

Wareham & District Development Trust (WDDT) Annual Report 2008 – 2009

In its 7th 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 2008 – 2009 are:

Guy Ryder (Chair)

Les Wright (Treasurer)

Lara Manningham-Buller (Deputy Treasurer)

Martin Adams

Roy Anderson

Philip Daubeney

Cllr. Sue Elmes

Cllr. Mike Lovell

Jan Willmot

During the course of the year fundraising activity continued, (see following 'Activities' and 'Trustees report and financial statements'), and the Purbeck Community Enterprises Ltd (PCEL) Management Group of two Directors and the WDDT Chair 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 2008 – 2009 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**
- ?? **PCEL (Purbeck Community Enterprises Limited)**
- ?? **Priory Meadow**
- ?? **Wareham On-Line**

with the following being more minor activities

- ?? Challow Pond Conservation Area, Corfe Castle
- ?? Hauses Field of Dreams
- ?? Heaven's Gateway
- ?? Priory Meadow Educational Pack
- ?? Purbeck Middle School Green Classroom
- ?? Rex Cinema
- ?? South Bank Performance Area
- ?? Wareham's Walls Information Boards
- ?? Wareham's Water Meadows Circular Path
- ?? WDDT Web Site
- ?? West Howe & Winton Investing in People Groups
- ?? Wool Play Area

LifeWheels Mobility Centre

LifeWheels, based in a substantial shop premises in St Johns Hill, Wareham, has now completed 5 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 course of the year, with input from the PCEL Directors, the Centre developed a more 'business like' approach with the installation of an EPOS system, new procedures and volunteer timetables, smarter van livery, better promotion and proactive approach to new sales potential, including becoming the Purbeck distributor for the Dorset NHS Prescription Scheme, all resulting in a 'break-even' situation at the end of the financial year.

It had been agreed by the WDDT Trustees in 2002, when LifeWheels was first created, that it would be given 5 years to see if it was a sustainable business, and if so then offers it to the open market. This was done in October 2008 with Bob Richardson, the current manager, offering to purchase the business. Some 6 months later the sale has not yet been finalised, but it is hoped that it will be resolved very soon.

(The paperwork was finally signed in July 2009)

(PCEL) Purbeck Community Enterprises Limited

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, with all the input as described above. (See LifeWheels Mobility Centre)

Priory Meadow

During this year the revised 'Management & Maintenance Plan' for Priory Meadow was put into practice. The 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 been working on the meadow, utilising tools donated to WDDT by B&Q through their 'Good Neighbourhood' community support scheme. They have now been joined by the Kingston Maurward e2e students, the two groups working in the meadow at least two days a week and between them achieving good results. We have also enlisted the help of Best Farm Services to put in place a more regular grass cutting regime.

As it is intended to further develop Priory Meadow an additional £10,000 of funding has been applied for, successfully, 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. The trailer was purchased in October, and at the same time 12 willow trees were ordered. All the planting and development work covered by the funding is due to be completed by the summer of 2009. Also during the year a further £3,000 was promised by Hall & Woodhouse, but went to Wareham Carnival 'by mistake', and a contribution of £300 towards the cost of the willow trees, when planted, by Humphries Kirk.

In addition the meadow has featured in the Dorset Echo, Purbeck Gazette, Meadow Mysteries Children's Competition, www.breathingplaces.com and been a vital part of the Wareham in Bloom Regional Gold Award for 2008, and the National Silver Award for 2008.

The meadow also forms part of the Purbeck District Council plan to redevelop the Redcliffe Path, delayed in the autumn of 2008, and again in the spring of 2009. (Now rescheduled for the spring of 2010)

Wareham On-Line

It was Wareham On-Line that led to the formation of the Wareham & District Development Trust in 2002, and will always be 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.

That was the case until September this year when sadly our last remaining on-site 'partner', Dorset Adult Learning, could no longer justify their use of the building, and so the facility faced closure and eventual dereliction. To avoid this happening the Trust made every effort to find a new tenant, successfully, and on 28 March the old waiting rooms re-opened as 'Cyclexperience', an already successful cycle hire and sales business with centres at Brockenhurst and Norden.

