



Otford Palace

The Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust

The Business Plan (Part 1)



Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust,
Chantry Cottage, The Green, Otford,
Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 5PD

secretary@otfordpalace.org
Tel +44 (0)7968 721 958

The APCT is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charity registration number 1173486

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Executive summary

- The site of Archbishop's Palace in Otford, Kent, dates back to 821 but it was in 1512 that Archbishop Warham started to build one of the largest palaces in England, comparable in size to Hampton Court. The site and buildings are of significant architectural and archaeological significance, as is its history of William Warham and his connection with King Henry VIII.
- The aim of the Trust is to develop experiences and content that will engage with a wide range of people from Kent, London, and further afield, with general tourists and special interest visitors. We will use the site and buildings of the Tudor Palace and the resources of the Otford Heritage Collection to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of the heritage of the Darent Valley.
- To achieve this, we will restore the iconic buildings of the Archbishop's Palace in Otford and create a high-quality interpretation centre or gateway, towards discovering the landscape and environmental relevance to the generations of inhabitants of the Darent Valley. Providing public access to such an historic building will therefore be of positive benefit and further its aim to continue as one of the Valley's major heritage sites. It will also help to support the tourism economy of the area.
- The objectives have evolved over time: from the initial emphasis on the restoration and recycling of a Tudor Palace, the Trust has moved to a focus on benefits to the community and then to an understanding that the Palace and the landscape of the Darent Valley are mutually interwoven.
- The Trust was incorporated as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2017. It currently has nine trustees whose abilities cover many of the competences required to undertake this challenging project. Although we try to consider how inclusive our programmes are at every stage, we recognise there is a link between inclusivity and diversity and we will ensure a range of voices are considered within our decision making and planning.
- In the early stages of the project, the Trustees considered a number of options for the conservation and restoration of the site and buildings before deciding that:
 - The North-West Tower will house the Otford Heritage Collection and interpretation centre, with meetings and exhibition space. There would also be a shop in a modest extension to the south of the Tower.
 - The Gatehouse will be converted into an educational study centre for the growing number of school groups and specialist visitors who currently visit the site.
 - Environmental sustainability will play an important part in the design with plans for good building insulation, water harvesting, solar panels and heat recovery from ground water.

- The Trust has been clear since its formation, that the Archbishop's Palace should be an interpretation centre for the whole of the Darent Valley – not just for the Village of Otford. This not only increases the size of the potential audience, but also its diversity. The Darent Valley is an area enjoyed by many visitors. Because of the close proximity of London and the high population of North West Kent, the potential visitor audience to the Darent Valley is huge. 508,870 people live within 5km of the Valley boundary. The number increases to 1.3 million within 10km (the area includes some London suburbs) and to 3.2 million within a 16km radius. The potential is constantly increasing as new housing estates are established.
- The fundamental purpose of developing this site is to offer a memorable experience for the visitor to take away; a lasting impression and understanding of the richness of life in and around the Palace and Otford, together with an increased knowledge of the historical impact of the Darent Valley. The way we promote and subsequently deliver must support this objective.
- The visitor experience has been considered in five phases:
 - Information to help visitors make the *decision* to visit the palace,
 - *Entry* to the Palace and its grounds,
 - *Connections* to, and *interpretation* of, the site and buildings and the landscape of the Darent Valley though time,
 - The *exit* phase as visitors leave the site, and
 - Making a *commitment* to return and tell their friends.

This is discussed in detail in a separate document: *The visitor experience and interpretation plan*.

- The Palace Field management plan considers three areas of the site:
 - The Outer Courtyard to the south of the buildings, which will be used for community events,
 - An Environmental Area that will be managed for biodiversity, providing a pollinator corridor, a north-south hedgehog highway – and a safe space for forest schools,
 - The Garden and Heritage Orchard at the west of the site will be an area of relative tranquillity,
- The project evaluation is based on a theory of change model developed with the help of consultants from the Tavistock Institute. This sets out the distinct actors, the actions, outputs, outcomes and impacts.
- The Trust continually reviews the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the project and maintains a SWOT analysis.
- The overall project is divided into six stages:
 1. The initial planning which ran until October 2018,
 2. Community involvement which is ongoing,
 3. Stabilisation works to make the north-west Tower weatherproof, to carry out repairs to the masonry and brickwork and fully glazing the structure. (November 2021-October 2023),
 4. Development and capacity building, and securing funding for the main part of the construction work. (February 2025 to June 2027)
 5. Construction of the interpretation centre in the Main Tower, and the conversion

of the Gatehouse to an educational study centre. (February 2027 to February 2028),

6. Operation of the Interpretation Centre and Study Centre. (from April 2028).

- The Trustees pay continual attention to planning for the future, including developing the competences of the Board and volunteers and ensuring the orderly succession of the Board itself.
- The detailed financial predictions and the project risk register are set out in the second volume of this business plan.

1. Vision and objectives

1.1 Our vision

The Trust will engage with a wide range of people from Kent, London and further afield, using the site and buildings of the Tudor Palace and the Oftord Heritage Collection to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the heritage of the Darent Valley, and thus to engender their well-being through engagement with that heritage. To achieve this, we will restore the iconic buildings of the Archbishop's Palace in Oftord and develop an interpretation centre that will act as a hub for further exploration.

1.2 Objectives

- a. Working closely with the local community, to develop and run a sustainable programme of activities that will enable us to fulfil our vision to engender well-being through engagement with our heritage,
- b. Subject to the assent of Historic England and with the agreement of Sevenoaks District Council, to have the freedom to maintain and develop the Palace buildings and their grounds,
- c. To assemble the talents, finance and management skills required to build and manage a self-sustaining centre for the dissemination of knowledge about our Tudor and our Valley's heritage,
- d. To develop a lasting heritage landmark within the Sevenoaks region.

1.3 Our values and culture

Our work is informed by enduring values of

- *Authenticity*, of the researched content, producing stories that we tell our audience and in the way in which we conserve the fabric of the Palace,
- *Quality*, in the presentation of the site and buildings, and in the experiences that we provide,
- *Imagination*, in how we interpret the heritage of the Darent Valley,
- *Inclusivity*, in making the activities of the Trust widely accessible to as diverse an audience as possible,
- *Responsibility* for our stewardship of the site and buildings; and
- *Fun*, in sharing our love for heritage in the most enjoyable way possible.

1.4 Evolution

The objectives have evolved over time. The initial emphasis was on the restoration and recycling of a Tudor Palace. However, there is little point in restoring a building if it does not have a purpose and the objectives moved to a focus on benefits to the community. More recently (through community engagement and support of the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership), we have come to realise that the Palace and the landscape of the Darent Valley are mutually interwoven and that an important objective is to interpret this 'landscape through time.'

2. Introduction

The site of Archbishop's Palace in Otford, Kent, dates back to 821 but it was in 1512-22 that Archbishop Warham built one of the largest palaces in England as his 'House of Power.' It was comparable in size to Hampton Court. Unfortunately, in the 17th Century, the buildings fell into disrepair. Now all that remains is part of the North Range - the North West corner Tower, part of the Northern Gatehouse and connecting wall which has been turned into a row of three small cottages. The site, the Tower and the Gatehouse are currently owned by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC).

The local community indicated it would like to see this significant historical building conserved and developed as a focal point for the Darent Valley as a whole. To that end, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - The Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust (APCT) - has been established (Registration number 1173486) to conserve the site and buildings and operate it as a self-sustaining community resource. The Trust signed a 99-year lease with SDC in September 2019.

This document demonstrates the feasibility of the project. It sets out a plan for the conservation process and the first five years of its self-sustaining operation. It covers the period from inheriting an empty shell into restoring the buildings into a heritage landmark for the region, and creating a self-sustaining hub for the discovery of the Darent Valley, the Tudor period and the role of the Archbishop's Palace and its incumbents. The financial details of the project are set out in a separate volume.

As with all business plans, this is an evolving document that is continually being revised to reflect changing circumstances.

It should be read in conjunction with three supporting documents:

- [The APCT Audience development plan](#),
- [The APCT Visitor experience and interpretation plan](#), and
- [The Palace Field management plan](#).



Figure 1: The Palace buildings from the South-West

3. The Archbishop's Palace

3.1 Location

The Archbishop's Palace and grounds lie a short distance to the south-east from Otford Village Centre. The Heritage Village of Otford is in the centre of the Darent Valley in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – The Kent Down National Landscape. Otford itself is a Heritage Village dating back to Roman times with many listed buildings, including the only duck pond in the country with Grade II listed status.

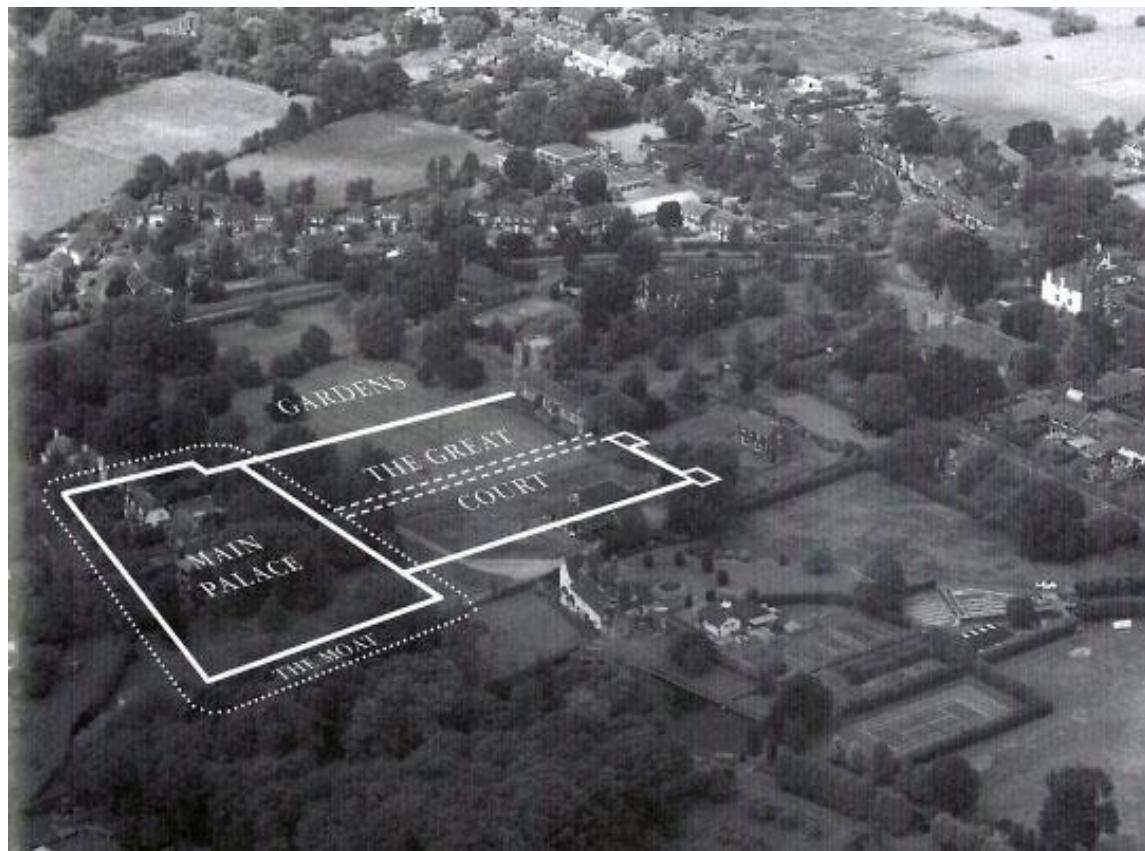


Figure 2: The Palace footprint, looking north-west over Otford

3.2 A heritage landmark

The historic environment of the Palace buildings and its grounds in Otford constitute our common heritage. A history timeline can be found on the Palace website at: <https://otfordpalace.org/palace-history/>. More detailed accounts can be found on the APCT website (<https://otfordpalace.org>), in Clarke & Stoyel (1975), and Philp (1984).

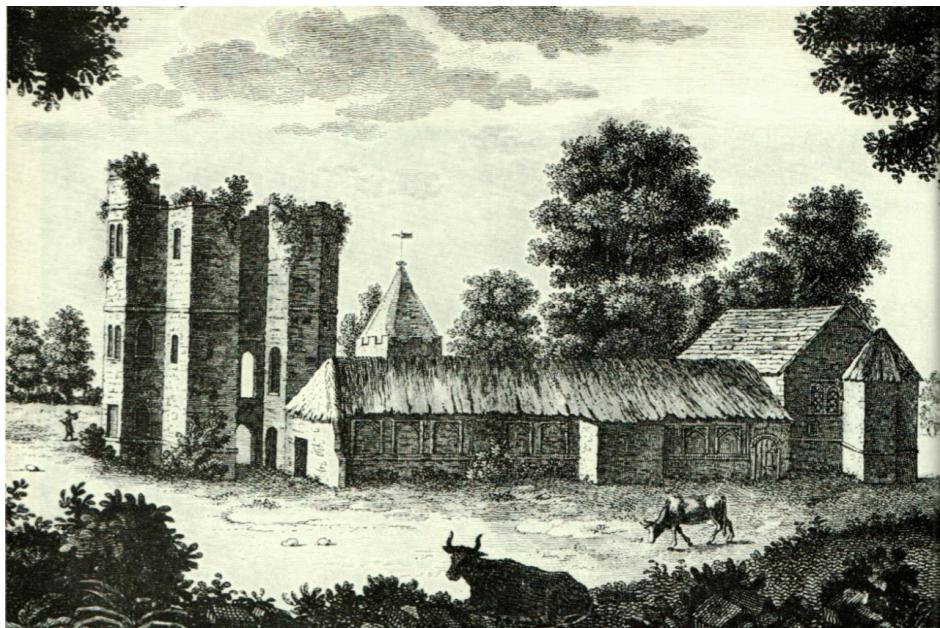


Figure 3: The view of the Palace from the South West in the 18th Century, from an engraving by Bayly (in the Otford Heritage Collection)

Described by Drury (2018) as a “spectacular but short-lived extravagance,” now all that remains is part of the North Range - the North West corner Tower, part of the Northern Gatehouse and the connecting wall which was turned into a row of three small cottages. There are further remains on private land, and a section of the boundary wall can be seen in Bubblestone Road - which was previously the site of the Palace moat.

However, geophysical and Lidar investigations reveal the underlying structure of what was, in its heyday, a truly magnificent palace. With this demonstrable long history, Otford Palace, which is a scheduled monument (no 1005197, Historic England 1928), is unquestionably a Heritage site of National significance.

The surveys show that there are no foundations or other structures beneath that part of Palace Field bordering the Sevenoaks Road. This area was used as a vegetable garden in Tudor times.

However, the 2023 geophysics survey showed evidence of a pre-Tudor building in the Great Court. This is not aligned with the Tudor Palace and may have been demolished to make way for Archbishop Warham’s creation. Excavations in April 2025 revealed that this was a large medieval building from 1250-1350, which was probably demolished to make way for Warham’s Palace.

