

**The Adventure Dolphin (Pangbourne) Charity**  
**Charity Registration Number 1156978**  
**Report of the Trustees for the Financial Year**  
**1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

**Contact Details.**

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**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Adventure Dolphin (Pangbourne) Charity was originally established in 2005 as a fundraising organisation that would work alongside the statutory youth service of West Berkshire Council. It wanted to enhance opportunities for young people from the Pangbourne area of West Berkshire to get involved in outdoor and adventurous activities. Primarily, the focus for the period between 2005 and 2012 was to raise funds for projects that were outside of the scope and remit of West Berkshire Council. This included construction of a purpose designed climbing room and specialist equipment for users with mobility and cognitive limitations.

In 2014, the impact of reducing funding for Local Authority Services resulted in West Berkshire Council deciding that its role at the Dolphin Centre would be to focus on programmes supporting services to schools and other Children's Social Services priority groups. The Council would no longer provide financial support for discretionary services during evening and weekend programmes for the wider population.

At this point, the Trustees of the Adventure Dolphin (Pangbourne) Charity decided to explore ways in which these valuable programmes of out of school personal and social development could continue to benefit the youth population of the area. A new legal entity in the form of a "Charitable Incorporated Organisation" (CIO) was established. The undertakings and operations of the previous charity transferred to it in accordance with a Transfer Deed dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014 when the new charity was registered. The parties to the transfer deed were:-

- (1) The Adventure Dolphin (Pangbourne) Charity (Registered Charity Number 1111555)
- (2) The Adventure Dolphin (Pangbourne) Charity (Registered Charity Number 1156978)

Having completed the change from being a fundraising charity to being an operational organisation delivering outdoor and adventurous activities, in 2017 the Charity faced a further challenge. West Berkshire Council announced that from the start of the 2018 – 2019 financial year, they had no ongoing operational requirement for the Dolphin Centre building.

To continue to operate a programme of outdoor and adventurous activities the Charity needed to secure continuing access to suitable premises. Although several alternative options were considered, most members of the Adventure Dolphin (Pangbourne) Charity felt that the best way of continuing to meet the charitable objectives of the organisation was by seeking long term security of tenure in the Dolphin Centre. For their part West Berkshire Council first considered bids from the private sector but when these failed to result in a firm proposal, they offered the Centre to the Charity. As a result the Charity took over the running of the Centre in its entirety on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. The intention is that West Berkshire Council, who lease the centre from Pangbourne Parish Council (the freeholder) will sub-lease the Centre to the Charity. Through no fault of the Charity negotiations on the Lease have been protracted and are still in progress at the time of this Report. The Council have stated that the Charity will be offered a Sub-Lease of 3 years certain from the date of signature with an option to extend for a further 7 years. This will be at a peppercorn rent.

#### **PURPOSE OF ADVENTURE DOLPHIN (PANGBOURNE) CHARITY.**

The charitable objectives of the CIO as set out in its constitution are:

- to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of West Berkshire in particular Pangbourne and the surrounding area the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation (in particular water and land based activities) for individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving their condition of life; and
- to advance the education and development of the young people in the area of benefit and to promote their mental, spiritual, moral and physical development and improvement so as to develop their full capabilities, grow to full maturity as well-rounded individuals and enable them to become responsible members of society.

The Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

#### **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Charity is managed by a Board of Charity Trustees. The constitution requires a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 15 Trustees to be registered. The founding Trustees were recruited from the Trustees of the previously existing Charity, who also invited other people with specific knowledge and skills to join them. Now that the Charity is established, Trustees are appointed through elections held at the Charity's AGM in the autumn of each year. Each Trustee is elected to serve a 3-year term with one third of the Board of Trustees standing down at each AGM.

During the 2019 – 2020 financial year the following changes in registered Trustees were recorded: -

Trustees who resigned during the 2019 – 2020 financial year

- Bob Feuillade
- Sarah Westall

Trustees appointed or re-appointed at the 2020 AGM (8<sup>th</sup> January 2020)

- David Appleton
- Alan Brown
- Kevin Dennis
- Tony Fitzgerald
- Chris Whitehead
- Clive Williams (for 1 year)

Trustees continuing to serve within their 3-year term of office

- Ed Edwards
- Steve Ellis
- Simon Halliday
- Joy Jamieson

The Board of Trustees concentrate on Strategic Planning and Oversight for the long-term development of the Charity. This covers business and financial planning; licensing, insurance and regulatory compliance; and succession planning.

