

Pembrokeshire Mencap Ltd
Report to 2022 Annual General meeting

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report for the year ended 31st March 2022.

Reference and Administrative Details

Registered Company number: 05963025

Registered Charity Number: 1128982

Registered Office: Stackpole Walled Gardens, National Trust Estate,
Stackpole, Pembroke SA71 5DJ

Trustees: Mr G Headley (Chairman) appointed 10.06.15 reappointed 16.07.21
Mr A B Marmara (Vice Chairman) appointed 10.06.15 reappointed 16.07.21
Mr I Wilshaw, (Treasurer) appointed 22.05.13 reappointed 16.07.21
Mr B Griffiths, appointed 15.4.09 reappointed 16.07.21
Mr M Evans, appointed 15.4.09 reappointed 16.07.21
Mr D Brockway appointed 16.06.10 reappointed 16.07.21
Sarah Berry appointed 1.06.16 reappointed 16.07.21
Caroline W Marmara, appointed 22.05.13 reappointed 16.07.21
Michelle Morris appointed 16.07.21 resigned 28.01.22

Company Secretary: Caroline Wendy Marmara

Independent Examiner: Ashmole and Co
Williamston House
7 Goat Street
Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 1PX

Bankers: HSBC
41 High Street
Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 2BU

This report marks the end of the thirteenth year of operation as an Incorporated Company. For the purposes of this report, the term 'Society' will continue to be used.

Governing Document

The Society is controlled by its Memorandum and Articles of Association adopted at a Special General Meeting held on 29th November 2008,

registered by Company House on 10th December 2008 and approved by the Charity Commission on 2nd April 2009.

Pembrokeshire Mencap Ltd is affiliated to The Royal Mencap Society but is financially a self-contained body fulfilling the objectives of our constitution. The original affiliation agreement ended in March 2013 and was replaced by a Partnership Plan encouraging more collaboration between local groups and the Royal Mencap Society.

Most of our activity continues to be centred on our training facility for adults with learning disabilities within Pembrokeshire. Training, work experience and personal development are provided at our six acre site at Stackpole Walled Gardens, five miles south of Pembroke.

Trustees

In accordance with the constitution, members of the executive are elected annually and all executive members are elected as Trustees of the Charity. Trustees holding office during the year are listed above.

In January 2022 Michelle Morris resigned with immediate effect, as she had accepted a new role which she believed could result in a conflict of interest. She was sent a letter of thanks for her important contribution to the charity, particularly with reference to HR matters. Everyone wished her well in her new role.

Meetings were held as follows:

4th June 2021 - Meeting of Trustees
16th July 2021 - Annual General Meeting
3rd September 2021 - Meeting of Trustees
3rd December 2021 - Meeting of Trustees
4th March 2022 - Meeting of Trustees

Structure Governance and Management

Trustees have continued to be directly responsible for the running of Stackpole Walled Gardens. They are responsible for staff welfare and the charity's future, with additional scrutiny during the past year in emerging from the Covid 19 pandemic.

Annual development reviews take place with staff as well as more informal weekly meetings with the Garden Manager, Debbie Drewett. They also met with Trustees.

Together, the Garden Manager and Trustees managed the gradual return to work of a full quota of staff and recruitment of seasonal staff for the Tearoom. Staff continued to take Lateral Flow Tests with intermittent Covid cases being identified which had an impact on staffing levels.

Strategic forward planning featured in Trustee meetings, in terms of ensuring sufficient staff coverage between tutoring, gardening and bus duties. The Treasurer wanted to plan a phased retirement which led to purchase of QuickBooks software package overseen by the Garden Manager, with support from the trustees. This enabled the financial situation to be constantly assessed and easy comparison of income with previous years.

Trustee recruitment took place but candidates with the required skills and knowledge were not forthcoming. These included finance and volunteer management,

The Agenda for meetings included:

- Apologies for Absence
- Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
- Matters Arising
- Garden Manager's Report
- Treasurer's Report – including Funding
- Correspondence
- Any Other Business

A representative of the National Trust attended as a co-opted member of the management committee, as did County Councillor Simon Hancock.

Risk Management

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

In the past two years this revolved around the limits set by the Covid 19 pandemic. Considerations included staff welfare and the implications of re-opening the Tearoom to take into account the infection risk, as well as the business case.

Data Protection rules continued to be adhered to in line with the GDPR legislation.

The Business Plan is a robust working document projecting development to 2023.

Objectives and Activities

The charitable objectives as detailed in our constitution are:

a) the relief of people with a learning disability, in particular by the provision of help and support for them and their families, dependents and carers and to prevent learning disabilities for the public benefit

b) to provide or assist in the provision of facilities for the recreation or other leisure time occupation for people who have need thereof by reason of learning disability with the object of improving their conditions of life

Learning disability means any developmental disability of the mind and any associated condition however caused and whether mild, moderate or severe.

Achievement and Performance

Charitable Activity - Pembrokeshire Mencap Walled Gardens Project, Stackpole.

Objective - Working with people with learning disabilities to provide horticultural training and work experience. This programme has been successfully extended to include supervised training and work experience in Cawdors Tearoom.

Stackpole Walled Gardens:

It was exciting to see the Gardens coming back to life after the lockdowns when minimum maintenance had taken place. This of course meant that considerable catch-up work had to be undertaken, based on the Garden Forward Plan designed by Martin Wood Robinson.

The Spring 2021 season started with good plant sales, then soft fruit picking. Vegetable quantities were reduced, to balance time spent with students. Trustees agreed to a second order of perennial plants which were much demand.