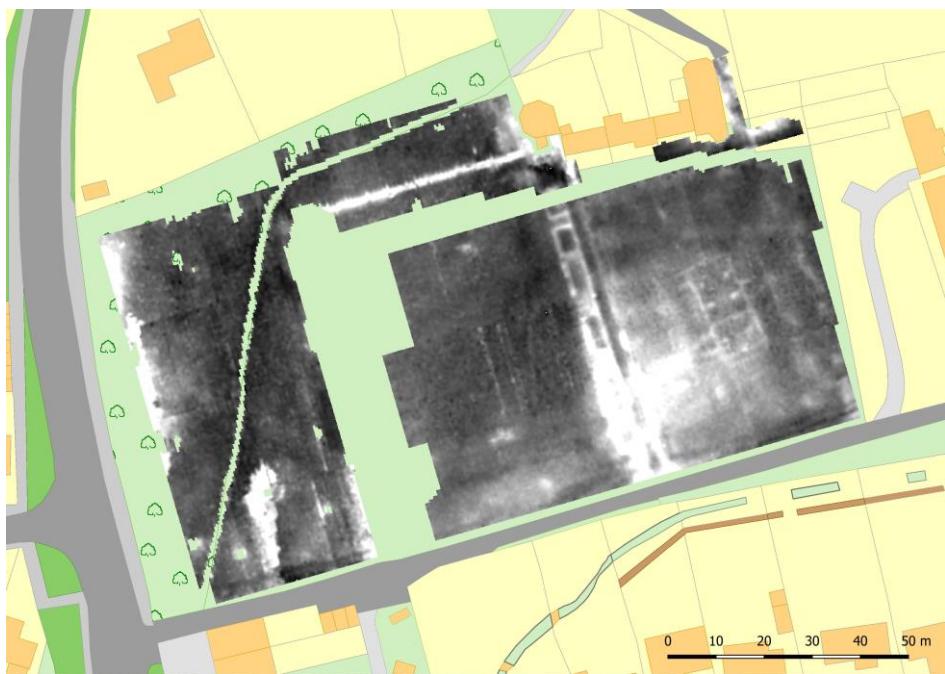
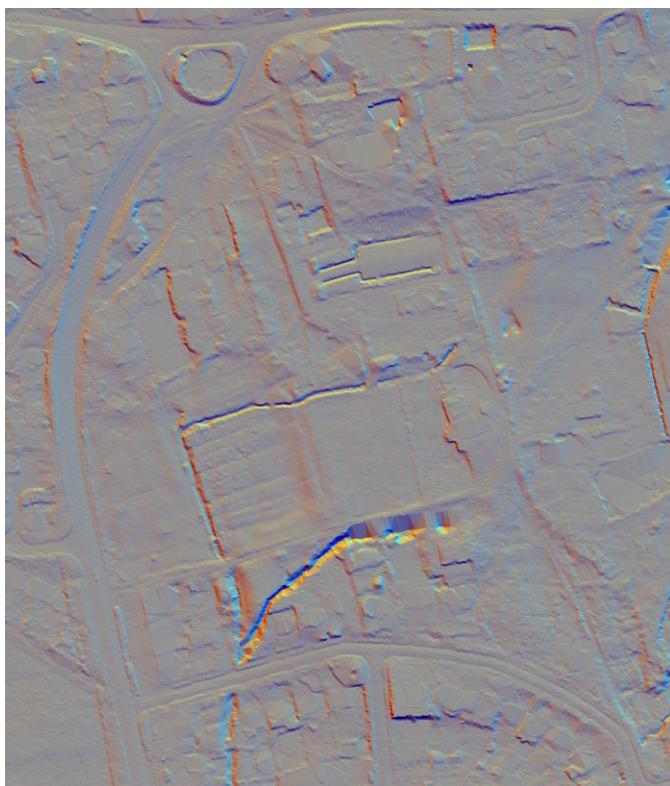


Figure 4: The overall plan of the Tudor Palace against the background of the geophysical survey



*Figure 5: A LiDAR image of the Palace area.
(© Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme)*

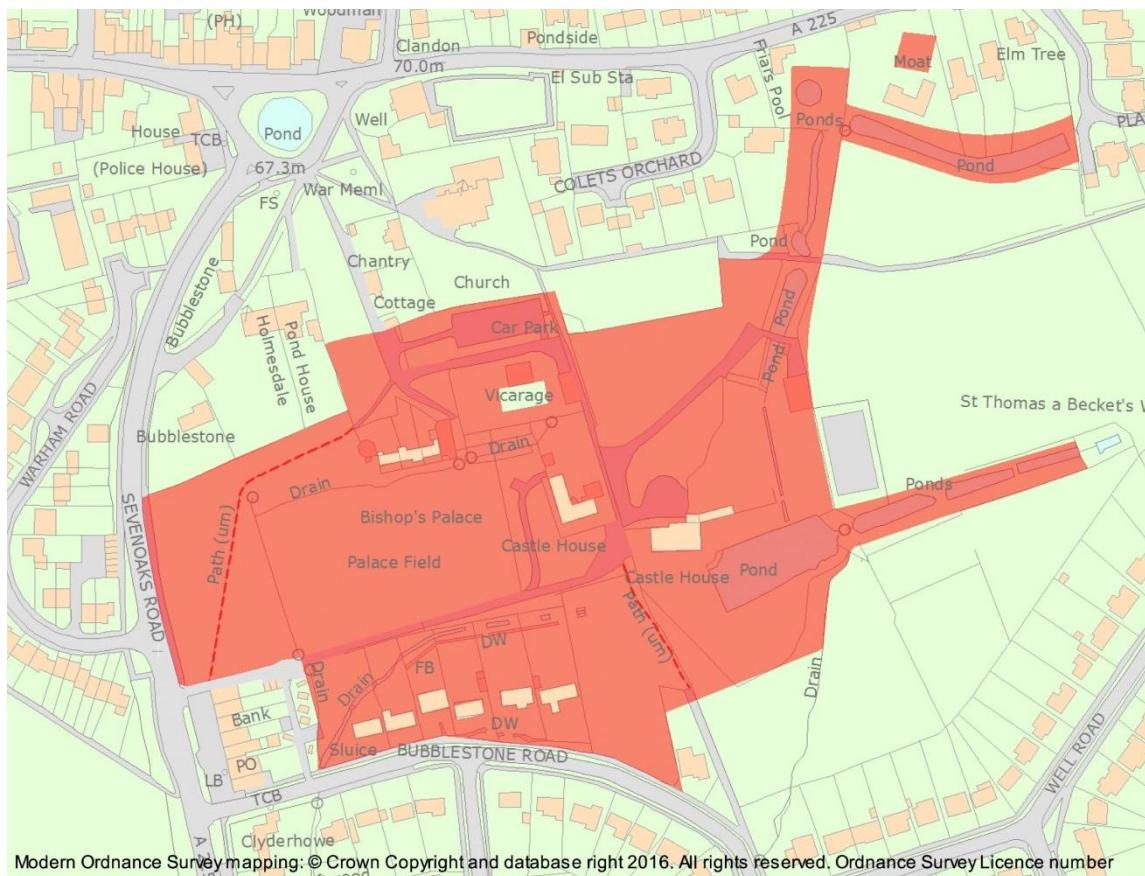


Figure 6: Historic England map of the scheduled site.

As the map from Historic England (Figure 6) illustrates, the overall extent of the scheduled site extends well beyond the remaining Palace buildings. The remains of the Southern buildings lie under a 1970s housing development.

Oxford Palace is of *exceptional* significance for

- The evidence which it provides for the form and architectural character of what was one of the outstanding buildings of early 16th century England,
- Its archaeological potential to yield much more information about that building, particularly on the moat island, and its medieval predecessors,
- Its part in the infrastructure and back story of visiting national and international figures relating to ecclesiastical and Warham's personal relationships.

Oxford Palace is of *considerable* significance for

- The evidential value of the adaptation of the north-west range by the Sidney family,
- Its ability to illustrate the form and scale of a late medieval archiepiscopal palace, despite its fragmentary survival,
- The aesthetic qualities, designed and fortuitous, of the north range building in its open space setting,
- The contribution it makes to the character and appearance of Oxford Conservation Area,
- The insight it provides into the character and ambition of Archbishop Warham.

Oxford Palace is of *some* significance for

- As an illustration, especially with the archive material, of the struggle for the conservation of historic places during the 20th century,
- Its contribution to the identity of Otford and its community today.



Figure 7: Existing elevations (Thomas Ford)

4. Becoming a hub

The location of the Palace is a natural hub and starting point for exploration of the Darent Valley and the surrounding region. It is located at the intersection of the two major valley routes, the pilgrims' route from London which joins the east-west Pilgrims Way, the ancient route between Winchester and Canterbury, at Otford Pond.

The Darent Valley Landscape Partnership (DVLPS, 2019)¹, supported by significant Lottery and EU funding, has enhanced the profile and visibility of the valley's major heritage and landscape assets with the support of The Tourism and Economy team at Sevenoaks District Council (SDC).



Figure 8: The Darent Valley (© Rod Shelton)

¹ The Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme finished at the end of 2024 and its activities were subsumed into the Kent Downs National Landscape.

By maintaining and enhancing this famous heritage site we can develop it as a high-quality interpretation centre, or gateway, to discovering, not only the landscape and general economic back-history but also the social-anthropology of the Darent Valley. The ability to provide public access to such historic building will therefore be of positive benefit and further its aim to continue as one of the Valley's major heritage sites.

The Sevenoaks District Draft Local Plan (SDC, 2023) notes that " Tourism and the visitor economy are significant contributors to the local economy in Sevenoaks District and" As such, the Council seeks to support the provision of, and offering made by, tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation, in particular those that would help to extend the tourist season, improve the quantity and quality of visitor accommodation and meet the needs of both visitors and the local community.." This project to develop the Archbishops' Palace speaks directly to that aspiration. Section **Error! Reference source not found.** discusses the value to the local economy in greater detail.

The Trust's Audience Development Plan is set out in a separate document. (<https://otfordpalace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/APCT-Audience-development-plan-v3-3.pdf>)

4.1 For the discovery of the heritage of the Darent Valley

It is the Trust intention to restore the North-West Tower as an Interpretation Centre for the Darent Valley and restore the Gatehouse as an Educational Study Centre for school groups and specialist visitors. The use of these spaces is discussed in detail in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**

Using the expanse of the Great Inner Court space outside, there are many opportunities for period-themed events: historical re-enactment groups, open-air theatre, country fairs and feasts within a running programme of events, tailored for school holidays.

4.2 Developing tourism in the Darent Valley

From the outset it was clear to the Trustees that a sustainable future that was highly reliant on visitor numbers and would only be possible through development of the visitor economy in the Darent Valley. The Trust has therefore become actively involved in, and has undertaken some projects that will encourage and enable the growth of sustainable tourism in the area.

These activities include:

- Active participation in the Sevenoaks Visitor Economy Forum, organised by Sevenoaks District Council,
- Promoting the provision of visitor accommodation in the area,
- Encouraging the provision of a local visitor bus service and electric-assist bicycle hire.

If the Darent Valley is to enjoy sustainable tourism, then alternatives to cars must be found. This will also make a significant contribution to Sevenoaks District Council's Net Zero aspirations.

While this note focuses on the Darent Valley, it is hoped that the findings of the study will be applicable to other parts of the District and possibly further-afield.

The solution for sustainable tourism involves complementary inputs from:

- a. More attractive rail travel on the Darent Valley Line
- b. Local bus services offering a hop-on hop-off shuttle-buses that can reach the small villages.
- c. A bicycle and e-bike rental service.

4.2.1 Value

Each year, Visit Kent, Kent Downs Natural Landscape (formerly Kent Downs AONB) and Sevenoaks District Council commission research on the economic impact of tourism in the area. The most recent reports were published in December 2022, and were based on data from 2021 (Destination Research 2022a, 2022b). The results are summarised in Figures 9 and 10).

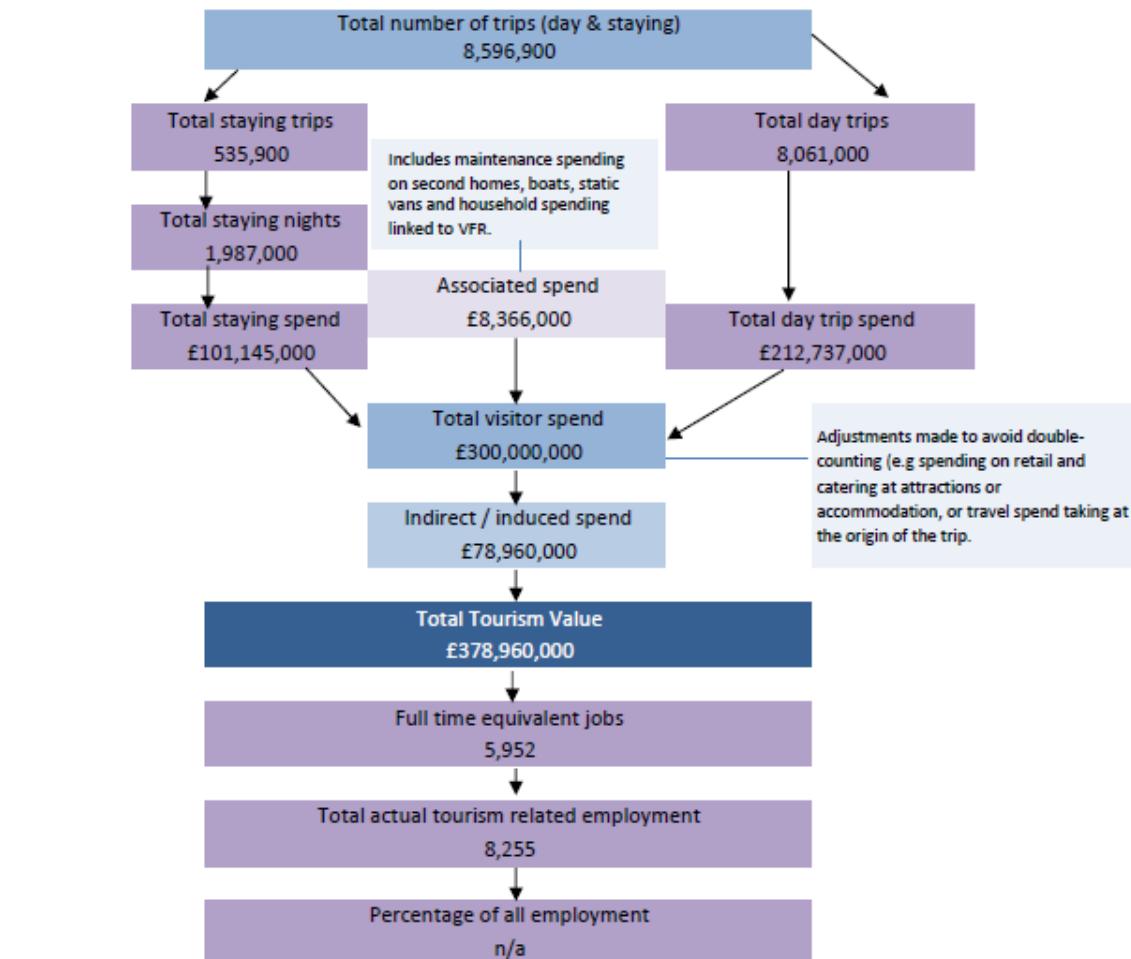
In 2023, tourism in Sevenoaks generated an estimated £260.9 million in value, supporting 3,212 full-time equivalent jobs and a total of 4,264 actual jobs. The total visitor spend was £203.2 million, including £157.7 million from overnight stays and £40.1 million from day trips, which supported a significant amount of indirect and induced spending of £57.7 million.

Sevenoaks saw a total of 4.3 million tourism trips in 2023, including 4.1 million day visits and 0.2 million overnight stays. Visitor spending totalled around £203 million, and the area benefitted from the return of overseas visitors and increased school/group travel. (Visit Kent Business, 2023).

In its consultation document for the new local plan, Sevenoaks District Council notes that “The Council seeks to support the provision of, and offering made by, tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation, in particular those that would help to extend the tourist season, improve the quantity and quality of visitor accommodation and meet the needs of both visitors and the local community.” The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports building a strong and competitive economy, including encouraging sustainable tourism that both benefits businesses, in rural and urban areas, and protects the countryside” (EMP6, Sevenoaks District Council, 2022).

