millennium Green for the benefit of the Inhabitants of Inkberrow and to be used as an area for informal recreation, other leisure-time occupations and community events.

The aims of the Millennium Green are to

- be open and evident to visitors to the locality as well as Inhabitants;
- be able to be enjoyed by people of all ages and physical abilities;
- be an attractive place for people to take air and exercise and pursue leisure activities;
- include an area suitable for community events and celebrations;
- include significant 'natural' areas where people can enjoy nature and wildlife;
- make a positive contribution to the local environment and respect the established character of the area;

The Trustees acknowledge that they have paid due regards to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. During the year, the Trustees' main activities undertaken in relation to the objects have been to ensure that the Millennium Green is open to the public as described above and to maintain and improve the biodiversity of the site. All activities are directed towards making the Green an attractive place to visit and towards showing the public that it is cared for and therefore can be used safely and enjoyably.

A winter's scene in Jan 2013 – the site is ideal for families to enjoy sledding



Achievements and Performance

The Trustees are pleased to report that despite much adverse weather in 2012 - particularly the very wet conditions - the Millennium Green has been open every day of the year, for the benefit of the public of Inkberrow and other visitors.

The Green is managed mainly by volunteers. Working parties take place on the second and fourth Sunday of every month at 10.00 a.m., with a schedule of work being set out on a seasonal basis, usually six months in advance. The main aims of the working party are to maintain the Green for the easy access and enjoyment of the inhabitants and, as set out in the HLS agreement, to improve the quality and extend the range of the wildflower grassland. Work involves grass maintenance, with hay cutting and some strimming contracted out, the care of trees and other wildlife, hedge and shrub maintenance, keeping brambles and nettles from becoming too dominant, and maintaining built features, such as the boardwalk, gates and fences at the site. Despite the poor weather and ground conditions, good progress has been made during the year.

The Trustees are immensely grateful to Wendy Johnson for her hard work and dedication in organizing the working parties, and also in liaising with contractors and local public bodies, including the effort put into the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) contract with Natural England, which has guided much of the work done at the Millennium Green and has substantially supported the finances of the Green in recent years.

A major project undertaken in the year was the restoration of a 12 metre section of the moat bank, eroded by ducks and dogs, using a specialist contractor and natural materials. Being part of the SAM, the work was done with the Consent and supervision of English Heritage. The drainage in the first field has also been extensively discussed, and again SAM Consent has been obtained. The work has not yet be carried

out, due primarily to the very wet winter conditions and discussion amongst Trustees as to the best approach. It is possible that a fresh Consent may be required. To support this work, the Trust has applied for and has received a grant of £1,200 from the Rowlands Trust, for which the Trustees are very grateful.

Another major project was the completion of the 3 year Scrub Clearance plan under the HLS agreement largely organized by Wendy and Cyril Johnson, with the help of John Tilt (the warden of Grafton Wood) with his brush cutter, and our own volunteers, which has enabled the Trust to claim a capital works payment of £744.50 from Natural England.

On the downside, some areas for public recreation have not been fully maintained during the year, due again to the wet conditions and the difficulty of grass maintenance at appropriate times. Due to the wet conditions, it was not possible to have either amenity area cut early but Chris Bonehill kept the paths cut regularly, enabling visitors to walk on a variety of routes round the first field on relatively short grass. The original working party plan for Sundays was reviewed in mid-June as the wet weather had prevented some things being done and had caused others to become more urgent – such as the prolific growth of nettles, thistles and cleavers. By the end of August the working party had improved both fields. In field two, the grassland has again been well-trimmed by nine sheep, which were brought in during July and will stay until March 2013, and the silt heap was cut by our contractor Chris Bonehill in late September. The cutting of the main areas of grassland in field one for hay, which normally takes place fairly soon after 15 July, was eventually done at the beginning of September after the wettest summer for 100 years.

The HLS contract includes visitor parties, educational visits and during the year Trustees have especially welcomed the pupils of Inkberrow First School for outdoor classes focusing on appreciation of wildlife.

The wildflowers such as Bedstraw, Agrimony and Meadow Vetchling did very well in spite of the extra-long grass – one group of school children found 9 different yellow flowers near the upper seat. Over the summer there were visits from three classes at Inkberrow School, and the School is now including these as part of their curriculum. There were also visits from 3 adult groups, guides and Brownies.

The total number of volunteer man hours over the year was in excess of 350 - mostly by 5 or 6 regulars. Trustees are conscious that there may be a need to use more contractors in the future. In June, Trustees took a display stand in the marquee erected on the Village Green to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Interest in the Millennium Green was good though no new volunteers were signed up.



A working party constructs a new bridge in field two

Photographs in this report are courtesy of Rod Talboys, to whom the Trustees are also grateful for construction and maintenance work during the year, and for his work on the website.

In the meantime, the winter works programme continues, with bramble cutting, pond, hedge and barrier maintenance. In summary, Trustees consider that they have met all the requirements of the HLS agreement, and that overall the Millennium Green is looking better than ever despite the wet season.

One of the final actions of the Trust's year was the clearing and maintenance of the site's bird nesting boxes, in mid-February. During winter, Trustees have also re-commenced the development of a website to promote the Green and have contributed to the Inkberrow Village website, with a feature on the Green.

Financial Review

Total Incoming resources during the year were £4,655.44 (2011-12: £3,229.52) and expenditure £2,678.95 (2011-12: £2,253.81). The Trust therefore managed a surplus of income over expenditure in 2012-13 of £1,976.49 (2011-12: £975.71).

The Trustees acknowledge with thanks the funds received from Natural England and from the Rowlands Trust. They are also grateful for local donations received from Inkberrow Horticultural Society, the Inkberrow W.I., the Luncheon Club and 'What's On' publications.

At present the Trust currently has free cash reserves of £8,237.65 (2011-12: £6,256.40). This includes the grant received from the Rowlands Trust, which will be spent early in 2013-14 in support of the proposed work on replacing the broken drainage in field one.

The Trustees' policy on reserves is that all the Charity's funds are unrestricted. The Trustees consider that the funds shown in the Income and Expenditure account and Bank Reconciliation are sufficient to cover expenditure in the foreseeable future in pursuit of maintaining the Millennium Green for public benefit. The land of the Millennium Green was acquired without any debt, and the Trustees also confirm that the Trust has no long-term debts.

At present, within the unrestricted reserves, no designated reserves are held, though the Trustees are considering the need for a designated reserve in order to pay for future major works, such as the eventual replacement of the boardwalk around the moat.

The Trustees are most grateful to Graham Mowbray for his careful stewardship of the Trust's finances.

Authorized to be signed on behalf of the Trustees

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T J Patrickson
Trustee
12th March 2013