

The Wye Rural Museum Trust

Reg.Charity No: 1055879

Report of the Trustees for the period 1 March 2022 to 28 February 2023

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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); *Sir 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*, Vice-chair of Trustees; *Dr. John Bulaitis*; *Dr. Jeremy Clarke*; *Mrs Caroline Knight*; *Mr John Tomkins*; *Mr Francis Huntington*; *The Rt Hon Sir John Mummery DL*; *Prof Paul Webster*; *Mr Mike West*.

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, with additional bi-monthly meetings of a lottery steering group of five trustees from September 2022 onwards. 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, one of the best preserved medieval barns in South East England and a building of national importance, 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.

Following a review undertaken during the year the Trustees agreed the following statement of purpose for the Museum:

- To preserve, interpret and improve access to the museum site including the fourteenth-century manorial barn, nineteenth-century oast house and stable block.
- To collect, preserve, interpret and present the agricultural and rural history of Brook and East Kent.
- To secure the long-term future of the museum, its buildings and collections, and to ensure the widest possible public access to the site and its heritage assets.

Outline of the Period

Last year's report identified the key challenge for the 2022/23 year as ensuring the successful delivery of the Trustees' ambitious bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund that was submitted just before the previous year end in February 2022. The bid requested a £75K grant for an £80K one year project which would cover a) employing a Collections and Engagement Manager for 3 days a week for a period of one year; b) undertaking a full collections audit c) employing architects to develop outline proposals for the lean-to sheds for interpretation and display; d) getting specialist advice on the collection and its conservation with an allowance for a specialist conservator to train volunteers on conservation; d) building up a further group of volunteers to work with the Collections and Engagement Manager on the digitalisation of the collection with the purchase of specialist software and the redesign of the website. The application was a result of the strategic review undertaken by the Trustees in the previous year and was intended to increase the resilience of the Trust and Museum and to better understand and care for the museum's buildings and collections.

Having received the welcome news that its lottery application had been successful, the Trustees were able to advertise for a Collections and Engagement Manager with the aim of commencing the lottery project at the start of September 2022. They were delighted to be able to appoint Dr Philippa Mesiano as the Engagement Manager, working 2 days a week, and Tom Kennett as the Collections Officer, working one day a week, with additional support from Fran Penberthy who had been appointed earlier in the year to help with the Trust's administration and the recruitment and organisation of volunteers.

This was the first time that the Museum had paid staff and it quickly became clear what a difference it would make as Philippa brought the benefit of her experience from running another lottery heritage fund project and Tom applied his experience as a professional archivist to the auditing and cataloguing of the museum's collections. Most of the work in the period covered by this project was behind the scenes involving a full audit of the museum's collections with the aid of volunteers; consultations with the local community and other stakeholders; reviewing the Museum's statement of purpose, its name(s) and branding; preparing a social media strategy; developing a learning programme for every pupil in Brook primary school to visit the museum during British Science week in March 2023; arranging a series of talks over the winter months and mapping out a programme of events from April through to September 2023. Reporting on these will be a matter for next year's annual report but at the time of writing this

report one can already note that the Museum's first major event on Easter Saturday attracted 277 visitors from across Kent.

The numbers visiting the collection during 2022 remained modest but included a group of agricultural students from Luxembourg as well as a number of groups from local organisations in Kent. The successful 2021 initiatives of holding a harvest festival barbecue and a Crib service in conjunction with the neighbouring parish church were repeated in 2022 and both again attracted good turn-outs. In September the museum's annual Nightingale lecture was given by Trustee Graham Bradley on the history of agriculture in Brook. As in previous years the lecture was organised by Trustee Sheila Sweetinburh and given in Canterbury as a joint initiative with Christ Church Canterbury University; it attracted an audience of over 50 and its popularity led the Trust's new engagement manager to schedule Graham to give a similar talk to some 40 members of the Brook community in January 2022.