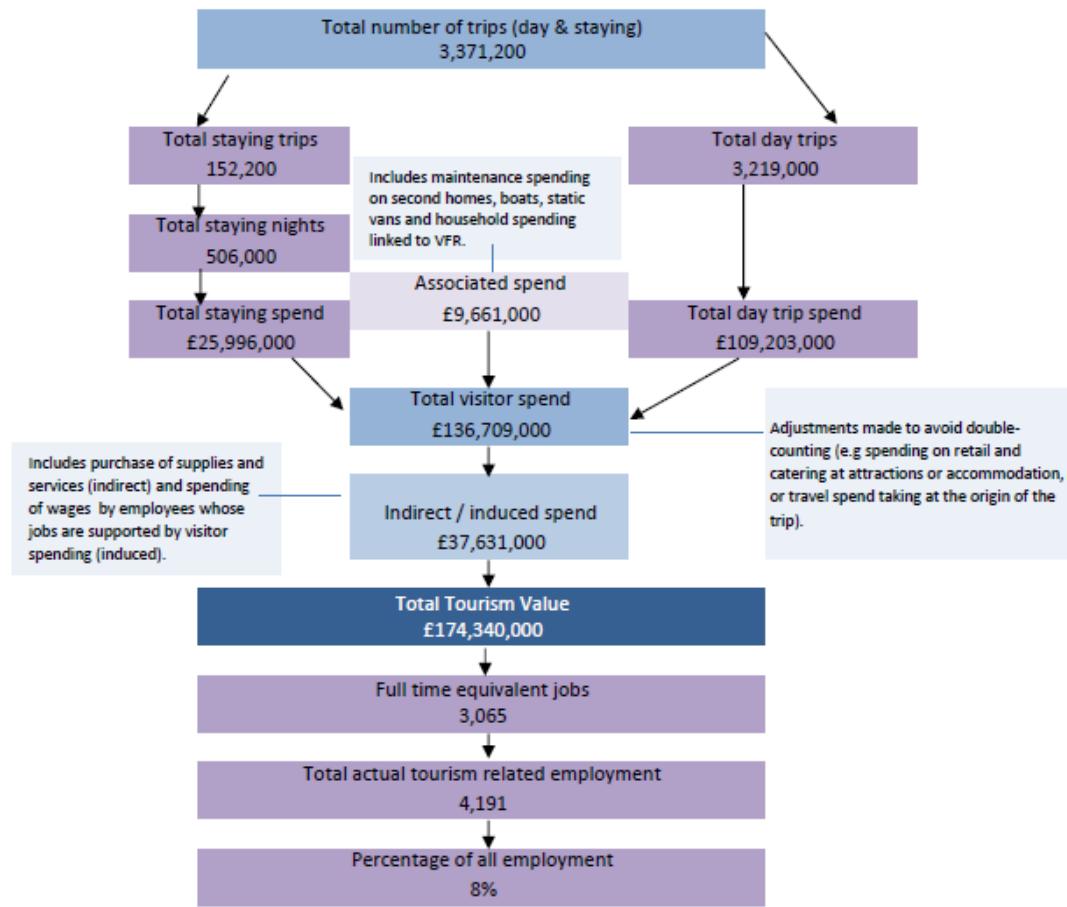
The Darent Valley Landscape Partnership (2016) notes that, “The legacy of the Darent Valley’s heritage is considerable: 28 Scheduled Monuments, 5 registered parks and gardens, 16 conservation areas, 13 Grade I listed buildings and several hundred others at lower grades. This is a landscape of considerable time-depth with a complex untold story to tell.”

The Trust will work with Sevenoaks District Council, Kent Downs National Landscape, the forthcoming Cross-Channel Geopark, Visit Sevenoaks, Visit Kent and other bodies to help develop (and benefit from) the local visitor economy. As a visitor and interpretation centre for the Darent Valley, the Archbishop's Palace is ideally positioned to provide visitor information for SDC. We propose that it should be open for a minimum of eight months each year, during the tourist season and for those months it could provide information covering the whole of the Sevenoaks District.



<u>Economic Impact of Tourism – Year on year comparisons</u>				Year-on-year comparison	Pre-pandemic levels
	2021	2020	2019	2021 v 2020	2021 v 2019
Day Trips					
Day trips Volume	8,061,000	6,015,000	8,390,000	34%	-4%
Day trips Value	£212,737,000	£153,283,000	£217,913,000	39%	-2%
Overnight trips					
Number of trip	535,900	375,800	618,200	43%	-13%
Number of nights	1,987,000	1,243,000	3,392,000	60%	-41%
Trip value	£101,145,000	£62,558,000	£151,252,000	62%	-33%
Total Value	£378,960,000	£258,483,000	£447,385,000	47%	-15%
Actual Jobs	8,255	5,625	9,770	47%	-16%
	2021	2020	2019	2021 v 2020	2021 v 2019
Spend x night	50.90	50.29	44.59	1.2%	12.8%
Spend x day trip	26.39	25.48	25.97	3.6%	-1.9%
turnover / jobs	£ 45,904.72	£ 45,954.47	45,792.92	-0.1%	0.2%
visits / job year	£ 243.27	£ 276.06	187.20	-11.9%	30.0%

Figure 9: Headline figures for the economic impact of tourism in the Kent AONB area
(Destination Research, 2022a)



Economic Impact of Tourism – year on year comparisons				Year-on-year comparison 2021 v 2020	Pre-pandemic levels 2021 v 2019
<u>Day Trips</u>	2021	2020	2019		
Day trips volume	3,219,000	1,933,000	4,069,000	67%	-21%
Day trips value	£109,203,000	£63,406,000	£153,120,000	72%	-29%
<u>Overnight trips</u>					
Number of trips	152,200	101,000	233,000	51%	-35%
Number of nights	506,000	329,000	757,000	54%	-33%
Trip value	£25,996,000	£16,474,000	£40,092,000	58%	-35%
Total value	£174,340,000	£105,314,000	£265,397,000	66%	-34%
Actual jobs	4,191	2,426	5,741	73%	-27%
	2021	2020	2019	2021 v 2020	2021 v 2019
Average length stay (nights x trip)	3.32	3.25	3.25	2.4%	2.3%
Spend x overnight trip	£170.80	£163.11	£172.07	4.7%	-0.7%
Spend x night	£51.38	£50.07	£52.96	2.6%	-3.0%
Spend x day trip	£33.92	£32.80	£37.63	3.4%	-9.8%

Figure 10: Headline figures for the economic impact of tourism in the Sevenoaks area
(Destination Research, 2022b)

Our aim is to act as a catalyst to attract more visitors and, at the same time, to minimise any adverse impact to the Village and its residents. The project should encourage the retention and growth of local businesses and in particular, the shops in the High Street. The impact on the local community can be measured in part by footfall in those shops, cafes and restaurants, and this will be supplemented by interviews with the business owners and managers.

The Destination Research report on the Economic of Tourism in the Sevenoaks District (Destination Research, 2022b) gives estimates for business turnover as a result of tourist spending in 2021, from the purchase of supplies and services locally by businesses in receipt of visitor spending and as a result of the spending of wages in businesses by employees whose jobs are directly or indirectly supported by tourism spending.

	Staying Visitor	Day Visitors	Total
Accommodation	£7,848,000	£825,000	£8,673,000
Retail	£4,162,000	£40,136,000	£44,298,000
Catering	£6,430,000	£40,031,000	£46,461,000
Attractions	£3,110,000	£12,279,000	£15,389,000
Transport	£2,668,000	£9,559,000	£12,227,000
Non-trip spend	£9,661,000	£0	£9,661,000
Total Direct 2021	£33,879,000	£102,830,000	£136,709,000

Table 1: Direct turnover derived trips to the District, Sevenoaks 2021 (Destination Research, 2022b)

To this can be added the indirect spend, non-trip spending and income induced turnover, total £37,631,000. This gives a total local business turnover supported by tourism activity of £174,340,00. If the Trust can add only 1% to this turnover, it would represent a further £1.74 million.

4.2.2 Employment

The number of full-time equivalent employees (FTE) at the Palace will be limited. The financial predictions are based on two FTE with the possibility of increasing this number as demand requires.

However, the key benefit is to the indirect employment.

- The visitors to the Palace will spend time in Otford. They will probably eat and drink at the cafes in the Village and visit the antique shops and other shops,
- It is the Trust's policy to purchase locally. Maintenance on the Palace and its grounds is undertaken by local tradesmen and, wherever possible, supplies are purchased from companies in North West Kent.

The Destination Research study (2022b) estimates that a new FTE tourism job is created with every £48,600 increase in tourism revenue. Thus, if the Trust achieves its target of contributing a 1% increase in tourism in the Sevenoaks District, this would represent over 360 new jobs.

4.3 Summary

The conservation of the Archbishop's Palace as a visitor interpretation centre will benefit the community in Otford and the Darent Valley by:

- a. Encouraging and supporting sustainable tourism in the area with consequent benefits to the local economy, in particular to local shops and eateries,
- b. Increasing understanding of the history and landscape of the Darent Valley for visitors of all ages,
- c. Engendering well-being and changing attitudes and behaviours towards heritage and

- the landscape,
- d. Developing employability skills in the volunteers and engendering a volunteering ethic in the community.

There will be benefits for many different organisations and groups:

- a. Historic England and Sevenoaks District Council who will see a secure future for the buildings which can then be removed from the risk register,
- b. Otford residents who will benefit from an increased understanding of the local heritage and a share in the increased prosperity of the community,
- c. The local shops, pubs and cafés who will see increased profits from increased visitor numbers,
- d. Other Darent Valley visitor attractions who will see increased visitor numbers through the synergy of working collaboratively,
- e. The volunteers who will develop valuable employability skills,
- f. Museums, archaeological groups and local history groups in the Darent Valley will have access to a digital modelling facility and an online cataloguing system for museum objects, documents and images.

Located in the heart of the Heritage village of Otford, in a conservation area and Kent Downs National Landscape, it will provide:

- a. The 'go to' place for visitor information and interpretation,
- b. A wealth of resources,
- c. A study centre for school groups,
- d. A focus for community activities.

5. The Trust and organisational stability

After taking advice from those funding heritage conservation projects and legal experts, the Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The Objects of the CIO (as set out in Appendix A Constitution of the APCT) are:

- a. For the benefit of the public the preservation, restoration, maintenance, repair and improvement of the building known as the Archbishop's Palace in Otford, Kent,
- b. to advance the education of the public in the history of the Archbishop's Palace, the Tudors, the role of the Archbishops and the history of the Darent Valley by the provision of exhibitions and other learning experiences.

A copy of the Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust constitution can be found in Appendix A. The Trust is a registered charity, number 1173486.

5.1 The trustees

The Founding Trustees were carefully selected to ensure that collectively they bring the range of competences that will be necessary for the effective and efficient operation of this challenging project. As of 20th November 2025 the Trustees were:

- Nick Rushby (Secretary and treasurer),
- Andrew Goymer (chair, oversight and constructive challenge),
- Elizabeth Anderson (Website and online marketing),
- Stuart Baird (building construction oversight)
- John Edwards-Winser (Liaison with SDC),
- Elizabeth Fettes-Neame (events)
- Roger Gough (consigliere)
- Roger House (communications director and content manager),
- Charles Shee (Historical research),
- Neil Williams (Finance).

5.2 Diversity and inclusivity

The Trust is continually looking to appoint further trustees who will increase the diversity of the Board. The whole board is committed to ensuring The Trust is an inclusive organisation. Although we consider how inclusive our programmes are at every stage, we recognise there is a link between inclusivity and diversity, and we want to ensure a range of voices are considered within our decision making and planning.

To ensure we are considering and evaluating how inclusive we are throughout the organisation we will recruit a new Inclusivity Champion to join our board of Trustees. This role has been developed to ensure we have someone on the board who continually challenges us to ensure all our programmes, decisions and the way we work is as inclusive as possible.

The trustees are supported by numerous members of the local community and other subject experts who form an Advisory Group.

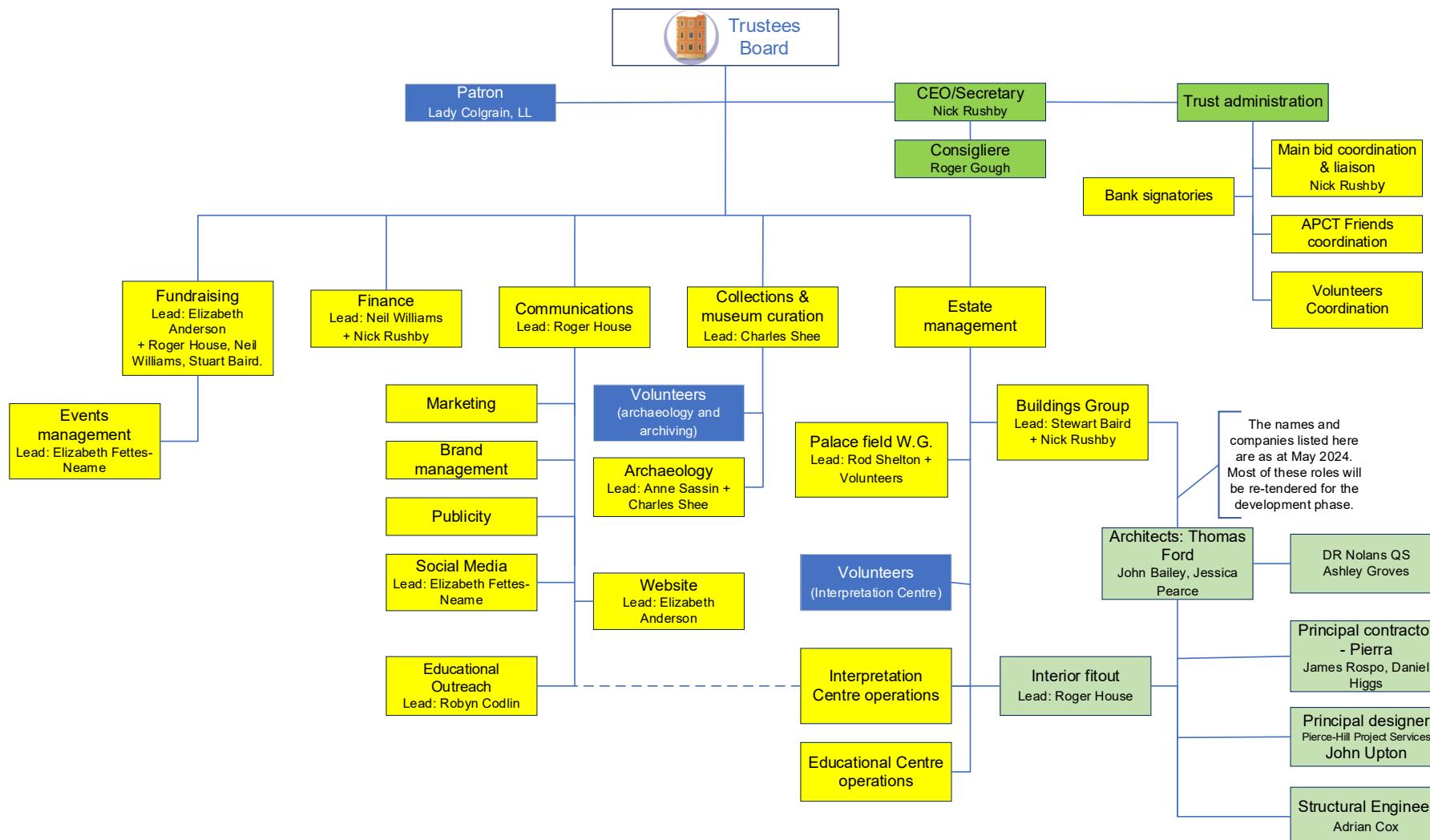


Figure 11: Structure of the Trust

5.3 Trustee development

Since its formation, the trustees have been avid consumers of training relevant to heritage charities. This has included courses from:

- Futurelearn (Evaluation for Arts, Culture and Heritage)
- The Carbon Literacy Trust
- Heritage Compass
- Heritage Trust Network Academy
- Rebuilding Heritage
- MDSE Museum Development (formerly SE Museum Development)

Encouraging our trustees to take advantage of learning opportunities contributes to

- Increased commercial and governance capabilities
- Embedded resilience in the project
- Developing skills and capacity across heritage

5.4 Succession planning

In common with many heritage trusts, some of our Trustees are over 60 years old and cannot be expected to continue in their posts forever. However, over the past two years we have added some new and younger trustees.

The APCT Constitution does not provide for a maximum duration of service and so a Trustees' appointment and retirement policy has been adopted by Trustee resolution. It aims to provide a balance between continuity and the need to refresh the Board over time.

