

The Wye Rural Museum Trust

Reg.Charity No: 1055879

Report of the Trustees for the period 1 March 2020 to 28 February 2021

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Purpose and Governance of the Trust

The Trust was established in 1996 and is Registered Charitable Trust No.1055879.

The objects of the Trust, taken from the Deed, are as follows:

1. General charitable purposes.
2. In particular within the County of Kent:
 - a) The provision of one or more historic, economic and social museums of agriculture and rural life.
 - b) For the benefit of the public generally
 - i) The preservation, maintenance and improvement of any building of beauty or historical or architectural interest.
 - ii) The conservation of natural features of the landscape ecology and character of the area.
 - iii) The furtherance of general educational religious and social amenities.
 - iv) The stimulation of public interest in the history character beauty and wildlife of the area.

The names of Trustees in post at the end of the year are follows:

Nominated: *Mr William Howard* (Ashford Borough Council); *Mr George Jessel DL* (Canterbury Farmers' Club); *Prof John Nightingale*, Chair of Trustees (Cromarty Trust); *Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh* (Kent Archaeological Society)

Co-opted: *Mr Tim Betts*, *Dr. Graham Bradley*; *Dr. John Bulaitis*; *Dr. Jeremy Clarke*; *Mrs Caroline Knight* (appointed 9 March 2020); *Mr John Tomkins*; *Mr Francis Huntington*; *Mr Andrew Linklater*; *The Rt Hon Sir John Mummery DL*; *Dr Alan Rogers*; *Prof Paul Webster*

Mrs Caroline Knight was appointed as a Trustee on 9 March 2020. Her career in publishing and wide experience of governance offered a range of valuable skills to the Trust and, as an immediate neighbour of the museum, the Trustees look forward to her helping the museum build closer ties with both the community in Brook and its medieval church which is situated next to the museum.

On 26 July 2020 Paul Webster relinquished the role of Treasurer and the Trustees appointed Mike Mooney in his place; as Assistant Treasurer Mike had kept the day to day accounts and helped with the preparation of the annual accounts for many years so was already very familiar with the Trust's affairs.

John Nightingale replaced George Jessel as chair of Trustees on 26 July 2020.

George Jessel was appointed as Honorary President on 5 October 2020.

Dr Alan Rogers retired as a Trustee after the year end on 26 April 2021.

Trustees are chosen for the appropriate range of skills they bring to the Trust and their readiness to contribute to its day to day activities. An induction process is now in place. Three meetings of the Trustees were held during the year, two of them by zoom. The Trust has a range of policies in place in keeping with its status as an accredited museum and these include safeguarding, data protection, collection accessibility, conservation and collections care. No reportable incidents occurred during the year.

Current role of the Trust: Public Benefit reporting

The Trust's main work is associated with the ownership, conservation and running of the Agricultural Museum at Brook. The museum's buildings consist of a Grade I listed 14th century manorial barn, a Grade II listed early 19th century oast house and some associated buildings which include one containing a fully equipped Education Room and toilet facilities. The Museum is devoted to items associated with the agricultural history of Kent and the collections, the buildings and the siting of these in an attractive rural area directly fall within the Trust's charitable objects and provide public benefit in terms of public access, conservation and education.

Because the Museum is small, specialised and sited in a rural area with little passing traffic and no public transport, the total number of members of the public benefitting from it is relatively small, but much effort continues to be expended on trying to increase this number and on engaging with the public in different ways. Activities related to this include maintaining close links with the local primary school which include visits to the school with items from the museum; maintaining a website with detailed information on a wide array of objects from the museum's collection; presence at various public events in the area and collaboration with other Kent museums in various educational and public- relations-based activities. The Education Room is also available to outside organisations at very modest cost and has hosted a considerable number of events over the past few years, including several training courses for bee-keepers and periodic use for meetings of local councils.

Although weekly opening hours are limited, the Museum also opens at any time by request for group visits or other public events. Entry fees are set at a low level to avoid exclusion on grounds of cost. Children of 14 and under are admitted free, as are members of the local community in Brook.

Outline of the Period

Within a few weeks of the Trust's year commencing on 1 March 2020, a national lockdown was declared and the Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably dominated the year under review. The Trustees were saddened that they were not able to open the museum as planned or go ahead with a series of events and initiatives that had been carefully planned – building a closer partnership with Brook primary school and reaching out to neighbouring schools, a joint event with the Brook community, a Nightingale lecture at Christ Church, Canterbury in September and much more.

However a number of activities continued despite the pandemic and lockdown. The Trust remotely hosted a couple of interns from Christ Church University; not being able to visit the museum inevitably hampered what they could do but the Trust was keen to

maintain its links and do what it could for this generation of students. It continued to work with other Kent museums on the Wheels of Time initiative, which has attracted increasing numbers of children to museums, including Brook, and has been piloting a remote access initiative.

