

# Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust

## Trustees' Annual Report for the Year ended 28 February 2022

The Trustees of Inkberrow Millennium Green Trust present their Report for the year ended 28 February 2022, in line with guidance from the Charity Commission on Section 162 of the Charities Act 2011.

### Reference and Administrative Information:

**Registered Charity** 1075736

**Principal Office** 3 Poplar Piece  
Inkberrow  
Worcester WR7 4JD

**e-mail** [mail@inkberrowmilgreen.co.uk](mailto:mail@inkberrowmilgreen.co.uk)      **Website:** [www.inkberrowmilgreen.co.uk](http://www.inkberrowmilgreen.co.uk)

<b>Trustees</b>	James Booton	
	Dinah Griffin	Parish Council nominee
	Wendy Johnson	Work party manager
	Edward Manns	Treasurer
	Frances Merrony	
	Timothy Patrickson	Chairman
	Dr Jane Richardson	<i>(appointed 31 Jan 2022)</i>
	Dr Mark Robbins	
Gareth Thomas	<i>(resigned 22 Jun 2021)</i>	
John Tromans	<i>(resigned 11 Mar 2021)</i>	

**Clerk to Trustees** Gordon Allison

<b>Advisers</b>	Gabriel Allison	Jenny Powis
	John Tromans	Roger Winn

<b>Solicitors</b>	Kerwoods	<b>Bankers</b>	Barclays
	7 Church Road		Leicester
	Redditch B97 4AD		LE87 2BB

### 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 c.8.7 acres divided into two fenced fields (“the Millennium Green”, “the Green”), situated in the village of Inkberrow, Worcestershire. The title to the land is vested in the Official Custodian of Charities, by an Order of the Charity Commission dated 17 August 2000. (The Official Custodian is a member of the Charity Commission’s staff. This service simplifies ownership of charity land - for example, new deeds are not needed when trustees change).

The land is a public open space. It features a historic moat and fishponds, ridge and furrow, MG5 grassland and other habitats. The Trustees are responsible for the management of the Green. They 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 induction, meeting other Trustees including the chairman and the work party manager. They receive a copy of the Trust Deed and other relevant documents and are shown around the Green. The Trustees met five times in the 2021-22 year, including one full site inspection.

The Trust’s overall regulator is the Charity Commission for England & Wales. In addition, there are agreements with, and responsibilities to, both DEFRA / Rural Payments Agency (with advice available from Natural England) and Historic England (HE - formerly English Heritage). In respect of Natural

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England, the whole of the Green is shown on DEFRA Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) maps as a as land-based / agri-environment scheme under Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship. In respect of Historic England, part of Field 1 is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) under the 1979 Act. The archaeology of the whole site is also protected under the HLS agreement.

The agreement with Natural England, which started on 1 June 2009 and runs (with extensions now administered by the RPA) until 31 May 2023, is to protect and improve the wildflower grassland and the biodiversity of the whole site, and to offer educational access. The Millennium Green is designated a Local Wildlife Site for its relict neutral lowland flower-rich grassland.

The Green is maintained by volunteer work parties, which meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month. The Trustees are grateful to Wendy Johnson for the organisation and management of the work parties, and to the Advisers and working volunteers who help maintain the site.

The Trust encourages local students doing Duke of Edinburgh Awards to do their volunteering at the Green, and children from Inkberrow Primary School (IPS) come in year groups to learn about habitats.

### **Trustee appointments and resignations**

At the first Ordinary meeting on 22 March 2021, as mandated by the Trust Deed, the Trustees reconfirmed the ideal level of 10 Trustees. During the year, Mrs Jenny Powis and Mr John Tromans resigned. John was the last remaining 'founder' Trustee, giving a huge contribution over more than twenty years, from working party support, to hedge laying, to sound, impartial advice, and latterly serving as Vice-Chairman. Jenny continues to take an active part in work parties.

Mr Gareth Thomas also decided to retire during the year: Trustees will miss his calm deliberation, his deep expertise in environmental matters and his sound judgment and advice. The continuing Trustees are very grateful for the contributions of Jenny, John and Gareth. A priority has therefore been to advertise for new Trustees with suitable skills and commitment. In January, Trustees welcomed Dr Jane Richardson, whose expertise will be an asset to the Green.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The objects of the Trust are to provide and maintain an open space (the Green) for the benefit of the inhabitants of Inkberrow and for use as an area for informal recreation, other leisure occupations and community events. The aims of the 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 have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. During the ongoing pandemic, the Trustees' have ensured that the Millennium Green is open to the public and well maintained, have raised funds to enable maintenance and improvements for the benefit of the community and the site's biodiversity, and have again involved D of E and IPS pupils.

### **Risk Assessment**

Trustees have considered the risks to which the Trustees and public are exposed and have acted upon them. Notices were posted to help dog walkers avoid harming sheep; fences were maintained; barrier

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tape was put around a damaged seat until it was replaced, and a warning sign was put up at the entrance on the day of the tree surgery. Nothing is undertaken which might disturb the SAM area without prior HE Consent. A Risk Register review is carried out each January.



