

Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust
Trustees' Annual Report for the Year ended 28 February 2017

Reference and Administrative Information:

Registered Charity 1075736

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Trustees	Dinah Griffin	Parish Council nominee
	Wendy Johnson	Work party organiser
	Denise Jones	
	Timothy Patrickson	Chairman
	Jennifer Powis	
	Mark Robbins	
	Gareth Thomas	
	John Tromans	Vice-Chairman
David Willis	Treasurer	

Minutes Secretary Gabriel Allison

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Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust

Trustees' Annual Report for the Year ended 28 February 2017

The Trustees of Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust present their Report for the year ended 28 February 2017. The Report takes account of the guidance from the Charity Commission that the Charities Act 2011 requires all registered charities to prepare a Trustees' Annual Report, and in particular, Section 162 of the Act.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Trust is an unincorporated charity, set up by a Declaration of Trust dated 17 March 1999. Its principal asset is land of approximately 8.7 acres divided into two fields ("the Millennium Green"), the deeds of which are vested in the Official Custodian of Charities. The land is a public open space. The Millennium Green has an historic moat and fish ponds, "ridge and furrow" landscape and a variety of natural habitats and is well situated near the centre of the village of Inkberrow for informal recreation.

Part of Field 1 is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) under the [Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979](#), supervised via Historic England (formerly English Heritage). In addition, the archaeology of the whole site is protected under a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement with Natural England. This started on 1 June 2009 and runs for 10 years until 2019. The HLS Agreement is primarily to protect and improve the wildflower grassland and to improve the biodiversity of the whole site, as well as to offer educational access. The Millennium Green is designated a Special Wildlife Site for its relict neutral lowland flower-rich grassland.

The Trustees 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.

New Trustees are given an appropriate induction, consisting of meetings with other Trustees including the Chair and the Work Party Coordinator. They also receive a copy of the Trust Deed and other relevant documentation such as Minutes. They are also shown around the Green, to familiarise them with current work and future plans.

There were no changes to Trustees during the year.

The Green is maintained for the benefit of the inhabitants of Inkberrow and the surrounding area by regular volunteer work parties. These meet on the second and fourth Sundays of every month. The Trustees continue to be grateful to Wendy Johnson for the organisation of the work parties. Trustees are also grateful to the volunteers who help at the Green, with work parties and school visits.

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 occupations and community events.

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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 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 can be used safely and enjoyably. The Trustees meet at least four times a year, including a regular Trustee site visit in summer, to inspect the Green in detail and make recommendations.

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 character of the area;

Risk Assessment

During the year, the Trustees have considered the risks to which the Trustees and the public are exposed, and have acted upon them. An example of this is the safety and maintenance of the main boardwalk. This has been a factor in the consideration of replacement of the boardwalk structure. In respect of trees, due to good maintenance in prior years, the Green has stood up well to the various "named storms" in the year, and no tree surgery has been required.

During the year, Trustees inadvertently exposed themselves to a serious risk that should have been foreseen, when Historic England (HE) drew attention, on a visit, to the temporary moat bridge supports that had been erected on the moat banks without formal DCMS Consent under the 1979 Act. HE has powers to pursue criminal charges, but decided not to take action, since the work was in the wider interest of maintaining the moat island effectively. Instead, they sent a letter 'opening and closing' the case. However, the correspondence remains on file, and in future Trustees and volunteers will be careful to seek Consent where work is carried out within the SAM area.

Arising from this, Trustees have decided to consider entering a Management Agreement with Historic England, and a draft is awaited from the HE Birmingham office. Consent has also been sought to rebuild the entrance gate, which falls within the SAM area and since the year end, the Trust has been formally notified by HE that this has been granted by DCMS.

Achievements and Performance

The Trustees are pleased to report that the Millennium Green has been open every day of the year, for the benefit of the public of Inkberrow and other visitors.

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In April 2016 the Duckworth Worcestershire Trust (DWT) came to rebuild the main steps in Field 2. This turned out to be a bigger job than anticipated - Trustees contributed about 40 man hours and the DWT over 60. The material cost was supported by a generous grant from the Rowlands Trust.

As mentioned above, a major task for 2016-17 was the clearance of growth on the moat island. It was decided at the Spring 2016 Trustees' meeting that the safest method to bridge the moat would be the construction of a temporary, removable bridge, using 6 metres planks to span the narrowest point. This was seen as much safer, and easier to purchase and manage, than the floats and planks used in the past. Cyril Johnson designed and built the parts for the bridge and abutments, supported by expertise from David Willis.

The whole structure was tried out in Aug 2016 and the dismantled bridge stored on the island. It proved invaluable when the DWT were eventually able to make their second visit this year, bringing two staff and four volunteers in Feb 2017 to clear brambles and debris from felled diseased trees on the island.

There were four school visits again over the summer, with groups of children studying ponds and habitats and being 'nature detectives'. The two visits before the end of May enabled the Trust to meet the minimum of four visits for the 2015-16 HLS year. The two in June/July will count towards the 2016-17 HLS year. There were 2 more visits (in Oct and Nov) "exploring the Millennium Green".

