



MEDWAY TOWNS SOROPTIMIST TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

Registered charity number 1175474

Report of the Trustees

Administrative details	2
Governance	2
Objectives and activities	3
Achievements and performance	4
Financial review	5
Structure, governance and management	6
Declarations	7

Financial report (Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021)

Receipts and payments accounts	8
Statement of assets and liabilities	9

Report of the Trustees

The Trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2021. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the trust's governing document and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102 SORP). During this unusual year, the Trustees have also taken into account the Charities SORP Committee's guidance regarding "Implications of COVID-19 control measures and charity financial reporting".

Administrative details

Registered Charity Number:	1175474
Registered Office:	Medway Towns Soroptimist Trust 328 Lunsford Lane Larkfield Aylesford Kent ME20 6HX
Trustees:	Elizabeth Duckworth Barbara Fisher Lillian Gould Janet Garnons-Williams Wanda Wright Susan Daykin (retired April 2020)
Staff:	No staff are employed by the Trust
Independent Examiner:	No independent examiner is named here, as the trust's low income currently precludes examination or audit.

Governance

The Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation model), registered charity number 1175474.

The Charity's constitution is the primary governing document of the Charity.

The Medway Towns Soroptimist Trust was registered with the Charity Commission on 31st October 2017.

Purpose

The purpose of the trust is to ensure the responsible management of a small financial endowment and to occasionally award modest grants.

Background

The original investment was generated by members of Soroptimist International of the Medway Towns in the 1960s and we are influenced by their Soroptimist philosophy of actively supporting the community locally, nationally and internationally, through service and through funding.

The Trust is managed by a Board of Trustees, all of whom are (but do not have to be) members of Soroptimist International.

Soroptimist International is a recognised Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) representing women from all over the world. Soroptimist International (SI) and Soroptimist International Great Britain & Ireland (SIGBI) both have consultative status at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations (UN), which gives a voice on important discussion papers, and allows members to attend the Commission on the Status of Women in New York each March, and contribute to the “Agreed Conclusions”. This status would not be possible without the fantastic work being done by, and facilitated by, Soroptimists at local level.

There are nearly 80,000 Soroptimists worldwide, the majority of whom belong to their local Club, where they can make friends with like-minded women, have fun and work on projects that help improve lives.

Objectives and activities

Charitable objectives

The object of the charity as set out in its governing document is:

To further such charitable purposes (charitable under English law) as the Trustees see fit from time to time.

Activities

The trust exists to manage a small endowment and occasionally provide modest grants for projects which fit within the areas of work listed in the guidelines.

The Trust has an obligation to:

- manage the investment in a responsible way to ensure the proceeds deliver community benefit;
- discharge the duty to gain maximum growth of the fund.

The Trustees consider applications quarterly.

Public benefit

The Charity’s Trustees have complied with their duties under the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. Medway Towns Soroptimist Trust’s particular public benefit activities are included under Achievements and Performance, illustrating the commitment of the Charity to supporting charitable causes locally, nationally and internationally.

Policy on grant making

In 2020, the Trustees took the opportunity to revisit our grant-making priorities. In particular, we wanted to move away from our focus on specific UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and strengthen our focus on the Soroptimist mission: *Soroptimists transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities.*

As a result of our deliberations, the Trust changed its priorities, subtly but importantly, to:

- better reflect the Soroptimist Mission, particularly support for women and girls;
- no longer specifically focus on UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- favour local causes;
- continue our policy of supporting individuals, but only through established organisations, not through grants directly to individuals;
- be responsive and react to urgent requests between board meetings if necessary;
- continue to meet the Charity Commission requirement that we remain separate from the Soroptimist Club;
- not fund projects retrospectively;
- support only one grant per organisation at any one time.

The grant application form and guidance were amended accordingly.

The Trust conducts quarterly minuted Board meetings at which grant decisions are made. The decision to award a grant must be a majority decision of a quorum of Trustees. The quorum is two charity Trustees. If an urgent application is received, it may be discussed and voted upon by email between Board meetings.

A Trustee may declare an interest in an applicant organisation, in which case they will withdraw from the vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair has a second or casting vote.

The Trustees gather sufficient information, primarily through the application form, to give assurance that the applicant is genuine, reliable and competent, and suitable for us to support in terms of meeting our charitable purposes. Occasionally a vote will not be held until we have requested and secured more information about the applicant or their project.

The Trustees insist on appropriate monitoring of the grant spend in terms of progress reports and invoice evidence, to give Trustees oversight and scrutiny. Our level of monitoring and scrutiny will be proportionate to the size of the grant.

