

Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust

Trustees' Annual Report for the Year ended 28 February 2019

Reference and Administrative Information:

Registered Charity 1075736

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Inkberrow
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Trustees	James Booton	<i>(Appointed 21 January 2019)</i>
	Dinah Griffin	Parish Council nominee
	Wendy Johnson	Work party organiser
	Denise Jones	<i>(Resigned 26 March 2018)</i>
	Frances Merrony	<i>(Appointed 10 September 2018)</i>
	Timothy Patrickson	Chairman
	Jennifer Powis	
	Mark Robbins	
	Gareth Thomas	
	John Tromans	Vice-Chairman
David Willis	Treasurer	

Minutes Secretary Gabriel Allison

Solicitors Kerwoods
7 Church Road
Redditch B97 4AD

Bankers Barclays
Leicester
LE87 2BB

The Trustees of Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust present their Report for the year ended 28 February 2019. 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 in total divided into two fenced 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, MG5 grassland and a variety of natural habitats. It is situated near the centre of the village of Inkberrow, Worcestershire.

The Trustees 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.

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A 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 31 May 2019 (now confirmed - to be extended to 31 May 2020). 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 Green is maintained for the benefit of the inhabitants of Inkberrow and the surrounding area by volunteer work parties, on the second and fourth Sundays of every month. The Trustees are very grateful to Wendy Johnson for the organisation of the work parties. They generate team spirit and a sense of community, and ensure that the right maintenance and improvements are done at the right time of year.



Common Spotted Orchid - Dactylorhiza fuchsia
June 2018: photo: D Willis

Trustees are also grateful to the volunteers who help at the Green, with the work parties and with visits of the children from Inkberrow First School. The Trust actively encourages students doing Duke of Edinburgh Awards to undertake their volunteering for Bronze, Silver or Gold and is very pleased to have had three students from Alcester Grammar School participating in 2018-19.

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the Trust 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.

The aims of the Millennium Green as set out in the Trust Deed 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;

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 and well maintained as above, to raise funds and carry out necessary tree surgery, to encourage the D of E students and to maintain and improve the biodiversity of the site.

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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 Trust has complied with all the requirements of the HLS Agreement. The Trustees meet at least four times a year, including a regular Trustee site inspection visit in summer, to look at the Green in detail and make recommendations.

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: major tree surgery was undertaken; improved fencing in Field 2 has been constructed to stop the escape of sheep; and a seat was replaced promptly following suspected vandalism. To improve working relationships with the statutory body, Trustees decided in 2017-18 to consider entering a Management Agreement with Historic England – though a draft is still awaited from the HE Birmingham office.

No activities are undertaken which might disturb the ground in the SAM area without prior Consent.

Trustee resignation and appointment

During the spring, the Trustees were sorry to lose Neen Jones, who was relocating away from the village. In the autumn, they welcomed Fran Merrony as a new Trustee. The connection with Inkberrow First School continues to be regarded as important to Trustees and the appointment of a second new Trustee - James Booton - at the January meeting, will cement this connection.

As a strategic objective, to manage ongoing and future retirements and keep the Millennium Green active for the next generation, Trustees will consider appointing two further Trustees in 2019-20.

Safeguarding

All school visits from Inkberrow First School are supervised by teachers; the D of E student are under the supervision of their scheme, and of the work party organiser. Trustees are satisfied that there is no requirement for safeguarding checks on any volunteers or Trustees of the charity.

Achievements and Performance

The Trustees are pleased to report that the Millennium Green was open every day of the year, for the benefit of the public of Inkberrow and other visitors. Working parties have again followed seasonal work plans, so that each Sunday working party has a clear objective.

The year started with heavy snow on two occasions in March – Storm Emma (“the beast from the east”) at the beginning of the month, and the “mini-beast” on 17/19 March. The latter meant that the planned visit of the Duckworth Worcestershire Trust was postponed, though this was rearranged for 23 April, when their volunteers carried out substantial repairs to the south fence in Field 1 and did other maintenance in Field 2.

In the spring and summer of 2018, the fortnightly working parties were, as usual, aimed at keeping the site well maintained and accessible. In March and April, working parties concentrated on tree pruning, particularly the sycamore by the entrance and a large, overhanging hawthorn near the steps in Field 2. Litter clearance is always a chore, and sadly, needs doing every month. The party also cleared the stream channel in Field 2 and repaired some casual vandalism to the stone seat. Grass was strimmed early to as to keep on top of the ‘community’ areas and the seat surrounds, and our regular contractor

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cut the main paths throughout the growing season – though not every month, due to the extreme dry weather.

In the summer, the Trust entered its work under the Community Group category of the Wychavon DC Intelligently Green Awards and was pleased to be “shortlisted” at the award ceremony at Worcestershire Wildlife Trust’s Lower Smite Farm on 7 June. This type of activity requires effort but keeps the name of the Green in the public eye with the local authorities.

