

KEMERTON CONSERVATION TRUST GOVERNOR'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

The governors present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2010.

Reference and Administrative Information

Reference and administrative information is as set out on page 1.

Structure, Governance and Management

The governors have taken advantage of the exemption from an audit conferred by section 249A(1) of the Companies Act 1985 and the financial statements for the year are unaudited.

The charity was incorporated on 15 December 1989, registered as a charity on 24 January 1990 and is governed by its memorandum and articles of association. The charity is constituted as a company which is limited by guarantee, the liability of each member on winding up being limited to £1.

The company's name was changed from Kemerton Trustees Limited on 25 June 1999.

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the management committee. Trustees are elected at General Meetings for an indefinite period and are not required to retire. Trustees may co-opt new trustees and provide details at the following meeting.

Objectives and Activities

The company was founded by A M G Darby OBE for the charitable objective of the conservation of fauna and flora and of places of natural and cultivated beauty for the public benefit in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and adjoining counties.

Public Benefit

It seeks to realize this public benefit through all the activities listed below. It provides access to nature reserves and woodland, informal education, research into biodiversity conservation, surveys of plants and animals, management of sites to promote their biodiversity and opportunities for volunteers to participate in these activities.

Achievements and Performance

The company received grants and donations totaling £62,851 during the year (31 March 2009 - £39,798). This was placed on deposit until such time as it was required. The total interest earned during the year was £2 (31 March 2009 - £246)

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

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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 2010 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.

Land Purchase at Asham Meadow

During the year the Trust made two purchases of land in Asham Meadow, Birlingham, totaling some 13 ½ acres. This meadow is a traditional Lammas meadow and is subject to common grazing rights from Lammas Day to the end of January. We hope to include this land in a Higher Level Stewardship scheme covering the whole meadow of some 61 acres. The Trust received a grant of 75% of the purchase price from Natural England under its Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund Grant Scheme, which also made a similar contribution towards the costs of surveying the site and publicizing the meadow. This meadow has not yet been included in the Floodplain Meadows Partnership inventory.

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. A grant of £2000 was received from Welcome to Our Future which was used to pay a part-time warden. Grant applications for further management work on this site were unsuccessful, and the level of management activity has had to be limited to what can be provided by the Trust's own resources and the valuable contribution of volunteer work parties. A project with Buglife to introduce the native White-Clawed Crayfish is under consideration.

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Beggarboys Nature Reserve

This wetland site is leased for a peppercorn from the Kemerton Estate. Work to identify and repair a leak to the bank of the lake, to improve the inflow of water to the site and to manage the vegetation was financed by grants from Welcome to Our Future and the Cotswold Conservation Board under its Sustainable Development Fund. The work was carried out by Alan Marsh working with an outside contractor and volunteers from the Friends and Gloucester Vale Conservation Volunteers.

Management Agreement over Kemerton Estate

Under this agreement the Trust can recommend that work which would be 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 Trust has urged the Estate to enter a Higher Level Stewardship scheme and one of the Friends, Caroline Corsie of Green Agronomy, has given free expert advice

Surveys and research

Work continued under the estate-wide Monitoring Strategy, with John Clarke organizing a complete survey of the veteran trees, and Kate Aubury arranging bat surveys. Surveys of the flora and fauna were carried out at Asham Meadow to underpin the purchase of this reserve, and further surveys were carried out by volunteers to support the Higher Level Stewardship application for the Kemerton Estate which was due to be submitted in autumn 2010. Kemerton Estate is fortunate to be able to call on 28 years of biological records to support the HLS application.

Volunteers continued the monitoring of dragonflies and birds at Kemerton Lake.

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 via a specific Woodland Shrubs and Wildflowers project.

Orchard Countdown 2010

This project is managed by the Natural Trust with funding from Natural England and continues to 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. There was a very successful Apple Day in October, in which we were able to organise guided walks of two orchards thanks to the funding provided by the project.

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 organized by the Volunteer Coordinator, Kate Aubury. This is an unpaid post but some of Kate's expenses (relating to publicizing the purchases at Asham Meadow) were paid by the ALSF. Friends receive a twice yearly newsletter 'Kemerton Clippings'.

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Visits 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, and was able to offer guided tours of orchards on the Kemerton Estate with the support of the National Trust's Orchard Countdown 2010 project see above.

The Trust regularly produces 'Kemerton Cuttings' which is published in the report of the Worcestershire Biological Recording Group. This is also circulated to the Friends as part of Kemerton Clippings.

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 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 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 £.

Other Acknowledgements

In addition to contributions by governors and local residents and businesses the Trust would like to thank Natural England operating through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, to the Cotswold Conservation Board, to Welcome to our Future (Local Agenda 21), and to the National Trust for the support referred to above.

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Financial Review

The general fund represents the funds arising from past operating results and capital grants. It is the policy of the governors to spend their income and only to hold reserves equivalent to six month's recurrent expenditure.

Statement of governors' responsibilities

Company and charity law requires the governors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the governors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The governors have overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise. They are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The governors are responsible for establishing the company's strategy, but day to day management is delegated to A M G Darby and P S Doble.

Accountants

The governors recommend that Waugh Haines Rigby remain in office until further notice.

Special provisions

This report is prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies.

This report was approved by the governors on 8 November 2010 and signed on their behalf by

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A M G Darby

Governor