Challow Pond Conservation Area

Following discussions between WDDT, the landowner, Corfe First School, and the residents of the cottages adjacent to the pond in Sandy Hill Lane, Corfe, it was agreed that the badly silted pond would be cleared and then maintained as a 'conservation area' by the residents and Corfe First School, and to be enjoyed by all, including passing walkers.

Hauses Field of Dreams

The 5 acres of overgrown wilderness within the Northmoor Park Estate, Wareham, previously converted into a 'Field of Dreams' by the Trust, continues to be well maintained by Wareham Town Council and the residents, with by-monthly updates being forwarded to WDDT.

Heaven's Gateway

Following a request from Wareham in Bloom, the Trust has taken on the task of improving the northern approach to Wareham by improving the appearance of the steeply sloping land on either side of North Street and alongside both St Martin's and St Edward's churches, hence the title 'Heaven's Gateway'. As the ownership of the land alongside St Edward's church has yet to be determined it was agreed to begin on the St Martin's side, and this was cleared in the early summer. It was then intended that Philip Daubeny, the WDDT Trustee assigned to this project, would work with the Kingston Maurward e2e students to develop this area, and indeed plans were discussed. It was then realised that a crack had developed in the retaining wall, holding the banking back from the road, and work had to be put on hold until allowed to proceed by Dorset County Council Highways Department. Sadly no further progress has yet been made.

Priory Meadow Educational Pack

It was agreed in 2004/2005 that the artwork created by local designer Maria Burns, for the information boards around the meadow, should also be used for further educational material such as a Children's Conservation Pack. A 'mock-up' of such a pack has now been created, costings done, and a potential 'sponsor' found in the shape of BP. It is intended to further develop this concept during 2010 as a PCEL project.

Purbeck Middle School Green Classroom

Following a visit to Priory Meadow and Hauses Field the School approached the Trust requesting support with their planned 'Green Classroom' development. It was intended to convert the old outdoor swimming pool site into a conservation and allotment area, with a pond, raised flower and vegetable beds, a butterfly area, etc. The Trust offered the trailer and tools and suggested that the School apply to B&Q for the 'Good Neighbourhood' grant which would then allow them to purchase pathway materials, compost, plants and seeds. This project was put on hold when the future of the school itself became unclear.

Rex Cinema

The Trust was approached by the Purbeck Film Charitable Trust when planning to purchase the Rex Cinema. Full support and advice was given including possible funding streams and how best to be approached, the more flexible use of the Cinema and Theatre, etc.

South Bank Performance Area

The area is now being used on a regular basis by those enjoying a picnic, team-building groups, entertainers, and the local PEAT group for their 'Car Free Awareness Day' on 20th September. It has also been booked for the regional finals of the 'Southern Town Criers Competition' in July 2009, and is part of

Purbeck District Councils improvement plans for the south bank in the spring of 2010.

Wareham's Walls Information Boards

The designs have been seen and approved by the Trust, the funding is in place, but final agreement has yet to be reached between Purbeck District Council and the Rempstone Estate, the owners of the Walls.

Wareham's Water Meadows Circular Path

The Trust has put forward an idea to develop a circular walk around the edge of the Water Meadows by extending the existing Redcliffe path from the Yacht Club to the Kings Arms at Stoborough, across the road, and then back to Wareham along the top of the existing flood bank, a total of 2 miles, and what could be a very enjoyable and educational 'stroll'. Agreement in principle has been reached with Arne Parish Council but, as yet, not the two landowners. Further discussions will take place.

WDDT Web Site

The web site www.wddt.org.uk has now been totally redesigned by Art Studio 36, with guidance from the Trust, and will be updated on a more regular basis than in the past.

West Howe Investing in People Group

Following media coverage relating to Hauses Field and Priory Meadow, the Trust were approached by groups from West Howe and Winton, both wanting help and advice with their projects. On 21st May both groups spent the day with the Trust and were shown all our success stories in and around Purbeck.

Wool BMX & Skate Park

In 2007 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. The facility continues to be well used and very well looked after by the youth of Wool, as proved by several visits during 2008/2009.

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 2009-2010, and the benefits we are sure that the Trust will bring to the communities of Wareham and the surrounding areas of Purbeck.