A number of interesting items were donated to the Trust: A fine Drake and Fletcher Hop Press manufactured in Maidstone in the 1880s was donated by Ian Bouchard. An Allen scythe and Allen Challenger were donated by Mr Love on behalf of his father who used them on his smallholding near Dover. In the other direction the museum found a permanent home at Dover Transport Museum for the intricately designed and engineered tricycle that had been made and much used by Bob Scarfe who looked after the museum's grounds for several decades.

During the year the final sections of the rotten oak cladding on the storage sheds adjoining the barn were replaced with similar oak cladding cut locally in Kent. Two of the Trustees, Graham Bradley and Tim Betts, have worked closely with the Museum's curator Brian Wimsett, to improve the interpretation of some of the museum's displays. About 120 major items have been photographed and, along with a brief description, have each been included on a laminated A4 sheet held in each bay of the barn and in each level of the Oast, so that visitors can readily learn about the objects but without interpretative resources coming to dominate visually. At the same time a number of items have been reorganised with the aim of bringing together related objects that were previously dispersed, so that they can better tell the story of agricultural practice and development. The tables used to display small objects on the upper floor of the Oast have all been repainted by Tim Betts. The former shop or office which now houses a fascinating collection of models of horse drawn implements, hop fields and the Brook barn itself has been developed further with posters on the architecture of the museum and the geology of SE England. A collection of historic Kent tiles has been put on display – although a separate theme from the agricultural collection, this display acknowledges that many visitors to the museum come to view and learn about its buildings as well as the museum collection.

In October the Trustees took the first steps to initiating a strategic review and options appraisal. The retirement of a number of those who have been key contributors to the museum's life over the previous two decades made it important to undertake such a review and appraisal with a view to increasing the museum and trust's resilience and identifying new ways to deliver public benefit. The Trustees agreed that some immediate steps could be taken as soon as Covid-19 restrictions permitted and these included forging closer links with the Brook community, seeking to develop links with other local schools on the model already achieved with Brook primary school, and improving communications in terms of facebook postings and a regular newsletter. Others such as the possibility of establishing roles such as a paid curator or outreach officer post, and changes to make parts of the museum more accessible to families and young children (taking account of its proximity to Ashford) required an options appraisal and a better understanding of funding possibilities. To this end it was agreed to seek the advice of the heritage consultant, Alix Slater, who made an initial visit after the year end in early April 2020.

Reopening the museum, delivering on the immediate steps identified above, and carrying through the strategic review and options appraisal will be the key challenges for the 2021/22 year. The strategic review will naturally feed into the next review of the museum's accredited status which is due in 2022.

A quinquennial review of the museum buildings is due in 2021 and the trustees have asked Rutherford Architects to undertake this. The overall assessment of the previous review in 2016 was that all the buildings were in a fair or good condition and over the intervening period the Trust has undertaken most of the repairs recommended in that report.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

The Trustees gratefully thank Councillor Clair Bell of Kent County Council, and Councillor William Howard of Ashford Borough Council for making discretionary grants to cover the cost of the purchase of a marquee and associated equipment to allow for the holding of functions such as a planned joint event with the local community which will be held once Covid-19 restrictions end. They also thank the Cromarty Trust (chaired by John Nightingale) for a grant towards the costs of recladding the sheds adjoining the barn with replacement oak cladding. They also gratefully acknowledge the support of the £10,000 Covid business interruption grant which has provided the museum with the resources required both to weather the closure arising from the pandemic and hopefully to bounce back with renewed vigour once circumstances permit.

The donations of items for the museum collection by Mr Ian Bouchard and Mr Love are recorded with thanks in the previous section of this report.

The Trust's long-standing chairman, George Jessel, stood down as the chairman of Trustees in July. The other Trustees owe him a great debt of gratitude for all he has done in this role in the previous two decades – not just chairing meetings but regularly turning up with his tractor and farm equipment to help move heavy items within the collection. They marked his contribution by inaugurating and appointing him to a new position of Honorary President in October and look forward to his continuing as a Trustee - and hopefully still turning up with a tractor from time to time!

At the same time the Trust's curator, Brian Wimsett indicated that he thought it was time to pass on the baton, having held the position since the Trust was established in the late 1990s. Along with the Trust's former Secretary Tom Hill, Brian has been the face of the museum for over two decades and over this period he has built up a font of knowledge on the Museum collection that will be very hard to replace. The Trustees are therefore very grateful that he has agreed to carry on in the role until a successor can be found and more generally continue providing advice if in a less hands-on manner.