The policy states that each trustee shall serve for an initial three years, and this term shall be renewable by agreement between the Trustees and the retiring Trustee for three occasions. This limits the service of individual trustees to twelve years.

5.5 Policies

The Trust has agreed policies for:

- Ethical donations
- Fraud, and
- Reserves and investment of any surpluses to cover at least 6 months operations.

Financial records are maintained using Xero accounting software with banking details updated and downloaded directly daily.

Up to date Statements of Earnings and Balance Sheets are sent to each quarterly Trustee board meeting for discussion.

Significant items of Grants receivable and future recommended expenditure are discussed in detail and recorded in the minutes.

The year-end accounts are prepared by one of the trustees who is a chartered accountant who, with the secretary, sets out the full report which is sent for approval to

the Independent Financial Examiner.

Expenditure budgets are maintained on a rolling basis for the succeeding and future years

A full risk register is maintained and regularly reviewed by the trustees. This is a standing agenda item at Trustee meetings and a comprehensive review is carried out annually.

The detailed figures and underlying assumptions are given in the second volume of the APCT Business Plan. This separate document sets out in detail how the trust intends to proceed from early years based on volunteer help to support paid employees when special attractions have been developed and promoted. Care has been taken to ensure that all of the assumptions about visitor numbers etc, are pessimistic. The same approach has been taken with fixed and variable costs.

5.6 Funding

The Trust's Funding working group has identified about 50 potential funding sources for this work. These are continually being prioritised and contacted to ask whether this is the kind of project which they would consider helping.

We are also actively seeking funding from local companies, both within Otford (where there is a sizeable industrial estate) and elsewhere in the Darent Valley, as well as from individual donors. A list of over 100 local companies is being qualified and the Funding Group will be contacting them to solicit donations and sponsorship.

Donations from individual donors are made online (using the 'Donate now' button on the website) and sometimes, for larger sums, directly to the Trust.

Timing for individual and corporate donors is important because potential donors are more likely to give when they can see tangible evidence of something happening on the site.

As an incentive to funders, we will offer a scaled range of rewards with the most prestigious rewards going to those individuals or organisations that donate the most. The rewards will be things that cannot be obtained from other sources, such as:

- A guided tour of the Tower,
- An illuminated facsimile manuscript acknowledging contributions,
- A framed colour photograph of the Tower signed by Richard Starkey or Alison Weir,
- A digital book,
- A commemorative plaque,
- A bird's eye view of Otford from a tall crane,
- A Darent Valley balloon trip,
- A leather-bound copy of the Book of Common Prayer signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury,
- Your name in a stained-glass window.

5.7 Continual improvement

The Governance Review, planned for 2026 will:

- Deliver a Trustee Board skills audit, with a view to identifying any gaps that will be critical to fill in order to deliver the operation of the Palace and the Activity Plan
- Review our meeting patterns, procedures, and any other aspects that may identify barriers to diversity in our trustee cohort, and advise on any necessary changes to overcome such barriers
- Assistance with recruitment of new trustees in the light of the above.

6. Objectives

6.1 Initial objectives

In its meeting of 9th January 2017, The Otford Parish Council formally supported the creation of a trust but indicated that they did not wish to take on responsibility for the Palace site or its buildings themselves.

A public meeting in Otford was held on Saturday 21st January and was widely advertised in the media, local newsletters and posters. A vote was taken at the end of the meeting and an overwhelming majority (70 for: 2 abstentions) voted for the creation of a Charitable Trust to represent the Otford community in any future discussions with Sevenoaks District Council as regards the Palace site and buildings.

Realising that our mission will take many years, the project is divided into a number of overlapping stages each with specific objectives. Initially, these four stages were:

1. Planning,
2. Feasibility and community involvement,
3. Development and delivery,
4. Operations.

However, circumstances and in particular the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, had a dramatic impact on this original plan.

6.2 Sevenoaks District Council initial objectives

When the lease was granted in September 2019, the Trust was set seven objectives. To:

- a. commission a detailed options appraisal for the conservation of the property as a visitor and interpretation centre for Otford and the Darent Valley;
- b. commission detailed plans (including architectural drawings) in connection with the development;
- c. submit the Planning Application to the Determining Authority and use all reasonable endeavours to obtain the grant of a Satisfactory Planning Permission;
- d. submit any necessary applications for Scheduled Monument Consent in connection with the development;
- e. carry out a botanical survey of the property and prepare a revised management plan for the Palace Field;
- f. Carry out non-invasive archaeological studies of the property with funding from the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme;
- g. Subject to obtaining all the necessary consents, commence the development including the installation of fenestration, glass or other suitable material necessary to secure the Tower against the ingress of wind and water.

To these, we subsequently added a further six objectives. To:

- h. Identify potential sources of funding and develop proposals;
- i. Secure an interim tranche of funding;
- j. Carry out a baseline survey for the project evaluation;
- k. Become involved in, and undertake, enabling projects to develop sustainable tourism in the Darent Valley;

- I. Undertake a community engagement programme;
- m. Develop the Educational Outreach Programme.

6.3 Revised objectives

The objectives were reviewed in September 2024 and the current list of objectives is to:

- a. Continue the development of the Trust
- b. Continue our work to secure more funding for the creation of the interpretation centre and the study centre.
- c. Commissioning a suitable firm to undertake the archaeological investigations needed before the building design can be finalised.
- d. Subject to consent by Historic England and Sevenoaks District Planning Authority:
 - Replace the missing floors and the temporary roof in the North-West Tower
 - Create a small lobby to the south of the Tower, to provide an entrance, space for a shop, a toilet and a lift to the first floor for disabled visitors
 - Install photovoltaic panels and rainwater harvesting equipment
 - Create an interpretation centre in the Tower, using advanced audio-visual equipment, and create engaging interactive content for visitors.
 - Create a study centre in the Gatehouse
- e. Organise and manage community events (eg, Percy Pilcher (19thC aviator) exhibition, talk and flying competition, Thomas Cranmer and the English Book of Common Prayer, exhibition on Archbishop Warham, exhibition on Shaping the Darent Valley)
- f. Develop the environmental area of Palace Field with paths and interpretation.
- g. Restart the educational outreach programme (Darent History Takeaway)
- h. Prepare and then open the Centre to visitors.
- i. Evaluate the performance of the project and of the centre

It is the Trust's contention that we have achieved all of the objectives set out in our agreement with SDC and that the way is clear for the Council to confirm that the lease will be extended for the remainder of the 99-year term.

On 7th February 2024, SDC wrote to the Trust:

"There are a series of objectives for the Conservation Trust to implement within the first 5-year period of the lease between Sevenoaks District Council and the Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust. We can confirm that, bearing in mind all the works carried out to date, SDC does not anticipate exercising the [lease] break in September 2024."

6.3.1 Options appraisal and master plan

With Purcell (our architects at that time) we developed a detailed feasibility study. This was costed by DR Nolans (quantity surveyors) and their figures, suitably adjusted for inflation and other changes, have provided the basis for our cost estimates (objectives a and b).

6.3.2 Planning and scheduled monument consents

The local planning authority (Sevenoaks District Council) deferred to Historic England in the matter of permissions and consents (objectives c and d).

The first stage of the conservation of the North-West Tower was to undertake

conservation work on the masonry and brick and scheduled monument consent was obtained from Historic England. The original consent has required some variations to accommodate changes in the construction of a door, the use of oak window frames and polycarbonate glazing all of which were given without difficulty.

6.3.3 Palace Field survey

By agreement with Sevenoaks District Council and the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme, the biological survey (objective e) was removed from the objectives. This has been replaced with an on-going programme for the development and maintenance of Palace Field to enhance its biodiversity and make it more accessible to visitors. This is described in detail in a separate document, the APCT Palace Field Management Plan (see: <https://otfordpalace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/APCT-Palace-Field-management-plan-v5-1.pdf>).

6.3.4 Archaeology

In addition to two archaeological watching briefs as part of minor works on Palace Field, a community archaeologist assisted by volunteers, undertook a detailed geophysical survey of Palace Field and some of the neighbouring properties (objective f). This was based on a 50cm geolocated grid and provided a much better picture of the subsurface structures. It also revealed the unexpected presence of a large pre-Tudor building near the centre of the Great Court. This was investigated in April 2025 and was identified as a medieval building dating from 1250-1350.

Archaeology SouthEast investigated the Tower floor in October 2025 to ascertain what might below the layer of mud and cow dung that had accumulated over the 205 years that the Tower was used as a farm building. This revealed that the tiled floor that was believed to have been present in Tudor times, had been robbed and that there was nothing of archaeological interest there.

Throughout the restoration and repair work carried out in 2016, 2017 and 2022-23, numerous photographs were taken of the Tower and the Gatehouse. These together with the records made by Thomas Ford and Partners (digitized where necessary) will provide a permanent record on the APCT website. This archive is continually being enlarged with new images chronicling the stabilisation work and showing previously unrecorded features.

A statement of archaeological significance can be found at: <https://otfordpalace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/APCT-Statement-of-archaeological-significance.pdf>

The finds from excavations carried out since 1970, are being reviewed and catalogued. Subject to copyright constraints, the reports from this output will be made available on the APCT website.

6.3.5 Stabilisation works

Planning for work on the immediate repairs (objective g) started at the end of 2021 with the work itself being carried out in the warmer months of 2022 and 2023. The repairs to the brickwork and the masonry both inside and on the exterior of the Tower have been completed. The Stair Tower has been secured with metal gates and the Main Tower by a wooden door. Oak window frames have been installed in the Main Tower and the Garderobe Tower and temporarily glazed with polycarbonate sheet. The long-term

intention is to glaze with glass in a traditional Tudor style.

Minor works have included the installation of a French drain by the entrance to the Main Tower, repairs to the roof and the installation of a temporary floor in the Tower.

The process of drying out the structure (which was without a roof until 2017), can now continue so that the building is ready for the main restoration work in the Delivery phase of the project.

At the end of 2022 and by mutual agreement, we terminated our contract with Purcell and appointed Thomas Ford and Partners as our architects. After a competitive tender, we appointed Pierra as Principal Contractor.

6.3.6 Funding

Addressing objectives (h) and (i) the Trust has raised £244,000, most of which was restricted to the stabilisation work over the period 2022-23. Our principal donors have been:

- The Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme,
- The Enovert Community Trust,
- Garfield Weston Foundation,
- Pilgrim Trust,
- The Headley Trust,
- The Historic Houses Foundation.

Initial seed funding for the Trust was obtained from local individuals, supplemented with a grant made by one of the Otford societies.

Our research into potential funding sources will provide a strong basis for seeking the matched funding required for continuing the project.

6.3.7 Evaluation

Working with consultants from the Tavistock Institute, we have developed a framework for evaluating the project (objective j). This is considered in detail in Section 10.

6.3.8 Sustainable tourism

There is a tension between the desire to increase tourism in the Darent Valley and the consequence of congestion in the villages and the byways. To resolve this, the Trust has been working with Sevenoaks District Council and the DVLPS to promote car-free tourism. The aim is to encourage visitors to come for several days rather than making a number of day trips, leaving their cars and travelling by train or bus, and cycling or walking in the Valley. The decision by Otford Parish Council to disband their Sustainable Tourism Working Group has slowed progress towards this (objective k) but the Trust has continued to work with the DVPS on walking routes, and with the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership on rail travel.

6.3.9 Community engagement

The Trust believes that the Archbishop's Palace should be an interpretation centre for the whole of the Darent Valley – not just for the Village of Otford (objective l). This not only increase the size of the audience, but also its diversity. The Palace is located in the

mid-point of the Darent Valley, an area enjoyed by many visitors. Because of the close proximity of London and the high – and rapidly increasing - population of North West Kent, the potential visitor audience to the Darent Valley is huge. 508,870 people live within 5km of the Valley boundary. The number increased to 1.3 million within 10km (the area includes some London suburbs) and to 3.2 million within a 16km radius. With the proposed residential development in North-West Kent, this number will increase significantly.

In addition to restoring the fabric of the buildings, the Trust is engaging with the local community:

- Arranging talks on aspects of the Palace, for example on: *Oxford Palace More than a restoration project*, the *Life of William Warham* and *350 Years of Mud and Cow Dung*;
- Providing tours of the Palace to local groups;
- Working with Kent Downs Natural Landscape (formerly Kent Downs AONB) on the legacy of the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme;
- Working with Sevenoaks District Council to promote sustainable tourism in the District;
- Providing a venue for community events such as the annual May Day celebrations, the Christmas Grotto and Picnic at the Palace;
- Providing facilities for open air theatre, such as Sevenoaks Shakespeare's production of *Midsummer*, and the Pauline Quirke Academy;
- Collaboration with Sevenoaks Shakespeare on the production of audio-visual materials;
- Working with West Kent Mind to deliver their *Creative Minds* programme;
- Working with SupaJam, Swanley to provide audio experiences for young people;
- Working with Otford Forest School on history and environment for primary school children, involving them in management and development of Palace Field;
- Working with Sevenoaks District Seniors Action forum to provide a meetings venue and wellness through engagement with Heritage.

6.3.10 Educational outreach

The Darent History Takeaway project aims to help schools in the Darent Valley, South and East London, and more widely in Kent and Essex, by providing exhibitions, books, handling boxes, speakers and other learning experiences, on the history of the Archbishop's Palace, the Tudors, the role of the Archbishops, and the history of the Darent Valley.

6.3.11 Communications

The Otford Palace website (<https://otfordpalace.org>, described in detail in the APCT Interpretation Plan) makes available a wealth of information on the Archbishop's Palace including:

- Background to the Palace,
- A historical timeline,
- Information on the Trust including our sponsors,
- Resources for the family,
- Resources for schools,
- An interactive catalogue for the Otford Heritage Collection,

- Directions on how to find the Palace,
- A digital archive,
- News

The website is continually being updated.

6.3.12 The Heritage Collection

The Trust and the Otford Heritage Centre merged in December 2019. It was agreed that the objects held by the Centre should be removed to the Gatehouse where they could be stored and reviewed, with the intention of putting them on display in the Interpretation Centre when that was completed.

During the Summer of 2020, the Trust wrote the core Spectrum procedures that will be required when the renamed Otford Heritage Collection becomes an accredited museum. The Trust now applies those procedures to all the objects in the Collection so that it is in a position to apply for accreditation under the Arts Council scheme as soon as possible.

In the meantime, and to make the collection accessible to the public, the collection is being reviewed and catalogued. There is a disposal process for objects that do not meet the new collection and accession policy. The APCT website (<https://otfordpalace.org>) has been enhanced to include an online catalogue which is freely accessible. The catalogue has been designed so that it can also be used by other organisations, and it is now hosting the archives of the Otford and District Historical Society.

A photogrammetry facility has been established, funded by the DVLPS. Training has been provided for volunteers who are now able to create virtual 3D models of objects, and for some objects, print 3D replicas.

A condition report for the Collection will be prepared in March 2026.

6.3.13 Governance

We have also taken time to revisit our business plan, build the capabilities of the board of Trustees, and maintain our community engagement to ensure that we continue to meet the aspirations of the local community, the Darent Valley and further afield.

7. Saving heritage

7.1 Approaches

There is a range of approaches to restoring a heritage building such as Otford Palace. At one extreme there is minimal intervention. The aim is to prevent further deterioration so that the building can be seen and appreciated in its current state. At the other extreme, the aim is to recreate what was there at a particular point in time.

The Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust has chosen a middle course. The Trust's view is that there is little point in preserving the buildings if there is no benefit to the community, beyond their engagement with heritage.

This Palace is on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register. This gives a brief

description of the site's current situation, but may well need updating as things change. The risk does include the gatehouse building as well. In general, the buildings are at risk due to their condition and vulnerability to decay. This includes the roof, walls, windows and any vulnerable features. The risk has probably been reduced by the work that has been carried out to stabilise the Tower. However, advice from Historic England is to concentrate on the repair of the historic fabric as the first priority, with bringing the building into use, following its repair.

