



ABBERTON RURAL TRAINING

REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2017

Charity number: 1169247

Abberton Rural Training

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The registered name of the Charity is Abberton Rural Training. It is registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales with the number 1169247 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Charity was first registered on the 19th September 2016.

Registered Office

Wormingford Community Education Centre, Church Road, Wormingford CO6 3AZ,

Tel: 01787 228269

Website: www.abbertonruraltraining.org

Members of the Board

The names of the first Trustees of the Charity for the period 19th September 2016 to 31st March 2017 are shown below in alphabetical order and, where appropriate, the name of the office they occupied:

Nick Shuttleworth - Chairman
Anne Brown (elected 13th January 2017)
Anne Hughes (resigned 13th January 2017)
Brian Cairns
Fiona Wilson
Henry Bass
Jonathan Compton
Kevin Bentley (resigned 13th January 2017)
Paul Williams
Russell Everard (elected 13th January 2017)

Report of the trustees for the year ending 31 March 2017

The Trustees of Abberton Rural Training present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 and confirm they comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, our Constitution and have adopted the provisions of the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

OUR AIMS

The Charity operates under a constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation Model), with the date of the constitution (last amended) of 8th September 2016 and was sealed by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales on 19th September 2016 which included the regulations for appointment of trustees.

THE CHARITY'S OBJECTIVES

The objects of the Charity are

- a) the advancement of education, training or retraining and
- b) the relief of those in need in particular but not exclusively among unemployed people in Essex by providing them with work experience, volunteering opportunities, mentoring and rural employability and craft skills courses, and by supporting their re-integration back into the rural community. Or by such other means as may from time to time be determined subject to the prior written consent of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.

Public benefit statement

In its *Strategy 2016-2020*, the Charity sets out its vision as follows:

“Abberton Rural Training will deliver a programme of practical skills training to residents of rural Essex with a particular focus on supporting those who need help to access jobs or further education and training.”

In pursuing this vision, the Charity is committed to making a real difference to the lives of people in rural Essex by focussing on helping those who are outside the workforce, education and training to re-engage with training. The aim is to equip trainees with the confidence, skills and qualifications to enable them to progress into employment, self-employment or further education and training. In doing this, the Charity will help employers to secure the motivated, skilled and qualified staff they need to grow their organisations, and in turn to strengthen the rural economy.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Key achievements

In the year under review, the Charity secured new premises at Woringford Community Education Centre (a disused primary school). This provides enhanced learning facilities for the delivery of courses as well as an improved administrative base for the Charity.

Until now, all courses run by the Charity have been delivered through Rural Community Council of Essex, which has acted as accountable body for all funding that has been obtained and also employs the project staff. RCCE manages funding for ART as a restricted fund within its own accounts. For this reason, the annual return for Abberton Rural Training shows a £0 return for the period under review.

The course currently in progress is providing training to 36 participants and is funded through the Big Lottery's Building Better Opportunities programme, supported by the European Social Fund. Training is being provided in Woodland and Land Management, Countryside, Environment and Horticulture, and Carpentry and Mixed Trades Construction. The delivery of this course will demonstrate the capability of the Charity, when it bids for funding directly in future.

The Charity's previous pilot courses have provided excellent opportunities for its participants with 84% moving onto further education, volunteer work, employment or self-employment in the past year and 100% of our participants who have completed the attendance for the courses gaining a recognised qualification.

The Charity has further developed its Strategy and Business Plan, which is now in place to 2020, aiming for a total of 150 participants per annum by the end of 2020.

FUTURE PLANS

The Board of Trustees intends to continue their current strategy of further growth by seeking further funding and partnerships to provide further opportunities for those in need to access courses.

The Charity is seeking additional capacity for further courses in additional locations, and has already since the end of the financial year secured partial use of a second site at Stow Maries Aerodrome to provide a one day a week course for this area.

Alongside education, the Charity continues to provide counselling and life skills assistance to further enhance opportunity and wellbeing for its participants.

The Board of Trustees and Programme Manager continue to review the courses on offer in conjunction with the community and partners to ensure they meet local needs and remain appropriate for the development of the Charity's participants'.

The Charity's future plans are financed primarily from funding income. The Board of Trustees need to maintain an equitable balance ensuring its current participants benefit whilst, at the same time, ensuring a sound infrastructure and financial base are preserved for future participants.

