

Pensford, Publow and The Stanton Community Trust

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (“CIO”) No. 1160279

Chairman’s Report for the year ended 31st. January 2017

I am pleased to report on our second year of operations, a year in which we have strengthened our position in the consciousness of the two villages, which make up our areas of benefit, and made some very significant grants to a number of key causes.

Grants

The grants made in the year totalling just under £19,000 demonstrate our wide reach and the range of needs in both villages:

- St. Thomas Becket Church Tower, Pensford £119 for minor furniture and electrical items;
- The legal fees of £455 to facilitate a generous gift of land at Culvery Wood by Meg Thomas to The Woodland Trust;
- £4,000 to Stanton Drew Sports Field from unrestricted funds and a further £6,000 from restricted funds to the same cause;
- £1,400 to Pensford Primary School towards a number of minor projects;
- £5,500 to Stanton Drew School towards major works in their play facilities;
- £1,500 towards the Pensford “finger post” project.

Further Projects

We are presently working on a significant number of further projects, with applications approved or in progress for:

- The Acker Bilk memorial bench in Pensford;
- Restoration work on the old lock-up in Pensford;
- Various items for Pensford Primary School;
- Improvements to Pensford playground;
- Facilitating the installation of a new bell, which has been gifted to Stanton Drew church;
- Major restoration works to the bell tower at Publow church, the first such works since 1905.

Finances

During the year, we have eaten into our unrestricted reserves, by just over £4,600. This was a deliberate decision by Trustees and we still have a buffer over and above our reserves policy, meaning that we are able to respond rapidly to any urgent needs for funds. The unrestricted funds at year end were just over £14,000.

Our income from the 100 Club was lower than it would be in a normal year because its members agreed that the 100 Club needed to build a “fighting fund” of £10,000. This has now been reached. The major fund-raising event was the second “Rok the Stones” marathon, again a huge success thanks to the very considerable skill, enthusiasm and efforts of a large team led by Simon Whittle and Judith Chubb Whittle with Phil Townshend organising an army of volunteer marshals. We also received donations restricted to a particular cause, enabling us to claim Gift Aid tax relief which would not otherwise have been available. We received our first Gift Aid tax relief just before our financial year end.

Post Year End

Since the year end, we have had the third “Rok the Stones” Marathon, and this event seems to get more popular, more successful and with an ever wider range of participants, from near and far. Many thanks to all those many people who came together to make this a terrific event for the participants, a true community effort, and as well as being a lot of fun, raised about £1,400 for our funds. It is invidious to name individuals but I feel that I must mention a few names, in addition to Simon, Judith and Phil who repeated their tour de force in overall organisation. Gillian Wookey was responsible for the publicity and marketing which ensured a “sell out” within hours of applications opening and followed up with the post event press coverage. Charles Wookey walked the course many times to check the route in advance and then to ensure that, despite the recent heavy rains, it was passable on the day. Karen Warrington organised the kitchen team which ensured that everyone was fed and watered - from bacon butties before the start to vegetarian chilli as runners came home. Anne Bennett and her WI colleagues provided huge quantities of wonderful cakes and other items to ensure that sugar levels did not drop. The Stanton Drew Village Hall committee must also be thanked, as without this facility the event could not possibly be run. I am speechless when I contemplate what the participants put themselves through, supposedly by way of recreation. I have not run cross country since I left school, and the experience of running through the snow in the early months of 1963 will never leave me!

Looking Ahead

I and my fellow Trustees believe that your generosity is already making a real difference to our communities, as may be seen from the list of projects, either completed or in hand, set out earlier. There are many causes that badly need support: the village schools; the church buildings; the village halls and playgrounds; sporting facilities; our wonderful open spaces; tackling projects such as the A37 and keeping our children and older people safe and able to move around; and the many local groups.

Your Trustees are making it their mission this year to be seen as the facilitators of projects to assist these organisations and institutions. Whilst we do not intend to fund many, if any, projects 100%, we are able to use our financial strength to underwrite really worthwhile and needed projects so that they actually get done. Members’ assistance in identifying and bringing such projects forward is hugely appreciated. We shall be keeping the feet of our local councillors, whose leaders are themselves Trustees of course, firmly to the fire to help deliver.

Thank You

Our financial base is secured by the generosity of the members of the 100 Club and my thanks go to them and the organisers, led by Clarke and Sue Osborne, Phil Townshend and Ken Payne. Your Trustees continue to seek out and then process grant applications. It is invidious to pick out individuals but my task as Chair is made hugely easier by Sue Osborne’s tireless work on your behalf.

Ken Payne continues with his efficient management of the finances and I thank him and also Mark Finn, our Reporting Accountant.

Finally, thank you all again for your time, money, enthusiasm and general support – and of course the fun we have along the way. It remains and continues to be a privilege to Chair this great community charity.

Andrew Hillman
March 2017