



Annual
Report
2018



President Lucinda Lambton

Patrons Professor Christopher Dyer CBE
John Breeze
Roger Cadbury
Michael Thomas

Avoncroft's Council of Management at 31st December 2018

Chairman Michael Woolley
Deputy Chair Kathy Gee MBE
Hon. Treasurer Michael Hill
Hon. Secretary Nick Psirides
Mark Armstrong
Andrew Hurley
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Peter Reilly

Clerk to the Trustees Neil Gulliver



This is the 56th Annual Report since the foundation of the Museum on 10th June 1963 and the 54th since the incorporation of the Company on 10th December 1964.

Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings was founded in 1963 and opened to the public in 1967. It is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee (Company number 830659 incorporated 10th December 1964).

Avoncroft is owned by its membership and its *Memorandum and Articles of Association* which govern the organisation allows for an unlimited number of subscribing members who elect the Council of Management, the Museum's governing body. The Council appoints the Museum Director who manages the Museum and appoints the Museum staff within the budget and the guidelines established by the Council. The Museum also depends on its large number of volunteers who support the Museum across all areas of its work.

Avoncroft is an independent museum which relies on its visitors' admission payments, our members subscriptions and the profit transferred from its trading arm, Avoncroft Enterprises. Our ongoing work and many of our new projects are also supported through fundraising, and by grants and donations from a number of charitable trusts.



Avoncroft in 2018

Overall, 2018 was a difficult year of mixed fortunes for Avoncroft, for a variety of reasons. We saw a number of staff leave in the early months of the year, with the inevitable displacement of their roles to other staff in the interim, and our three-year Arts Council England project (and along with it the funding) came to an end in March. This meant that we had to incorporate the project activity and posts which had been developed during the project into the Museum's core activity.



While our intended focus for 2018 had been to implement the first stages of the 20-Year Vision, this had to be put on hold. By April, we had a significant number of staff posts vacant and it was time to consider the bigger picture. While we could have recruited within the existing structure, which had been in place for a number of years, there was an opportunity to ensure we had the right mix of roles, skills and expertise to take the Museum forward. Consequently, the Trustees and Director agreed it would be timely to consider a new staff structure to equip the Museum to deliver its goals. The review which followed led to several staff taking redundancy as the Museum decided to reduce its senior management.

As an open-air museum the weather was also not helpful to us in 2018. Until after Easter it was wet and cold and, when summer eventually came, it was too scorching to be outside for long. This affected our attendance figures which, together with a reduced events programme as a result of our staff vacancies, had a knock on effect on our finances.

We are very grateful and appreciative of the magnificent contribution that the remaining staff made to ensure that the Museum continued to open on a daily basis without too significant an impact on our visitors and clients. Our thanks also go to all those volunteers and trustees who helped out with additional duties and responsibilities to ensure things have kept going and our visitors had an enjoyable and worthwhile experience when they visited Avoncroft. We began early in 2019 by recruiting for the new posts and we welcome all our new staff members who have joined us in the year and thank those who departed in 2018 for their contributions, many of them over a significant number of years.

On a happier note, we were very pleased that Michael Thomas, the Director of Avoncroft Museum between 1968 and 1996, has agreed to become a Patron of the Museum, 50 years since becoming its first Director. Michael came to Avoncroft when there was only one building and he led the Museum through the years when most of the historic buildings here were rescued and re-erected. It is a good reminder that Avoncroft's endeavour to save threatened historic buildings is a long-term process, which has faced difficulties before. We intend to keep doing it for many more years to come as we look forward to a more positive 2019.

Michael Woolley
Chairman of Trustees

August 2019

Simon Carter
Museum Director

Overview of the Year



One of the earliest developments in 2018 at the Museum was the installation of new composting toilet near the agricultural buildings. For many years we have been aware that the only lavatory provision was near the entrance, and that this was a significant walk back for those with children, using wheelchairs or who have walking difficulties - and an inconvenience (excuse the pun) for everyone else. Thanks to a grant from Bromsgrove District Council's New Homes Bonus Community Scheme, we were able to commission an environmental solution which doesn't require the facility to be connected to a sewer, and which works without the use of water. The loos are proving very handy and despite some early concerns, do not produce any odour issues (which might be expected) even in warm weather!

