

LYMM HERITAGE INFORMATION CENTRE



A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Reg Charity No 1164961

www.lymmhic.co.uk

Trustees Annual Report 2016

presented to the AGM on April 24th 2017.

TRUSTEES

Alan Williams (Chair)

Ray Banton (Secretary)

Patrick Knowles (Treasurer)

Glynis Allen (Research)

Susan Williams (Exhibits)



- The charity was formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in December 2015 and registered with the Charity Commission on 22 December 2015.
 - I L Leigh st Lymm WA13 0DA
 - Our constitution is available for download at lymmhic.co.uk/about_us
- Charity Objects: To advance the education of the public by providing and maintaining a heritage centre and museum for the exhibition to the public of objects, documents, photographs and other items connected with the history of Lymm, Cheshire and surrounding district

INTRODUCTION

This has been a year of great progress on all fronts. As we write the premises are very close to completion and drawing positive comments from all quarters. In March 2017 we were awarded the £88,200 Heritage Lottery Fund that we had bid for under the "Our Heritage" scheme as part of a £100K project to create exhibitions, set up a learning programme and launch a digital archive project.

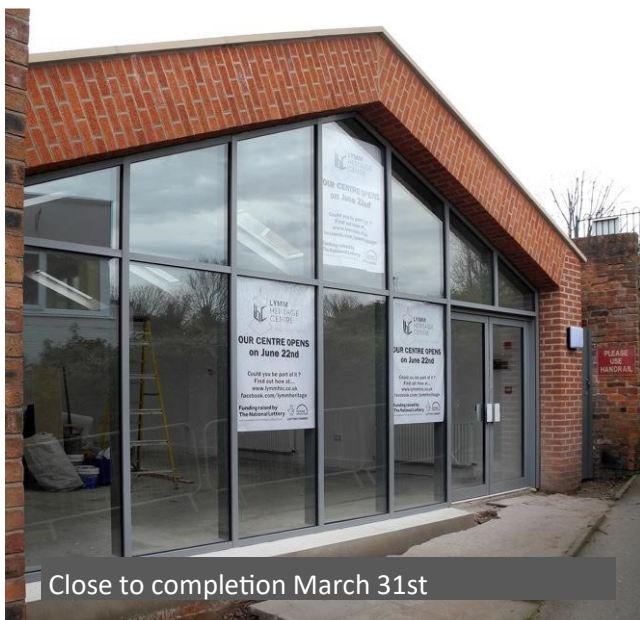
This Trustees' report comes at a key moment in our development that will also be the biggest test of our organisation when we open to the public for the first time on June 22. It will be an important step for a centre that we hope will be an attraction to visitors and a source of learning and enjoyment that will benefit local residents and the wider community for many years to come.



I. PREMISES

I.1 The year just completed

When the project was formally set up in January 2015 there is no doubt that finding suitable, affordable premises was seen as the key challenge. So we are enormously grateful for the intervention of Howard Platt. Howard purchased the Royal British Legion building on Legh St in July 2015 and has gone on to fund the whole process of transformation from design and planning permission through to rebuild. The result is a stunning and much admired addition to the village scene. We appreciate that the process has not been without its challenges but Howard has persevered and, as our landlord, is presenting the centre with an incredible opportunity to establish itself at the heart of the community by offering us a 10 year initial lease with the first three years rent free followed by 7 years at £12,000 per annum. (a rent which is still significantly lower than



local commercial rates).

The premises consists

- An exhibition / general use area 11 metres by 7 metres
- A back-office/workspace/meeting room 5 metres by 4 metres
- A storage room approximately 4 metres by 4 metres.
- Facilities area , toilets, kitchen, cleaning materials storage area.

I.2 The year ahead

Our first step is to reach agreement on all details of the lease and then put in place all the necessary administrative aspects , insurance, utilities etc.

We then have some budgeted expenses to achieve

completion of the building for use as part of our agreement with the landlord. These are items that fall outside the scope of the Heritage Lottery Award as they represent enhancements to the fabric of the building. The key items include window blinds, floorcoverings and additional kitchen units and security entry systems to cater for the large number of volunteers who may require access.

One ongoing issue of concern is disabled access. Entry to the building itself has been improved by creation of a level approach from the path but there remains the challenge of there being steps at both ends of the path. We have met our legal commitments in the development by making our best efforts to improve access given that this is an existing building. We did make some initial enquiries last year, including liaison with Warrington Disability Partnership. We had a visit from a specialist installer of wheel-chair lifts but we need to return to this subject for more detailed consideration along with some investigation of possible funders.