Work in the spring and summer of 2016 was aimed mainly at keeping the site well maintained and accessible: bramble cutting, removing nettles and thistles, strimming around seats, tables and walkways, keeping steps clear, and removing litter (especially drinks cans). Specific tasks included the clearance of a large area of brambles that had encroached down the west bank of Field 1, and the development of better access points around the larger pond, to help children on school nature visits.

Professional contractors were used for major grass cutting of pathways and level land. This was done once a month during the growing season. Professional strimming of the steep land in Field 1 was also carried out. The cost of this grass maintenance in the year was £820 (2016: £842). By the end of summer the Trust had met most of the HLS requirements, with all the grass cut and remaining short.

In June and July the wildflower grassland in Field 2 was exceptionally attractive. The key flowers such as Meadow Vetchling, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Agrimony, Lady's Bedstraw, Yellow Rattle and Knapweed had spread and there was more Field Scabious, though this is slow to spread in either field.

Nine sheep returned in July to Field 2, provided by a local farmer. They have been very effective in keeping the grass grazed. Unfortunately the farmer's plans for sheep management were temporarily disrupted by an outbreak of Orf disease in September - a viral infection causing blisters and bleeding mainly around the mouth and nose. Trustees put up signs and took other necessary steps to warn the public. The sheep were treated but the infection had to 'run its course' and took some weeks to clear. The lambs were then removed and the ram introduced to the remaining 5 ewes. These 6 sheep then stayed over the winter of 2016-17, and the Field 2 is now in good condition for the 2017 season.

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Winter 2016-17 work included cutting round the moat banks, willow herb clearance, and cutting back the roadside hedge. Two new nest boxes were put up. A full survey of the boundaries was done, to create a list of maintenance tasks. The DWT have offered to come on Monday 22 May 2017 to do most of these repairs, particularly fence posts and the Field 2 back steps. Some repairs, e.g., the entrance gate posts, will be done professionally, after Consent from HE. Over the winter the work party welcomed a new Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme volunteer, a local boy of 15 doing his bronze award at Pershore High School.

During the year, a major fundraising programme was approved by Trustees to support the replacement of the Boardwalk in the summer of 2017. At the year end, the Trust had confirmed grants of £10,000 from the Tesco Bags of Life Scheme, and £2,000 from the Rowlands Trust. Appeals to the Singer Foundation and the George Collins Charity were unsuccessful, and the outcome of others was waited. A total of at least £21,000 is required to complete the full project.

New volunteers from the village are still required to help with work parties and general maintenance.

However, the total volunteer hours worked in the year was in excess of 500 (2016: 400). The annual butterfly count and fungus record update were also carried out during the year. The leaflet dispenser continues to prove popular, with stocks being replenished regularly. Trustees always try to speak to visitors and get a lot of positive feedback.

Financial Review

Incoming resources in the year were **£12,321** (2016: £4,327). Expenditure was **£2,199** (2016: £3,019). The Trust therefore made a surplus in 2016-7 of **£10,122** (2016: surplus of £1,308). However, this surplus includes grants received in the year towards the major capital expenditure relating to the new boardwalk in the 2017-18 financial year, as follows:

Boardwalk grants received in the year:

Tesco Bags of Life Scheme	£7,500	(75% of their £10,000 committed)
Rowlands Trust	£2,000	
.....		
Total	£9,500	

Taking out the funds applied for and received in the year for the boardwalk, the net income was £2,821, comprising £1,600 from Trusts and donations, and £1,221 from the Rural Payment Agency for the HLS programme. With the expenditure of £2,199, this gave an 'operating surplus' for the year of **£622**. Whilst this figure is satisfactory, it might easily have been turned to a deficit if (for example) some emergency tree surgery had been needed after one of the "named storms". So the Trust accounts should be read in this light.

The detail of the £1,600 above was as follows:

Ratcliff Foundation	£500	to repairs and materials for the moat bridge
Rowlands Trust	£500	to the replacement steps in Field 2
Singer Foundation	£500	to support site maintenance for the public
Inkberrow Sinfonia	£100	to support site maintenance for the public

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Trustees had designated £2,000 in 2014-15 to start a Fund for major repairs. To this has been added the above sums from Tesco and the Rowlands Trust (£9,500) giving a total of £11,500 of designated funds held as at 28.02.17. Undesignated free cash reserves at 28.02.17 were £4,257 (2016: £3,635).

Total Funds at 28.02.17 were £15,757 (2016: £5,635). The Trustees' policy on reserves is that all Trust funds are unrestricted. They consider there are sufficient funds to cover expenditure in the foreseeable future to maintain the Millennium Green for the public benefit and to meet the HLS requirements.

The Trustees acknowledge with sincere thanks the funds received to date from the Tesco Bags of Life Scheme (administered by Groundworks), and from the Rowlands Trust, for the boardwalk project. They also gratefully acknowledge the grants referred to above from the Ratcliff Foundation, the Rowlands Trust, the Singer Foundation and the donation from Inkberrow Sinfonia.

The land of the Millennium Green was acquired without any debt, and the Trustees also confirm that the Trust has no long-term debts. Once again, the Trustees are grateful to the Treasurer David Willis for his work in overseeing the finances and insurance.

Authorized to be signed on behalf of the Trustees

T J Patrickson
Chairman
20 March 2017