Paul Webster stepped down as Treasurer in July 2020 after undertaking this role with great skill and commitment for many years. The Trustees expressed their great thanks to all he has done to keep the Trust on a firm financial footing and were pleased that he would continue to be able to provide advice in this area in his capacity as a Trustee.

They were also delighted that the assistant treasurer Mike Mooney had agreed to step up to the role of Treasurer.

Alan Rogers retired as a Trustee shortly after the year end. Alan was another stalwart who had served as a trustee from its inception and the Trust has benefitted greatly from his wise advice and hands-on engagement over the years. The trustees are delighted that he and his wife will be maintaining links with the museum by continuing to act as volunteers when the museum reopens in Summer 2021.

The Trustees wish to thank Tracey Block who has continued to act as the Administrator to the Museum throughout the period under review.

Although successive lockdowns and the other pandemic restrictions meant the Trust's wonderful team of volunteers could not play their normal roles of welcoming visitors, they will be crucial to the successful reopening of the museum for the summer 2021 and the Trustees gratefully thank them for both their past efforts and in anticipation of their future work on behalf of the museum: Joyce and Graham Bradley (also a Trustee), David Brown, Stuart and Alison Finn, Chris and Kathy Cox, Ed Oliver, Michael Button, Tom Kennett, Jerry and Sue Arnott, Tom and Mary Hill, Vic Jeffrey, Janet Jessop, Vicky Linin, Janet Medhurst, David Pearson, Mike Mooney, Tim Betts (also a Trustee), John and Diana Prescott, Barbara Randall, Alan Rogers and Pam Rogers, Frank and Jose Preston and Oliver Trowell. Paul Rodway, the Village Caretaker has undertaken the mowing of the grass area behind the barn and the Museum and the mowing of the grass in the front of the Museum.

The Trustees warmly thank the Museum Development Officers for Kent and Medway, Joanna Low and Samantha Bowen, both of whom are familiar with the Wye Rural Museum Trust.

Historical Background

The Trust was formed primarily to take over the Agricultural Museum at Brook from Wye College (University of London), and in 1997 paid the College £75,000 for the great aisled barn of about 1380 (Grade I listed) and associated complex of Oast (Grade II listed) and other farm buildings at Court Lodge, Brook. At the same time the College donated the Museum's important collection of agricultural implements, wagons, carts, tools and other artefacts to the Trust at no charge.

At this time the Trust also received as a gift two parcels of land at Hollingbourne, Kent, on condition that they should never be developed. These comprise a 13-acre field known locally as Church Meadow and a small paddock beside the church in the centre of the village. The former is let to a local farmer and the paddock is let to the owners of an adjacent house. The rent from these properties forms part of the annual income of the Trust.

The Trustees set themselves an initial target of raising £200,000 in order to cover the acquisition costs, to undertake a programme of repairs and renovations and to provide an initial Endowment of £65,000. This was achieved thanks to generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Ashford Borough Council, the Bernard Sunley Charitable

Trust, the Canterbury Farmers' Club, the Cromarty Trust, the Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust, Godinton Charitable Trust, the Rochester Bridge Trust, the Pilgrim Trust and a number of other charities, organisations and individuals. The repairs and renovations included the complete replacement of the lathe and plaster interior of the kiln of the Oast, repair and restoration of some of the timberwork of the Barn and the Oast, installation of fire and intruder alarm networks and conversion of the Stable Block to provide a shop, an office and modern toilet facilities, including disabled access. These works were completed under the supervision of the architects Sell Wade Postins.

Since that time there have been many changes and developments which are reported annually by the Trustees. On the repair and renovation front these have included re-tiling the roof of the roundel on the oast house and the repair of the wind-vane above this; the conversion of a workshop/storage area into a well-equipped education room which is available to outside organisations as well as the Museum itself, and the provision of a legally compliant ramp giving easy access to the education room and toilets. Other activities have included the re-labelling of the entire Museum collection, and the production of three booklets on local aspects of rural crafts with the aid of funding from the Local Heritage Initiative. The museum has cooperated closely with other Kent Museums through the Kent Museums Group, the Ashford Museums group and many training events organised through the Kent Museums Development Service.

Of particular note was the receipt of a legacy consisting of some 30 paintings by the Kent artist Clifford Nickson which formed part of the estate of Ursula Ridgewell. The Museum has arranged with the County Council for these to be hung in the Chairman's Corridor in Sessions House, Maidstone following two or three years of display in Library Galleries around the county. A significant sum of money accompanied the paintings in the bequest as an endowment for the general benefit of the Trust and this has been invested so that the interest earned can be used for the general purposes of the Trust and, if required, the maintenance of the collection of paintings.