*The south side of the moat....*



*....on the last day of the old year*

Many people comment that the Green is a beautiful place. All activities are aimed at making it pleasant to visit, to show the public that it is cared for and can be used safely and enjoyably, and to comply with the requirements of the HLS Agreement. It was encouraging to receive feedback recently from a group of 'Archers' enthusiasts visiting the area: "(the group) generally had a lovely time and are grateful to the villagers of Inkberrow for developing and caring for this very special place for everyone to enjoy".

### **Safeguarding**

The site is regularly inspected to ensure its general safety for the public, and appropriate repairs done. School visits from Inkberrow Primary School are supervised by teachers. Duke of Edinburgh students are under the supervision of their scheme, and of the work party organiser. Trustees are therefore satisfied that there is no requirement for safeguarding (DBS) checks on volunteers or Trustees.

### **Achievements through year**

At the start of March 2021, the country was still in 'lockdown' for the pandemic. The Trustees decided that the Green should remain open, in line with other public parks, for permitted daily exercise as set out by the Government. Apart from a series of Atlantic depressions in the second week, March was dry and quiet with high pressure in charge. This also brought a noticeable drop in the moat water level.

Socially distant volunteering continued with removal of invasive brambles and nettles in field 2. The main field 2 steps were refurbished, with weeding, soil removal and fresh ARC chippings. Signs were cleaned and the whole site tidied up for the season. April was drier and cooler than average, with only one day of serious rain - on 10<sup>th</sup>. The small steps in Field 2 were re-laid with hardwood chippings, scrub clearing continued in Field 1 and the paths around the stream in Field 1 were maintained.

In May, Trustees were pleased to welcome Year 5 and the new Year 6 groups from IPS, and also a local group from Broom W.I. By contrast with April, the month was very wet, with cooler temperatures continuing, but the groups enjoyed themselves.

In June, four more year groups from IPS successfully completed visits to the Green. Visits are planned carefully by Wendy Johnson, aided by volunteers and supervised by the Year Teacher and his/her Teaching Assistant, with volunteer parents on occasions.



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*Pond 2 ready for Inkberrow Primary School visit 11 Jun 2021*



*Pupils using the identification 'key'*

The format of the IPS visits varies, but typically will involve the class of 25 to 30 children being split into two groups to look at different habitats on the Green. The picture (*above left*) shows equipment set out at prepared “stations” around Pond 2, ready for children to do ‘pond dipping’ and identify the creatures netted - from a printed, work-through identification ‘key’ (*above right*).

The children learn about the life cycle of the dragonfly and about other creatures in the aquatic environment. They also learn more general skills of how to work together and how to care for living things. At the same time, they have a break from the normal classroom - and some fun. This educational work is a vital way of fulfilling the first ‘aim’ in the Trust Deed - ‘to make a substantial contribution to the life of the whole community’.

June 2021 started warm, and after the May rain, vegetation growth was very strong. Overwintering sheep were removed from the second field on 4 June – later than usual, but there was still plenty for them to eat. The second half of the month was cooler and wetter. The second Trustees’ meeting of the year, with the site inspection, was held on 21 June. Trustees reviewed the requirement for additional Trustees to be recruited and agreed to examine skills required. They also agreed to spot-spraying in Field 2. (A third ordinary Trustees’ meeting was held - indoors again, for the first time - on 4 October, a fourth meeting on 31 January and a fifth (special) meeting on 28 February, both via Zoom).

On 16<sup>th</sup> July, the annual Big Butterfly count was carried out by Wendy Johnson, who recorded a total of 181 butterflies (2020: 130), with the most significant increase being in Meadow Browns. The main grassland in the first field was once again cut by Anthony Steel, during August. Mr Steel was paid for his services, and the hay was baled and removed. Unfortunately, the regular strimming service provided by the Farnsworths was not available this year, but Trustees and volunteers put in a great effort over several sessions to clear the summer’s grass growth from the slopes. In the autumn, attention turned to the second field, and particularly the phenomenal growth of brambles in the year.

Our regular local contractor Chris Bonehill kept the main paths in Field 1 mowed each month of the spring and summer. The litter bin worked well, and Trustees are grateful to Fran Merrony for emptying it and keeping it hygienic. As mentioned, the seasonal maintenance programmes were followed as closely as possible. The Trust’s volunteers worked more than 600 hours in 2021-22 (2020-21: 550+), including fundraising and administration.

An unusual feature of the Green this year – and by chance a valuable educational ‘resource’ – was the arrival of a swarm of honey bees in June 2021. These were not expected to stay long, but did not respond to a ‘bait box’ provided by a local bee-keeper, and within two months it was clear that they

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*Swarm of bees – 23 Jun 2021, Field 1*



*The same swarm – 31 August 2021*

were staying: they developed a significant structure high up on an Ash tree around one of its many woodpecker holes (see *above*). Over the winter of 2021-22 they appear to have retreated inside the tree, keeping warm until outside activity resumes when the temperature reaches a consistent 15°C.