As conceived around 1512, the great courtyard was visually anchored on its four corners with substantial towers, of which the northwestern tower remains substantially intact. The tower has lost some of its gravitas by the relatively recent removal and modification of the parapet and the top staircase turret, however it is still imposing, and dominates this corner of the palace field. The tower was originally conceived to be seen with substantial ranges of buildings to the north and west, a full stop on the corner, allowing the courtyard to turn through 90 degrees. Today, the northern range is reduced in stature but still gives a tangible hint to the relationship of the range to the tower which remains dominant. The western range has been completely lost but survives archaeologically below ground. In looking at the provision of the essential facilities that are required to allow the surviving tower to be given a sustainable and viable future various options have been looked at for a modest extension, both modern and single story and more interventionist. The current proposal, which responded to clear guidance given by Historic England aims to reduce the accommodation needed in any extension to the minimum necessary to provide a viable future. The orientation, scale and footprint try to echo the line of the now lost western range, without in any way trying to recreate it, and means the tower will be seen with attachments to the north and west as it would have been 500 years ago. We do not believe the ruined southern elevation of the tower where the original western range has been removed is so significant as to prevent the addition from occurring, and the scale is within the roof scar lines that exist on the tower itself. The new extension nods its head to the lost structure without trying to emulate it.

The ground floor of the Tower will house the main part of the Interpretation Centre and will be constructed to give a realistic impression and feel of a high-status Tudor Room of the early 16th century. The ceiling will display wood boarding as if it were the floor of the room above, although in practice there will be two layers of boards separated by insulation to meet fire regulations. The first floor (which is also part of the Interpretation Centre) will be less decorated and this diminution will continue to the second floor. The first and second floors will use oak beams, but the new roof will employ steel girders to carry the load of the solar panels above.

The ground floor will be reinstated with materials commensurate with the quality of this historic building. The windows (installed as part of the stabilisation work in 2023) are temporarily glazed with polycarbonate. This will be replaced with Tudor style glass and, for the ground-floor windows on the east side, with facsimile stained glass.

The top of the Garderobe Tower will house the tanks for water harvesting. The temporary balustrade around the roof (dating from 1982 and repaired in 2017) will be replaced with a higher structure to conceal the solar panels and the input for the water harvesting system. The roof provides a significant area for rainwater harvesting and should provide adequate grey water for the toilets. The roof area will be used for electricity generation employing photovoltaic panels. These would be out of sight from ground level.

In 2022-23, the Trust secured funding of £244,000 and commissioned work to the North-West Tower that built on earlier projects, to stabilised the building with repairs to the masonry and brickwork, and the installation of glazing. These and other minor works have already improved the condition of this heritage building, although it remains on the Historic England 'Heritage at Risk' Register. The delivery of the Interpretation Centre and Educational Study Centre, will improve the condition of the heritage and enable Historic England to remove it from the Register.

It should be noted that there was a single storey extension to the Tower in the 16th century, as evidenced by channels in the Tower brickwork and the remains of Tudor plaster on the west elevation of the Garderobe Tower.

The restoration work will also address deficiencies noted in the Building Condition Report (see: <https://otfordpalace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/APCT-Building-condition-report.pdf>).

Historic England has assigned an inspector to assist with consents, such as scheduled monument consent that will be needed for the conservation and development of the palace remains. She also provides pre-application advice during the development of the project.

7.2 Phased tasks

To minimise risk, the Trust is adopting a phased approach to the restoration (figure 12).

Two of these tasks (the installation of the electrical supply to the Tower and the archaeological investigation of the Tower Floor) have now been completed. These have prepared the way for the work to follow.

Once funding has been secured, the Trust will be able to instruct the architect to draw up detailed plans, and then apply for planning permission from the Local Planning Authority (Sevenoaks District Council) and Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England.

The reinstatement of the floors and the staircase will enable visitors to appreciate the fabric of the Tudor building at close quarters.



Figure 12: A phased approach to the restoration of the Palace

7.3 Roof replacement

A key component in reducing the risk to the fabric is to replace the roof. The current roof was installed as a temporary measure in the 1980s and was given a life expectancy of 20 years. Although a significant leak in the south-east corners was repaired in 2023 with liberal application of bitumen sealer, the timbers beneath that area have been damaged by water ingress and are structurally unsafe (figure 13).



Figure 13: Underside of the roof in the south-east corner showing water damage

The installation of the permanent roof will include raising the height of the temporary balustrade and incorporating crenellations. At a future date, we propose to install solar panels and water harvesting to reduce the environmental impact of the Palace. However, these installations are not included in this proposal for a replacement roof.

There will need to be some form of access from the top of the Stair Tower onto the roof. The rain water pipe will be relocated so that it does not intrude in the interior of the Tower

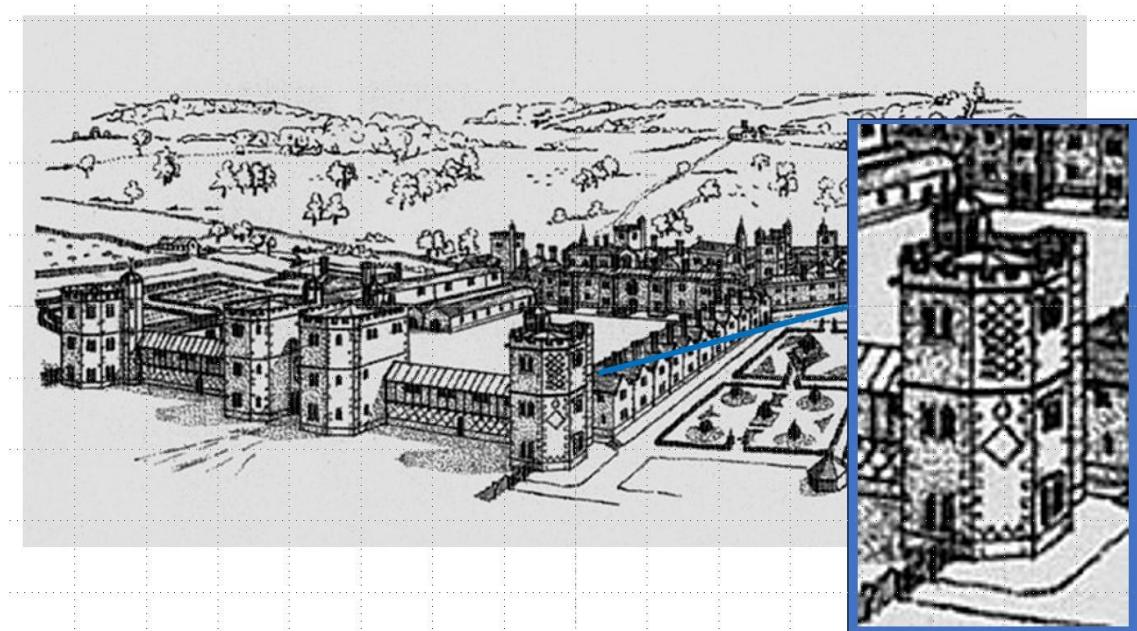


Figure 14: View of Otford Palace in 1546 (Bolton, 1548)

Historic England has suggested that it might be possible for visitors to access the roof and enjoy the view from the top. This would involve some changes to the currently proposed design.

- a. It would be necessary to add a small turret at the top of the Stair Tower so that visitors have a safe exit onto the roof. A simple trapdoor at the top of the stairs is not considered safe. Although Historic England have, in the past, opposed the notion of a stair turret, the best evidence available is that the Tower originally had such a turret.
- b. A glass balustrade would be required around the edge of the roof, of sufficient height to prevent visitors from falling off.
- c. The solar panels would be located in the centre of the roof, allowing visitors access around the sides

Once on the roof, visitors would have a good view over Palace Field, but the view towards the Village centre would be obstructed by mature trees.

An alternative approach, advocated by the Trust is the provision of a video camera on top of a flagpole that would be steered from a control unit on the second floor of the interpretation centre. The camera would be significantly higher than a visitor's eyeline. It would offer views even in inclement weather.

The costs of these two solutions would be investigated during the project Development Phase before a final decision is made.

7.4 Reinstate spiral stairs

Given that the lift in the new annex will be delayed until a later phase, the spiral stairs will need to be reinstated to give access to the upper floors. The original proposal was for stone treads from the ground to the first floor and timber higher up, but there are significant savings to be made by using timber throughout.

The concrete block in the opening to the Tower at the first-floor level needs to be removed. We understand that a polythene sheet separates the concrete from the main fabric of the Tower and that its removal should be relatively easy. With the block removed, there should be level access from the stairs to the first floor of the Tower.



Figure 15: Area beneath the stairs for an accessible toilet

There is sufficient room beneath the stairs to install an accessible toilet. The broken door to the garden of 1 Castle Farm Cottages would be replaced with a false, non-opening, door.

7.5 Reinstate floors

The investigation of the ground floor has shown that there is nothing of interest beneath the overburden. This simplifies the reinstatement of the floor which can be laid on a lime slab.

The sockets in the walls need to be cleaned out to take the primary beams for the first and second floors. Once the floors are in place, the electrical services need to be installed.

The ground floor of the Tower will house the main part of the Interpretation Centre and will be constructed to give a realistic impression and feel of a high-status Tudor Room of the early 16th century. The ceiling will display timber boarding as if it were the floor of the room above, although in practice there will be two layers of boards separated by insulation to meet fire regulations. The first floor (which is also part of the Interpretation Centre) will be less decorated and this diminution will continue to the second floor. The first and second floors will use oak beams, but the new roof will employ steel girders to carry the load of the solar panels above. The ground floor will be reinstated with materials commensurate with the quality of this historic building.

7.6 The Gatehouse

The Gatehouse will house the Educational Study Centre and will also be used as exhibition space at times when it is not required by schools or other educational groups. A mezzanine will provide some office space and archival storage.

The false ceiling, probably installed when the building was used as a morgue between the two world wars, will be removed to expose the roof timbers and the partitions forming the kitchen area and the toilet will also be removed. A free-standing mezzanine floor will be supported on pillars, with a gap between the sides of the floor and the existing walls. This will make it possible to remove the mezzanine completely at a later date if this was ever required. There will be glass balustrade to safeguard users of this space. Access will be by a freestanding spiral staircase that will reflect the apsidal north end of the building.

The doorway in the circular tower at the southern end of the Gatehouse will be the emergency exit.

A pod containing the new toilet, and a small kitchen area will be located on the south end of the ground floor.

The unknown factor is the existing floor and the level of the path to the east of the Gatehouse. The level of this path has risen by 40-50cm over the past 500 years, as evidenced by the blocked-up doorway on the side of the Gatehouse and the probable presence of a void under the existing floor. Investigations of the floor of the Gatehouse together with some exploratory excavations on the path will be required, to determine the appropriate levels for the new floor and the path.

No decision has been taken as to whether to open up some of the blocked-up windows in the Gatehouse.

7.7 Vestibule

While the full restoration project envisages a new-build annex to the south of the main Tower entrance, an interim solution is a vestibule as an infill, shown in blue in figure 16.

The vestibule (figure 17) will provide

- access to the first floor
- cover to visitors entering the ground floor and the stair tower and
- an additional layer of security to the building.

It will extend upwards to provide cover for the entrance to the first floor via the door on the southern aspect.

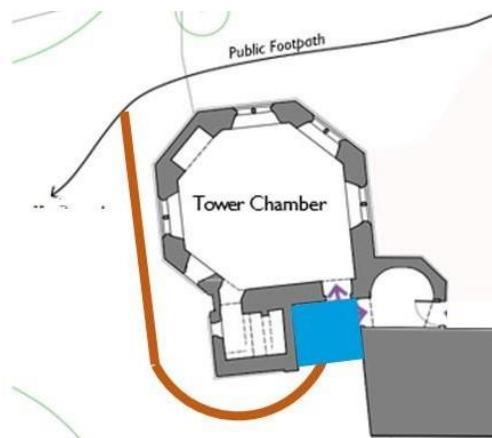


Figure 16: *Interim vestibule*



Figure 17: *Vestibule option B3*

7.8 Path to the Tower

While the ultimate restoration plan involves landscaping around and to the south and west of the Tower, the general appearance would be generally improved by the construction of a path around the west of the Tower, to the entrance. In the longer term, there will need to be more extensive landscaping in this area, a new bridge over the Scitta Bourne.

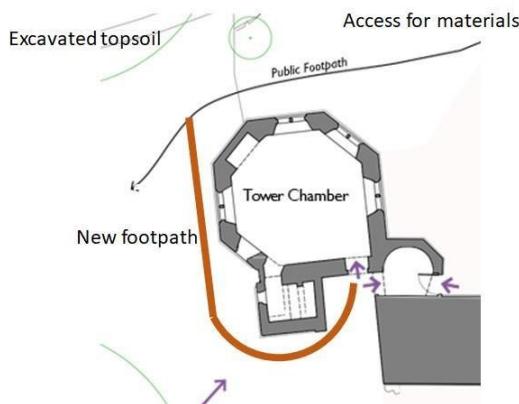


Figure 18: Location of the temporary path

Such a path would require some excavation and thus would need Scheduled Monument Consent. Alternatively, a temporary path of wood chippings could be constructed. The path would be approximately 1.2m in width, laid on a membrane to prevent weeds growing through. There is already a substantial pile of chippings against the north wall of the Field and more should be available when the walnut tree in Palace Approach is dismantled. This approach would not require Scheduled Monument Consent.

7.9 Impact on neighbouring properties

Overlooking

- The wall of the lobby adjoining the neighbouring cottage will be opaque to avoid any 'overlooking.'
- The windows in the Tower predate the residential cottages (until the 19th century they were farm buildings).
- The ground-floor windows on the east side of the Main Tower will be glazed with facsimile stained glass, to provide privacy for the garden of 1 Castle Farm Cottages.

Disturbance

- The main lights in the lobby will be turned off after opening hours to prevent light spill into the residents' gardens and Palace Field.
- Evening meetings in the Interpretation Centre and Gatehouse will not involve music and users will be required to keep noise levels to a minimum when leaving the premises.
- Access to the Gatehouse is by the entrance on the east side – away from the cottages.
- Access to the Interpretation Centre will be from the public footpath (Ref: 0192/SR49/1) which passes to the north and then west of the Tower, away from the neighbouring cottage.

- h. The Trust has taken a deliberate decision to discourage visitors from trying to park cars close to the site. Instead, it is promoting car-free tourism with sustainable modes of travel. (Note that Otford Station is about 7 minutes away by foot). There will be some provision for disabled visitors.

Construction

- i. Working hours will be 08:00h to 17:00h on weekdays only.
- j. There will be no weekend or bank holiday construction work, except in exceptional circumstances.
- k. Access for construction traffic will be along the metalled path from Otford Pond.
- l. The delivery of materials will be along the footpath to the north of the Main Tower. Delivery vehicles will be moved as quickly as possible.
- m. Light vehicles will park on Palace Field.
- n. Workmen will be required to keep noise to a minimum (e.g., radios will be prohibited).
- o. The contractors will be notified when weddings or funerals are taking place, so that the entrance to St Bartholomew's Church car park is not obstructed and the services are not disturbed by any noise from the site.

8. Protecting the environment

The Trust intends to achieve its aims and carry out its operations with the minimal adverse impact on the environment. Where possible it will work to bring about positive impacts. This project will enable us to do even more, tackling climate change by using sustainable materials and technology, and utilising green energy. The Trust intends to:

8.1 Minimise waste

By evaluating operations and ensuring they are as efficient as possible

- a. Ensure that the new roof to the Tower is adequately insulated to prevent heat loss
- b. Install secondary double glazing to the windows in the North-West Tower and
- c. Gatehouse.
- d. Use primary double glazing for the windows in the vestibule
- e. Installing double doors to the main entrance
- f. Installing adequate insulation in the walls and roof space of the extension
- g. Paper and other office consumables (eg, printer cartridges) will be recycled.
- h. Displays in the interpretation centre will be designed to use the minimum of electricity
- i. The use of electricity is monitored using a power meter, and the data included in the annual carbon footprint report.

