

The New Mechanics Institution Preservation Trust Limited

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 May 2019



The Trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with a financial overview of the charity for the year ended 31 May 2019.

The Trust is a Registered Charity No. 1048961. Its activities are governed by and set out in the Memorandum and Articles, which are available to members on request.

The Trust is also a Company, Registered Company No. 3059960 (England and Wales)

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Trust's Primary objectives remain:

- The preservation of the built heritage (of particular historical, architectural or constructional interest)
- The development and operation of facilities for the education, recreation or other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare
- The promotion and provision of activities supportive of community development, and of regeneration and renewal

Charitable activities

The immediate working projects of the Trust are:

- Progressing the ownership, restoration and management of the derelict Mechanics' Institution building for the benefit of the townspeople of Swindon
- Managing the Central Community Centre
- Managing the improved areas of the Victorian "GWR Park" within the Conservation Area of the Railway Village
- Neighbourhood renewal initiatives in the interest of Swindon residents within the Railway Village and surrounding neighbourhoods
- The organisation of the Children's Fete

- Opening the Bakers Arms (a former public house) as a Community Café
- To develop the Railway Cottage Museum as a visitor attraction for local people and visitors
- To scope the potential opportunity for the Cricketers (a former public house) as a Community resource
- To promote the Heritage Action Zone status awarded to the Railway Village

Achievements

The main achievements during the 2018-19 Financial year can be summarised as follows

1 The Mechanics Institution

1a) Ownership

Forefront Estates, who owned the Mechanics were dissolved in 2012, since when it was dealt with by the Crown Estates. However, in summer 2018, the former owner had reclaimed his ownership of the site following the reestablishment of Forefront Estates Limited. Since then it has remained unclear what his intentions, if any, are for the building.

Legal work is continuing to assess the options available to the Council regarding the condition and ownership of the building.

1b) Grants for Viability Study

The Trust has been awarded three grants to assist with the Viability study. Two of these, a grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund for £25,000 and a grant from the Pilgrim Trust for £25,000 were awarded in 2018, but as we were unable to commission the Viability Study following the resignation of Daniel Rose, we have had to seek extensions to these grants. Both grants were extended until the end of 2019. At the time of this Report, no monies had been drawn down by the Trust.

We have now been able to commission the Study and we are confident that we can claim the AHF grant. The Pilgrim Trust grant is dependent of a resolution to the ownership issues of the Mechanics, and if these can be resolved, we hope to be able to use the grant to support a condition survey in addition to the Viability Study. However, we have also been successful in receiving a grant of just over £24,000 from the Theatres Trust to support the Viability study, and this will provide the match funding for the AHF grant. The Theatres Trust grant will expire in 12 months' time.

2 Central Community Centre

The Trust continues to manage the Community Centre and we have seen further improvements in levels of use.

The pre-school continues to grow, and our partnerships with local companies continue to ensure that the space is well used and improvements can be made.

We are very grateful to have received a grant from Swindon Borough Council to refurbish the upstairs of the Central Community Centre, and turn this in to a useable space. This building work was one of the most significant projects undertaken by the Trust in this year.

The Trustees are particularly thankful to GWR who have provided Gifts in Kind to refurbish the Meeting Room space.

3 Children's Fete

The 2018 Children's Fete was a great success. We welcomed over 7,000 visitors.

We were able to strengthen our partnerships with other local organisations with a social welfare objective, by offering tickets for rides to children and families that would otherwise not have been able to fully take part in the day.

We are very grateful to South Swindon Parish Council whose financial support made the event possible.

Due to the pressure on resources as a result of other projects in this financial year (most notably the opening of The Bakers café, but also the Sharing Swindon's Story heritage project) the Trustees had to make the difficult decision not to run the Fete in 2019. We hope to be able to run the event in 2020, although this is dependent on recruiting more Trustees and other volunteers who are able to take on key responsibilities for the event.

4 The Bakers

The flat has been continually occupied during the entirety of this financial year.

Renovation was completed on the Café, and the Community Enterprise Cafe was opened at the end of April 2019. We are very grateful for grant support from Power to Change which has made this possible. Initial feedback from both local residents and workers has been very positive. We have recruited a good number of volunteers to support Front of House, marketing and kitchen support functions.

5 Heritage Action Zone

Swindon Borough Council has received Heritage Action Zone status for the Railway Village and works area from Historic England. This is only the second such award for the South-West, and it has been strongly supported by partnership from the Mechanics Institute Trust. The Scheme, which will last for five years was officially launched at an event at the Baker's Café in early June, and a Project Manager has been appointed to start work in July. The scheme, which includes approximately 20 projects relating to building conservation, public realm activities and community support has at its heart the resolution of the Mechanics itself. We will be working closely with Swindon Borough Council and Historic England to progress this and other of the projects, for which some funding has been allocated. The Chair of the Trust will chair the Stakeholder Steering Group for the overall project.

