

West Stow Anglo-Saxon Trust Annual Report April 2020 - March 2021

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 and the loss in visitor numbers the West Stow Anglo Saxon Trust and the West Suffolk staff that support its endeavours have remained resolute in maintaining and promoting the Anglo-Saxon village during this difficult year.

Within this twelve-month period the Trustees met formally on three occasions: the first being on the 14th September 2020, 25th January 2021 and the 29th March 2021. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic all three meetings were held remotely via Microsoft Teams. During the last year the constitution of the trust has remained the same as has the board of trustees.

The Covid 19 Pandemic had a significant effect on the reconstructed Anglo-Saxon village and museum site in so far as it was forced to closed for three significant periods during the financial year. These periods being:

From:	To:
26 th March 2020	14 th August 2020
14 th October 2020	2 nd December 2020
6 th January 2021	17 th May 2021

During these closed periods the majority of the Council's work force deployed at West Stow were either redeployed to other essential covid response duties elsewhere in the Council or furloughed.

During the closed period a small team of staff were retained to provide a security presence at the Anglo-Saxon village and the surrounding West Stow Country Park. Those retained staff were also able to progress a number of site improvements utilising an Arts Council grant fund which the local authority was fortunate enough to obtain. These improvements, which aided the reopening of the museum in a more covid secure manner included:

- Purchase of a 9 x 12m Marquee to host outdoor activities
- Creation of a large 'dig' activity that increased the area from 3m space to 12m. Each bay for group bubbles to participate in archaeological studies
- External Outside covered large monitor to show introductory programme.
- Picnic benches x 12 for outdoor handling sessions and improved lunch space.
- Online digital equipment to support schools and learning from home
- Quality historical costume for video promo.
- Bespoke made side panels to outdoor barn shelter- increase usage.

In addition, online education material was produced by staff using some of the items included above to not only help children, parents and teachers in lockdown but further promote the site. This is explained later in this report.

The table below shows the visitor numbers for the financial year 2020-2021 and for comparison the preceding four years.

	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17
Group visits	456	14,369	15,304	16,222	16,885
General Admissions	11,158	21,648	20,986	22,607	26,063
Total visitors to Village (Pay Zone)	11,614	36,017	36,290	38,829	42,948
Visitor Centres (Non-Pay Zone)	26,681	83,145	90,787	93,374	89,739

Group visitor numbers and the number of people entering the site for free activities (termed the Non-Pay Zone) were negatively impacted throughout the years because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Other initiatives

Work has continued in the village to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the site. The Trustees have been supportive of the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) scheme which will, amongst various other projects, see the creation of a reconstructed Iron Age Roundhouse within the grounds of the museum site. This new addition will enhance the visitor experience and provide some historical context surrounding the advancements made between the Iron age and Anglo-Saxon period. This project was due to start in March 2020 but has been delayed by the Coronavirus pandemic. The plan is for this work to start in the summer of 2022.

The Trustees have also been supportive of one of the other Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers NLHF projects entitled 'Clearing the View'. This project, which was progressed in early 2021, has helped put the reconstructed Anglo-Saxon village into context with its surrounding landscape by clearing vegetation to create a vista between the village and the River Lark. The proximity of the river corridor is one of the key reasons why the early Anglo-Saxon settlers would have chosen that location to develop their settlement.

Marketing Activities

What's On West Suffolk

In 2015, the team launched the 'What's on West Suffolk' brand. Whilst this doesn't replace the existing identity for West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, The Apex, Moyses Hall Museum and parks, it does allow cross-marketing across the full leisure portfolio. This means that at any given point, West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village now has potential exposure to almost 100,000 people via digital marketing (email and social media) or print. Naturally, this increase in reach has benefited the full portfolio.

By producing the What's on West Suffolk magazine alongside digital marketing activity and PR, the leisure marketing team have effectively created their own routes to market and therefore do not need to rely on advertising in other expensive local publications and newspapers to market its events. West Stow Anglo Saxon Village is now featured in a new magazine 'What's on West Suffolk' (WOWS) produced by the Leisure and Cultural Services marketing team. 10,000 A4, 24-page full colour magazines are printed three times per year and are distributed throughout West Suffolk.