The funding for our Arts Council England project - "Avoncroft: Going forward to Excellence" came to an end in March having started in 2015. This project has made a major impact on the Museum and we are very grateful to ACE and the other funders, The Connie and Albert Taylor Charitable Trust and The Bromsgrove Institute Trust, who supported it. The project has brought many successes - a greater amount of costumed interpretation in the buildings, an adult course programme, new period gardens, demonstrations in the forges, and milling our own flour again - but it has also enabled us to learn lessons about what doesn't work too!

Ensuring our programmes of events and activities at the Museum is innovative and popular has been important over many years at the Museum - and we always consider what new things we can add and which events may be becoming stale and may need a refresh or a rest. In February's half-term the Guesten Hall was transformed for Engineering Science! week - working in partnership with Keele University and Cheltenham Science Week group - with hands-on experiments for children to try, engineering and building challenges and our own planetarium-like inflatable star-dome.

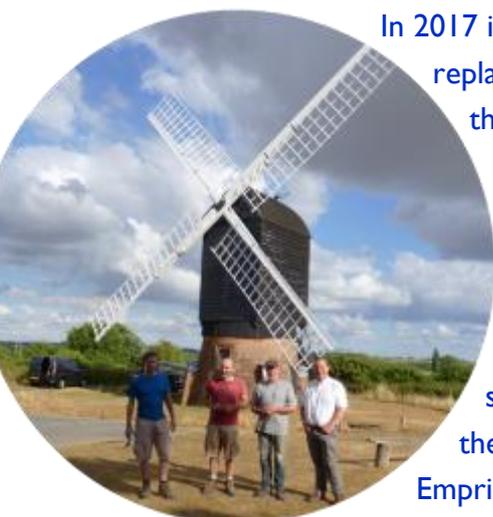
The families' activity programmes continued with Avoncroft's build your own model village during the May half term. Children had the opportunity to contribute their own ideas of buildings by making them in scrap and recycling materials. This proved to be very popular, with lots of wind-turbines, hairdressers, houses of the future, as well as most of the usual public buildings; a school, petrol, bus & train stations, shops, a library, an Anderson shelter, some lighthouses and Rugeley power station! All the buildings you generally find in a Midlands village!



August saw Avoncroft welcome Worcestershire's WI to mark the centenary of their founding. Our grounds and buildings were transformed for the *Sounds Amazing* event, which showcased musicians and performers from a wide range of genres to celebrate through music. Visitors were able to promenade around and take in performances in the historic buildings while enjoying picnics.



Not every event was unaffected by the year's changeable weather. The ever-popular Joust, which usually attracts hundreds of visitors over the weekend, hit its first year of persistent rain. The show still went on, but inevitably it wasn't its usual success, as the challenging conditions which faced the horses and the footsoldiers of the Wars of the Roses Federation meant limitations on what could be undertaken. However, a good number of hardy visitors were rewarded when the sun eventually came out on the second afternoon.



In 2017 it had become apparent that one of the windmill sails needed complete replacement, following the discovery of significant rot which had weakened the structural integrity of the wood. Our windmill volunteer team had undertaken repair work on the other sails, however it was considered they would still only last a short time longer and that while fundraising for the project and commissioning the work it was worth undertaking a more thorough job. We therefore decided to replace three sails in total - the fourth only needing minor work having been remade after storm damage in 2012. The project to deliver the work was undertaken by David Empringham millwrights of

Buckinghamshire who had previously worked on the mill. The old sails were lowered in mid-May and, during July, in the height of the heatwave, the new sails were hoisted into place and the windmill was fit to sail again.