2. FINANCES

2.1 The year just completed

During the period from formation to 31st December 2016, the charity received income totalling £8,976 and made payments totalling £2,847. At the year end, the cash at bank balance stood at £6,129. The principal sources of income were donations (£4,378), fund raising (£2,478) and the sale of heritage related goods (£1,201).

We received welcome donor support from organisations and individuals including former workers and residents at Cotebrook House (£1,040), Lymm Round Table (£1,000) and Dynavistics (£1,500). as well as many other smaller donations. Notable successful fund raising events included Brazilymm celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Brazil team staying in Lymm during the 1966 World Cup competition.

The main payments were £903 for the costs of goods sold and £882 for printing and signage.

Since the year end the charity has received further income, principally donations amounting to £4,363 and the first £44,100 instalment of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

It is also shortly set to receive:

- £3,000 donation from Lymm Parish Council
- £3,000 donation from the authors of The Wheels and the Water
- £2,142 donation from the Lymm Co-op Community Fund
- £1,000 donation from Lymm Round Table

2.2 The year ahead

The first task for the finance group is to review our five year plan in the light of the latest funding position as circumstances have changed considerably since it was first drawn up. The key challenge is to create a business model that will enable us to develop reserves over the next three rent-free years. Beyond that we need to be able to demonstrate a sustainable plan based on a range of revenue streams and prudent cost control that will carry us through well into the future.

One key challenge is likely to be the development of a friends, supporters subscription plan to bring us regular recurring income. Business support, sponsorship is another avenue we have yet to explore properly.

We will also be looking at the possibility of applying for funding from other organisations such as WREN though these would be for capital projects e.g. disabled access rather than for day to day running costs.

The trustees will also be considering having a policy of having unrestricted reserves at any time such that the cash and liquid balances forming part of those unrestricted reserves are sufficient to fund at least the next six months of forecast unrestricted expenditure. This would mean that the charity could continue to operate for a period where income was considerably lower than anticipated unrestricted expenditure.



increase that engagement. The website will act as a link to the digital archive as that develops. A well-presented website has the potential to help attract more visitors to the centre. We are also conscious that there will be many who, limited either by disability or distance, are unable to visit. The website offers a rewarding alternative experience for them too.

The facebook site: facebook.com/lymmheritage. Users need to make a positive decision to visit the website. With facebook however we have the means to proactively present stories, images and news to a growing group of followers and “likers”. We have seen the facebook following grow impressively over the past twelve months from 700 to 1,800+ in 30 countries around the world. Individual posts have attracted great attention with the most successful reaching over 25,000 facebook users. The site has brought many benefits including practical offers of support, equipment and materials, stories and images for the archive, requests for information and help on local history from third parties. Regular postings and feedback have helped to contribute to the general “buzz” around the creation of the centre.

Twitter: @Lymmheritage. Probably the least used of the three and mainly useful for getting out a news story and pulling people back to the website for more information. It has immediacy beyond the other two and has brought in specific positive results like a potential local broadband and IT supply source who is also supportive of the centre.

3.2 The year ahead

The website will take on an increasingly important role as we develop both the learning resources and the digital archive. Once the centre is open we will have increased opportunity to promote it and use it a resource within the centre too.

In relation to facebook it may be ambitious to expect the same level of growth but 2,500 followers by the end of the next year would seem to be an achievable target.

We must also remember that there are as many interested users of the Heritage Centre who are not on facebook. Contrary to popular belief facebook probably does not reach out predominantly to the younger audience. 55% of our followers are women over the age of 35 and only 2.5% of all followers are under 24. We clearly need to find other ways to reach out to younger members of the community – possibly via the schools.

3 ON-LINE PRESENCE

The Heritage Centre is more than a building. It is everything that we offer to the community in terms of activities, learning and engagement. That includes, importantly, an on-line presence.

3.1 The year just completed

There are three key aspects to our on-line presence, each having its own role in the overall offering.

The website: lymmhc.co.uk This has been developed significantly in recent months and particularly in the past few weeks. The site is managed by the group’s chair, Alan Williams and is moving step by step from being mainly promotional to being an important source of information and a focal point for learning and research. Increasingly we are taking input from third parties and will look to



The Management Team

Back Row: Malcolm Young, Geoff Hawley, Scott Smith, Su Williams, Ray Banton, Alan Taylor

Front row: Sarah Shepherd, Trish Cockayne, Alan Williams, Patrick Knowles, Glynis Allen

Not at this meeting : David Gaster, Lynn Smith.