8.2 Minimise toxic emissions

Hot water and room heating can be supplemented, if necessary, by ground-source heat pumps. We believe that the main heat-loss from the Tower will be through the roof which will be thoroughly insulated. Heat-loss through the walls should be minimal because of their thickness and where practical, secondary double-glazing will be used to minimise heat-loss (the cylindrical Tudor glass cannot be used in primary double-glazing). The entrance atrium will minimise the heat loss from the Tower to the outside. The Gatehouse also has very thick walls. The windows will be double-glazed and the entrance (probably on the South-East corner will provide a heat-lock. Again, the roof is the most likely area for heat-loss and this will need to be insulated in such a way that the heritage structure is visible and undamaged.

- a. Through the selection and use of the source of its power requirements. The Trust will install photo-voltaic cells on the roof to generate electricity for the interpretation centre, and the educational study centre in the Gatehouse, with excess electricity being stored in a battery.
- b. Wherever possible the Trust uses teleconferencing (eg, Zoom) for its meetings. This reduces travel and the associated carbon emissions.
- c. Equipment in the Interpretation Centre, Gatehouse and Trust offices will be Energy Star compliant and will be turned off when unused for any length of time (eg, overnight).
- d. Retail equipment (eg, the till) will be selected for energy efficiency and will be turned off when the centre is closed

- e. Heating will be thermostatically controlled at 18C
- f. Lighting will be turned off when the office is unoccupied
- g. Wherever possible, documents will be held electronically and only printed when necessary. Double sided printing will be used.
- h. Employ water harvesting from the roofs to provide grey water for toilets etc

8.3 Actively promote recycling

Both internally and amongst its visitors and suppliers.

- a. The Trust will source and promote recycling the materials it uses, to minimise the environmental impact of both production and distribution.
- b. When displays are no longer required, the materials will be recycled
- c. Interpretation will show how we have reduced the environmental impact of a historic building

8.4 Manage Palace Field to maximise biodiversity

Palace Field will be managed to increase biodiversity. It will be run using traditional methods without the use of pesticides and herbicides. The heritage orchard has recently been significantly increased in size, and additional trees will be planted in the environmental area. (outside the scope of this project). We will maximise biodiversity and meet or exceed all the environmental legislation that relates to the Trust.

8.5 Events

- a. Events using Palace Field are planned with careful consideration to minimise their environmental impact
- b. Where events are organised by third parties, the responsible organisation will be asked to take environmental issues into consideration
- c. Theatre Groups will be encouraged to adopt the Theatre Green Book to manage sustainability
- d. Events will be subject to the same monitoring and review as other Trust operations.

8.6 Construction works

At the heart of this project is the recycling of a 16th Century building. Throughout the project, the Trust will strive to use contractors who can demonstrate that they are following the spirit of Scope 3 ² as well as taking steps to reduce its carbon footprint and use recycling techniques wherever practical

- a. Contractors working on the restoration will be encouraged to comply with the Scope Guidelines to minimise their carbon footprint
- b. Where possible, local contractors will be used, to minimise emissions from travel to and from the site
- c. Where possible, materials (eg, timber, stone and bricks) will be sourced locally so as to minimise transport-related emissions
- d. Timber will be obtained from sustainable sources

² <https://www.carbontrust.com/our-work-and-impact/guides-reports-and-tools/what-are-scope-3-emissions-and-why-do-they-matter>

- e. Contractors will be instructed not to discharge any waste into, or near to the stream and will be advised that it is environmentally sensitive
- f. Volatile organic compounds will only be used where there is no practical substitute.

8.7 Visitors

- a. Visitors will be encouraged to travel to the Palace using public transport (the rail station is 650m from the Palace), on foot and by cycling. Visitor information and other publicity information will promote car-free travel
- b. It is not intended that a car park will be provided.
- c. The Trust does not intend to operate a café although it may install a drinks machine. Cups for the machine will be selected so that they can be recycled and will be collected in a clearly marked recycling bin.

8.8 Carbon footprint

The Trust has calculated its Carbon Footprint for the year ending 30th June 2024 using the tools from Julie's Bicycle website approved by the Arts Council ³. This snapshot covers:

- The NW Tower,
- The Gatehouse,
- The Project Office in Chantry Cottage.

The results (see <https://otfordpalace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Carbon-impact-report-July-2024.pdf>) show that the total APCT carbon footprint for the year ending June 2024 was about 1 tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). This is likely to increase in subsequent years as the restoration work gets under way.

The Trust's progress towards Net Zero will be reviewed annually and a report will be produced for the consideration of the Trustees. This review will identify areas where improvements can be made.

9. Inclusion, access and participation

The restoration and the new interpretation centre will showcase the national and international significance of the Palace's heritage. The heritage will be interpreted, preserved and shared. The digital content we create for the centre and website will be open, accessible and discoverable by a wide range of people, now and in the future.

These investigations will offer the opportunity to involve the community, by making the sites visible to spectators and holding educational events hosted by the archaeologists.

Beyond the physical developments to the site and buildings, the Trust continues to create and extend a comprehensive website that includes a history of the Palace since 821, a digital archive, resources for schools and parents, and a catalogue for the Otford Heritage Collection,

On their own, these developments will not save the heritage of Otford Palace. That requires a longer-term plan to ensure the organisational and financial sustainability of

³ <https://juliesbicycle.com/our-work/creative-green/creative-climate-tools/>

the site and buildings. After careful consideration of various options, the Trust has concluded that this is best achieved by the proposals set out in this application.

At present the buildings are not open to the public but many visitors enjoy walking around Palace Field and viewing the Palace from the outside. Subjective estimates of visitor numbers indicate an increase at least three-fold since 2021. Our research and consultations indicate that when the Interpretation Centre and Gatehouse are opened and fully publicised, estimates of visitor numbers start at 5,500/year on opening, rising to over 11,000/year by the fifth year of operation (see Operation Budget in Supplementary document: Detailed cost breakdown). These numbers do not include those who just come to walk around the Palace, engage in events and visit exhibitions.

The Palace is located in the centre of the Darent Valley, with a population 3.2 million within a 16km radius. Our core audience includes these people together with visitors to the area, both national and international. While there is relatively little diversity in Otford and the immediate surrounding area, the situation is very different in South and East London. The interpretation of the Darent Valley and of the Palace itself will be designed to reduce the barriers for people who have traditionally been underserved by heritage.

Cutting across these audiences the audience development plan (<https://otfordpalace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/APCT-Audience-development-plan-v3-3.pdf>) identifies 11 visitor types. Fitting out of the spaces for the interpretation centre and the study centre is driven by different needs for inclusion, access and participation. The design will be governed by the principles set out in the APCT Visitor Experience and Interpretation plan. Content generation will sensitively take into account the needs and abilities of a diverse and inclusive range of visitors and participants in their visits to the site.

The site will be wheelchair accessible and, in the future, a lift will be provided to take visitors to the first floor.

We have a long-term project to catalogue, photograph and in some cases, create 3D computer models, of museum objects. The catalogue forms part of the Otford Palace website (<https://otfordpalace.org/catalog/>). This work will continue through the Project and will be open-ended. The website also includes a growing collection of other digital resources, interpretative videos and a digital heritage resource

In addition to established events, The Trust is working with local theatre groups to stage open-air productions on Palace Field, using the Palace as a backdrop.

We regularly have groups of visitors from the local area and further afield, and Trustees give talks to organisations on various aspects of the Palace. Topics have included:

- William Warham, Lawyer, Ecclesiastic, Otford resident
- From A House of Power to Community Asset
- Otford Palace More than a restoration project
- 350 Years of Mud and Cow Dung
- Otford Palace and Important people (for year 2 children)

The Trust has partnered with West Kent Mind to run a six-month course in photography and wellbeing. Clients on this programme learned a new skill of photography, and also learned about managing their mental wellbeing. We intend that it will be followed by other collaborative programmes.

The aim of the Darent History Takeaway programme is to advance the education of the public in the history of the Archbishop's Palace, the Tudors, the role of the archbishops and the history of the Darent Valley by the provision of exhibitions and other learning experiences. It is targeted at schools in the Valley and further afield in South and East London. The scheme will reduce barriers for people currently under-served by heritage, by taking heritage into schools.

The project provides opportunities for volunteers to help with:

- The management of Palace Field
- Reviewing archaeological objects in the Heritage Collection
- Cataloguing documentary archives
- Storytelling, voice-overs and building the digital resource for the InfoPoint Tales of the Tower project
- Research projects and generally creating content for the main showcase

Wherever possible, training and the transfer of skills will continue to be woven into our work with volunteers.

The Study Centre will serve school and college groups, as well as special interest groups who want a base while they study the history and geography of Otford and the wider area.

We will establish and strengthen links with universities and post graduate students seeking to expand their points of information and experience.

With increased visitor numbers, together with more 'Friends of Otford Palace,' and more individual and institutional funders, the Trust will need to manage its relations with the growing community carefully.

9.1 The interpretation Centre

At present, the Tower is an empty shell approximately 40 feet (12.2 metres) in height, with a roof that was installed in 1982, but no interior floors.

Internally, the Tower will have: ground floor reception, shop and lift access in a modest two-storey extension to the south of the main Tower. Great care has been taken, through several design iterations, to make the extension as small as possible. The extension points the way to the earlier west wing. The new building could always be removed in the future allowing the surviving historic fabric to be returned to the position it is currently in. The new building will also be designed to limit the impact on the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The ground floor will cover the earlier periods of history, William Warham and the construction (and recent conservation) of the palace. The first floor will house interactive material related to the history of the Tudor period focused around the Otford site. It will also feature a visitor-controlled video camera based on the tower roof to view the surrounding countryside together with a virtual reality programme relating the view to the palace in its original form. (This will also provide those unable to access the top floor with the ability to explore further afield). The second (top) floor will house further interactive material focussed on the Darent Valley in general.

In recognition of the fact that the three floors of the Tower provide a limited physical space to interact with visitors, we will move beyond standard static presentations of

displays and artefacts. We will however place a focus on the excellent model that a local professional historical model maker has produced, showing how the site potentially appeared in its heyday. The positive element of the size of the tower itself is that it will provide an immersive area for us to engage with visitors. Taking a lead from the model, we will explore a variety of topics utilising the latest technology in audio visual, short throw projectors, computerised digital screens and appropriate tactile interfaces to bring a mix of compelling historical content in an entertaining and interactive format suitable for engaging all ages. Presented in this manner we will easily be able to develop a portfolio of content that can be regularly updated to encourage return visits.

Our curated proposition will be content driven prepared by a mix of volunteers and semi-professional writers, combining original research and creative material for which we have a team in place. For the presentation of this content, we will work with professional artists, amateur dramatic volunteers and experienced exhibition and display professionals where we have a small team already established. We will set out to build relationships with established authors and historians to input and direct us (for example the author Alison Weir has been a recent visitor).

In a wider context, we will bring to light the Darent Valley, rich in a range of historical and environmental subjects which will in turn demonstrate the siting of the palace itself. Our programmes of content will explore the people, occupations, agriculture and much more.

9.2 The Gatehouse

The Gatehouse will become a Study Centre for school groups and specialist visitors. The archaeological material in the Otford Heritage Collection will be housed on a mezzanine leaving the group floor as a versatile space for study, exhibitions and guest specialist speakers - whenever possible linking with the school syllabus and college and university faculties.

The Gatehouse will be the portal for a growing library of reference knowledge on the valley's history and heritage. Many of our Darent villages have already collected historical assets, papers and photos of local historical interest. This disseminated knowledge can now be correlated, digitised and centralised and made available for reference and study. Where possible it will be added to the growing digital archive and/or the Collection Catalogue on the APCT website (<https://otfordpalace.org/catalog/>)

As the gatehouse is not physically connected to the tower itself, we will provide managed access upon the presentation of tickets purchased either online or in the Tower shop. We will house a variety of exhibitions and displays together with a small cinema to show content created by our creative team.

We believe that the centre will become a familiar venue and learning experience for many of our schools. Educational projects will be tailored to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

9.3 Palace Field

The Trust encourages visitors from the local community and further afield to use and explore Palace Field. The Palace Field Management Plan sets out our environmental aspirations for increasing the biodiversity of the site. This includes extending the

existing heritage orchard by the planting more heritage fruit trees and planning a wildflower meadow (<https://otfordpalace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/APCT-Palace-Field-management-plan-v5-1.pdf>) .

The Trust is a participant in Kent's *Plan Bee*. This pollinator action plan has been developed by Kent County Council to take the lead and encourage local communities to improve the habitat and food sources for pollinators in Kent. Palace Field will be a link in a pollination corridor through planned planting of pollinator friendly flowers and environmentally friendly management of this area.

9.4 Marketing plan

Increasing participation with its concomitant increase in access and inclusion, will require a significant marketing effort. Despite the Trust's efforts, the site still remains 'Otford's Hidden Palace' and regrettably many of those living in North-east Kent are unaware of its existence.

There is a multiplicity of possible solutions for attracting and engaging with the general public and those with special interest, and importantly how we capture and retain their interest, make return visits and spread the word.

In the early stages of the development of this visitor interpretation and educational centre not all of the solutions and ideas will be practicable from the very start. Rather, this is a checklist for an ambitious and developing scheme to keep the site in the public eye and active far into the future.

Even as a relatively small but nevertheless exciting site taking us back directly into the English history past, the site holds the potential for developing a number of peripheral activities and inclusion of special interest collections, to bring in visitors from all walks of life, locally, nationally and internationally, both physically and through an online presence.

The marketing activity started in the second stage of the project will change in its focus; instead of aiming to raise funds, it will now be directed towards increasing visitor numbers. We have allocated a percentage of income to this activity.

Marketing is part of the process which will include attracting, engaging and committing to "the product" and brand that is Otford Palace.

9.4.1 What do we offer – the "product"

The fundamental purpose of developing this site is to offer a memorable **experience** for the visitor to take away; a lasting impression and understanding of the richness of life in and around the Palace and Otford, together with an increased knowledge of the historical impact of the Darent Valley. The way we promote and subsequently deliver must support this objective.

Museums are changing; from repositories for looking and learning, they have become lively gathering places that encourage visitors to be active participants. They can be catalysts, proactively supporting an objective and sustainable future. In their traditional role, they would do this by raising awareness through exhibitions and public programmes.

The Interpretation Centre will not look like a museum of the later 20th Century. Rather, the Trust will set out to create an experience that plays a proactive role in helping to shape the future by providing the visitor with knowledge and inspiration (from the past) delivered in an engaging and accessible manner.

9.4.2 Who and where are our customers

A detailed description of our audience and our approaches are set out in the Trust's Audience Development Plan (see <https://otfordpalace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/APCT-Audience-development-plan-v3-3.pdf>)

Audience Finder (the national audience and data development programme) identifies people who might have an interest in heritage, into six groups and provides suggestions for their motivation.

- **Kaleidoscope Creativity** are ethnically diverse, inner-city dwellers who often live in local authority housing close to a lot of cultural provision, but don't tend to engage, as low education, employment and income all act as barriers to access. Some do consider themselves 'arty' though, so community-led, local co-creation can be key to engagement, and culturally specific festivals, street arts, and live music, beyond the western mainstream and outside of traditional venues, all tend to be more popular.
- **Metroculturals** choose a city lifestyle for the broad cultural opportunity it affords. They are therefore interested in a very wide spectrum of activity, but many tend towards their own preferred artform or style. Although active museum attenders, engage more with the performing arts, and many on a weekly basis. Working in demanding but rewarding professions, they are highly educated and have a wide variety of other interests from food and travel to current affairs and architecture
- **Commuterland Culturebuffs** are keen consumers of culture, with broad tastes but a leaning towards heritage and more classical offerings. Mature families or retirees, living largely in leafy provincial suburban or greenbelt comfort, they are willing to travel and pay for premium experiences, their habits perhaps influenced by commuting. Motivations are multiple, ranging from social and self-improvement, to the pursuit of learning opportunities for older children. They tend to be frequent attenders and potential donors.
- **Dormitory Dependables** are a dependably regular if not frequently engaging group. Most live in suburban or small towns and show a preference for heritage activities, alongside popular and more traditional, mainstream arts. Many are thriving well off mature couples or busy older families; lifestyle coupled with more limited access to an extensive cultural offer mean that culture is more an occasional treat or family outing than an integral part of their lifestyle.
- While **Trips and Treats** may not view arts and culture as a passion, they are reasonably active despite being particularly busy with a wide range of leisure interests. Comfortably off and living in the heart of suburbia their children range in ages, and include young people still living at home. With a strong preference for mainstream arts and popular culture like musicals and familiar drama, mixed in with days out to museums and heritage sites, this group are led by their children's interests and strongly influenced by friends and family.