In order to progress the rescue of a Victorian Cricket Pavilion from Worcester, further recording work was undertaken during the year. The Pavilion, from the Boughton Ground, was originally used by the Worcestershire County Cricket Club and later the Cinderella Shoe Factory and the Kays catalogue company. Recording was done by students of Wolverhampton University, School of Architecture and Built Environment led by Anthony Hatfield, Senior Lecturer and David Heesom, Reader in Building Information Modelling. Using drones to record the Pavilion from the air and 360-degree digital photography from multiple positions around the building, they were able to produce a digital map of the structure with each individual component identified prior to dismantling.

Opening to the Public

The prices for the main season opening remained at £11.00 Adult, £9.90 Senior, £6.60 Child/Student and £33.00 Family Ticket, including Gift Aid donations. Pre-booked group rates are lower, children under five remain free, as are carers of visitors with a disability who need support to visit. We regularly issue complimentary tickets to local schools, charities and other organisations to support their fundraising activities.

Overview of the Year (cont).

As always, attracting visitors was a prime concern during the year. The Arts Council England Project had supplemented our core marketing budgets for the previous three years, allowing us to undertake some experiments in using new techniques to reach audiences. As part of this project we began work on developing the Museum's new website, as our existing one was 8 years old. The new website went live in early 2019.



Early in the year we again welcomed BBC's *Escape to the Country* which filmed a segment of one of its programmes based in the Midlands. Avoncroft benefits from inclusion in this type of programme as the series are often repeated for several years, and we've seen renewed interest following repeat showings of *The Great Antiques Hunt* and a previous *Escape to the Country* filmed some years ago.

Another promotional opportunity was afforded by an enquiry from the National Farmers' Union *Countryside* magazine which is a monthly magazine focusing on food, farming and rural life. Following discussions, Avoncroft was featured with a five-page photo story in their 'Guardians of the Countryside' edition.

Our partnership project with the University of Leeds and four other museums (Weald & Downland Museum, Museum of East Anglian Life, Dales & Countryside Museum and Ryedale Folk Museum) progressed to its next phase. The project had received first stage funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to fully develop the project which will take place over 3 years, with Avoncroft's involvement mainly focused on years two and three. During the summer Avoncroft held a pop-up



'Museum of Lost Words' event which included a 'dialect picnic' to test approaches and public engagement with the subject of the disappearing and changing dialects of our region. Families, particularly those visiting with three generations, were engaged to find out about the words they use for particular items (bread rolls, the midday meal, boiled sweets etc) as well as which disappearing dialect words they thought matched images.



Our Virtual Visitors in 2018

Our website was visited 89,376 times in 2018 with almost 300,000 page views.

Our website users are 60.75% female (a further decrease in the % of female users) with the largest age group again being 35-44 year olds (though the proportion of this group has dropped).

Our largest virtual visitor audiences to our website from outside the UK came from United States, France, Germany, Australia and South Korea (in that order)!

We were open to the public for a total of 289 days in 2018 (and for school visits, functions and events outside these times!)



Visitor Numbers	2018
General admissions	28,726
Schools and colleges	2,391
Total	31,117

Our visitor numbers saw a decrease (30.5% lower than in 2017). In addition to those looking around the Museum, over 4,800 people also visited the Museum by attending private functions during 2018.

In Memoriam

Over the last year we heard the sad news of the death of a number of former supporters and volunteers of Avoncroft

Mary Harris, widow of Leslie (LG) Harris our first chairman, died in October 2018 aged 98. Mary had continued to generously support Avoncroft after Leslie's death and took part in the Museum's 50th anniversary celebration.

Michael Fea was a long-term Trustee of the Museum's Development Trust (from the 1980s to its dissolution in 2017) which raised funds for many of the Museum's projects. He was a solicitor who helped with legal advice for the Museum on many occasions. He died in October 2018



Islwyn Watkins was an artist who, from 1967, lectured at Birmingham's School of Art Education. From there he became involved in Avoncroft's Education Committee and was on the Museum's Council from 1973 until 1983. He died aged 80 in January 2019

Paddy Parsons died in January 2019 aged 101. Paddy is one of the lime-wood carved head corbels in the Guesten Hall and she ran the Museum's shop for many years.