4 TEAM /VOLUNTEERS

4.1 The year just completed

Over the last twelve months we have established a settled core management team with thirteen members. This brings together a good age range from 20s to 70s and a fair gender balance of 8 male to 5 female. The team includes an excellent range of skills from museum education, librarianship and photography to accounting and project management. This is all underpinned by members with a strong interest and good knowledge of local history.

The trustees who have served since formation of the charity, in the capacities noted on page 1 are Alan Williams, Ray Banton, Glynis Allen and Su Williams. Tim Askham served as Honorary Treasurer from formation to 30 January 2017 when he resigned and was replaced by Patrick Knowles.

Further trustees may be appointed at any time by the existing board of trustees. Existing trustees will stand down at the AGM but be eligible for immediate re-election. More detail on rules and procedures around election of trustees can be found in the constitution.

We are grateful for Tim's involvement during our formative phase and welcome Patrick as his replacement. David Gaster who joined the management team during the year with considerable business and charity organisation experience, has also agreed to join the trustee team. This is being progressed.

The trustees have given due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

They believe that the extensive work done to secure Heritage Lottery Funding, to progress plans to open a centre, to initiate learning activities and events and to put in place a plan for the creation of a digital archive satisfies the public benefit requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

The emphasis of the efforts of the whole management team is now shifting from establishing the organisation and initial fundraising to execution of a plan to get us open and then up and running smoothly. With that in mind we have created a number of working sub groups, typically with three members to move us forward on key strands of the project. The teams are

- Volunteering
- Finance
- Building Maintenance
- Digitisation / Research / Exhibits
- Learning
- Core Exhibition Development
- Exhibition Programme Planning.

Each of these teams is working to the overall timetable structure that we planned and submitted as part of our HLF application. Most team members are drawn from the core management group but are supplemented by other volunteers who can offer skills and experience particularly relevant to specific teams.

Considerable effort has been put into establishing a wider volunteer base who will be involved in various strands of the project from staffing the centre to provide technical expertise in digitisation, assistance with the learning activities and administrative tasks.

At the moment we have a “long list” of around 70 potential volunteers (including the core management team). We aim to hold volunteer drop-in session in late April to test that number and confirm those with real interest. These sessions may also bring in new faces. Initial training is planned prior to opening on June 22nd.

4.2 The year ahead

We are very conscious of the need for strong volunteer support in order to be able to make a success of the project . This is especially challenging as we will rely solely on voluntary effort. We do not currently have the means/funds to employ staff even on a part-time basis.

We believe that by setting ourselves high standards in the areas of training and internal communication we will be able to offer a rewarding experience that should not only lead to high retention of volunteers but hopefully encourage others to get involved.

We will look to be as creative as we can in seeking our volunteers from a wide variety of sources including schools and colleges, people with special needs and the elderly.

A key role to be filled by one or two people will be that of organising the staffing of the centre on a week by week basis managing a rota and communicating with the volunteer team.

5 ACTIVITIES.

5.1 The Year just completed

The charity ran its first major event in February 2016. Brazilymm66 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the stay of the Brazil football team at the Lymm Hotel with a four day exhibition that started with a gala opening. The whole event proved a huge success on a number of fronts. As well as providing a great example of working in partnership with a local business to mutual benefit (i.e. the hotel) the event also raised approximately £1,850 for centre funds. The exhibition which ran for four days attracted several hundred visitors and received coverage on the BBC website, Radio 4, Granada , the local press and local radio stations. It also involved 24 volunteers who gave of their time to contribute to the event’s success.

Since then our public activities have been more limited as we have been concentrating our efforts on developing our proposition and securing funding. Both now successfully achieved.

Our presence at May Queen (in June !) was sadly curtailed by torrential rain though our story of the 1926 May Queen, Winnie Yearsley and the images of her

Statham School enjoy “We Love Our Canal”.
Costumes made or provided by Su Williams



crown donated to the centre drew much attention on Facebook .

The four day “We Love Our Canal” project for local primary schools, which occurs in the run up to Transport Day now takes place under the auspices of the Heritage Centre but is in practice an established event transferred over from the Transport Day organisation. Passing it to the Heritage Centre is a good way of raising the profile of the Heritage Centre to local schools. The event is cost neutral.