During the October 2021 half term, the Green was part of the Friends of Inkberrow Primary (FOIP) 'Hallowe'en Trial'. This attracted many children and families, searching for spooks and ghouls! The Trust hopes that cooperation with FOIP can be developed in 2022, as it complements the work that IPS does with nature classes and shows families that the Green is an integral part of the community.

Our regular local farmer brought three sheep for the annual grazing of Field 2 on 4 November, and six signs were posted for dog walkers. The signs have proved their worth, reducing issues this year. The overall state of Field 2 going into the winter was better than a year ago, with fewer nettles and thistles. The work parties made good progress on cutting back the strong growth in brambles from summer 2021.

During late autumn and early winter work was carried out to pull nettles and thistles in the second field on the top bank and slope; and in field one, hedges, barriers, brambles, willow herb and general maintenance of the field edges kept work parties busy. There was a steady flow of new work party volunteers in the year, though unfortunately some came and went after a few sessions. December was mild and mainly dry, with high pressure dominating in mid-month, and closing with a very mild spell, with temperatures up to 14° C.

Storms Arwen and Barra in the late autumn did not cause any damage, but then in the week before Christmas, one half of a 40-to-50-foot bifurcated lime tree fell across the full width of the first pond.

Professional tree surgery was carried out on 14 February 2022. The fallen tree was removed, the other half, still standing but rotten at the base, was also felled, and another small nearby tree was removed for safety. Tree surgery is an expensive item for which it is difficult to budget. Fortunately, after a dry January, the ground was reasonably firm. Volunteers tidied the site and made good use of the wood chippings in restoring paths and steps. Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin in late February also passed without damage.



*Tree surgery – expensive and often unpredictable*



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## Financial Review 2021-22

Income: Total Income was £3,298 (2021: £3,283). The sum of £900 was received from Natural England (Rural Payments Agency) for the educational visits in the year. A further sum of £643.16 was received in respect of the Higher-Level Stewardship agreement. The Trustees are again very grateful to Wendy Johnson for her work in complying with the HLS agreement and the income arising from it.

With no major projects this year, fundraising from local charitable trusts was for 'core costs'. Trustees were grateful for a grant of £500 from the GJW Turner Trust, £500 from the Heart of England Community Foundation (Harry Payne Fund), a generous one-off legacy from the estate of local resident Mrs Jill Parton, a gift of quiz winnings from Ms Liz Ferguson and a creative initiative from Mrs G Allison in producing and selling sets of cards featuring photographs of the Green.

Expenditure: The expenditure for grass cutting, insurance, meeting costs, maintenance costs, tree surgery, printing and other core costs came to £2,151 (2021: £1,633).

Net outcome: The Trust therefore made a surplus in 2021-22 of £1,147 (2021: £1,650). The accounts do not value the land or other assets, such as picnic tables, gates and benches or boardwalks. A small petty cash float of £11 (2021: £31) is also retained by the Treasurer.

Designated Reserves: Trustees have considered the Charity Commission Guidance CC19 "Charity Reserves: Building Resilience". The Trustees' policy on reserves is that all Trust funds are unrestricted. At 28 Feb 2022 total reserves amounted to £12,576 (2021: £11,409). The level of reserves at 28 Feb 2021 was more than normal annual expenditure.

Therefore at a meeting in Feb 2022, Trustees resolved to designate a sum of £10,000, to start a fund for future capital / asset costs. A major example of this will be the eventual replacement of the boardwalk - a cost likely to exceed £25,000. In line with CC19, Trustees reserve the right to reallocate this reserve if essential - to allow for unforeseen changes to the Government HLS Scheme, or a funding emergency.

Free Reserves: With the above action, the level of undesignated free reserves (£2,576 at 28 Feb 2022) is approximately 12 months' core running costs (though with the unpredictable nature of storms and tree surgery, this could possibly reduce to some 6 months' only).

Long-term liabilities: The land of the Millennium Green was originally acquired without any debt, and the Trustees also confirm that the Trust is a going concern and has no current long-term debts.

The Trustees are grateful to Edd Manns for his management of the Trust's finances during the year.

## Plans for the future

- To continue fulfil the aims of the Trust and make the Green a beautiful and peaceful place to visit;
- To continue to look for new Trustees;
- To keep abreast of the Government plans including the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS);
- To continue to raise funds from other sources;
- To progress the still unresolved Consent for the Moat with HE;
- To continue to run the IPS habitats programme and encourage IPS staff to take a more active role;
- To consider an appropriate way of marking the Platinum Jubilee.

## Authorized to be signed on behalf of the Trustees

T J Patrickson  
Chairman - 28 March 2022