Achievements and performance

Activities to 31st March 2021

The Medway Towns Soroptimist Trust has, like most charities, found the past year to be an interesting time. The Covid-19 pandemic had an inevitable impact on our investment and we took a more cautious approach to grant-giving, but we also had the opportunity to revisit our priorities.

Managing our investment

Our financial assets sit with Sanlam, an investment house who provide the level of financial monitoring and management we need to give us control and accountability.

Our original capital investment with Sanlam in April 2018 was £120,000 but by 31st March 2020 the value of our investment had dropped to £109,988 due to COVID-19 and the resulting impact on the world economy. However, by 31st March 2021 markets had recovered well and the value had grown to £141,640.

The Trustees are very grateful to Leon Payne of S & P Wealth Management for his independent financial advice. Leon continues to offer advice and guidance without charge, as he wishes to support the valuable work of the Soroptimist movement.

Grant applications

Our operational account with Lloyds Bank covers the cost of donations and bank charges to March 2021. The balance stood at £6,728.18 at the start of the year. We plan to allocate around £4,600 per annum to donations and bank charges. However, over the past year, we just made 5 modest donations totalling £1,700:

- £500 to the Lalibela Children's Library in Ethiopia, to buy new quality books in Amharic for all age ranges, to provide an essential resource in their local language. We will waive the requirement that a grant is spent within a year of award, because unrest in the north of the country and Covid have caused rampant inflation, so the Project Manager has decided to delay purchase until prices return nearer to normal.
- £100 to Medway Domestic Abuse Service for their emergency fund which supports women and children who are escaping domestic abuse in its many forms. It provides welcome and immediate support to those forced to leave their home with little or no resources, to help them get to a place of safety.

- £600 to Medway Street Angels to continue their provision of ongoing care to local residents of Medway who have been affected financially, through redundancy or no free school meals, through vulnerability or isolation, especially during Covid. This included providing food parcels, gas and electricity where appropriate, and providing home starter packages to the homeless moving into temporary accommodation.
- £200 to Hospital Radio Medway to buy 10 radios to allow patients, visitors and staff to tune into hospital radio.
- £300 to Blythswood Trust's Shoebox Appeal, which sends boxes of gifts to children and adults in Eastern Europe. Whilst boxes of gifts are donated voluntarily, there is expenditure incurred by Blythswood in transporting them to their destination and our grant contributes to this cost.

With bank charges of £80, the total outgoings of £1,780 was less than usual, due to our caution over Covid.

Since March 2021, we have also made one more substantial grant:

- £1,000 to the "Fitness, Freedom and Brighter Futures" project at the Medway Women's Refuge, to provide access passes to local leisure centres for women and children, along with fitness classes, swimming and gym access, yoga and self-defence activities and courses, and group mindfulness sessions, from summer 2021 to spring 2022.

The donations represent a good distribution between local, national and international, from meeting the very local needs of the Medway Street Angels and the Medway Women's Refuge, to supporting the national charity Blythswood Care, to reaching the excellent Lalibela project in Ethiopia.

We have not advertised our grant scheme and recipients tend to come to us through charities or other organisations by word of mouth. We did not support the many unsolicited requests for funding from large national charities and small London charities.

The closing balance of the operations account stood at £4,948.18.

In 2021/2022, depending on the progress of our Sanlam investment, we will withdraw a further cash sum from our capital to continue our charitable objectives for another three years.

Website

In the past, the Trust had a page on the website of the Soroptimist International Medway club, where applicants could find the application form and guidance. We plan to develop our own internet presence which will be independent of the Club webpages.

Financial review

Principal funding source

Our sole funding source when the charity was formed was the financial investment endowed by Medway Soroptimists, as described on page 2.

Total funds

At the end of this period our total funds were £124,948.18. Of this, we continue to record our original investment of £120,000 in the Sanlam investment account. Its value of course fluctuates over time and the current value will only be realised if and when we release the asset. We will monitor closely.

The remaining £4,948.18 is in our bank account, to give cash reserves for operational costs and awarding grants.

All funds are unrestricted.

Reserves policy

The Trust employs no staff and is operated entirely by the Trustees, who are volunteers. Our running costs are minimal (mostly bank charges), so we will ensure that a balance of £500 will always remain in our cash account to meet the Charity Commission guideline of reserves of 3 - 6 months of running costs.

Our main reserves are our capital investment. We aim to maintain an investment of at least £120,000 to ensure we generate some growth which can be accessed every three years to top up the bank cash account. This will ensure we can continue to make modest grants to meet our charitable objects.

