

2018 - REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

In addition to the Chairman, Mr Michael Bailey and Vice Chairman, Mrs Alex Clarabut, a number of Trustees held key positions during the year:-

Estates - Chairman - Mr Donald Troup, Vice Chairman - Mr Brian Cox
House & Grants - Chairman - Mrs Catherine Gore, Vice Chairman - Mrs Liz Janz
Remuneration & Staffing - Chairman - Mr Terry Burton, Vice Chairman - Mr Colin McCarthy
Finance & Investment - Chairman - Mr Peter Smith and Vice Chairman - Mrs Kam Tesse
Internal Auditor - Mrs Kam Tesse

During the year Mr Anthony Clayton retired as Trustee and Mr Geoffrey Ettridge was appointed.

During 2018, the Charities provided almshouse accommodation and associated support to needy people within ME1 & ME2 and working in pairs, Trustees undertook visits to interview applicants requesting almshouse accommodation. Two new residents moved into the almshouses as well as the resident Custodian of The Six Poor Travellers' House who left the role which she had originally shared with her husband until his death in early 2015. The Custodian position was advertised as a paid role and a new staff member was employed from late March in time for the Easter opening of the museum. There has been an increased use of volunteers at the museum and overall good feedback is received through Trip Adviser. Through the work of the House & Grants Committee together with the support of the staff there was an occupancy rate of 99.5% of the accommodation during the year. The Weekly Maintenance Contribution from residents was increased by a further 15% in January 2018 to help fund the extensive maintenance works programme.

In the year, support grants were made amounting to £61,379 (2017: £63,346) to 9 local organisations and 8 schools, 18 children for school uniform, 9 awards for domestic items for families, 10 awards to adults who were in difficulty, two awards for specialist equipment and two apprenticeship grants. In most cases, a Trustee together with the Senior Administrator (House & Grants) visited applicants to assess the level of need to ensure that grant aid was given to those in greatest need. In addition, £27,795 was awarded for the counselling initiative managed by North Kent Mind which continued the work they started last year by working in four schools serving children who live within the catchment; Fort Pitt Grammar, Sir Joseph Williamson Maths School, Strood Academy and Thomas Aveling. One to one counselling continued to be provided by Breathing Space, located in Rochester.

For older members of the community, the Charities provided outpension support to an average of 55 individuals (2017: 62) with 7 Outpensions discontinuing and 2 new Outpensioners being added during 2018; provided a gardening service to support 5 people living at home and paid for the Medway Helpline for 5 people. A subsidised Home Help service was provided for 43 people plus an additional 10 people who have the service provided free of charge.

The financial statements for 2018 continue to reflect the effectiveness of the management and administration of the Charities that is supported by a strong and proactive Board of Trustees through the work of its five Committees. Rental income from investment properties continued to provide the majority of the Charities' income. Rents invoiced for 2018 were £755,514.65 and overall the arrears level has been kept low with all but 95.6% of 2018 rents paid. Occupancy levels were good too with commercial properties achieving 96.9% occupancy and residential 93.5%. A quinquennial survey was carried out at John Bradley House, St Catherine's resulting in works involving redecoration

and building repairs being completed during the year costing just under £112,000. Work continued with the bathroom and kitchen refurbishments at the almshouses with four new bathrooms and 4 new kitchens being completed.

This year altogether two new staff members were recruited though only one was confirmed in post. In November 2018, Trustees decided once again to remain ahead of the official deadline for paying the annual increase in the National Living Wage i.e. January 2019 rather than April 2019. Other staff received an inflationary increase of 3%.

During 2018 increased efforts were made to promote the services offered by the Charities and to become more involved and known in the wider community. Once again in September the Charities took part in the National Heritage Open Days by opening the Boardroom and putting on view material from the archives. The openings attracted over 200 visitors across the weekend. Visitors had the opportunity to read material on display in the Board Room, tour the site, visit some almshouses and buy refreshments. Yet again key to the success of the weekend was the involvement of residents in all aspects of the event. In December, residents and staff enjoyed their annual Christmas Lunch with Trustees at the Friary at Aylesford.

Overview

The results for the year show a surplus on unrestricted funds before transfers of £65,039 and on endowment funds a surplus of £7,529 meaning that net income before investment gains amounted to £72,568 (2017 - £129,980).

Income increased from £1,306,934 in 2017 to £1,384,966 in 2018. Investment income increased slightly to £1,168,306 whilst income from charitable activities increased by 13% to £216,067. Total expenditure increased by 11%, from £1,176,954 in 2017 to £1,312,398 in 2018.

At year end the Charities' investments comprised investment properties of £13,812,005 and listed investments of £7,658,514. Movements in these investments, together with the surplus for the year, resulted in a negative net movement in funds of £692,043 to be deducted from the total funds brought forward, meaning the total assets at 31 December 2018 were £25,318,526. Endowment funds totalled £23,628,684 (2017 - £24,251,332), designated funds totalled £471,883 (2017 - £477,452) and general funds totalled £1,217,959 (2017 - £1,281,785).