- The **Home and Heritage** group are conservative in their tastes, this more mature group appreciates all things traditional: a large proportion are National Trust members, while classical music and amateur dramatics are comparatively popular. While this is not a highly engaged group –partly because they are largely to be found in rural areas and small towns –they do engage with the cultural activity available to them in their locality. They look for activities to match their needs and interests, such as accessible day-time activities or content exploring historical events. Locality is key for these keen visitors of nearby heritage sites and lovers of craft activities. We are therefore likely to attract a proportionally larger number of these potential visitors from the local area.

The Audience Development Plan sets out a number of strategic and tactical marketing channels to engage with the different segments.

The Trust will:

- a. Work with regional and national tourist organisations such as:
 - Visit Sevenoaks (<https://visitsevenoaks.co.uk/>),
 - Visit Kent (<https://www.visitkent.co.uk/>),
 - Visit Britain (<https://www.visitbritain.com/en>).

The aim will be to ensure that their websites and marketing material include an up-to-date listing for the Palace.

- b. Provide familiarisation visits for Blue and Green guides based on the South-East of England (<https://southeastbestguides.org/>)
- c. Establish a Brown tourist attraction signposting to the site
- d. Work with Visit Sevenoaks to explore joint ticketing arrangements across the District.
- e. Write issue public relations material and place advertorial material in lifestyle magazines such as:
 - Inside Kent (www.insidekentmagazine.co.uk),
 - Kent Life,
 - Heart of Sevenoaks www.heartofsevenoaks.co.uk/magazine
 - Wealden Times (<http://wealdentimes.co.uk/>),
 - The London Magazine (<https://www.chelseamagazines.com/london-magazine/>),
 - Absolutely London (<https://absolutelymagazines.com/london/>),
 - Country Living ([https://www.countryliving.com/uk/](http://www.countryliving.com/uk/)),
 - Other magazines servicing London and the South-East.

In addition to extolling the Archbishops Palace as a tourist attraction. the materials will direct potential visitors to the Palace website and social media where they can get further information.

9.4.3 The Darent Valley card

We see a mutual benefit for all of the visitor sites in the Darent Valley for a card that gives access to a number of sites and offers a discount in local participating shops. While this might not generate a large profit (because of the costs of running the scheme) it would encourage visitors to the Palace because this is where they would purchase the Darent Valley Card. This card would work in the same way as the London

Visitor's Pass or the Omnia card for Rome and other Italian cities.



Figure 19: The Omnia card: a possible model for the Darent Valley card

Its success would depend on the extent that other sites and shops would be willing to participate. The idea of a card requires marketing and detailed planning that is inappropriate at this stage in the project.

9.4.4 Timing

The timing of the strategic marketing depends on the progress of the main delivery phase. Until the interpretation centre is operational there is relatively little for visitors to see. The aim will be to prepare the marketing materials about six months prior to opening so that the marketing can coincide with the first two to three months of operations.

9.4.5 Methodology

Offline

- a. *Public relations*: Production and despatch of press releases to the media including all printed media outlets, radio and television broadcasters.
- b. *Newsletters*: The trust has already determined a successful format for a newsletter printed in full colour and distributed through many local channels. This has also been distributed to good effect online as a pdf file via our website, email and Facebook.
- c. *Paid advertising in printed media*.
- d. *Posters and display material*: Distributed as appropriate promoting the various events through retail agreements and other outlets.

Online

The Otford Palace website

The website will be the primary repository of information for the project. It will be pointed to by all social media formats so there is a fully coordinated facility to all users.

Blog

The use of a Blog in a museum/interpretation centre context, serves as a dynamic platform to share in-depth information, behind the scenes insights and engaging stories related to exhibits and artefacts and the centre's mission. It enhances visitor engagement by providing a digital space for educational content, event announcements

and interactive discussions. The blog can also feature curator perspectives, historical context and updates on ongoing activities, creating a valuable online extension of the centre's experience.

The Blog will potentially offer a showcase to the many historians and historical writers to feature their work and contribute pieces. We already have established a relationship with the Author Alison Weir.

Email: Friends of Otford Palace

Email is a valuable additional tool for facilitating communications with visitors, promoting events and providing educational resources. It will enable the organisation to engage with the target audience, share updates and assist in building a community of patrons and patronage interested in cultural and historical content.

Social media channels

For a small organisation with limited resources, we will need to give careful consideration as to how to make the most of social media channels. We will need to be clear on where and who our audience is and focus on the channels that will work best for us.

We have registered our name on all social media channels as a protective measure and to reserve for future use as our activity expands.

9.4.6 How we will retain interest

The Trust wants visitors to come again in the future and tell their friends and family that they enjoyed their visit. Beyond that, they will be given information (in the feedback questionnaire and on the website) on the opportunities for volunteering and donating to the work of the Trust.

Full use will be made of the online potential through the availability of online virtual tours which the research work for content is currently under way. Added to this will be the availability of access to our Collection stock through a subscription system.

The Trust will:

- Capture visitor information for onward marketing (online based),
- Create visitor links with other sites, build a network of interrelated visits,
- Create a membership package with onward communications such as offers and newsletters.

9.4.7 Retail

The Trust has an online shop selling a number of books about The Palace, Otford and the Darent Valley. We also sell jigsaws and notelets, again specific to Otford and the Darent Valley. A recent addition has been paperweights comprised of medieval pottery shards mounted on acrylic base. These are shards that have been excavated in and around Otford but are not sufficiently significant to be accessioned into the Heritage Collection. Each comes with a certificate describing the find, when and where it was found.

There are opportunities to develop the range of books and collectibles:

- The story of the Horseshoe,
- The Story of Becket's Well (Video),
- The Story of the Papal Bulls,
- A young person's story (Print),
- The hypocaust slave from Castle Farm Villa,
- The Otford Chronicles, a series of novelettes based around the Tudor period, characters and the people who lived and worked at the palace and in local area.
- Jack Cade and the battle of 1450.
- Sevenoaks as an international centre: material on Holbein, Campiello etc.,
- Cast models from the artefact collection in archives and Heritage Collection.

9.4.8 Invitations to sponsor

The Trust will explore a number of opportunities for sponsorship:

- Sponsor a brick or part of the site,
- Certificates, Charters, mediaeval manuscript-based design for individuals and corporates,
- Sponsor or create specific items such as podcasts, films, stories.

9.4.9 Establishing a programme of exhibitions

There will be a revolving programme of exhibitions in the Interpretation Centre and the Gatehouse. Subject to flexible use of space we intend to hold a range of exhibitions over the coming years, all connected with the Valley. There will be a wealth of fascinating material for enquiry and discovery at this new Centre. There are manifold opportunities for one-off exhibitions, promoted and introduced by specialist speakers. Themes at present under consideration include:

- a. *The Tudor years*; William Warham, Henry VIII, Erasmus, Holbein, Thomas Moore and the English Prayer Book encapsulated in a series - *Tales of the Tower*. A further series of stories or vignettes as seen from the viewpoint of the gatekeeper. Content for these is currently under research and preparation.
- b. *What are we made of*; A geological understanding of how the great Weald was first formed, the origin of chalk, the effects of erosion and the creation of flints.
- c. *The Valley of Visions*; Occasional exhibitions, in association with the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford, of selected work and paintings by Shoreham artist, Samuel Palmer.
- d. *Understanding the Grasslands*; The geology, biology and ornithology of the protected grassland areas which range the valley sides.
- e. *Paper*; The earliest paper made in England was milled on the Darent during the reign of Elizabeth I. The Darent paper mills once produced all British paper money. The first continuous paper-making machine went into operation on this river.
- f. *Romans in the Valley*; The valley contained Roman villas, bath houses and granaries almost every 1.5 kilometres along its length. The latest discovery, Otford's Church Field villa lies a matter of metres away from the Archbishop's Palace and much of its tesserae and foundations were used in building the medieval manor

9.4.10 Augmented reality

In the future we propose to develop an augmented reality (AR) application for mobile phones (iPhone and Android) that will superimpose a computer-generated image of what the Palace may have looked like, on the user's view of the Palace site as it is now, thus providing a composite view. The Trust is in discussions with IMITO to develop an AR application for Exploring the Tudor Archbishops Palace.

9.4.11 Meetings

The first floor Tudor Room will be marketed to local businesses as a venue for meetings and small conferences. Catering would be brought in from local caterers.

The proximity of St Bartholomew's Church opens the possibility of hosting wedding receptions using a marquee erected on Palace Field.

9.4.12 Educational outreach – Darent History Takeaway

The Trust is developing an outreach programme for local schools and libraries providing resources and speakers to support an improved understanding of the heritage of the Darent Valley. Sections of the Oxtord Heritage Collection (formerly held by the Oxtord Heritage Centre) will be curated as stand-alone collections and made available on loan to schools and libraries in the Darent Valley and the neighbouring areas, with particular attention to the London Boroughs that would derive the most benefit for these resources.

9.4.13 Visitor relations management

The Trust uses MailChimp to manage the mailing list. It is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (registration no: ZA754952). It will purchase a subscription for a higher tier so that it can access the more advanced MailChimp CRM features. This will enable us to manage:

- Enquiries from potential visitors
- Relevant detail from actual visitors
- Relevant details from online shop purchases
- Potential and actual donors

10. Operations

10.1 Objectives

The final stage of the project sees the transition from the construction and fitting out of the Archbishop's Palace to the ongoing operation of a self-sustaining Community Resource. The key objectives are to operate and further develop activities that will generate sufficient revenue for the Palace to be largely independent of external funding (although we envisage that further fund raising will be needed for future developments).

However, we also need to look to the future and ensure that there is:

- A staff development programme to ensure that new staff are properly trained,
- Processes to retain existing staff and to recruit new staff as and when necessary,
- A programme for succession planning for the Board of Trustees.

10.2 Commercial activities

A key requirement for the programme is that the site and buildings should be self-sustaining: there needs to be a revenue stream that covers the costs of operation and enables the Trust to build up reserves. Our calculations show that this is achievable with some additional revenue from a shop, events and charging for the use of the educational study centre.

There are four main revenue streams:

- a. Admission fees,
- b. Shop sales,
- c. School visits thereafter,
- d. Events on Palace Field.

We have carefully planned and costed the Operational Phase beyond the end of the funded project, and set out, in the second part of the Business Plan, a plan that will ensure the long-term financial future of the Palace. It will attract significantly more visitors (including repeat visitors) to the Palace and to Otford. This project will enable us to deliver that plan.

These are set out in detail in the second volume of this Business Plan.

Admission fees

The number of visitors is one of the key uncertainties in this analysis. There is little on which we can base an initial estimate and so that starting point must be a best guess informed by discussions with other visitor attractions in the area. Those discussions have confirmed that these in turn, are dependent on effective marketing. Based on these discussions, we believe that with effective marketing the numbers envisaged are achievable.

Admission will allow visitors to enjoy the exhibitions in the ground and first floors and the library on the second floor. As a registered charity, the Archbishop's Palace conservation Trust will be able to take advantage of the Gift Aid scheme which would further increase the revenue from entrance fees.

Retail

Shop sales are described in Section 9.4.7.

Events

For ease of management all special exhibitions and events will be budgeted separately. Thus, a profit and loss account will be drawn up for each project. These projects are expected to make a profit but where a small loss is expected then their viability will be assessed in the light of the benefit to the community and increasing the exposure of the Palace. These events also have a marketing aspect.

The Heritage Trail: The Otford Heritage Trail comprises a series of ten display boards set at strategic points around the Village. To make the trail more accessible for teachers organising study trips to the Village, the Trust will provide support with educational notes and risk assessment documents.

A guided walk round Otford Palace. First published by the Otford and District Historical Society, this has provided the basis for a series of six videos, available on the Palace website.

Re-enactments; Palace Field is a space that lends itself to re-enactments against the backdrop of the Archbishop's Palace. The Trust will be holding a number of events, aimed at fund-raising and raising awareness of the Archbishop's Palace.

May Day celebration; The Trust has established the first May Day celebration that has been held in the village for over seventy years opened by our Patron, The Lord Lieutenant, The Lady Colgrain.

Wassailing. The Trust has reestablish the custom of the Wassail, held in January each year on the Heritage Orchard.

Open Air Theatre. Palace Field provides an exciting venue for open air theatre with the Palace buildings as an atmospheric backdrop.

Study centre

We believe that the centre will become a familiar venue and learning experience for many of our schools. Educational projects will be tailored to meet the requirements of the curricula. The Gatehouse will be utilised for this purpose as a study centre, lecture-room, and base for these groups. This activity is fundamental to the objectives of the Charity, although the revenue from this activity will be relatively small.

Marketing

The marketing activity started in the second stage of the project will change in its focus; instead of aiming to raise funds, it will now be directed towards increasing visitor numbers. We have allocated a percentage of income to this activity.

10.3 Staffing

The Trustees consider it is essential that the Archbishop's Palace is open from at least the beginning of March to the end of October - that is for 8 months each year. The

opening hours will be from 10.00h to 17:00h, six days each week. For safety reasons at least two volunteers will be on duty at any one time. Outside this period, the Interpretation Centre and the Study Centre will be open by arrangement to cater to specialist groups.

As the visitor numbers build, we will need to consider paid staff. We will prepare a comprehensive job description and then seek to recruit suitable staff from the local area. The Trust will be an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate in its human resource policies on the basis of age, race, colour, religion or sexual orientation.

Because the Centre will only be open for eight-ten months of the year, we expect that a significant number of volunteers will leave at the end of the season and may not be available in the following year. All staff will need to be educated into the history of the Palace, the Book of Common Prayer and the Tudor period, and be fully trained before they start work. That training will include emergency procedures and basic first aid, as well as the operation of the till.

10.4 Operating procedures and policies

Best practice and legislation require that the Trust provides and regularly reviews a number of key documents which shall be available to all staff:

- Fire risk analysis,
- Health and safety policy,
- Staff handbook (including grievance procedures),
- Emergency procedures. This will include instructions on what staff shall do in a range of emergencies. There will be also be a section on managing the situation after the immediate emergency (eg, public relations),
- Conflict of interest policy,
- Fraud policy,
- Data privacy policy,
- Trustee appointment and retirement policy,
- Safeguarding policy,
- Reserves and investment policies.

11. Evaluating the project impact

The evaluation will form an important part of the main project to create an interpretation centre for the Darent Valley, together with an educational study centre. This document sets out how that evaluation will be carried out from the gathering of data through to the analysis and the reporting.

It is our intention that the evaluation will be:

- a. Beneficial. It will address the needs of our stakeholders and the Trust itself. It will, of necessity consider the priorities of our stakeholders (including the NLHF) but will also be applicable to the needs of our visitors, our staff and the wider public. The Trust is committed to learning from its activities and to do this the trustees, staff and volunteers need to understand how things have worked. It must also be ethical, so that the approach will allow participants to define the change and the learning they want to see.
- b. Robust. The approaches and methodology will be appropriate, rigorous and help us and our stakeholder to learn from the project. While being proportionate, it will examine all the aspects of this complex project and mix qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the multiple facets. Grounded in empirical experience, observation and practice, it will aim to produce results that can be replicated in later stages of the project – or by other heritage projects.
- c. People-centred. The evaluation will consider as wide a diversity of viewpoints as possible. We will ask our visitors and staff what is important to them, and the extent to which these aspirations have been achieved.
- d. Connected. The valuation will enable learning with, and through, one another in a shared and effective way. The results will be freely available to stakeholders, our visitors and our staff.