Environmental issues are also a high priority and the Charity is making its buildings more energy efficient, seeking the more efficient use of water and supporting local recycling initiatives and working closely with Colchester Borough Council's Environment and Sustainability Officer to see how it can improve its facilities to ensure best environmental protection.

40 new participants will be attending the Charity's courses from January 2018, under a contract secured by the Charity, and the Charity will seek to enhance this further during the year with further bids and applications.

These participants are from across the North Essex region and include homeless, long term unemployed, disabled and ethnic minority groups, with c. 70% of our participants also suffering from a mental health issue of some sort.

Transport from across the area is being provided at no cost to the participants to enable them to access the Charity's service. Courses for this group are Land Based Studies, including horticulture, land management and construction. There is no cost to participants for attending.

OUR FINANCES

In addition to the benefits the Charity brings to its participants, the local community and society through the education it offers, the Charity's help and assistance to those in need including mentoring and rural employability create a social asset without cost to the Exchequer.

Reserves and Financial Health

The Trustees regularly review the finances, budgets and spend against budget together with a monthly cash flow analysis as part of the effective stewardship of the Charity, currently leveraging the facilities of the Rural Community Council of Essex. This will continue going forward.

THE CHARITY'S ETHOS, STRATEGY AND POLICIES

The Trustees are responsible for setting a strategy for achieving the objectives they have set. The focus is on the development of its participants and their continued high levels of training progress and to further widen access to the education the Charity provides.

In taking forward the Charity's strategy it :

- reviews and benchmarks the Charity's courses, progress and achievements
- ensures the range of courses available to its participants is meeting their needs
- invests in technology and the infrastructure of the Charity
- co-operates and shares resources with local charities, community organisations and partners
- continues to review and develop its methods to ensure wider access to participants from all backgrounds

The Charity's ethos: a caring Charity serving its local community and society

Abberton Rural Training is a charitable trust which seeks to benefit the public through the pursuit of its stated aims. Its courses are free to participants in order to ensure accessibility for all, and particularly those from difficult backgrounds or in difficult circumstances including homelessness.

The Charity welcomes participants from all backgrounds. The Charity has further increased this year its female attendance and also those from ethnic minorities and continues to work hard to ensure its courses are accessible to all.

The Charity is an equal opportunity organisation and is committed to a working environment that is free from any form of discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. The Charity makes reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of staff or participants who are or become disabled.

The Charity is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its participants and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

In the last Independent Inspection, carried out by Essex County Council, the Charity was graded "Outstanding".

ACCESS POLICY

It is important to the Charity that access to the education it offers is not restricted to any particular group or section of the community. The Charity believes its participants benefit from learning within a diverse community. A great deal of learning occurs through social interaction, conversation and shared experiences which helps its participants develop an understanding of the perspectives of other people that will be vital in their further adult lives.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Board of Trustees, are responsible for the overall management and control of Abberton Rural Training and meet six times a year. The work of implementing most of their policies is carried out by the Programme Manager and reviewed and amended or accepted by the Board of Trustees.

The Abberton Rural Training Programme Manager is responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Board of Trustees and any sub-committees as may be required, preparation of papers and management accounts and the review of matters arising.

All trustees give of their time freely and no remuneration or expenses were paid in the year.

Organisational Management

The Trustees determine the general policy of the Charity. The day to day running of the Charity is delegated to the Programme Manager.

Risk Management

The Trustees are responsible for the overseeing of the risks faced by the Charity. Detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Programme Manager. Risks are identified, assessed and controls established throughout the year. A formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis.

The main risks that the Trustees have identified and the plans to manage those risks are:

- The project lacks direction, strategy and forward planning
- Loss of key staff
- Lack of customer satisfaction with service provided
- Security of assets
- Health & Safety
- Disaster recovery and planning
- Budgetary control
- Fraud or error
- Loss of premises
- Student numbers not meeting targets

Through the risk management processes established for the Charity, the Trustees are satisfied that the major risks identified have been adequately mitigated where necessary. It is recognised that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately managed.

Trustee Recruitment and Training

The Board of Trustees requires breadth and depth of experience to carry out its duties effectively and efficiently. When recruiting new trustees the important attribute is a passion for the work of the Charity and an understanding of education as a holistic and rounded experience of personal growth.