We had a major presence at Dickensian Day in December with members of the Youth Club taking part in the parade as striking Fustian Cutters. Our display and refreshments brought in many visitors and new



Local Morris dancers admire a print of the well known painting of Lymm Rushbearing

volunteers including our treasurer – but also highlighted the need for us to have a dedicated space.

We have responded to requests for information from facebook and other local groups e.g. providing images to a local group reporting on the Conservation area and have been actively involved in helping May Queen to raise public awareness of the heritage of the event.

5.2 The year ahead

We look forward to developing a varied range of activities over the coming year. Many of these will come out of the learning group as they develop their

relationship with schools. Others will be spin-offs of our exhibitions or may even be geared toward the creation of exhibitions by other local groups – particularly with the anniversary of the end of the Great War coming up. A regular series of talks, walks is another aspiration.

The exhibition programme will start with a temporary exhibition “A Quiet Revolution” run with the support of Walton Hall Cycle Museum. This is scheduled to open on June 22nd and run until September 30th during which time work will also be going on, in conjunction with selected suppliers, on the development of the core exhibition telling Lymm’s story.

6. PROMOTION

6.1 The year just completed

We are blessed with a local press that is both interested and supportive. We have particularly strong relationships with Lymm Life, Lymm Pages, Essential Guide and Warrington Guardian who are always keen to cover our stories. We also have the opportunity to promote at local events through the year including Duck Race, Lymm Festival, Transport Day, May Queen etc. These events also provide potentially large visitor numbers on these exceptionally busy days.

Mention has already been made of the potential of social media not only to inform and entertain but to promote. Our follower count of over 1,800 gives us good access to one section of the community.

6.2 The year ahead

With the centre now complete and a programme of exhibitions emerging we are finally in a position to produce a written brochure (probably two sided, three-panel A4) We have a budget for this and for their distribution as part of our Heritage Lottery award. Similarly we have funding to create attractive signage to the exterior and on the approaches to the building. We will continue to use the press and social media to get our message out.

7. SUMMARY.

The notes above give some impression of the breadth and depth of the activities involved in bring this project to fruition. The fact that we have reached the point we are at today is a tribute to the generosity, both financial and in terms of time given, by a large group of volunteers and local organisations and in particular the management team and the building’s owner Howard Platt.

The Heritage Lottery funding has given us the opportunity we were seeking to create the centre, its exhibitions, activities and archive.

We see the key challenges for the year ahead as being

- To develop a volunteer team that will enable us to open regularly and who will add to the enjoyment of visits through their knowledge and enthusiasm. Further trained volunteers will be need to sustain the learning and archiving projects.
- To build our revenues to meet our budget projections in the areas of visitor donations, room hire, education, grants and awards, friends/ supporters/sponsors, retail.
- To generate the visitor numbers that will help provide that revenue through well-focused and cost-effective marketing.
- To develop a varied stimulating programme of exhibitions including a lasting “core” exhibition.
- To liaise with local groups and in particular schools to start to develop a set of learning resources of lasting value.
- To establish a team of volunteers to develop our approach to the creation of a digital archive and to begin work on this important part of the project. **Email**

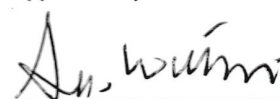
lymmheritagecentre@gmail.com

Phone: Alan Williams (Chair) 01925-754080

Website lymmhc.co.uk

Approved by

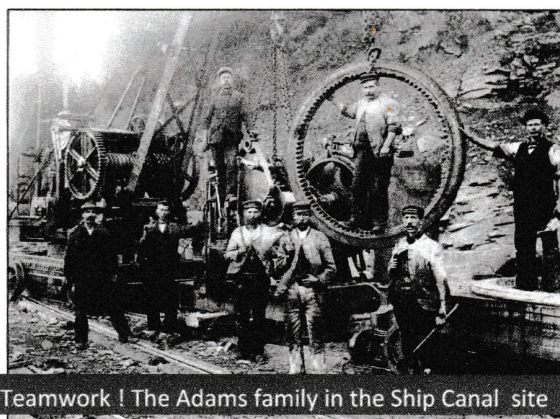
Date- 19 April 2017



Alan Williams Chair



Patrick Knowles Treasurer



LOTTERY FUNDED