Dr Cath Elliott was well known in Bromsgrove where she was a doctor for many years - she was a life member and generous supporter of the Museum - she died in April 2019 aged 98.

Laurence Meacham had volunteered at the Museum since 2005. A farmer who continued to be incredibly active until very recently, Laurence was part of the team which rescued a mill thresher from Cumbria and was a weekly member of the Wednesday maintenance team. He died in August 2019.



Our supporters

We would like to thank the following for supporting us during 2018:



Connie and Albert Taylor Trust	£15,000
William Adlington Cadbury Charitable Trust	£15,000
Bournville Village Trust	£12,000
The Heritage Lottery Fund	£10,000
Droitwich Preservation Trust	£10,000
Anonymous donation	£9,442
Anonymous donation	£6,000
LJC Fund	£5,000
The Bromsgrove Institute Trust	£5,000
Anonymous donation	£5,000
The Bromsgrove Society	£2,500
George Cadbury Trust	£3,000
The Ombersley Conservation Trust	£1,500
Newell Palmer	£1,500
Dumbreck Charity	£1,000
Birmingham Common Good Trust	£1,000
The Ratcliff Foundation	£1,000
The Elmley Foundation	£300

We would also like to thank the many people who have made smaller donations and all those who contribute their time or services free of charge to the Museum in many different capacities.



Museum staff

Director	Simon Carter
Deputy Director & Head of Projects & Interpretation	Hamish Wood (to Jun)
Head of Development	Rachel Shepherd
Head of Engagement	Lucy Lewis (to Mar)
Head of Finance	Karen Thomas (to Jul)
Head of Visitor Services	Clare Green (to Sep)
Director's Assistant & Personnel Manager	Emma Townshend
Maintenance Officer	Mark Kendall
Head Gardener	James Quinn
Assistant Curators Miller	Michelle Lisa Gayle, Sam Reavey (to May)
Engagement Assistant	Michael Skoda
Lifelong Learning Officer	Sucki Dhaliwal
Volunteer Co-ordinator	Peter Gale (to Jul)
Engagement Officer	Julia Morris
Workshop Leaders	Thomas George (to Feb)
Finance Assistant	Sheila Chamberlain-Hyett, Heather Costello (from Aug), Rebecca Foley (from Aug), Peter Gale (from Sep), Alex Hill (from Sep), Natalia Hurst (from Aug), Sue Kington, Janine Rusby (from Aug), Rachael Saice, Kim Tibbetts
Banking and Sales Ledger Clerk	Hilary Farmiloe
Weekend Duty Managers	Sucki Dhaliwal
Catering Manager	Janet Hicks, Stuart Marks, Joyce Rutter, Mike Snow, Pat Tansell, Lisa Wilson (to May)
Bookings Officer (Hospitality & Functions)	Vicky Sketchley (to Jan)
Caretaker	Amy Butalia Harris
	David Miles

Front of House Assistants (including Tea Room Assistants & Visitor Services Assistants)

Isabella Andrews (Apr-Sep), Leanna Bird (from Jul), Luke Brazier (to Mar), Dorothy Colman, Linda Deboo (from Jul), Anjali Dhar, Alex Doidge (from Jul), Matthew Doidge, Michelle Doidge, James Farmiloe, Sarah Farmiloe (to Aug), Wendy Fenton (from Apr), Helen Garner (from Apr), Charlotte Hathaway (from Jul), Michael Holmes, Elizabeth Houghton (to May), Emily Kesterton (from Apr), Francesca Linnett (Jul-Oct), Thomas McQuillan (Apr-May), Amy Mason-Towers (from Jul), Emma Pickering (to Jan), Margaret Porter (to Jun), Daniel Ranford (from Apr), Emily Seymour (to Jan), Sue Stiles, Jenny Stock, Elaine Summers, Lorna Tucker (from Apr), Lucy Vivian (to Jun), Lauren Whitton, Lisa Wilson (to May), Madeleine Wilton (from Jul)

