

## **Trustees' Annual Report**

for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

### **Oak Tree Farm Rural Project**

Registered Charity 1138396  
Co. Ltd by Guarantee 7343296

Oak Tree Farm Rural Project,  
Oak Cottage Farm  
Sandon Road  
Hilderstone  
Stone  
ST15 8RT

**Charity Trustees for period** – serving during the period covered above.

#### **Appointed by Members**

David Folkes            Chairman  
Janet Markwell        Vice Chairman  
Mike Abbott (to Dec 2020)  
Carol Blurton  
Anne Bird  
Alan Markwell  
Simon Mountford  
Sheila Penfold  
Angela Thomas  
Paul Wyatt

#### **Appointed by Trustees**

Harry Brunt  
Ian Parry  
Bill Scarlett

#### **Patrons**

The Earl of Harrowby  
The Countess of Harrowby  
The Lord Stafford  
Monica Moreton MBE  
Tony Browne (to Nov 2020)

Independent accounts examiner - David Rogers FCA  
General Manager                      - David Moreton

## **Structure, governance and management**

Oak Tree Farm Rural Project is Company Limited by Guarantee governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association and was incorporated in August 2010. Registered with the Charity Commission in October 2010 the organisation was previously an unincorporated association and charity set up in May 1988.

Trustees/Directors are elected by the Members of the charity at the Annual General Meeting, one third of these Trustees are required to retire each year. Up to twelve Trustees are elected and three others have been appointed, these Trustees have been appointed or co-opted by the elected Trustees. These appointed Trustees must all retire each year.

New Trustee induction involves awareness of the Trustees' responsibilities, constitution, procedures, policies, history and general 'ethos' of the charity. Trustees are required to read the pack of policies and procedures which are adopted annually. The Trustees review the risks that the charity faces annually. Currently they relate mainly to health and safety issues, and are managed by individual, area and process risk assessments and six-monthly health and safety meetings. There are some risks associated with employing staff which are covered by proper procedures and insurance. Trustees are also aware of threats to finances from recession, new projects, biological farming problems and possible changes in government funding or competition from other providers. The organisations Disasters and Emergency Plan anticipated large-scale absences due to illness but did not anticipate a crisis of the scale of the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic.

The current priority is to develop new toilet and office facilities in order to maintain the safety of beneficiaries and visitors. This is dependent on the countrywide restrictions being lifted and the charity emerging from the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic without a significant change to its financial circumstances. Our insurers carry out an independent review of risk periodically.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The objects of the charity set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association are 'the support of people with learning disabilities and difficulties through activities and of vocational training in horticulture, agriculture, catering, pottery and associated rural activities'.

The main activities relating to these objects are the provision of training and supported occupation for adults with learning disabilities known as 'Team Members'. The setting for these activities is primarily a 15 acre small holding with a horticultural unit growing plants and flowers. The holding also has beef cattle and poultry and from time-to-time pigs. A fully equipped pottery on site produces garden pots and other ceramics. 'Acorn Garden Services', a division

of the farm project, carries out gardening work in the community, which helps those individuals with the potential of gaining sheltered employment. The 'Oak Leaf Tea Room' has established itself as a destination for visitors, including those with disabilities, as well as providing further opportunity for Team Members. 'Branching Out' is the organisations scheme to enable less able Team Members to work off site and access community activities.

The Charity's staff team is headed by a General Manager who has regular contact with Trustees. The team consists of a Team Member Coordinator, four Project Assistants (Three full time equivalents), a part time Pottery Instructor, a Team Leader for Acorn Garden Services, a Retail Catering Manager, Cook and two part time Assistants for the Oak Leaf Tea Room and an Admin/Finance Coordinator. A Cleaner completes the staff team.

In addition, volunteers have a vital role providing additional support to Team Members with disabilities, offering time, expertise and experience to the Charity. These staff and volunteers undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

## **Achievements and Performance**

These facilities and human resources along with the activities listed below were only realised during part of the year because of the various measures taken in response to the **Coronavirus Pandemic**. The Charity offered ninety-eight day places each week for people with learning disabilities during 2020, normal attendance is two days a week. Fifty-seven individuals regularly benefited from the farm's activities. On-site provision was substituted with remote support during the 'lockdown' closures, for those who chose not to attend or were advised not to due to being extremely clinically vulnerable. This remote support was tailored to the individual and consisted of weekly welfare calls, Zoom sessions, a closed Facebook group, a closed Facebook Messenger group, monthly newsletter, deliveries of resources, doorstep visits etc. A very limited number of Team Members attended on site during 'lockdowns' on a one-to-one basis.

To enable Team Members to return to attending in person the site and operating procedures were made 'Covid 19 secure'. Social distancing, PPE, hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette, cleaning procedures, one-way systems, reduced numbers, virus and antibody testing, isolation etc. were used for infection control and detailed in a comprehensive risk assessment. Twenty-nine Team Members were funded by Direct Payments, seven by local authority agreements and seventeen by other agencies. In addition, four were funded by internal fundraising activities; the charity supported them. In normal times eight are permanent 'Acorn Garden Services' Team Members, seventeen work regularly in the 'Oak Leaf Tea Room' and well over twenty are involved in 'Branching Out'.

In normal times the main activities are growing basket and bedding plants, perennials, vegetables and cut flowers, and planting hanging baskets, all targeted at public events, these were not held in 2020. Plug plants were

delivered to some Team Members during 'lockdown' to keep them busy and all Team Members received plants, compost and hanging baskets to construct and look after. Oak Tree Farm also gave plants to twenty-three other similar organisations working with people with disabilities, special schools, care homes and former Team Members. This was for the wellbeing of people isolating, children of essential workers and residents, to give them an activity focus and improve their immediate environment.

