



The Lanchester Partnership

Chair's Notes For Members 2021

Scope

This report covers the financial year commencing April 2020 and ending in March 2021. It was a hugely challenging year for everyone starting with the first Coronavirus Lockdown, which started in law on 26th March 2020. The activities of Lanchester Partnership were affected in a multitude of ways. The recent final easing of restrictions means that only now, eighteen months later, have activities started to resume their normal pattern.

Trustees

During this period Trustees continued to meet regularly via Zoom and the 2019 – 2020 AGM was also a virtual event. Trustees are pleased that we can once again return to a physical format for the current AGM. We are nominating one new Trustee and will recommend her for your endorsement (see Notice of AGM).

Working Groups

I wish to pay tribute to the resilience, adaptability and innovative spirit of constituent working groups, which managed to implement new and existing activities in response to changed circumstances. Particular mention should be made of the following:

- **The Churches Together/Lanchester Partnership Covid Response Team** supported self-isolating members of the community with shopping and delivered Christmas Hampers and food to vulnerable families.
- **Friends of Longovicium** oversaw the completion of the geophysical survey of the Fort in partnership with the archaeology Department of Durham University, which took place in February. This work was funded by a generous donation from an ex-member.
- **The Social Activities Group** live-streamed the switching on of the Christmas lights and organised visits of Santa and Elves with presents to almost every street in the village. Both events were planned and delivered with the support of Lanchester Parish Council.
- Members of the **Monitoring Development Group provided** sustained input to the Lanchester Neighbourhood Plan over many years. This effort was rewarded its endorsement by voters at the Referendum held on 5th May 2021. The Plan was formally adopted by Durham County Council on June 23rd. I have been reliably informed that this brilliant plan is now the envy of many places in Co. Durham.
- **The Transport Group** ensured that the Lanchester Village Link Bus continued to operate throughout the lockdown period, helping isolating/ shielding individuals and families with shopping and errands.
- **The Orchard Group** managed to open the Orchard to visitors with the appropriate social distancing, especially at a very successful event arranged over Easter 2021.
- **The Environmental Group** continued with its programme of tree planting and worked with the Lanchester Wombles to support a socially distant litter-picking scheme, as the annual spring cleanup of the Village could not operate in the normal way.

This list demonstrates that activity remained as diverse and important as ever in spite of the challenging circumstances. Trustees would wish me to thank Group and Project Leaders for their work, which is at the heart of the Partnership.

Membership

As a charitable organisation, the Lanchester Partnership depends on the moral, practical and financial support of its members. We continue to thank existing members and donors for their generosity. The viability of the organisation is built upon a strong membership. Understandably, membership numbers remained static during 2020-21. As conditions gradually return to normal the ambition must be to attract support from a wider base of individuals in the Village. We hope that new members will

be stimulated by our general aims and be able to contribute to specific areas of activity. There is also a need to replenish unrestricted funds and a greater focus will be needed on attracting donations and the operation of a Gift Aid scheme.

In 2021-2 there must be a strong focus on attracting new members and I'd encourage existing members to share the virtues of membership with friends and family.

Work with Partners

As its name suggests, the Partnership exists in order to add value and strength to its projects and working groups by strong partnerships with funders, local councils, individual donors and other significant organisations working in Lanchester for the wider benefit of the local community. Over the last year we have continued to work very positively with:

Lanchester Parish Council

- Christmas Lights and Santa's visit

Durham County Council

- Area Action Partnership (AAP) and other support for the Village Link Bus
- AAP support for equipment for Lanchester Wombles – (litter pickers)
- Financial support for Covid Support group

Morrisons Consett

- Food donations to Covid Support Group

Patients Group at Lanchester Medical Centre

- Partnership working for Welcoming Lanchester project

Karbon Homes

- Financial support for Covid Support Group

Durham University Archaeological Services

- Partner in delivery of Geophysical Survey of Longovicium

Private Donor

- Funding for Geophysical Survey of Longovicium

Churches Together

- Facilities and volunteer staff for food bank at Methodist Church during the Covid crisis

James Knott Foundation

- Continuing support for the Village Link Bus

Stanley Travel

- Delivery partner for the bus

The Partnership wishes to thank all partners and individuals who have contributed either in kind or financially to its work in 2020-21. This is an impressive list and reflects well on our continuing ability to attract and administer voluntary funding which benefits the village and its residents.

Finance - General

In addition to providing general banking services for working groups the Partnership provides them with:

- An organisation which is able to bid for and receive external grants and donations
- Insurance for events and activities working groups and projects

The Partnership holds two types of funding:

1. Unrestricted Funding, which comprises general donations by members and others, the use of which is determined by the Trustees on behalf of members.
2. Restricted Funding, which held on behalf Working Groups or specific projects. This funding comprises either membership subscriptions of the individual groups or grants, which have been donated for a specific purpose by a donor or funding body. Working groups or individual projects determine the expenditure in line either with the wishes of the group or according to any conditions of grant.

A unique characteristic of the Partnership is its ability to act as an umbrella organisation for funding applications and then to hold and administer funding for a particular charitable purpose or other

benefit to the local community. This approach proved particularly useful during the setting up of the local food bank by the Covid response team.

Financial Overview for 2019-20

Whilst grants and subscriptions remained steady during the Covid crisis, income from general donations and fund raising events was inevitably diminished as a result of our inability to organize fund raising activities (especially in our Anniversary Year).

	CORE - UN RESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Brought forward 2019/20	928.75	20,588.14	21,516.89
Total receipts 2021/22	1,928.08	24,130.55	26,058.63
Total payments 2021/22	1,767.44	25,372.55	27,139.99
End of Year Balance	1,089.39	19,346.14	20,435.53
+/-	160.64	-1,242.00	-1,081.36
% change on 2019/20	17	-6	-5

A detailed account of the financial situation is provided in the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements, which are formally submitted for approval at the AGM.

Financial Priorities for 2021/2022 and Fund Raising

During 2021-2022 there will need to be a focus on fund raising activities. In particular, attention now needs to be given to:

- Continuing to attract grants as appropriate
- Attracting general donations to the unrestricted fund and the especially to the Lanchester Village Link Bus.
- A resumption (when appropriate and safe) of social fundraising

Communication

Reduction in the amount social interaction allowed during lockdowns had an inevitable effect on the informal ability of the Partnership to communicate its activity widely to village residents.

1. Leafleting

Effective use of leafleting was made at the start of the Covid crisis to communicate the work of the Covid Response Team.

2. Facebook page

The Partnership also hosts a Facebook page, which also a number of groups. These include:

- Village Vita (Fun Run)
- Lanchester Loves Local (promoting local small business)
- Environment Group
- The Community Orchard

The page was particularly useful in disseminating information about the Covid Response, the switch on of the Christmas Lights and Santa's visit. The switch on of the lights was live streamed and reached a very large audience of people at home in and beyond Lanchester.

3. Newsletter and branding

Trustees have adopted new branding. Since the end of the financial year we have launched a membership campaign. A newsletter was sent to every home in the village drawing attention to the work of the Partnership and encouraging the enrolment of new members. We are actively considering the issue of a number of themed newsletters during the course of the year.

My continuing thanks to members and Trustees for all their work and support in helping the Partnership to thrive during the last very challenging year.

Henry Edwards (Chair of Trustees)