## **OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

Day to day operational coordination is devolved to a group of experienced volunteers who meet as ‘the Seneschal’ to discuss and agree the practical operational arrangements.

All interest groups within the charity are represented at meetings of the Seneschal.

Based on 30 months’ experience of running the Centre, the Trustees commenced a review of the way the Charity is managed. This is still under way.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 the Charity took over the running of the Centre from West Berkshire Council. The Council also handed over all the equipment in the building at no charge. Even so the Charity were aware that the Council had been running the Centre at a loss as the cost of the Council’s paid staff based at the Centre was greater than earned income.

The challenge for the Charity has been to run the Centre successfully and also eliminate the deficit. In this they have been successful.

Letting the Hall generates a steady income. In addition during 2018-2019 the Charity entered into a 12 month agreement with a private provider – the Outdoor Academy – to hire the centre ground floor and its equipment during week-days, to run courses aimed primarily at schools. That agreement has not been extended on account of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic but it is likely that in future Outdoor Academy will revert to hiring the Centre as and when at a daily or part-daily rate. The Charity now run the Duke of Edinburgh Awards programme – previously run by Council

staff – and this also generates a surplus. Evening courses and membership subscriptions also generate income.

Against that has to be set the cost of running a large, expensive Centre. But a dedicated team of volunteers have been very successful in running the Centre both efficiently and cost effectively.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the financial reserves stood at £52,711 By 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 they had increased to £87,465. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 they stood at £93,716. This figure, however, is not as large as might at first appear:

- The Race Account budget is now included in the Charity's accounts. These monies are ring-fenced and used only for organizing national events
- The Charity have benefited from West Berkshire's decision to use their Centre budget to meet Centre costs – mainly energy- arising after the Charity took on responsibility for running the Centre on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018
- The Charity have not spent any money to date on equipment and little so far on maintenance. During the last year the Centre was decorated at a cost of £10k

**Reserves:** The trustee's set a target of one year's operating costs to keep the building open. Based on estimated building costs (unknown to the charity) and charity activity costs this was set at £52,000. This has now been achieved through increased charity activities and the hard work and dedication of our members who have given a lot of their time to reduce the operational costs this year. In the longer term this is not sustainable and operational costs are expected to increase.

The reserve figure does not include any capital expenditure for wear and tear, remedial works or depreciation of equipment. An initial review of remedial works was conducted at the time that West Berks handed over the keys and is under regular review. The list of works is extensive and includes but is not limited to: painting & decorating, replacing faulty taps etc, replacing the boiler, upgrading some doors and equipment replacement. West Berkshire have agreed in principle to undertake some of these works but there will be a shortfall which the charity will need to meet. The Charity is waiting for a signed lease and West Berkshire Council to either undertake these works or compensate the Charity before making any significant investments.

## **ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES**

For the last 3 years the Trustees have adopted the following principles in agreeing the annual budget.

- That the cost of "Members Activity" should be covered by the contributions of "Members".
- That courses and classes should generate a surplus that can be used for charitable purposes
- That the fixed costs for premises, insurance, licences etc. is split between courses that are traded activity to raise funds, and activities that are for the benefit of Members (see below)
- That the fixed costs are split in proportion to total hours of use for each type of activity (see below)
- Now that the Charity are running the Centre, the above two bullet points have been replaced by a requirement that the fixed costs of running the Centre should be covered by income from Centre hire.

The Trustees continue to recognise that the Charity needs to make provision to cover three specific financial risks.

- Income generation from courses and classes is highly dependent upon good weather, water conditions, and the state of the national economy. Poor attendance can result in failure to cover the Charity's fixed costs.
- Although appropriate insurance cover is in place, the Charity recognised the need to ensure that any "Excess" provisions of an insured claim against the Charity can be covered from the reserves.
- The Centre is insured against fire by West Berkshire Council. A guarantee is needed from the Council that in the event of the building being destroyed by fire, it will be re-built. Failing obtaining such an assurance the Charity will insure.

