

Wareham & District Development Trust (WDDT)

Annual Report 2007 – 2008

In its 6th year of operation WDDT, a charitable company limited by guarantee, has continued to sustain and develop projects in pursuit of its charitable objects, which are set out below:

To promote general charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of Wareham and the surrounding area, and to provide relief from poverty and disadvantage, and to advance the education of its residents of all ages, and in particular to provide opportunities for the aforementioned residents to participate fully in the life of their community in ways which address and alleviate social and economic deprivation.

To promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Wareham and the surrounding area by the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of such persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

Trustees

The Trustees who served on the Board of WDDT in 2007 – 2008 are:

Guy Ryder (Chair)

Les Wright (Treasurer)

Martin Adams

Roy Anderson

Timothy Audley

Victoria Edwards

Colin Goodwin

Jill Hooper

Mark Howlett

Gordon Jenkins

Lara Manningham-Buller

Susan Patterson

John Thraves

During the course of the year fundraising activity continued, (see following 'Activities' and 'Trustees report and financial statements'), and a Management Group of two Trustees and the Development Manager continued to oversee the operations of WDDT's LifeWheels Mobility Centre in Wareham

Members

Any individual who lives or works in the Trust's area of benefit (which covers most of the administrative area of Purbeck District) is eligible to join the Trust, as too are local businesses. The Trust has a membership of around 400 individuals and 30 businesses.

Staff, Volunteers and Other Support

The Trust continued to employ the LifeWheels Manager and a part-time Development Manager to ease the day-to-day pressure on the Trustees. Otherwise the achievements of 2007 – 2008 were due to the voluntary efforts of Trustees, supported by other volunteers, partner organisations and donations of labour, materials and the use of equipment.

Activities

The principal activities of WDDT this year have been:

- ?? **LifeWheels Mobility Centre**
- ?? **Hauses Field of Dreams**
- ?? **PCEL (Purbeck Community Enterprises Limited)**
- ?? **Priory Meadow**
- ?? **Wareham On-Line**
- ?? **Wool BMX & Skate Park**

Hauses Field of Dreams

This year saw the completion of the 2 year, £100,000 'vision' of converting 5 acres of overgrown wilderness within the Northmoor Park Estate, Wareham, into a 'Field of Dreams' including replacing the dilapidated children's play park for 0-

12 year olds, installing a family picnic area, building a small BMX Bike Arena for older children, creating a sensory garden for older and disabled people, and providing extra seating, litter and dog bins around the whole Field.

The 'partnership' to convert 'vision' into 'reality' was led by WDDT and included Dorset Community Action, Wareham Town Council, Wareham Town Trust,

Purbeck Community Partnership, the local Young Farmers, and local volunteers and businesses, and illustrated how well, when people put their mind to it, that the 'community' can work together to achieve great things.

Kevin Randall, Founder-Chairman, and latterly acting Development Manager for the Trust, received a personal award from Britain in Bloom in recognition of his outstanding input into the transformation of Hauses Field.

His work, and the impressive Hauses Field itself, went a long way to enabling Wareham in Bloom to achieve a South of England Gold Award in 2007, and thus automatic entry into the National Awards in 2008.

Hauses Field was also featured on BBC's South Today, as well as several local and regional newspapers and magazines.

LifeWheels Mobility Centre

LifeWheels, based in a substantial shop premises in St Johns Hill, Wareham, has now completed 4 years of operations. LifeWheels offers a variety of services to assist the transport needs of both able-bodied and disabled people, a combination which is both innovative and much-needed in Purbeck.

To help people with mobility difficulties to get around Wareham and Purbeck, LifeWheels runs a Shopmobility Scheme, allowing members to have cheap hire of electric mobility scooters and wheelchairs from a half day to several weeks. This has proven popular with locals and visitors alike, especially during the warmer months. The LifeWheels Shopmobility Scheme, registered with the National

Federation of Shopmobility, is the only free-standing shopmobility scheme operating daily in Dorset during shop opening hours.

The Centre is also providing valuable services to disabled people and their carers through local access to advice on aids to disabled living, and the staff frequently take out items of equipment so that people can see and try them in their own homes.

During the year the Centre also developed additional income through sales and repairs of both mobility equipment and disabled living aids. By offering a bicycle repair and maintenance service, complimented by sales, LifeWheels is filling a vacuum in Purbeck District, and helping to encourage more people out of cars (**PCEL) Purbeck Community Enterprises Limited**) and onto bicycles.