In January and February the Museum's Engagement Officer and Trustee Tim Betts hosted three days of visits from two classes from Brook primary school, followed by an exhibition for their parents of the work they produced – a dry run for the whole school visit planned for National Science week in March 2023.

In preparation for the daily use of the Tom Hill room by the Lottery project staff, the WCs and kitchen were redesigned with the works being undertaken for a cost of approximately £9,000 under the direction of the Tim Betts.

In the light of the consultation and review carried out by the staff, the Trustees agreed that the Museum should be renamed the Brook Rural Museum (replacing several different names variously used on the website, social media and letterheads) and the new name was formally launched with a new accompanying logo depicting both barn and oast after the year end in April 2023.

The prime challenges for the coming year will be to follow through with the successful delivery of the lottery project, and following a full evaluation of its results in September 2023 to prepare to build on it, with the possibility of a follow-on application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

The Trustees thank the Cromarty Trust (chaired by John Nightingale) for a grant towards the matching funds required for the National Lottery Heritage Fund project.

Thanks are due for the support given to the Trust over the terms of their tenure by Mr Andrew Linklater who retired as a Trustee on 19 April 2022 and by Dr Graham Bradley who similarly retired on 22 October 2022. Graham in particular had taken on much of the day-to-day running of the museum in recent years and worked hard to improve the presentation of the museum's collection, reorganising items in both the barn and oast house and preparing explanatory information sheets on individual exhibits and groups of exhibits which visitors can consult while they tour the museum. Although his support and advice as a trustee is much missed, the continuing Trustees remain hugely grateful

for the way he continues to share his deep knowledge of the museum collection and the history of Brook with Philippa and Tom - and indeed with visitors more generally thanks to the fact that he and his wife will be maintaining links with the museum as volunteers.

Mr Mike West was appointed as a Trustee on 10 October 2022. A local farmer with close links to Brook, he has already given considerable support to the museum as a volunteer, and his input as a trustee will help link the museum to 21st century farming. Mr Andrew Scarfe was appointed to join Mike Mooney as a co-treasurer on 20 February 2022. The Trustees remain hugely grateful to all the work that Mike Mooney has continued to put in on behalf of the Trust.

As in previous years, the Museum relied on volunteers who staffed it during weekend openings throughout the summer and also who helped out on specific tasks relating to the reordering of exhibits in the museum. The Trustees gratefully thank them all for this vital work on which the Museum depended and look forward to working with them again. 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 Joanna Low, the Museum Development Officer for Kent and Medway for her continuing advice and assistance, and are delighted that Rebecca Nash, the Director of the Royal Engineers Museum in Gillingham agreed after the year end to again assist the Trust as its museum accreditation adviser.

Historical Background

The Trust was formed primarily to take over the Agricultural Museum at Brook from Wye College (University of London), and in 1997 purchased 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 from the College for £75,000. 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 for the Trust separate income and expenditure on the lottery project from general income and expenditure. General income of £17,379 (2021/22: £17,501) and expenditure of £18,591 (2021/22: £21,018) resulted in a deficit of £1,212 (2021/22: deficit of £3,517). During the year £37,843, was received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund as a first instalment of its £75,000 grant, and £18,507 of this sum was spent on purposes set out in the approved project budget, leaving a balance of £19,336 to carry forward against expenditure in the next financial year. It is envisaged that the balance of the grant will also be claimed against actual expenditure in the next financial year.

The year end value of the Trust's endowment funds was £295,185 (2022: £309,931) and the surplus on operating funds, excluding the lottery project grant, was £34,604 (2022: £35,816). The surplus on the lottery project grant at the year end was £19,336 and this sum will be carried over for approved lottery project expenditure in the next financial year.

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 retain the reserve to a higher level in order to help with the current lottery project and other new initiatives that may emerge from this.

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 2022 was £317,317 (2022: £332,063).

