



Report to Annual General Meeting of Coddenham Parish Council May 6th 2021.

The Coddenham Centre, like so many community services and charities, has had a tumultuous year.

Despite our promising start and new disciplines immediately creating a positive impact on revenues, occupancy and engagement, we found ourselves locked down within six months of starting out.

This was followed by the rollercoaster of government guidance and the demands of safely continuing to offer services, whenever possible. Alongside the interpretation of national guidance, there was the need to adhere to that of the numerous governing bodies for the activities we had developed at the Centre.

Despite these challenges, the Centre has not only survived, but thrived, continuing to provide support to the health and wellbeing of Coddenham and beyond, at a particularly important time.

Some outdoor activities were accessible throughout the year and this month, fifteen indoor activities return to full capacity. Nordic Walking has grown and introduced over fifty people to this highly beneficial and accessible form of exercise. Coddenham Athletic Football Club, having had to abandon the season, returned with a series of 'COVID Cup' matches. Tennis continued to show extraordinary growth. New activities added in addition to Nordic walking, included carpet bowls, Dru Yoga, indoor tennis and Tai Bo exercise. The Mother & Toddler Group has been revived with local help and it's hoped its important support role can be eventually extended to the nearby 'Ten Villages'. Following our successful inaugural indoor events, last year we were still able to manage a small number of outdoor events which safely brought the community together.

We used part of our COVID grants to assist our suppliers in resuming activities at the Centre and continue to work closely with these primarily small local businesses, in helping their recovery.

Various improvements and repairs were completed. Early in the year, we were able to successfully install improved locking and security systems, with the aid of an MSDC grant.

Through our early re-branding, extensive communications and marketing, including local radio coverage, we have moved some way to establishing a fresh, positive profile for the Centre, locally and throughout Suffolk.

Online booking and payment facilities were made available as part of the continuous development of our website.

Mobile credit card facilities were set up for Centre events and services.

We played a founding role and continue to work closely with the Coddensham Community Response Group.

Despite operational demands, we also maintained a commitment to consider the Centre's strategies for the future. Environmental considerations were forcibly accelerated by the failure of the hot water system in December. We took the opportunity to seek to replace the fossil fuel system with air source heat pumps through grants, thereby achieving a potential significant impact on our carbon footprint for the benefit of all. In addition, our environmental strategy includes working with the community to plant new hedges, trees and create designated areas for wildflowers and wildlife. We will install cycle racks later this year, hope to acquire car recharging points via Suffolk's 'Plug In' Scheme and are in the process of adopting a Carbon Charter.

Longer term, we still wish to extend conference facilities, once the market has recovered. This year we also intend to start consultation on the redesign of the bowling green, which is coming to the end of its life.

Financially, we have so far survived the inevitably huge economic impact. I am indebted to the support of fellow founding Trustee Ray Collins, in his role as Treasurer

We don't believe the challenge is over of course, with the return of public confidence and the ongoing threat of COVID19 remaining an ongoing issue. However, working with Coddensham Parish Council (CPC), we were still able to reduce our demand on the precept by 14% this year. Further, we were also able to absorb some £11,000 of previously unidentified legacy costs. Whilst we have not been dwelling on the Centre's past, CPC recognised a history of erratic management of the premises, and this had predicated their decision to transfer to a charitable body with a dedicated management expertise. We continue to work with them and report our progress to their meetings.

It has nonetheless been a 'voyage of discovery' for the CIO. To identify just some of the more costly items; the hot water failure was accelerated by a past lack of maintenance; insulation was found to be absent from large areas of roof space; furnishings did not comply with fire safety requirements and the extensive floor area needed overdue maintenance,

With judicious management of finances, use of the local and national government's pandemic and grant support, the kind help of local charities and other benefactors plus the Parish precept, we have managed to improve reserves, maintain a degree of financial stability, retain the prospect of a sustainable and very bright future. For this, the local impact this year amounts to less than half a monthly cup of (Community Shop) coffee, per resident.

The 2020/21 full year accounts are the subject of a dedicated briefing to the Coddensham Parish Council, on the 5th May. An audited set of accounts for 2019/2020 have also been made available.

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THE CODDENHAM CENTRE

Finally, we are indebted to our many volunteers; Alan West, Nigel Allison, residents, all our customers, suppliers, staff, Centre Manager Gail Springett and the past and present Trustees. In January we were joined by Debbie McDonnell who has worked extensively in the past supporting events both at the Centre and in the community.

Other supporting organisations include Active Suffolk, Community Action Suffolk, the Day Foundation, the Gardemau Trust, Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council, Paul Weston Architects, Castons Quantity Surveyors and Larking Gowan.

A copy of this report once received, will be available online, on request and if required, in large print. Questions should be directed to enquiries@thecoddenhamcentre.co.uk

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