Back at the Green, on the wildlife front, duck ‘families’ came and went with varying degrees of success. Of the four or five broods of Mallard ducklings born and raised at the moat, the last family – nine ducklings in late May and June – were the most successful – seemingly because the female mallard kept very close to them. A late brood was born in August but few survived. In June, two ash saplings in the copse showing signs of ‘ash dieback’ (caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) were cut out and removed from the Green site for destruction.

The new boardwalk - in its first full year - was maintained, and a small repair done in the spring, where a wooden rail had warped and split. A second gate was also put in to the boardwalk fence, to help access to the moat and the island. At the Trustees’ annual walk around the site on 11 June, various actions were noted, and the Trustees welcomed prospective Trustee Fran Merrony for the first time.

School nature visits in May and June were a great success. The Trust regards the contact with Inkberrow First School as very important. As mentioned, Trustees were pleased to welcome James Booton as a new Trustee (James is also a Local Governor of IFS) and to report that one of the teachers has agreed to be the regular liaison with the school. The children enjoy their visits and IFS is keen to continue them.

In late June and in July, our ‘signature’ marbled white butterflies again appeared – initially seen in the flower rich top area of Field 2, and then on the banks of Field 1. Cutting of the moat banks commenced and the paths were again cut and/or strimmed. In late June and early July we enjoyed an exceptional warm period of dry weather for some three weeks. The grassland bloomed with yellow rattle, ladies’ bedstraw and other seasonal flowers. Nettles were cut back appropriately and a final school visit was hosted in July. The preparation of Field 2 continued in July – in particular, the pulling of thistles. On 22 July, Field 1 was cut for hay by our new contractor, Tieren Price. After five weeks of hot dry weather it was a relief to see this done successfully – and the hay was tedded and bailed within the week.



Hay-baling on the Green – July 2018. Picture: T Patrickson.

Fundraising from local charitable trusts has continued – this year, primarily for the anticipated professional tree surgery. Successful applications to the Blakemore Foundation, the C B & H H Taylor 1984 Trust, the Heart of England Foundation (Harry Payne Fund), the G J W Turner Trust and the Dumbreck Charity enabled the tree surgery to go ahead – with two substantial trees being felled on the Church Hill for safety reasons and others on the Green or over the road also being cut and reshaped.

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The Trustees are very grateful to the above Trusts for their support. The seasonal storms also produced a requirement to clear up fallen or damaged boughs from time to time.

The illustrations below show the scale of the professional tree surgery - note the man at the top of the tree and the man on the ground in the left-hand picture:



Tree Surgery 2018 Pictures: T Patrickson

In late August, professional strimming of the slope in Field 1 was carried out and the hay raked up. In line with the annual maintenance programme, Field 2 was cleared of remaining thistles ready for sheep to return to the field: five were introduced to the Field at the end of September, and four more, including a ram, in late November. In both fields during 2018, willow herb grew strongly, and action was taken in the autumn to pull up unwanted plants to reduce its spread.

In the autumn the Duckworth Worcestershire Trust brought a team to do the periodic maintenance of the moat island. This was successfully carried out, with the erection of the temporary bridge over the moat and disposal of all waste material. The Trustees are grateful for the commitment and hard work of James Birbeck and his DWT volunteers.

Winter 2018-19 work included cutting back the hedge between Field 1 and Field 2, the roadside hedge, clearing brambles and saplings from the Copse and from Field 2, reinforcing fences and other annual maintenance. Nest boxes were cleared in February, with extra volunteer support.

The total volunteer hours, including fundraising, worked in the year was in excess of 550 (2018: 500+). 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.

Financial Review

Income in the year was £4,669 (2018: £14,496). As mentioned, the Trust is grateful to the five local charitable trusts that supported the appeal for the tree surgery. The work put in by Wendy Johnson to comply with, and obtain income from, our Higher Level Stewardship agreement was once again

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invaluable. The fund-raising evening hosted by Rosemary Morris and Bas Yates was very well attended and contributed significantly to Trust funds in the year.

Expenditure was £2,954 (2018: £24,200). The Trust therefore made a surplus in 2018-19 of £1,715 (2018: deficit of (£9,514)). This surplus is regarded by Trustees as satisfactory. The variance between current and prior years is mainly explained by the major capital expenditure relating to the new boardwalk, which was constructed in October 2017.

Undesignated free cash reserves at 28.02.19 were £7,768 (2018: £6,053). As no funds were designated at 28.02.19, total funds at the year-end were also £7,768 (2018: £6,053).

The accounts do not value the Fixed Assets: the main asset is the land, which is vested with the Charity Commission custodian.

The Trustees' policy on reserves is that all Trust funds are unrestricted. They consider there are enough funds to cover expenditure in the foreseeable future to maintain the Millennium Green for the public benefit and to meet the HLS requirements.

The land of the Millennium Green was acquired without any debt, and the Trustees also confirm that the Trust has no long-term debts. 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

25 March 2019