

Wickham Market Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS

Year ended 5th April 2023

Charity Registration No. 1096332
Company Registration No. 4555122

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 5th April 2023

The Trustees, who are also Directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 5th April 2023. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in October 2006 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and was set up on 7th October 2002. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended on 7th October 2002. The company achieved charitable status on 4th March 2003.

The Trustees of the charity are:

Mrs C Caudwell
Mr G Hering
Ms J Hopps
Mr R Jenkinson
Mr R Lewis
Mr C Owens

The trustees are appointed for a three-year term and a third retire by rotation at the Annual General Meeting and may be reappointed. Additional trustees can be appointed by ordinary resolution.

Company Secretary is Mrs C J Caudwell and the registered office of the company is:

Wickham Market Resource Centre,
Chapel Lane,
Wickham Market,
Woodbridge,
IP13 0SB

Bankers for the charity are:

The Co-operative Bank plc, P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP

Solicitors for the charity are:

Greenland Houchen Pomeroy, 38 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1HZ

Independent Examiner for the charity is:

Mr N Bestow, CGMA

The Wickham Market Partnership's Vision for Wickham Market is:

To be a community that values and supports all of its people

That serves the surrounding villages with pride

That works hard to sustain and improve its remarkable quality of life

Objects

Its objects are to secure and improve the economic and social framework of Wickham Market and the surrounding parishes by encouraging the development of recreational and leisure activities; offering opportunities for education and training and improving and enhancing the town and surrounding communities.

People

Trustees have met on a regular basis to make decisions on the work of the charity. Their voluntary commitment has been substantial.

Mrs Karen Burrows is the charity's part-time Administrative Assistant, appointed in September 2022 on the resignation of Ms Amy Drayson. The charity has no relationships with either related parties or any other charities or organisations.

Funding

The Partnership developed out of the Market Towns Initiative (MTI), a government scheme aimed at promoting the key role of market towns in rural communities and managed by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA). This funding finished in March 2004. The Partnership continues to attract grant funding to support the development of local initiatives, including the Peoples Millions Lottery Fund, Local Authority grants, local charities and local businesses.

The Community Rooms are the base for the Partnership with regular lettings contributing to the running of them and enabling the charity to continue to employ an Administrative Assistant to manage its day-to-day business.

Membership of the Partnership demonstrates the wide range of local and statutory organisations, businesses and individuals actively supporting the work of the charity. Subscriptions provide revenue funding for the Partnership managed website.



The Resource Centre

Community Rooms

The Library and Community Rooms are a local focal point for residents and visitors. The Partnership leases the Community Rooms from Suffolk County Council with Suffolk Libraries IPS managing the building on their behalf. A joint Management Committee deals with issues of maintenance and statutory obligations.

The Treatment Room and an associated office continue to be hired by a private chiropractor. The meeting rooms are normally used to provide Retinal Screening Clinics for patients with diabetes, the Citizens Advice Bureau, counsellors and therapists as well as offering a venue for meetings for local organisations.

A volunteer team to look after the gardens has been reformed after a gap during the pandemic and whilst the church wall was rebuilt.

Library

The Partnership is a member of Suffolk's Libraries IPS Ltd, an Industrial Provident Society, providing library services for Suffolk County Council.

The Partnership continues to support the day-to-day Library Manager, Lynne Colbear, and Maggie Lusher, the Executive Manager, in maintaining the library as a key benefit for Wickham Market and the surrounding villages.

The library is open 5 days a week and relies significantly on volunteers to complement the library staff so that the library can be fully open each day. One of our trustees is a library volunteer and provides free IT support and advice to library users. New volunteers are always very welcome. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, then please pop into the library to see one of the staff.

The Partnership has also set up a small group of volunteers to look after the garden borders along the front and rear of the Resource Centre and the Library. Barbara Harrington leads the group, and she and her team are doing a great job, but more helpers would be very welcome.

Website & News Network

Visitors to our website www.visit.wickhammarket.co.uk have steadily increased and we now regularly exceed 1,200 visitors per month as news is being networked through social media channels. The weekly Round Robin news network continues to grow with over 450 subscribers who each receive updates of local events and messages directly into their inbox.

Tennis

Following the installation of three hard tennis courts, funded by the Peoples Millions of the National Lottery in 2008, tennis activities continue to be managed by a Tennis Club, including sessions with a dedicated coach. The maintenance of the courts remains the responsibility of the Partnership. Pay and play sessions are also available by booking through a local business outlet, R & S Hardware. Post-Covid the pay and play sessions have lessened but are still popular.

Inspirations

Opening in May 2016 Inspirations quickly became a destination store, not only for residents but also for visitors from neighbouring villages and towns, some from quite far afield. Negotiations with the East of England Co-operative Society by the Shops and Facilities group of the then Town Team led to a Community Interest Company being formed to develop the empty store on The Hill into a shared retail space for small entrepreneurs.