In addition, West Stow is part of online marketing campaigns including Facebook advertising as well as sharing of posts into local online groups as well as being amplified by West Suffolk Council and partners.

Website Research

The West Stow website has seen a significant rise in traffic over the past financial year. Between April 1st 2020 and 31st March 2021, the West Stow website received 62,850 visits, compared to 55,881 in the previous financial year. This is an increase of 12.47%. Likewise, during the same period the number of page views increased significantly to 507,636 compared to 271,011 in the previous financial year; an increase of 87%. The above figures highlight that not only has the number of visitors to the West Stow website increased, but the number of pages they are viewing during their visit has increased too.

Website traffic increases during spring and summer and peaks in June and July.

How People Arrive at Our Website

Organic search produced 70.9% of acquisition, direct search produced 17.9%, referrals produced 7.8% and social media gave us 3.3% of our traffic in 2021.

Website visitor demographics

25% of our audience are between 25-34 followed by 20% that are between 35-44 and 16% between 45-54. This demonstrates we are appealing to young families. We also have a high number of over 65s, the grandparent category. The gender split is 59% female to 40% male, this is higher than some of our other websites.

Locations

The majority of viewers who access the West Stow Anglo Saxon Village website are, in order of quantity, from the following towns/cities: London, Cambridge, Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, Peterborough, Colchester, Birmingham, and Haverhill.

Content

The most viewed pages in 2020/2021 were the 'Homepage, 'What's on', 'Your visit', 'About', Admission prices and Covid-19 information pages.

Devices

The most popular means of accessing our website is via a mobile phone (62%), then desktop at (30%) followed by tablet at (8%). We have therefore ensured that our websites are easy to view on mobile phones.

Social Media

Facebook has 4,840 likes, up from 3730 likes in 2019. The number of followers has increased to 5147 from 3951 followers.

Our followers are online mostly between 6-9pm. The best time to post to reach the maximum amount of people is 8pm.

Our top Social Media post types are:

1. Video
2. Photo
3. Link
4. Status
5. Shared video

Our social media audience are located in:

1. Bury St Edmunds
2. Ipswich
3. Cambridge
4. Norwich
5. Ely
6. London
7. Thetford
8. Sudbury
9. Newmarket
10. Stowmarket

How People Arrive at our social media

Facebook gave us 90% of our social media acquisition this year. Instagram was 6%, YouTube 2% and Twitter 2%.

Social media content during the pandemic

During the pandemic, the education and heritage officers at West Stow created educational content and videos to support parents home schooling their children

and for teachers looking for online content. These regular social media posts were a huge hit and regularly achieved a reach of over 40,000 people and received over 1,700 interactions.

This screenshot shows a Facebook video player for a video titled "Frigedæg's How?". The video features a woman with grey hair, wearing a necklace, leaning over a wooden table outdoors. On the table is a large, circular stone millstone. She is holding a wooden pestle and appears to be grinding something. The video player shows a progress bar at 0:29 / 12:30. To the right of the video, the Facebook interface displays the following information:

- Published by Aelflaed Laece · April 3, 2020 ·
- 184 Likes, 36 Comments, 19K Views
- 44.5K People Reached
- 1.7K Reactions, Comments, and Shares
- 19.8K 3-Second Video Views
- Retention curve graph
- Buttons: Love, Comment, Share
- Up Next section with video thumbnails and titles: "West Stow From Above" and "Merry Christmas everyone, from all of..."

This screenshot shows a Facebook video player for a video titled "How to make yarn". The video features a woman with grey hair, wearing a brown apron over a white long-sleeved shirt, sitting outdoors. She is holding a small, white, fluffy lamb. The video player shows a progress bar at 0:01 / 4:50. To the right of the video, the Facebook interface displays the following information:

- Published by Aelflaed Laece · August 13, 2020 ·
- 34 Likes, 705 Views
- 2K People Reached
- 45 Reactions, Comments, and Shares
- 705 3-Second Video Views
- Retention curve graph
- Buttons: Like, Comment, Share
- Up Next section with video thumbnails and titles: "West Stow From Above" and "Merry Christmas everyone, from all of..."