Financial overview

As has already been said, 2018 was a very challenging year for the Museum with an end of year deficit in the Museum's unrestricted operating costs of just over £30,000. The main factors were several key staff leaving early in the year who, following the decision to review the overall staffing, could not be replaced until this process was complete. This left us without a Deputy Director, Head of Engagement, Catering Manager and events team for at least half the year. Without these, the Museum's events programme was less dynamic, marketing concentrated on promoting individual events in the weeks beforehand and new catering opportunities weren't explored.

The effect of a sudden reduction in marketing and events programming, so soon after 3-years of boosted activity as part of the 'Going forward to Excellence' project was significantly noticed by our local audiences who had become members and had extolled Avoncroft as great value for money. Without the quality holiday activities and regular advertising to this audience, their repeat visits soon tailed off and their feedback was generally expressing disappointment in the change.

The time associated with managing a staff review and restructure also had an impact. While the process was ongoing, the time to manage the front-facing services was absorbed by the review process. The decision to switch the Museum's management resources to overall operational management of the Museum and the Museum's collection and interpretation, required financial headroom, and it was necessary to make several redundancies with associated redundancy costs. Following these, and with the existing gaps in staffing, the Museum operated on a skeleton staff for the remainder of the year.

Inevitably, this continued to impact upon marketing, programming of events and activities and the ability to generate income, leading to an end of year outcome of visitor numbers dropping to 31,117 (from 44,821 in 2017) and a negative impact on income. Although costs were well-contained, expected income levels (including from Avoncroft Enterprises Ltd) did not meet those which had been budgeted for and the Museum ended the year with a revenue deficit. The Museum's trading arm, Avoncroft Enterprises, saw a rise in profitability on the previous year, with a transferred profit of £28,622. Rental income continued to be boosted by leasing more spaces in our car park to companies occupying some of the local offices on Buntsford Hill which have insufficient spaces. This provides a regular source of income and rarely causes problems as our busiest events tend to be at weekends.

The Trustees have carefully monitored the financial position of the Museum over the last 18 months and have put plans in place to manage the current difficulties.

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the Trustees have considered our future ability to meet our charitable purpose when setting our 20-year Vision and its goals and objectives.

Statement of Financial Activities

For year ending 31 December 2018

			31/12/2018	31/12/2017
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	59638	73998	133636	282309
Other trading activities	235002	-	235002	246516
Charitable activities	179718	-	179718	246412
Investments	39918	-	39918	36309
Other	-	-	-	-
Total income	514276	73998	588274	811546
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	536095	92308	628403	701263
Raising funds	9057	-	9057	9724
Total expenditure	545152	92308	637460	710987
Net Income/(expenditure) before transfers	(30876)	(18310)	(49186)	100559
Transfers between funds	33838	(33838)	-	-
Net income before other recognised gains and losses				
Net movement in funds	2962	(52148)	(49186)	100559
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	691528	136711	828239	727680
Total funds carried forward	694490	84563	779053	828239

The net expenditure for the financial year dealt with in the financial statements of the parent charity was £54,722 (2017—net income £100,871)

Our Annual Report is a review of the main objectives, activities and achievements over the year with an overview of our financial performance.

These are based on the Consolidated Accounts of the Museum and its trading subsidiary. Our full accounts, including all the notes, are available via our own website or via the Charity Commission website.