The cash reserves now exceed the fixed costs of one year's operations in the event of catastrophic trading conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic, which is still taking place at the date of the AGM has indeed produced such adverse trading conditions and has tested the Charity's finances to the full as income dried up during the period Jan-March 2019 and subsequently. A Government grant of £10K to help shore up the Trust's finances will be shown in the accounts for 2020-2021. That position notwithstanding the Charity still wish to support low, or no, cost activity for young people who would not normally be able to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities due to their, or their families, personal circumstances.

## **ACTIVITIES**

The year started with our leaders training day and a challenge to all the leaders to assess if they were up to date, and current with their respective Governing Bodies. This was all completed and my thanks go to Ed Edwards and Adrian Moon for all their hard work and encouragement to achieve this task.

The competition group racing under Pangbourne Canoe Club had a good showing at the Regional Hasler Races and then moved on to training for the Devizes – Westminster canoe race and the Waterside Series and Thames side races. However, these were all cancelled for 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was a great disappointment to all the paddlers who had trained so hard and looked to compete.

The climbers continued to run both club and courses throughout the year and gradually built a regular following with many of the young people gaining NICAS level 1 and 2 accreditations. Once NICAS level 2 is gained they can then become club members. Due to numbers the climbing was consolidated on one evening. Thanks to Gerry Wigglesworth, Bob Feuillade and Steve Ellis with casual help from a number of other climbers.

The regular Sunday morning sessions continued throughout the summer and then paddlers were consulted about the winter sessions and all agreed to keep going. This continued to the end of October when the River went into flood conditions which continued through to the end of January, then just as we were getting back to normal lockdown occurred and sessions were cancelled as the River was closed for use.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award was organised on a Monday evening with those training at Bronze level attending one week and those completing Silver and Gold on the following week. We had four groups at Bronze who all completed a walking expedition, most going on to achieve their Awards. At

Silver we had two canoeing groups who completed their expeditions on the River Thames. Our Gold groups completed an expedition paddling down the River Dordogne in France and our two other groups explored the River Wye from Glasbury to just below Ross on Wye. Thanks go to Linda Clark, Dominic Hinton, Jake Humphries, Giles Hinton, Jan Porter, Tom Canning, Gwen James and Kevin Dennis for managing expectations and delivering in a seamless way with the majority of young people completing their Awards. A partnership with Theale Green School at Bronze level was established.

The summer saw the evening paddlesport courses commence on Thursday and Wednesday evenings, fronted by Ian Blatchley and John Bethell and their teams. The first two sets courses were better attended than the Summer holiday courses. The new addition this year was the arrival of Stand Up Paddleboards (SUP's) which proved popular. Thanks to Claire Hardwick who organised the training. Tuesday evenings saw the Scouts once again being supported by the Charity. The team lead by Chris Whitehead introduced over 700 Beavers, cubs, Scouts over the season using Bell Boats, rafted Canoes and Kayaks.

Special events included our annual Open day in April. The weather better than the previous year with over 80 people attending. We celebrated the "Go Paddling" week with hosting a BBQ and organising the canoeing at the village Fete with young people attempting the Pangbourne Challenge. A team from the Club competed in the Dragon Boat event and won the Title. Finally in September organising our own Hasler canoe marathon attracting clubs from all over the South.

To support the volunteers a series of training events were hosted including Safeguarding; 8 hour and 16 hour first aid courses; Foundation Safety and Rescue training; Coach level 1 training and assessment. Training for the Development and delivery of SUP courses. Level 3 in lowland Leadership and Aquatic First Aid. These courses enabled a number of coaches to comply with continuing professional training requirements. Our standards day was also used as a possible update opportunity for some.

Finally, we ran a number of local trips away from the Centre to explore different Rivers including the Rivers Wye; Severn; Dart; Usk and of course sections of the Thames and Kennet and Avon Canal; plus visits to the coast and an extended expedition to the River Dordogne in France. These opportunities enabled paddlers to experience a range of environments allowing them to improve their techniques.

The frustration for all was not being able to make the most of the good weather at the close of the year as the river and building were closed to use due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Clive Williams OBE

Chairman

13<sup>th</sup> October 2020