

Wickham Market Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS

Year ended 5th April 2024

Charity Registration No. 1096332
Company Registration No. 4555122

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 5th April 2024

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 2024. 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. 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 Resource Centre accommodates the Library, Community Rooms and Archive Centre and is 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.

Library

The Partnership continues to support and work closely with the library management team headed by Maggie Lusher, with Lynn Colbear looking after the day-to-day running of the library. The library continues to be 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. The volunteers generally cover the afternoon sessions during the week and the library staff cover mornings and Saturdays.

A new 'library friends' group has been formed and trustees of the group have been appointed. The Partnership has now formally handed over its membership of Suffolk Libraries IPS to the new group. Some of the things the new group will be focussing on are to raise the profile and encourage more use of the library, fundraising, and adding to the extra activities the library already provides, which are currently ancestry research and IT support (one of our trustees is a library volunteer and provides free IT support and advice to library users). The newly formed group had a stall at the Spring Market which was very successful. They sold some books and there was lots of interest in library membership and volunteering. They also intend to have a stall at the Summer Market.

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

Wickham Market Area Archive Centre has successfully moved into its new premises in the rear garden of the Resource Centre. Last 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 with the help of grants from East Suffolk Council, Wickham Market Parish Council, Wickham Market Partnership and local charitable trusts together with a legacy from a former trustee and was built by a group of volunteers, including the Chair of the Archive Centre, Partnership trustees and Shed members.



A very successful Facebook page is bringing a range of photographs of the local area and people to a wide audience, thanks to the efforts of members, and together with the new premises is revitalising the work of the Centre and engendering interest in local history. WMAAC was relaunched in

May this year with an Open Day when the premises were officially named the Morris Dyke Centre and exhibition materials were on display in the garden.

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.

Website

Our website www.visitwickhammarket.co.uk consistently achieves a monthly visitor total of 1000 plus. The number of visitors using a mobile device has increased to 70% whilst the top search terms are for local shops, pubs and things to do. Approx 15 announcements are added every month alongside multiple events sent in by organisers.

Facebook: Posts are added on a regular basis with a current reach of 9000 impressions. with 890 signed up followers.

Round Robin News: This news network is still growing with over 450 subscribers. Notifications are sent by email directly into the recipient's inbox. The service proves popular with members wanting to promote their events and services.

Christmas Promotion: We have for many years been helping local businesses promote their services by advertising Wickham Market as a Christmas shopping destination. A six-page folded leaflet was distributed at the end of November to over 17,000 households in the surrounding area. This year The Partnership provided the design management and co-ordination of the leaflet. The cost of print and distribution was met by East Suffolk Council via Wickham Market Parish Council. Thanks must go to past trustee Paula Scanlan for her part in liaison with the retail community.

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 about the value of giving men in particular the opportunity to Connect, Converse and Create. 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.



Shedders have since been patiently exploring options for venues and working on small scale refurbishments and sorting the wide range of donated tools and equipment. With the move of the Archive Centre to its new premises they have been able to take on the two portacabins and a wooden shed behind the Village Hall and Football Club and have been busy developing a functioning workshop. This is with the agreement of the Parish Council and marks a significant step forward for the project.

Following a successful grant application to the Co-op Community Cares Fund (managed by Suffolk Community Foundation) by the Partnership, which is facilitating this project, the workshop has been fully rewired with new sockets, lighting, cut-out switch, heaters and consumer unit by local firm Hudsons Electrical who offered their time (and some of the materials) free of charge, completing the work in one day, which was an amazing offer by the directors. New flooring is being laid and most of the equipment has now been rationalised. Shedders are now looking forward to getting creative.



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. It has been a successful business, giving small local retailers the opportunity to sell their products together, staff the store and manage the space on a day-to-day basis.



The volunteer Directors of this Community Interest Company are all members of the Partnership, and continued to manage the company for eight years when the collective decision was made with the retailers to cease trading due to increased utility and rates costs, the cost-of-living difficulties and the desire by many of the retailers to either retire or reduce their workload. The shop finally closed its doors on 30th March 2024 and many of its assets have gone to local businesses whilst shareholders will receive refunds of their share capital in due course. Any residual funds will be transferred to the Partnership and so remain in the village to be used for future projects.

The George

At the time of the last AGM there was still a significant funding gap which needed to be closed before we instructed the main works contractor to proceed. This was achieved on June 8th last year and the contractor started work on site in July which was the point which triggered payment of the £10k contribution to the project from the Partnership.



Since then you'll have seen some visible changes with the tin roof being dismantled and being replaced by the new timber frame, and the addition of the steelwork for the new kitchen and toilets. Inside, for those who have taken the hard hat tours, you'll have seen the new floor in the ancient building and the addition of the Activity Space on the first floor.

While significant progress has been made there have been a number of unexpected delays. These have included some discoveries regarding further deterioration of some of the ancient timbers, a chimney which was unstable and had to be demolished and some unexpected design clashes.

There are still some discovered design issues to be resolved and implemented and until these have been completed and there has been a consequential critical review of the project schedule it isn't possible to provide a firm date of when the pub will be opened.

In parallel with the physical site work we recruited our Community Engagement Co-ordinator, Christine Abraham, on 1st October. Since then Christine has been actively engaged in preparing for, and making good progress in, the delivery of the vision for the use of the Activity Space. She has also engaged with the community in the delivery of hard hat tours of the site.

Looking forward the Management Committee is now actively preparing for opening and making the detailed plans necessary for the operational phase and pub opening and is seeking to increase its in house experience with two more volunteer roles that involve IT and Business Management.

The first is someone to advise us on the requirements for an integrated IT system that will help us keep connected to sales, inventory, finances, and HR, together with a document filing system for both the pub and the society etc.

The second is for someone to advise us regarding all of the issues necessary for the effective and successful management of a SME, ideally, but not necessarily, in the hospitality sector.

Additionally, although not currently required it would be helpful to have available someone with legal knowledge and experience, particularly in contract law, who can be called on for advice in the event of need.

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 and the George Public House as well as facilitating projects such as the Shed and assisting the Archive Centre move.

The Partnership has pledged £5,000 to the Village Hall Rebuild Fund (later changed to the Refurbishment Fund); 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.