Consolidated balance sheet

As at 31 December 2018

	£	2018 £	£	2017 £
Fixed assets				
Intangible assets		11520		-
Tangible assets		356720		373030
Heritage assets		400195		397694
		768435		770724
Current assets				
Stocks	10423		11465	
Debtors	67363		33704	
Cash at bank and in hand	143500		182396	
	221286		227565	
Creditors				
Amounts falling due within one year	(210668)		(170050)	
Net current assets		10618		57515
Net assets		779053		828239
Charity funds				
Unrestricted funds		358130		395900
Designated funds		336360		295628
Restricted funds		84563		136711
Total funds		779053		828239

These financial statements were signed on behalf of the Museum Council by Michael Woolley, Chairman of the Council Company Number 830659 (England and Wales)

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2018

	2018	2017
Cash flow from operating activities	£	£
Net cash provided by operating activities	(12433)	114737
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(18376)	(62968)
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	1211	229
Net cash used in investing activities	(17165)	(62739)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	(29598)	51998
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward	93413	41415
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	63815	93413



Statement of cash flows - Museum and trading consolidated

Our trading

Avoncroft Enterprises is our trading arm which supports the work of the Museum. It runs the Museum’s visitor shop, Edwardian Tea Room and our wedding and hospitality events.

The total number of wedding and hospitality bookings in 2018 increased again on the previous year, with a significant rise in wedding bookings. This was partly owing to promoting the Museum as a venue by working with Aspire Events to hold two wedding fairs, and improving our marketing by taking out adverts on wedding venue listing websites. Work was also carried out to improve the presentation of the Guesten Hall, with improvements made to the tiled floor and wooden gallery floor, cleaning the lower walls of 30 years of dirt and repainting the internal woodwork, as well as high-level cleaning. The presentation of the Afternoon Tea weddings was also reviewed, and improvements made.

Improving the range of local suppliers with whom we work was a focus of the early part of the year. We began stocking local independent food suppliers from Droitwich for soups and sausages, a new cake supplier in Clent, who bakes products using Avoncroft produced flour (including tea cakes and scones), a cheese supplier from Croome and two makers of pickles, chutney and preserves from Evesham and Egdon, Worcestershire.

Most areas of Enterprises performance, however, were hit by a drop in visitor numbers to the Museum, meaning our outlets did not produce the anticipated profits which had been budgeted. Our hospitality hire for weddings and parties did improve and profit from this area of the business rose by 28%. Overall our overheads costs were reduced by 14%, partly owing to the loss of several staff during the year, and partly owing to planned cost reductions.

The total profit transferred to the Museum from Avoncroft Enterprises Ltd as a result of trading in 2018 increased to £28,622 up £7,653 or a 35.5% rise against the 2017 outcome.



Avoncroft Enterprises Ltd, registered office is:
 Avoncroft Museum,
 Stoke Heath,
 Bromsgrove,
 Worcestershire,
 B60 4JR.
 Company Registration No. 03303524

Profit and loss - Avoncroft Enterprises Ltd

For the year ended 31 December 2018

	2018 £	2017 £
Turnover	239152	245746
Cost of sales	(168033)	(184624)
Gross profit	71119	61122
Administrative expenses	(42604)	(40198)
Operating profit	28515	20924
Interest receivable and similar income	107	45
Profit before tax	28622	20969
Profit after tax	28622	20969

Balance sheet - Avoncroft Enterprises Ltd

For the year ended 31 December 2018

	£	2018	£	£	2017	£
Fixed assets			6472			8572
Current assets						
Stocks	10423			11465		
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	13308			7901		
Cash at bank and in hand	38443			40982		
Total	62174			60348		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(58105)			(60920)		
Net current liabilities			4069			(572)
Total assets less current liabilities			10541			8000
Net assets			10541			8000
Capital and reserves						
Called up share capital			8000			8000
Profit and loss account			2541			-
Total			10541			8000

The directors consider that the company is entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 and members have not required the company to obtain an audit for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with the provisions of FRS 102 Section 1A - small entities.

The Financial Statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board and were signed on its behalf by

C J Gupwell, Chairman, Director

Avoncroft Museum



Avoncroft Museum of
Historic Buildings
Stoke Heath
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 4JR

Registered Charity No 241644

Registered Company No 830659