The Pottery produces slip cast, hand built and thrown wares. Fettling, decorating, glazing and firing are all done on site, along with associated, reclaiming and designing. Pottery 'kits' were delivered to Team Members during 'lockdowns', as were craft projects, colouring, word searches, activities etc.

In addition to their core activities, Team Members normally assist at the public events, help in the shop, run coffee mornings and welcome visitors. This promotes ownership and pride in their achievements. Team Members were involved in the Advent Windows event in Stone town centre, albeit they were unable to attend as normal. Team Members artwork was used for the window display and the event opening was held online. Unfortunately, the Team Members Annual trip and Bikeathon fundraiser were not possible in 2020.

'Acorn Garden Services' Team Members provide gardening services to local elderly, churches and businesses. The team has an ongoing link with The National Trust at Biddulph Grange, the Team were able to continue this in a restricted way between lockdowns, again it was limited to a one-to-one basis.

The Team Members' own newsletter, produced entirely by them, 'The Cowpat' was replaced during the pandemic closures by a new publication, 'Custard's Quacks'. This was named by the Team Members and featured their pictures, contributions and news but was produced by a member of staff. It was distributed monthly.

The Oak Leaf Tea Room's menu includes lunches, cream teas, specials as well as drinks and ice cream. The tea room was closed to visitors for all of the 2020 pandemic period. When Team Members were able to attend, they did baking, jam making and supplied hot drinks for all those on site. Baking 'kits' were sent out as activities for Team Members, and the tea room kitchen was used on many of the Zoom sessions.

A planned 'Midsummer Music' event was also postponed until it can be held safely in the future year.

## **Financial Review**

### **Reserves**

The Trustees policy is to hold reserves of at least £80,000. This would be sufficient to cover the Charity's wind-up costs in the event of an unforeseen disaster. This figure includes the worst case of two years rent in lieu of notice, the redundancy of current staff and half of the three months running costs likely to be needed to wind up the charity. The reserves policy will be reviewed annually to take account of any changing circumstances. The level of reserve was £245,903 at the end of 2020 and is kept in a CAF account.

### **Sources of Funds and Expenditure**

The principal sources of funds for 2020 are split into two, the sale of services and products £193,144 and donations and fundraising £32,294.

Oak Tree Farm Rural Project received a legacy of £240,000 in 2019, the Trustees have set aside an initial £170,000 of this for capital purchases. This includes the building of new toilets and office and the replacement of the thirty year old tractor, these purchases were put on hold due to the financial uncertainties of the pandemic. The cost of this is likely to have risen over time.

The charity's key objective, the support of people with learning disabilities, is covered both directly and indirectly (write down of fixed assets) by an expenditure of £303,908. The largest proportion of this expenditure being a staff cost of £216,945.

### **Declaration**

The Trustees declare that they have approved the above Trustees' Report.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Signature

Full Name	David Folkes
Position	Chairman
Date	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2021

Signature

Full Name	Anne Bird
Position	Secretary
Date	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2021



OAK TREE FARM RURAL PROJECT			Charity No (if any)	700299	CC39a
Annual accounts for the period					
Period start date	1.1.2020	To	Period end date	31.12.2020	

## Section A Statement of financial activities

Recommended categories by activity	Note	Restricted			Total this year £	Total last year £
		Unrestricted funds £	income funds £	Endowment funds £		
		F01	F02	F03	F04	F05
<b>Incoming resources (Note 3)</b>						
Donations, legacies and Grants		28,025	-	-	28,025	263,836
Shop sales		30,905	-	-	30,905	139,914
Fees for charitable services		160,725	-	-	160,725	179,205
Interest and dividends		1,514	-	-	1,514	1,784
Fundraising events		4,269	-	-	4,269	6,786
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	S01	225,438	-	-	225,438	591,525
<b>Resources expended (Notes 4-7)</b>						
Wages, salaries, pensions and NI		216,945	-	-	216,945	229,058
Rent, rates and Insurance		10,492	-	-	10,492	10,408
Repairs and maintenance		11,776	-	-	11,776	14,918
Light and heat		13,283	-	-	13,283	14,926
Telephone postage and stationery		3,323	-	-	3,323	13,143
Bank charges and interest		1,908	-	-	1,908	3,256
Depreciation		17,759	-	-	17,759	20,966
Cost of fundraising events		28,422	-	-	28,422	62,827
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total resources expended</b>	S02	303,908	-	-	303,908	369,502
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers</b>	S03	- 78,470	-	-	- 78,470	222,023
<b>Gross transfers between funds</b>	S04	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other recognised gains/(losses)</b>	S05	- 78,470	-	-	- 78,470	222,023
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses)</b>						
Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use	S06	-	-	-	-	-
Gains and losses on investment assets	S07	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	S08	- 78,470	-	-	- 78,470	222,023
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	S09	572,532	-	-	572,532	350,509
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	S10	494,062	-	-	494,062	572,532



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
OAK TREE FARM RURAL PROJECT

On accounts for the year  
ended

31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2020

Charity no  
(if any)

1138396

Set out on pages

1-15

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2020.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed: David Rogers

Date: 17/8/21

Name: David Rogers

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Chartered Accountant – Member of Institute of Chartered Accountants

**Address:**

3 Balliol Way

Shrewsbury

SY3 6AP

## Section B

### Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**