Risks

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. Regular formal Trustee meetings are held to review progress towards achieving the Charity's objectives and to promote strategic direction within the Trust.

The Trustees regularly address risks and uncertainties and put in place procedures and controls to ensure those risks are adequately managed. The principal risks in 2021 are:

- poor performance of our capital investment;
- a grant recipient not using the funds to benefit the community;
- trustees retiring so we are no longer quorate.

The first will be mitigated by close monitoring of our investment, consulting our advisor at S & P Wealth Management as necessary. The second is mitigated by robust due diligence when assessing a grant application and good decision making. The third is a very low probability risk and we continue to generate interest in the Trust by communicating our work to colleagues and supporters, a potential source of new Trustees.

Plans for the future

It is still early days for our charitable trust and we recognise this is a long term undertaking. We will continue to operate in a cautious way over the next 3 years, awarding total grants of up to £4,600 per annum. We will not advertise but will rely on the number of applications growing by word of mouth.

We look forward to seeing our modest donations continue to make a real difference to people's lives locally, nationally and internationally.

Structure, governance and management

Board of Trustees

The Medway Towns Soroptimist Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation model), registered charity number 1175474, set up in 2017 in response to the need to manage the Soroptimist endowment. The founding Board of Trustees was Liz Duckworth (Chair), Barbara Fisher (Treasurer), Lillian Gould, Janet Garnons-Williams and Sue Daykin, skilled and committed volunteers with strong backgrounds in finance, law, fundraising and the VCSE (Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise) sector.

Sue stepped down at the 2020 AGM and we were delighted to welcome Wanda Wright to the Board as a new Trustee.

The Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation and meets regularly to manage the investment, to assess any applications for funding which had been received, and ensure that the Trust is on track to meet its objectives. The Board met four times during the last financial year as well as convening the Annual General Meeting in May 2020. This year's AGM was held in May 2021. In 2020 to 2021, all our meetings were via Zoom.

The Trustees have complied with the duties described under the Charities Act 2011, and with proper regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Each year we submit the annual report of the trustees and accounts to the Charity Commission for the financial year ending 31st March. Our report to 31st March 2020 was completed and submitted before the due date and was accepted.

Thank you



I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for their conscientious work for the Trust this year, and to Leon Payne for his continued support and advice. We look forward to seeing our modest donations continue to make a real difference to people's lives locally, nationally and internationally.

Liz Duckworth
Chair
10/07/2021

Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Elizabeth Duckworth	Barbara Fisher
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	Treasurer
Date	11/07/2021	11/07/2021

Financial report



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

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Medway Towns Soroptimist Trust

Registered charity no. 1175474

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

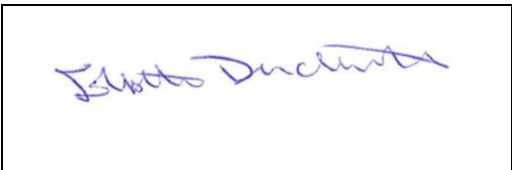

Section A Receipts and payments

to the nearest £

	Unrestrict ed funds	Restrict ed funds	Endow- ment funds	Total funds	Last year
A1 Receipts					
Bank account	6,728	-	-	6,728	11,373
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	6,728	-	-	6,728	11,373
A2 Asset and investment sales					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	6,728	-	-	6,728	11,373
A3 Payments					
Bank charges	80			80	78
Medway Youth Council					
Water Aid					
Meru Women's Garden Project					
Meru Teen Mums project					
Ovarian Cancer Action					
School uniform appeal					
Blythswood Trust	300			300	300
Zisize Feeding Project		-	-		1,080
Family Kitchen Project		-	-		2,000
Abbey Court's Farm Project		-	-		977
'Love Me, Love Me Not' cards		-	-		210
Lalibela Children's Library	500			500	
Medway Domestic Abuse Service	100			100	
Medway Street Angels	600			600	
Hospital Radio Medway	200			200	
Sub total	1,780	-	-	1,780	4,645
A4 Asset and investment purchases					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	1,780	-	-	1,780	2,461
Net of receipts/(payments)	4,948	-	-	4,948	6,728
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	4,948	-	-	4,948	6,728

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank account	4,948	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	4,948	-	-
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	Sanlam investment	Capital investment		120,000
			-	-
		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	

	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
Signed by one or two Trustees on behalf of all the Trustees		Elizabeth Duckworth	11/07/2021
		Barbara Fisher	11/07/2021