

KEMERTON CONSERVATION TRUST GOVERNORS REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2011

Chairman's Report on Achievements and Performance

The company received grants and donations totaling £35,379 during the year (31 March 2010 - £62,851). This was placed on deposit until such time as it was required. The total interest earned during the year was £5 (31 March 2010 - £2)

During its twenty-first year, Kemerton Conservation Trust continued to work in the areas identified in previous years' reports.

The Trust's owned sites

Daffurn's Orchard

This was purchased in December 2000 with the proceeds of a public appeal, an option to purchase being granted under the will of Miss Mercia (Betty) Daffurn, who died in June 2000. In the year to 31 March 2011 further maintenance work was carried out by local volunteers (Kemerton Orchard Workers). This was one of the local orchards covered by the National Trust Orchards Restoration Project – see below.

John Moore Nature Reserve

This small nature reserve, set up by his widow in memory of the writer John Moore who had lived in Kemerton, was donated to the Kemerton Conservation Trust in 2000. It is managed by local volunteers and is one of the sites which has benefitted from the planting of shrubs and wildflowers by volunteers.

Severn and Avon Vales Floodplain Meadows

As reported in previous years the Trust owns parcels in two Floodplain Meadow SSSIs, Twynning Great Hay Meadow (also known as Upham Meadow) on the River Avon and Upton Ham on the River Severn. Both of these meadows are in Higher Level Stewardship and the Trust is a member of the Floodplain Meadow Partnership which is monitoring them. It also owns two strips in a third floodplain meadow, Asham Meadow, Birlingham which it is hoped can be included in a Higher Level Stewardship when more funds become available.

The Trust's leased sites

Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve and Arboretum

This site is leased for a peppercorn from the Kemerton Estate. The hides and reserve have continued to be well used by the public. In partnership with Buglife and with funding from Naturesave an exciting new project to provide an Ark site for the endangered native white-clawed crayfish was carried out this year. In addition funding has been received from the Big Lottery Fund for a new map and signage for the reserve. Work is ongoing and will be completed by November 2011.

Beggarboys Nature Reserve

This wetland site is leased for a peppercorn from the Kemerton Estate. Thanks to a second grant from the Severn Waste Environmental Fund administered by Welcome to Our Future the next phase of the restoration of this site began in October 2010. Completion is anticipated in July 2011. This project, which includes restoration of the monk weir and emergency

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overflow is being carried out by Alan Marsh working with an outside contractor, as well as volunteers from the Friends and Gloucester Vale Conservation Volunteers.

Management Agreement over Kemerton Estate

Under this agreement the Trust can recommend that work beneficial to biodiversity should be carried out at the Estate's expense. For this purpose the Trust carries out surveys on the Estate land as well as that of any other interested local landowner. The Kemerton Estate's Higher Level Stewardship scheme referred to in last year's report was finalised with effect from 1 November 2010. KCT will be involved in three special projects in this scheme, providing advice and monitoring of the effectiveness of the options chosen. Caroline Corsie of Green Agronomy has continued to give free expert advice.

Arboretum

The Trust manages a collection of wild collected exotic trees which are arranged along rides in the Kemerton Estate woodlands. Work continued during the year in opening new rides for public access, updating the catalogue and planting new accessions.

Surveys and research

Work continued under the estate-wide Monitoring Strategy, with John Clarke training one of the Friends to survey butterflies, and Kate Aubury arranging bat surveys and starting fungi surveys. There were several visits from Worcestershire Recorders.

Volunteers continued the monitoring of birds, dragonflies, mining bees and other invertebrates at Kemerton Lake and elsewhere across the Estate.

Further work was carried out on introducing appropriate shrubs and woodland plants to the young forestry plantations. Grants for this work were received from local businesses.

Orchard Countdown 2010

This project was managed by the Natural Trust with funding from Natural England and was completed in February 2011. It has provided funds to carry out restoration and survey work on traditional orchards belonging to the Trust and the Kemerton Estate. Trees were planted in 5 orchards and wildlife surveys were carried out in 9. This project was a great success.

Education / Public relations / Community involvement

The Friends of Kemerton Conservation Trust was set up in 2008 as an informal club of supporters who commit themselves to helping the Trust, either by volunteer help or financial assistance. For details of their contribution see **Volunteers** below. The Friends are organised by the Support Coordinator, Kate Aubury. Friends receive a twice yearly newsletter 'Kemerton Clippings'.

Visits, events and open days continued to be well attended, and requested by various local groups. The Forest school continues to function in one of the plantations on the edge of Kinsham.

Kemerton Conservation Trust again supported the Apple Day celebration at Kemerton in conjunction with Kemerton Orchard Workers

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Website

The Trust has a web site www.kemerton.org. This has been designed and is maintained free of charge by Jim Verrechia. The site attracts much favourable comment and the governors are most grateful for his support.

Biodiversity action plan species & habitats

The Trust manages a number of BAP species and habitats and contributes to the work of the Worcestershire LBAP, which has appointed Adrian Darby as its Chairman.

Personnel matters

The trust has no employees but has well established arrangements with various self-employed contractors. John Clarke has continued as part-time advisor, sometimes assisted by his wife Pamela. Alan Marsh has undertaken work as a part time warden, as and when funding has been obtained. As well as carrying out paid work on the projects mentioned above he has as acted as a volunteer at other times of the year. John Threadingham, a forestry contractor has undertaken the work to the arboretum.

Volunteers

The governors again wish to express their appreciation of the valuable contributions made by those mentioned above and other local volunteers in many fields, including habitat management, nest boxes, IT support, public events, orchard maintenance, species identification and labeling of the arboretum trees. In total it is estimated that, when valued at the rates used by Natural England for assessing grants, volunteers' work was worth at least £46,256.

Other Acknowledgements

In addition to contributions by governors, local residents and businesses; the Trust would like to thank Severn Waste Environmental Fund administered by Welcome to Our Future (Local Agenda 21), the National Trust, the Big Lottery Fund, Buglife and Naturesave for the support referred to above.

A M G Darby
Governor