WEST STOW ANGLO-SAXON VILLAGE TRUST
FINAL ACCOUNTS 2020/21

Actual Total Funds 2019/2020	<u>RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT</u>	Note	Actual Unrestricted Funds 2020/2021	Actual Restricted Funds 2020/2021	Actual Total Funds 2020/2021
£			£	£	£
	<u>Receipts</u>				
54	Interest	1	9	6	16
0	Central Government Business Grant	2	5,000		5,000
0	Royalties	3	0		0
910	Donations		165		165
48,305	Visitor Charges	4	33,632		33,632
62,407	School Parties	5	1,723		1,723
111,676	Total Receipts		40,530	6	40,536
	<u>Payments</u>				
0	Archaeological Consultant Other Expenses (Insurance -	6	0		0
910	Premises)	7	1,864		1,864
110,712	Service Charge	8	35,356		35,356
111,622	Total Payments		37,219	0	37,219
54	Net Receipts/(Payments)	9	3,311	6	3,317
3,549	Cash funds last year end		1,676	1,927	3,603
3,603	Cash funds this year end		4,987	1,933	6,920

WEST STOW ANGLO-SAXON VILLAGE TRUST
FINAL ACCOUNTS 2020/2021

Actual Total Funds 2019/2020 £	<u>STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS AT 31ST MARCH 2021</u>	Note	Actual Unrestricted Funds 2020/2021 £	Actual Restricted Funds 2020/2021 £	Actual Total Funds 2020/2021 £
	<u>Cash Funds</u>				
1,676	Accumulated fund	10	4,987		4,987
1,927	Match funding account	11		1,933	1,933
3,603	Total Cash Funds:		4,987	1,933	6,920

NOTES

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Interest | Interest on investment was earned at an average rate of 0.334% in 2020/2021. |
| 2 | Central Government Business Grant | Awarded to West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village for being open during the period 2 December to 25 December 2020, when business was severely impacted by the tier 2 restrictions on socialising. |
| 3 | Royalites | From 2003/2004 St Edmundsbury Borough Council has agreed to pay the Trust a proportion of the image rights received from the site and a proportion of the income from the Easter Event, provided that these exceed the budgeted levels. The Easter event ceased from 2010/11 and there is no income from image rights from 2011/12. |
| 4 | Visitor Charges | } See note 8 below. |
| 5 | School Parties | |
| 6 | Archaeological Consultant | Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service now employs the Archaeological Consultant (w.e.f. 1st April 2005). |
| 7 | Other Expenses | This expenditure relates to the cost of the insurance premium payable on the houses. |
| 8 | Service Charge | This sum is equal to the income received from visitor charges and school parties (notes 4 and 5). It arises because of the management agreement with the Borough Council which is in a form acceptable to the Charity Commissioners. |
| 9 | Net receipts/(payments) | After reviewing its financial position, the Trust agreed in June 1998 that future budgets be prepared on a break even basis (excluding any match funding payments). |

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 10 | Accumulated fund | The low level of balances reflects past decisions to draw on reserves to fund deficits. |
| 11 | Match funding account | This account is set up to provide the possibility of match funding other outside grants when this is a condition of grant aid. It was set up by a generous grant from Suffolk County Council's locality budget arrangements. |



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

West Stow Anglo Saxon Village Trust

On accounts for the year
ended

31st March 2021

Charity no
(if any)

272897

Set out on pages

3,4, 5 & 6

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 03 / 2021**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

23/11/21

Name:

Lorna Heather Jenkins

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

MAAT

Address:	West Suffolk House
	Western Way
	Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3YU

Section B	Disclosure
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Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

There are no matters of concern.

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