

The John Simonds Trust

“Making a difference in children’s lives”

Trustees Report for the year ending December 31st 2021

John Simonds died as a nineteen-year-old in 1983 and the Trust was set up in his memory. Initially a dream arising out of tragic circumstances, the Trust is now established at Rushall Farm and recognised nationally for its services to education in the countryside. This has not been without the unswerving support of the Cumber family, the present chairman William Cumber, and a number of local charitable trusts including Englefield, Eling and the Ernest Cook Trust. Over the past few years the Trust has invested substantially in the Rushall Manor site to improve the safety and welfare of children, visitors and staff. This work could not have been more timely. It means that we have been able to operate with three groups on site at any one time without compromising Covid restrictions. We remained mainly closed until after Easter. Then school visits and camps started again. These were encouraged, particularly from schools in low income areas by paying for coaches, at times staffing and extra provision for camps. The development of the Growing for Good courses has been particularly notable as a result of the skills and understanding of our staff with various degrees of transformation taking place in children’s lives, some really dramatic. Four secondary schools are currently involved engaging 120 pupils annually. The Oaklands building will be officially opened this year in memory of Stuart Featherstone, a past pupil from Brookfield whose parents generously gave substantially from his estate for the refurbishment of the building. We were able to benefit from the furlough scheme and have received very generous donations particularly from individuals. Income generated from family functions and camps has almost returned to normal although DoE overnight camps have only occurred with relatively few schools, the rest having to spend their “night away” in the comfort of their own bed! So it is with pride that the John Simonds Trust has again been able to offer that valuable experience to people regardless of age, background, ethnicity, intelligence, physical wellbeing, or the ability to pay. Indeed, many from the youngest to the oldest find their visit a source of inspiration, encouragement and help with the struggles they are facing in life. Sadly, Victoria Fishburn died this year. We will greatly miss our long standing trustee and patron.

John Bishop
Chairman of Trustees

Achievements over the last 12 months

- Get up and running into some degree of normality in 2021.

Plans for the next 12 months

- Facilitate the rethatching of the barn
- Continue to develop excellent experiences for children in the countryside at Rushall Farm
- Complete move to CIO, improve website and update accounts package
- Hold an event to publicise the work of the Trust locally.

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Governance

Charity Trustees:

Lord Benyon
E.A. Bishop
E.L. Bishop
J.D. Bishop OBE
H. Fullerton OBE
R. Griffiths DL
Dr. L. Hutchins
J. Miller DL
T. Ruane
D.J. Simonds DL
S. Milner-Simonds
D. Wraight

Patrons:

Sian the lady Crisp,

All the trustees listed above have been active in the trust. Dr Louise Hutchins has joined the trustees this year. The trustees meet four times a year formally and are closely involved in all areas of the charity.

The day to day running is carried out by a committed team of staff led by the managing Trustee, John Bishop

Principle address

Rushall Farm, Scratchface Lane, Bradfield, Berkshire, RG7 6DL
www.rushallfarm.org.uk, jst@rushallfarm.org.uk, 01189744547

Examiner

~~Emily Crowson~~, Goringe Accountants, Moulden Way, Sulhampstead, RG7 4GB

Olivia Evans

Bankers:

CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ

Solicitors

Blandy & Blandy 1 Friar Street, Reading RG1 1DA

Charity Commission Registration Number: 294363

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The format and content of the report and financial statements comply with the Charity Act 2011 and the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the FRSSE.

Structure, Governance and Management

The John Simonds Trust was set up by Declaration of Trust dated 29 April 1986 for the advancement of education and the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare.

Charitable Objects

- Encouraging qualities of leadership, self-confidence and mutual respect in young people
- Promoting a love and understanding of the countryside
- Enabling people to learn about the countryside and agriculture
- Developing co-operation between the agricultural community and the public

Governing Body

The number of trustees must not be less than four or greater than twelve.