Inspirations (Wickham Market) CIC presented the project to the community in February 2016 and received a tremendous response, with 210 shares being taken by local people to finance the set-up costs of the project, together with a number of substantial private donations. A 10 year lease is in place. The Directors of the CIC, all members of the Partnership or former Town Team, continue to manage the company, promoting it with a range of marketing and attracting new retailers. Retailers themselves staff the shop, dependent on space occupied, supporting each other co-operatively. Post-Covid the retailers have been keen to continue, although two of the larger retailers have moved to commission only to give themselves a better work-life balance. This has meant extra hours being covered by a new retailer enabling the rota to be balanced. The current climate of increased cost of living expenses, including high electricity costs, is a challenge for the business.



The George

The detailed designs for restoration and rebuild were completed to plan in June 2022. A critical review of the costs was carried out and the outcome was the final detailed designs to be input to the Invitations to Tender for the Main Works Contract, with a final RIBA 4 Cost Report in August identifying the expected costs for construction.

A provisional tender list for the Main Works Contract was developed and a Prequalification Exercise completed which resulted in a final tender list of three local Companies. The Invitations to Tender were issued with the returns due on 28th February.

In December the funding position showed a gap of £195,000 to the Project final cost to completion and The George group applied for that amount to the Community Ownership Fund (COF) which was subsequently successful.

When the tender returns were received they showed significantly higher prices than the Cost Report indicated which resulted in a new funding gap to be closed before we could let the Main Work Contract and complete the project.

Closing the gap was approached by working with our preferred tenderer, Seamans Building, to identify further cost savings, raising extra funds through share sales, taking loans, and applying to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (HF) for a grant increase. The HF Panel meet on 7th June to consider all current applications to them for funds and we will know on 8th June if we have been successful.

The COF grant has some non-negotiable conditions, one of which is the project must be completed to the point of providing community benefit within a year of the award letter which was 15 March 2023. It isn't possible to complete the full building restoration before 15th March 2024, but Seamans have rescheduled their plan to make the Community Space available in March 2024 with the remaining works to follow. This plan is acceptable to COF.

Arts Project

The Wickham Market Arts project group had two events in the past year. The first event was participation in the Jubilee Picnic on the Pightle where children and adults were able to create their own colourful Jubilee Crowns. The Crowns were just one of the items that brightened up an otherwise cold and damp afternoon. The second project

involved Wickham Market Primary school who participated in a heritage awareness art exhibition. Five important heritage buildings from our High Street were chosen as subjects for art classes at the school resulting in over 70 fabulous paintings. These were then scanned and printed onto large 8' x 4' boards and then applied to the hoardings



surrounding the George Pub, forming an outdoor exhibition for all passing by to see. The exhibition was opened by County Councillor Alexander Nicoll and the School Head Mrs Helen Murray.



The **Wickham Market Shed** project held its introductory meeting in January 2020, at which 16 attended to listen to a presentation from an ambassador from the UK Men's Shed Association. Following this, fortnightly meetings ensued where options for the siting of a Shed were explored, other Shed projects were visited and ideas for the type of Shed shared. The Covid pandemic curtailed these until late 2021.

It then transpired that the Wickham Market Area Archive Centre (WMAAC) wished to find a new home and discussions led to the rear garden of the Resource Centre being put forward, leaving two portacabins and two sheds to potentially being released for the Shed project.



During the year a new lease was negotiated by the Partnership with Suffolk County Council for the Archive Centre to occupy a large, insulated log cabin unit. The unit was purchased by the Partnership at the end of the financial year with the help of grants from East Suffolk Council, Wickham Market Parish Council and a local charitable trust and has since been built by a group of volunteers, including the Chair of the Archive Centre, Partnership trustees and Shed members. The Partnership is looking forward to a good working relationship developing between themselves, the Archive Centre members and the Library service to bring history to the community in a more accessible way.

In the meantime 'Shedders' have been repairing an historic bench for the church and a bench for the Parish Council, as well as reroofing an allotment shed for the Just Giving community group. Once WMAAC has moved into the log cabin at the Resource Centre the Shed will be able to refurbish the two portacabins for the creation of a workshop. One of the existing wooden sheds has been passed to the Parish Council for use as storage. Support for the Shed project from the Parish Council has been agreed as it will be the landlord for the site in the future. Relaunching the Shed concept will be part of the activities for 2023.

Future Plans

The Partnership is a key player in many village developments, with trustees being represented on other major committees. These include the Parish Council, the Neighbourhood Plan (led by the Parish Council); Inspirations (Wickham Market) CIC and the George Public House.

The Partnership has pledged £5,000 to the Village Hall Rebuild Fund (later changed to the Refurbishment Fund) and £10,000 to The George project; important for matched funding applications.

It is encouraging to note that new volunteers are also coming forward to offer their help and expertise with new projects and demonstrates the community values that Wickham Market is regularly recognised for.