Summary of results and reserves policy

The financial statements show income of £25,659 (2019/20: £16,490) and expenditure of £11,912 (2019/20: £17,739) resulting in a surplus of £13,747 (2019/20: deficit of £1,2494). The year end value of the Trust's endowment funds was £288,159 (2020: £275,587) and the surplus on operating funds was £37,334 (2020: £25,387). Although the Trustees' standard policy is to maintain free unrestricted reserves at a level which equates to approximately six months of total expenditure by the Trust, they are currently seeking to build up the reserve to a higher level in order to help with possible new initiatives arising from the current strategic review and options appraisal.

The Trust held all of its endowment funds and £22,132 of its operating surplus in the form of investments in a CCLA's Charities Official Investment Fund, M&G Charifund and the Charities Property Fund. The combined market value of the investments at 28 February 2021 was £310,291 (2020: £297,894).

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

John Nightingale

Chair of Trustees

26 April 2021

The Wye Rural Museum Trust – Independent Examiner’s Report

I report on the accounts of the trust for the year ended 28th February 2021, which are attached to this document.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity’s trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity’s trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- To follow procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) and of the 2011 Act; and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner’s report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a ‘true and fair view’ and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner’s statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Nichola Walsh BA(Hons) ACMA CGMA
Leaside, Sole Street, Crundale, Nr. Canterbury, Kent CT4 7ES
5th April, 2021

THE WYE RURAL MUSEUM TRUST

Receipts and Payments

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
	<u>1.3.20 to</u>	<u>1.3.19 to</u>
	<u>28.02.21</u>	<u>29.02.20</u>
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Investment Income	11,661.74	13,214.54
Rent of Church Meadow & Church Green, Hollingbourne	1,273.00	1,633.00
Shop sales (net)	0.00	0.00
Visitors	0.00	542.61
Grants and Donations	12,724.22	600.00
Workshop and Exhibition Receipts	0.00	0.00
Hire of Thomas Hill Room	0.00	0.00
Nightingale Lecture Income	0.00	100.00
Sundry Credits	0.00	400.00
Total Receipts	<u>25,658.96</u>	<u>16,490.15</u>
PAYMENTS		
Mowing & cleaning costs	700.00	500.00
Insurance	2,457.13	2,961.49
Alarm maintenance	1,992.00	2,236.80
Publicity inc Display Boards	667.84	965.86
Subscriptions	85.00	85.00
Electricity & water	388.62	642.26
Council Tax	0.00	388.08
Telephone	394.00	371.00
Secretarial Costs	1,181.56	1,167.47
General maintenance work	2,653.31	7,585.47
Volunteers Conservation Training & Meal etc	0.00	563.45
Petrol & sundry travel	0.00	50.00
Website Maintenance	223.98	150.00
Exhibition expenses, etc	0.00	0.00
Nightingale Lecture	0.00	0.00
Small Tools & Equipment	0.00	72.22
Miscellaneous Expenses Marquee Tent	1,168.90	0.00
Total Payments	<u>11,912.34</u>	<u>17,739.10</u>
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	13,746.62	(1,248.95)
Balance of General Funds brought forward	25,587.07	26,836.02
Balance of General Funds carried to Balance Sheet	<u>39,333.69</u>	<u>25,587.07</u>

THE WYE RURAL MUSEUM TRUST

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES	28th February 2021 £	29th February 2020 £
Land & buildings at Brook, at cost	75,000.00	75,000.00
Meadow land at Hollingbourne, at cost	0.00	0
Value of Investments (see note below)	<i>£/unit</i>	
6,848.25 CCLA COIF income units	17.57 120,314.85	102,019.75
8,231.75 M&G Charifund income units	14.46 119,066.52	124,078.01
57,208.16 Charities Property Fund income units	1.24 70,909.51	71,796.24
Current account		
Lloyds TSB Bank plc	17,201.69	3,455.07
	402,492.57	376,349.06
Representing:		
Museum Fund (Land & Buildings)	75,000.00	75,000.00
Endowment:		
Initial Endowment Fund	65,000.00	65,000.00
Ridgewell Bequest	124,868.00	124,868.00
Increase (Decrease) in Value of Invested Endowments over Cost	98,290.88	85,893.99
Total Value of Endowment Funds	288,158.88	275,761.99
Surplus (Deficit) on Operating Funds	39,333.69	25,587.07
	402,492.57	376,349.06
Investments at cost		
CCLA COIF invest fund income units	60,000.00	60,000.00
M&G Charifund income units	97,000.00	97,000.00
Charities Property Fund income units	55,000.00	55,000.00
	212,000.00	212,000.00

Notes: The museum collection of agricultural implements and the Ridgewell Bequest of some 30 paintings by Clifford Nickson which were donated to the Trust are not shown on the Balance Sheet.

The value of investments is 'as at the latest valuation date'.

John Nightingale **Trustee**

Tim Betts **Trustee**