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

John Nightingale

Chair of Trustees

6 June 2023

The Wye Rural Museum Trust – Independent Examiner’s Report

I report on the accounts of the trust for the year ended 28th February 2023, 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

Nichola Walsh BA(Hons) ACMA CGMA

Leaside, Sole Street, Crundale, Nr. Canterbury, Kent CT4 7ES

2nd May, 2023

THE WYE RURAL MUSEUM TRUST

<u>General Receipts and Payments</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
	1.3.22 to 28.02.23	1.3.21 to 28.02.22
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Investment Income	13,607.71	12,732.86
Rent of Church Meadow & Church Green, Hollingbourne	1,923.00	2,673.00
Visitors	362.33	322.50
Grants and Donations	1,046.00	1,709.52
Nightingale Lecture Income	140.00	63.00
Hire of facilities	300.00	0.00
Total Receipts	17,379.04	17,500.88
PAYMENTS		
Mowing & cleaning costs	963.45	735.00
Insurance	2,173.00	2,653.37
Alarm maintenance	3,102.80	3,055.20
Publicity inc Display Boards	207.71	790.53
Subscriptions	35.00	85.00
Electricity & water	498.03	337.95
Council Tax	197.12	100.62
Telephone	180.62	420.65
Secretarial Costs	988.49	1,211.63
General maintenance work	8,920.00	4,948.22
Volunteers & Trustees: Training & Meal	914.16	801.46
Lottery application	0.00	3,600.00
Website Maintenance	173.98	150.00
Covid opening cleaning costs	0.00	874.11
Quinquennial inspection	0.00	785.80
Sundry	236.66	468.80
Total Payments	18,591.02	21,018.34
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	(1,211.98)	(3,517.46)
Balance of General Funds brought forward	35,816.23	39,333.69
Balance of General Funds carried to Balance Sheet	34,604.25	35,816.23

NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND
(NLHF) PROJECT ACCOUNT

		<u>Actual</u>
		1.3.22 to
		28.02.23
RECEIPTS	£	£
National Lottery Heritage Fund		
Initial Payment		37,843.00
PAYMENTS		
Staff Wages, including PAYE & Pension Costs	12,262.36	
Professional Fees	240.00	
Recruitment Costs	50.00	
Digital outputs	2,240.00	
Staff Travel	16.97	
Volunteer Expenses	43.51	
Event Costs	641.69	
Publicity and Promotion	99.99	
Equipment	2,625.84	
VAT	286.91	

		18,507.27

Balance c/fwd		19,335.73
		=====

Note:

This was a new project and account initiated during the year so there were no comparables for 2021/22. The initial payment of £37,843 received from NLHF during the year represented half of the grant of £75,686 it offered towards total project costs of £80,000. The balance of the grant will be payable against actual expenditure on the agreed budget items totalling £80,000.

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

		28th February 2023 £	28th February 2022 £
Land & buildings at Brook, at cost		75,000.00	75,000.00
Meadow land at Hollingbourne, at cost		0.00	0.00
Value of Investments (see note below)	<i>£/unit</i>		
6,848.25 CCLA COIF income units	18.61	127,429.50	130,459.00
8,231.75 M&G Charifund income units	14.30	117,714.00	123,229.00
57,208.16 Charities Property Fund income units	1.26	72,173.81	78,375.00
		317,317.31	332,063.00
Current accounts			
Lloyds Bank plc Original A/C 00964515		12,472.25	13,684.23
Lloyds Bank plc Lottery A/c 83921460		19,335.73	0.00
		31,807.98	13,684.23
		424,125.29	420,747.23
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
Inc or Dec in Value of Investments over Cost		105,317.31	120,063.00
		295,185.31	309,931.00
Surplus (Deficit) on Operating Funds		34,604.25	35,816.23
		404,789.56	420,747.23
National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant		37,843.00	0.00
Lottery Grant spent		(18,507.27)	0.00
		19,335.73	0.00
		424,125.29	420,747.23
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

6 June 2023