Recruitment and Training of Trustees

The Charity’s Trustees are appointed at a meeting of the Trustees on the basis of nominations made by current Trustees with regard to personal competence, the necessary range of professional and specialist skills and availability. New Trustees are inducted into the workings of the Charity, including the Charity’s policy and procedures, at an induction organised and led by the chairman. On appointment new Trustees receive full information about the Charity and a pack outlining their responsibilities, they also go through child Disclosure and Barring screening.

Organisational Management

Responsibility for the overall management and control of the Trust lies with the Trustees who meet four times per year and at other times as required by the Trust’s business. The day to day running of the Trust is delegated to the Managing Trustee.

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Risk Management

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the management of the risks faced by the Charity. Financial planning, budget control and spending levels are carried out and are fully reviewed at each Trustees meeting. Health and Safety performance and issues arising are discussed at each Trustees meeting.

The key controls used by the Charity include:

- Formal agendas and minutes for all Trustee and management meetings
- Annual appraisal and monitoring of the staff
- Comprehensive strategic planning, budgeting and management accounting
- Established organisational structure and lines of reporting
- Clear authorisation and approval levels
- Vetting procedure as required by law for protection of the vulnerable
- Appropriate use of professional advice and relevant studies from independent consultants

Public Benefit

There has been an increasing amount of the organised use of the services provided by the Trust which are normally available to schools and the surrounding community. In the expectation of better times the resources offered are listed below.

Schools activities

- Around 5,000 school children came on day visits and school camps.
- All visits here are subsidised and more than 500 children have received free visits.
- £10k was paid for coaches and staffing for schools needing help as a result of Covid.
- 10 post sixteen children from The Castle Special School come weekly
- Oaklands was used by children from four secondary and several primary schools for our Growing for Good courses. A total of 60 children attended the 12week course.
- 8 different schools (mainly from Reading) enjoyed low cost camps
- Assistance was given to Englefield Estate running their very popular Schools Days
- A river studies programme caters for large numbers of children with the cooperation of Bradfield College and other riparian owners

Barn, site and camps

- The Manor Farm site has been fully restored with thatched barn, bunkhouse, kitchen, toilets and showers. Pathways for the disabled have been laid and there is a small dispersal carpark and picnic area.
- Walks and woodland trails have been opened up with permitted paths.
- Tree safety work has been carried out on woodland paths and in areas of wood with open access
- The Manor farm has been used by over 2,000 campers from schools, D of E and scouting organisations
- Leadership training for young people is normally undertaken through church, uniformed organisations, DoE camps, command tasks and volunteer groups
- Access to the Trust was given to 9,000 people through work camps, volunteer days, church camp weekends, wedding receptions, family parties, organised walks..

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Financial Review and Results of Year

Summary of Results

The John Simonds Trust had a net inflow of funds of £20,056 for the year ended 31st December 2021 (2020: outflow £3,570)

Income

The total income was £206,244 (2020: £147,832). Schools generated an income of £62,035 (2020: £31,261). Income from camps and functions was £32,672 (2020: £7,246) Donations were £69,012 and Government grant was £35,699 (2020: £57,558/£45,200)

Expenditure

Expenditure was £186,188 on charitable activities, (2020: £158,465) and £0 on major capital improvements to site.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees review the reserves policy annually. Reserves are held to cover any potential commitments in the event of the charity winding up, and to cover large known costs associated with current operations. The trustees envisage any winding up to be predicted well in advance of the event, so that financial commitments will relate solely to staff redundancies and other ex gratia payments. These are estimated at £80k. Costs associated with current operations total £135k. Total reserves therefore are required to be a minimum of £215k. At December 2021 the Trust had £263,315, all in liquid investments. The Trustees consider this position satisfactory.

Provision of information to the examiner

So far as each of the trustees is aware at the time the report is approved there is no relevant audit information of which the charity’s examiner is unaware.

The above report was approved by the Trustees on... 23/06/2022

And signed on their behalf...  

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Statement of Trustees’ Responsibilities for the Year Ended 31st December 2021

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees’ Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards).

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees 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.