6 The Cricketers

The lease for the Cricketers between the Trust and Swindon Borough Council is currently being finalised. Once this has been concluded, we have grants in place to carry out a Structural survey and a Conservation Statement for the building to inform our planning for the building's restoration and repair. A Business Plan for the building has been prepared and is currently being reviewed. We look forward to making progress with this work during the next Financial Year.

7 Railway Cottage Museum

The Trust reopened the Railway Village Museum in April 2018 and monthly openings are proving popular with both local and national visitors. A volunteer team has been recruited and it is hoped that opening hours can be extended in future.

8 Sharing Swindon's Story

The Trust received a £34,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund which was supported by a £3000 grant from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon for a 'Young Roots' project, led by local young people, to explore and share the community and cultural story of Swindon, linked to the Mechanics' Institution, through creative arts.

The project looked at the Mechanics' and its associated buildings and social and cultural events and initiatives, including the Medical Fund Society, The Children's Fete, Trip Week, Milton Road Baths, the GWR Hospital / Central Community Centre and more. The project culminated in a website, a theatre production, a short film, two murals which have been fastened to the hoardings of the Mechanics' Institution as well a pack for schools to help teach this history locally.

We wish to thank all the young people who took part in the project, the people and organisations who worked on it with us - Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, Swindon Local Studies, Gwen & Karen, Artsite, Prime Theatre and Viewpoint Community Media and the funders.

TRUSTEES

Trustees are elected by the members at each Annual General Meeting, as detailed in our Memorandum and Articles. Additional Trustees may be co-opted during the year by a majority vote by the existing members of the Board.

The Trustees of the Charity at 31st May 2019 were:

Chair: David Thackray

Secretary: Katie Knowles

Treasurer: Jen Hall

Martha Parry

Donald Brunwin

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

During the year, the Chair of Trustees Michael Gray resigned as Chair and as a Trustee.

David Thackray accepted the invitation to Chair the Board.

The Board also agreed to co-opt Jen Hall as Trustee and Treasurer.

The Trustees would like to thank Donald Brunwin, who remains as a Trustee, but has stood down as Treasurer.

Recruiting new Trustees is a key priority for 2019-20 Financial Year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves Policy

It remains the Trust's Policy to achieve a situation where we can maintain a monthly cash balance to cover our core operating costs for the following three months.

However, the unique opportunity to open the Bakers Arms as a Community Café meant that this year, the Trustees took the difficult decision to spend money on this project, rather than maintain reserves.

Staff

The Trust engaged an Executive Officer (until December 2018) on a self-employed basis.

The Trust had one part-time member of staff, employed on a temporary basis; Facilities Officer at the Central Community Centre.

We also have project funded roles and consultancy contracts.

Statement of Financial Activities

Significant Expenditure on Projects

The Board wishes to highlight a few key projects undertaken during the year, to provide a greater degree of transparency in this Annual Report:

Central Community Centre Building Work	£14,229.88
Bakers Community Café	£27,366.87
Sharing Swindon's Story Project	£17,614.28
Mechanics Viability Study	£3,900

Financial Statement

Income

Income from Charitable Activities	£30,585.69
Grant Income for projects	£42,647.07
Income from Enterprise Activity at The Bakers, Emlyn Square	£10,211
Loans from a Major Donor	£5,000.00
Total	£88,443.76

Expenditure

General Charitable Activities	£44,650.26
Special Projects in this Financial Year	£68,028.67
Total	£112,678.93

Net Income / Expenditure

The Trust made a net loss of £24,235.17 in this period.

This was largely due to a) the Grant for the Sharing Swindon's Story Project being received during the previous Financial Year, but the work being undertaken (and so Expenditure made) in this and b) supporting activity at The Bakers Café during the first year of opening.


Comparison to previous Years

	This Year	2018	2017
Income	£88,443	£140,205	£107,359
Expenditure	£112,678	£195,885	£73,224

DECLARATION

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Signature		
Full name	Dr David Thackray	Sally T. Cole
Position	Chair of Trustees	Treasurer
Date	18 th March 2020	18 th March 2020

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 3059960 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1048961

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
The New Mechanics Institution Preservation Trust Limited

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The New Mechanics Institution Preservation Trust Limited ('the Company')

This report is for the charity trustees which explains my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 May 2019.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

The accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination and can confirm that no matters have come to my attention in giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

Emma Goodwin MAAT
AAT Member in Practice
Asset Accounting
9 Mallard Close
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN3 5JG