PCEL was set up as a result of advice from the Charity Commission. When the 'trading' activities of a charity start to be significant the Commission prefers it to be carried out through a separate company, partly so that the financial activities involved in trading are clearly separated from the charitable activities. One advantage of this is that the trading company can engage in a broader range of activities.

PCEL was set up in 2006, although it remained 'dormant' until 1 April 2007. It is wholly owned by WDDT, to whom any profits must be passed. There are two Directors appointed by WDDT – John Scott, the WDDT Development Manager, and Les Wright the WDDT Treasurer. Ideally there would be a third Director, independent of WDDT, but no suitable candidate has arisen.

At the current time PCEL's activities consist of running the LifeWheels Mobility Centre. For the year 2007-08 PCEL recorded a small loss of £1,936.

Priory Meadow

During this year a revised 'Management & Maintenance Plan' for Priory Meadow was drawn up with input from Natural England, RSPB and Dorset Wildlife Trust, and the final draft 'signed off' by Natural England as per the terms of the 25 year lease drawn up in 2004.

The revised plan, based on the agreed need to 'facilitate the improvement of its natural biodiversity', is based on the activities that need to take place on a month by month basis ie grass cutting, ditch clearing, tree pruning, etc.

In support of this the students of the Purbeck Centre, Wareham, have begun working on the meadow, utilising tools donated to WDDT by B&Q through their 'Good Neighbourhood' community support scheme.

The Purbeck Centre is run by Dorset County Council and provides opportunities for people with learning and physical disabilities to take part in social and educational activities. The opportunity provided by the Priory Meadow project will allow them to take 'ownership' of the maintenance of the site, and in so doing allow them an element of outdoor physical activity, a potential 'fun fitness' programme, and easy access to other activities such as fishing, walking, boating, etc., and to the town centre itself.

As it is intended to further develop Priory Meadow additional funding has been applied for through the Big Lottery BBC Breathing Places initiative, to cover the cost of extending the pathways, planting trees, creating a pond, and purchasing a box van trailer unit in which to store and transport the tools donated by B&Q.

Further support will be sought from other potential 'partners', such as the local community and schools.

Wareham On-Line

It was Wareham On-Line that led to the formation of the Wareham & District Development Trust in 2002, and remains one of the Trusts success stories.

The aims of the Trust are to develop new uses for buildings or land, which meet recognised needs in the local community, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

Wareham On-Line makes use of what were the old Waiting Rooms of Wareham Station, and in so doing enables such as Dorset Adult Learning a Purbeck base to give disadvantage youngsters a chance to develop their IT skills. The buildings are also used as a meeting place for other local community groups, such as the Wareham Town Trust, who do not have facilities of their own

Wool BMX & Skate Park

The community of Wool were so impressed with the BMX Bike Arena incorporated into Hauses Field, Wareham, that they approached WDDT to see if a similar facility could be provided for the youth of Wool.

Following discussions with representative of the young people of Wool WDDT successfully completed the creation of a new Skateboard Park and Play Area in the village.

Our thanks go to Talbot Village Trust, The Valentine Trust, and The Youth Opportunities Fund for donating the money to enable this project to be undertaken and completed quickly and within budget.

Partnerships

As well as participating in the partnerships previously mentioned, WDDT has continued its involvement in both the Wareham and Purbeck Community Partnerships, thanks to the volunteer time of several Trustees

Thanks

The WDDT Board of Trustees would like to express sincere thanks to many individual volunteers, and to many local businesses, charities, individuals and statutory organisations for their hard work, partnership and donations to the Trust over the past year. The Trust's work continues to benefit from the advice and fundraising assistance of Dorset Community Action, of which we are a member organisation. WDDT is also a full member of the Development Trusts Association.

We are also extremely grateful to all the local, regional and national trusts, charities and other funders that have given us their support, or placed their confidence in our ability to develop and sustain complex projects. We are looking forward to the challenges of 2008-2009, and the benefits we are sure that the Trust will bring to the communities of Wareham and the surrounding areas of Purbeck.

And finally a very big thank you to Kevin Randall, a founder member of the Trust, and without whom not a lot would have got done, who stepped down as Development Manager in September 2007, to be replaced by John Scott.