The Pond area proved very popular, with the variety of planting attracting many butterflies and other wildlife, including ducks visiting with their young. The project was supported by a Little Green Grant, with ground works carried out by a team of volunteers from Valero, while two trustees completed the path landscaping. The Pembroke Soroptomists donated a Liquid Amber Medlar and a Mulberry tree - to mark their centenary year - which they planted beside the pond.

The student plots were re-established in time for the Spring 2022 season which was welcomed by all involved. An attractive arbour seat was added, thanks to a bequest.

In August, the South Hook LNG Community Fund team were welcomed for a photo opportunity at the external wash station project which is powered by solar energy.

Students:

The students had been much missed during lockdown - in terms of bringing life and purpose to the Gardens and for the hard work they

contribute to the enterprise, so it was great to see them returning in a phased arrangement.

The Garden Manager had kept in touch with them through carers and parents. Some fared better than others. Some really missed the friendship and work at the Gardens.

Some returned for fewer hours a week due to transport issues but others, despite contact with support workers, took longer to return. Time and careful management by the tutor and gardeners restored confidence of more vulnerable participants. By the end of 2021, 20 students had returned to the Gardens.

Meetings took place with Pembrokeshire College in consideration of the effect that a phased return of students would have on accredited work programmes. Those in a two year programme of 11/12 units would achieve an Award rather than Certificate.

However, the tutors and students caught up over a few months and a curriculum for the next two years was agreed with the College. A meeting was held with Pembrokeshire County Council to agree a new day rate reflecting the value of the accredited work programme at the Gardens and the benefits to participants.

An Awards event was not held at Christmas 2021 due to the need for social distancing with the threat from the Omicron version of Covid 19. However, staff were determined to mark the festive period for the students with a traditional meal on consecutive days to which trustees were invited. This proved very popular.

In early 2022 we received confirmation of a place on the Mencap Cymru 'Citizen Curator' oral history project, funded by Heritage Lottery. Interviews will culminate in an exhibition on the Stackpole site, which will attract new visitors.

Staff:

Debbie Drewett entered her twelfth year of service as Garden Manager, meeting the challenge of making the site fully operational following the Covid 19 pandemic.

Her remit includes overseeing horticultural training for the participants, through to the business element of the organisation. In addition she represents the charity at external meetings, including the Day Opportunities Forum, and the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Julian Rollins settled into the Garden Tutor role. Lauren Dehtiar continued as Garden Team Leader, with Brian O'Neill as the third full-time member of the team. He also assists with participants' training and is the main bus

driver. Morgan Williams, continued to provide gardening support and chaperoning students on the bus.

Discussions around recruiting more volunteers continue and there is definitely potential for particular roles to be advertised. The National Trust has also expressed an interest in some sort of collaboration in this field, which needs further exploration.

Tearoom and Shop:

It was great to open the Tearoom (with three tables) in May 2021, offering a pared down menu. Social distancing was achieved with outdoor seating and the marquee.

A Café and Retail Review was carried out by 'Business Buddies' in 2021. In addition, Trustees' observations and staff feedback led to a Tearoom facelift with more subtle lighting and a new counter layout incorporating the chiller cabinet.

Queue management was also addressed, with drinks being served before food so that customers received part of their order quickly, which eased queues.

However, staff recruitment was an issue, consistent with reports from across the hospitality sector locally and nationally. The Manager advertised widely and the Kickstart programme was disappointing.

Sheila Davies had a phased return to work at the end of June 2021, following her period of ill health. A reduced menu of cakes and drinks aided a quicker passage of customers through the Tearoom, important in light of social distancing.

The PCC compliance team visited to ensure Covid 19 legislation was followed. Tables were returned in September as the weather cooled. Staff wages were raised in line with legislation and they were asked for ideas around running of the Tearoom.

The shop did not fully re-open in 2021. Instead, produce was displayed attractively outside the shop and craft items were displayed in the Tearoom, providing customers with an opportunity to browse.

Ideally the shop should be staffed at weekends to help ease the Tearoom queue when shop customers wait to purchase perhaps one item. Recruiting a volunteer, via PAVS and social media, was unsuccessful. A Trustee volunteered in the shop on Sundays between June and September.

Funding:

Pembrokeshire Mencap continues to seek ways of diversifying its income to strengthen its funding mix which includes contracts with the local authority, service level agreements and fundraising activities. In 2021/22 the Tearoom income recovered thanks to an influx of visitors choosing 'staycations' in the UK.

In addition to completing the Pond project and a Hand Washing station which was supported by a Little Green Grant, a Learning Disabilities Innovation Fund grant supported students' course work through purchase of i-pads and easy read software.

Funding from the Hywel Davies charity will support student seating, construction of a workshop and establishing a Stackpole Walled Garden Vineyard. Replacing the mini-bus and restoring the historic glass houses remain long term aims.

Promotion and Events:

The Walled Gardens website and social media accounts kept the public informed of opening times, according to the latest Covid 19 ruling. No public events were held.

Thanks

In the light of another challenging year, the Trustees wish to record their appreciation to the staff for ensuring a smooth re-opening of Stackpole Walled Garden site, with special thanks to Debbie Drewett, the Manager of Stackpole Walled Gardens.

Volunteers could not participate very much in this past year but their ongoing support is much appreciated, with the hope of recruiting more in the future.

Final thanks go to our students who make the Walled Gardens what they are today and whose contribution was more appreciated than ever in the past year.

**Caroline Wendy Marmara (Hon
Secretary) July 2022**