The form of the project evaluation is continually evolving. For projects such as the Archbishop's Palace, the recommendation from the National Lottery Heritage Fund is that the evaluation should be undertaken by an external, specialist organisation and that an allowance of the total budget should be allocated to this work.

The Theory of Change model will be extended using a tailored version of the 5-step framework (Figure 20) for each of the impacts. The work will be led by Nick Rushby (who has experience of evaluating educational change, business re-engineering projects, and more recently evaluation in the culture, arts and heritage. He will be supported by an external evaluation consultant.

The evaluation, described in Section 11, will continue into the operations phase.

External evaluators will carry out on-going data collection and analysis to determine the impact of the project on visitors, the residents of Otford, the economy in Otford and the broader context of the Darent Valley, and the volunteers involved in the project.

The comprehensive evaluation plan is being developed as a separate document: *APCT NLHF Evaluation plan*.

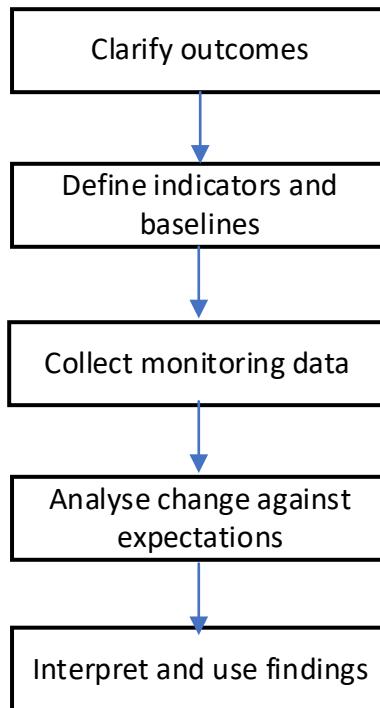


Figure 20: Five-step evaluation plan

A workshop run by specialists from the Tavistock Institute was held in the second half of January 2019 and a key outcome of that event was the theory of change diagram shown in 20. This envisages a number of distinct actors (audience) for the evaluation:

- Historic England (who wish to see a sustainable future for the Palace which can then be removed from the 'at risk' register),
- Sevenoaks District Council (who want a sustainable future for the site and buildings as an asset to the community that does not require continued funding from the Council),
- Otford residents (who see the Palace as an iconic centrepiece to the heritage village but want to minimise the disbenefits that could come from over-crowding, problems with car parking and noise. We aim to build their sense of pride in wanting to share and understand that heritage),
- Schools (who want to organise trips to Otford with the attendant curriculum benefits, and instil a better understanding of heritage for their students),
- Shops, pubs and cafés (who will benefit from increased customers and build their profits),
- Other attractions in the Darent Valley (who will benefit from the synergy of a number of attractions working together, resulting in increased visitor numbers for all),
- Volunteers (who want employability skills as well as a sense of achievement. We aim to restore a volunteering ethic in the local community)
- Grant-giving organisations (who need to understand *why* the Trust deserves funding, and need confidence in its ability to deliver a sustainable interpretation centre).

Although its economic benefit in terms of direct employment would be limited (although the project will of course generate a number of jobs during the development phases) it would help to leverage the benefit of other tourist attractions in the Darent Valley by encouraging sustainable tourism.

11.1 Visitors

The Trust will conduct a baseline study of visitor numbers and their current perceptions, wants and needs. It will also collect demographic information. The proposed methodology is to count visitor numbers at the main points of entry to the Village – specifically the railway station and the High Street car park. This will be supplemented by questionnaires completed by a sample of visitors. Subsequent studies will then be carried out on an annual basis, tracking perceptions of the Archbishop's Palace. The survey will also be looking at repeat visits: what brings visitors back – or discourages them from returning.

11.2 Volunteers

Throughout the project there is the concept of volunteers working in partnership with, or under the supervision of, experienced paid staff. Some of the supporting activities described above are undertaken by volunteers.

The Trustees (who are all volunteers) are already acquiring new skills. We are, for example, engaging with the Heritage Network Trust participating in seminars and conferences in museum conservation, social media, environmental management and carbon literacy, as well as the multiple competences required to run a charity. The Trust also has access to expertise in the field of archaeology and photogrammetry. We anticipate that the volunteers will gain new skills which will not only be intrinsically rewarding but also helpful in their future activities.

11.3 The local economy

Although its economic benefit in terms of direct employment would be limited (although the project will of course generate a number of jobs during the development phases) it would help to leverage the benefit of other tourist attractions in the Darent Valley by encouraging sustainable tourism.



Figure 21: The current working version of the Project theory of change

12. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

12.1 SWOT analysis

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The Palace is a National Heritage landmark with a history stretching back to 791AD.b. It is an iconic site of the Village and the Valley.c. The Palace plays a central role in our village. It lends character to the area and has deep-seated associations and community pride for local residents and the community.d. This is an initiative from the community, for the community and is strongly supported by the community.e. The Project has a strong and effective network of contacts with other members of the tourist economy, and influential figures in the area.f. The project has strong support from other visitor attractions in the Darent Valley.g. The 99-year lease secures long-term access to the site and buildings for the community and visitors.h. Support from a strong team of architects, quantity surveyors and contractor.i. Broad range of competences among the Trustees.j. Strong financial position.k. Demonstrable success in undertaking the Stabilisation works in 2022-23.l. The website is acknowledged as comprehensive and unique.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The Trust needs to raise significant funding (around £2.0M) to realise the project in full.b. The project relies on external funding for at least the first four years of operation.c. The board of trustees lacks diversity.d. Trustee resources are stretched thinly.e. Over-reliance on a small core group of trustees.f. Average age of the Trustees is high (but decreasing).

<p>Opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Significant increase in visitor numbers to the Village. b. Engagement with heritage has been shown to enhance well-being. c. Regeneration will reinforce the sense of community. d. The re-interpretation of this site can make an important contribution to the local economy. e. The focus on experience and extensive use of technology will create a unique visitor destination for the area. f. Restoration means re-vitalisation; the Tower's regeneration can act as a catalyst to further improvements to the whole village. g. The effects of Heritage-led regeneration will ripple outward to the benefit of nearby neighbourhoods. h. The public will gain a new level of interest and understanding of our area. i. Revenue stream from membership model. 	<p>Threats:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increased visitor numbers are associated with an unwelcome increase in local traffic. b. The search for all parts of the required funding may be unsuccessful. c. The current economic climate is reducing funding for core costs. d. Vandalism and Theft.
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Table 2: SWOT analysis

12.2 Competitor analysis

	Similar products/activities	Different products/activities
Similar customers	Direct competitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knole • Lullingstone Castle • Lullingstone Roman Villa • Ightham Mote • Eynsford Castle • Hever Castle • Leeds Castle 	Indirect competitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penshurst Place • Eden Valley Museum • Quebec House • Downe House • Chartwell • Chiddingstone Castle
Different customers	Product/activities competitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverhill Himalayan Gardens • Shoreham Aviation Museum • Eagle Heights 	Implicit competitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westerham Brewery • Mount Vineyard • Hop Farm and Shop

Table 3 : Competitor analysis

12.3 Joined-up stories

West Kent is particularly rich in heritage sites which attract customers similar to Otford Palace and have similar products. Our approach is to work with these other organisations to create a synergy for visitors to the area.

While the Archbishop's Palace is situated on Otford, it is our intention that it should also be an interpretation centre for the whole of the Darent Valley. We have therefore reached out and will be seeking to work with other heritage sites and visitor attractions in the area including (but not limited to):

- a. Wolfe House, Westerham,
- b. Westerham Brewery,
- c. Shoreham Aircraft Museum,
- d. Riverhill Himalayan Gardens,
- e. Knole House,
- f. Penshurst Place,
- g. Hever Castle
- h. Eynsford Castle,
- i. Lullingstone Castle,
- j. Lullingstone Roman Villa,
- k. Eagle Heights, Lullingstone,
- l. Mount Vineyard, Shoreham,
- m. The Percy Pilcher memorial, Eynsford.

We believe that there is mutual benefit in working together, through cross-marketing. We have already started talking to the management of these organisations to explore how we can cooperate and are receiving very positive responses

In the short term, we propose to work with Knole, Penshurst Hever and Lullingstone Castle to create a joined-up story of the Tudors in North-West Kent. There are connections and timelines that we could write about that could create some synergy. Several of these places have reciprocal ticketing arrangements.

It is proposed that we should engage in a joint project to understand more about our visitors and their interests and encourage them to visit our sister sites.

There is a second joined up story of the Darent Valley in Romano-British times. There are numerous Roman Villas, granaries, bath houses in the Valley, together with a site believed to be of a mansio (an official stopping place on a Roman road, or via, maintained by the central government for the use of officials and those on official business whilst travelling.) only 200m from the Palace.

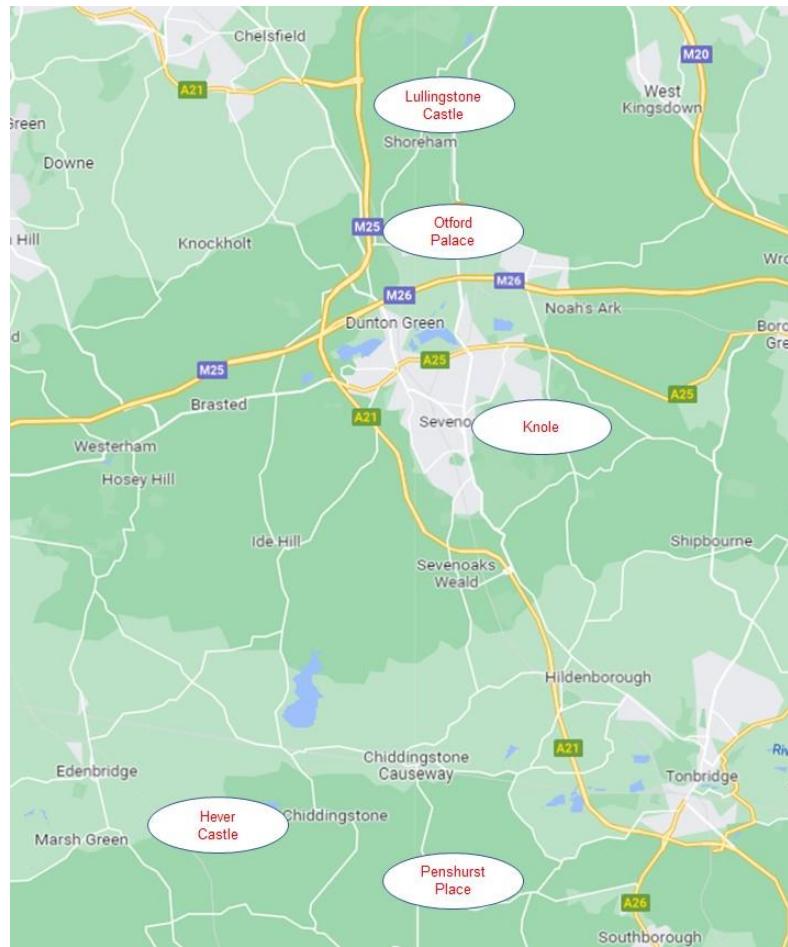


Figure 22: Joined up stories - Five sites with rich Tudor history

13. Planning for the future

13.1 Future developments

At present, the buildings and the site are owned by SDC and leased to the Trust. The buildings comprise the Tower itself and the Gatehouse. In between them is a row of three small cottages which were sold by SDC some years ago. At a later stage, when funds permit and the cottages are offered for sale, the Trust would hope to purchase them and incorporate them into the interpretation centre.

Sevenoaks District Council has raised the possibility of transferring the ownership of the site and buildings to the Trust. The implication of this will need to be considered carefully.

It has been suggested that the Palace buildings could provide a unique opportunity for apprentices wishing to specialise in the restoration and repair of historic buildings. These people would carry out their academic work in one of the local colleges but would then do their practical work on the Palace under careful supervision of a heritage specialist.

We might envisage that, sometime in the future, the West range could be rebuilt using period materials, on the original foundations!

13.2 Board of trustees

The Trust was founded with five Trustees and currently has nine. From time to time the Board appoints additional Trustees who bring other experience and competencies to the direction of the Trust.

In recruiting new Trustees, the Board seeks to ensure an appropriate degree of diversity in terms of age, gender, geographical location, and ethnicity.

The ideal trustee will have:

- A recognition of the values of our national heritage,
- A fascination for history and how it has brought us to where we are today,
- An interest in education, “making it real” and bringing it alive for the widest possible audience. The Trust’s audience development plan can be found on the Otford Palace website,
- The desire to make historic resources accessible and enabling engagement through sensitive and appropriate renovation of original architecture,
- The vision to combine an eclectic view in blending modern solutions and design techniques with the richness of historical artefacts,
- The ability to engage and demonstrate a vision to a wide audience and encourage collaboration and investment in this project,
- Enthusiasm for the work of the Trust,
- An ability to work as one of a team, to take on projects and deliver them.

Our aim is to build a team with complementary competences in:

- Experience in restoring heritage buildings,
- Education,
- Project management,
- Legal – property and intellectual property rights,
- Fund-raising,
- Communications using a variety of media,
- Marketing.

Succession planning will be an important on-going task for the Trustees

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Appendix A Constitution of the APCT

Constitution of

The Otford Palace Conservation Trust

a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Foundation Structure)

Whose Only Voting Members Are its Trustees

Date of Adoption (last amended):

21st August 2019

Name

1. The name of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("the CIO") is:

The Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust

National Location of Principal Office

2. The principal office of the CIO is in England.

Objects

3. The Objects of the CIO are:

(a) For the benefit of the public the preservation, restoration, maintenance, repair and improvement of the building known as the Archbishop's Palace in Otford, Kent.

(b) to advance the education of the public in the history of the Archbishop's Palace, the Tudors, the role of the Archbishops and the history of the Darent Valley by the provision of exhibitions and other learning experiences.

Powers

4. The CIO has power to do anything which is calculated to further its Objects or is conducive or incidental to doing so. In particular, the CIO has power to:

(a) borrow money and to charge the whole or any part of its property as security for the repayment of the money borrowed. The CIO must comply as appropriate with sections 124 and 125 of the Charities Act 2011, if it wishes to mortgage land;

(b) buy, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and to maintain and equip it for use;

(c) sell, lease or otherwise dispose of all or any part of the property belonging to the CIO. In exercising this power, the CIO must comply as appropriate with sections 117 and 119-123 of the Charities Act 2011;

- (d) employ and remunerate such staff as are necessary for carrying out the work of the CIO. The CIO may employ or remunerate a Trustee only to the extent that it is permitted to do so by clauses 6 to 11 and provided it complies with the conditions of those clauses;
- (e) deposit or invest funds, employ a professional fund-manager, and arrange for the investments or other property of the CIO to be held in the name of a nominee, in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as the Trustees of a trust are permitted to do by the Trustee Act 2000;
- (f) conserve, develop and manage the site and its buildings as a heritage landmark for the benefit of the community;
- (g) create a self-sustaining centre for the dissemination of knowledge about the Archbishop's Palace, the Tudor period, and the heritage and history of the Darent Valley; and
- (h) hold and/or own a collection and to operate a museum
- (i) raise funds and engage in primary purpose trading so to achieve the Objects.

[Given that Powers 4(a) and (c) can only be exercised subject to any limitations imposed by Historic England.]

Application of Income and Property

5. The income and property of the CIO must be applied solely towards the promotion of the Objects, and none of it may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to any member of the CIO, provided that:

- (a) a Trustee is entitled to be reimbursed from the property of the CIO or may pay out of such property reasonable expenses properly incurred by him or her when acting on behalf of the CIO;
- (b) a Trustee may benefit from trustee indemnity insurance cover purchased at the CIO's expense in accordance with, and subject to the conditions in, section 189 of the Charities Act 2011;
- (c) nothing in this clause shall prevent a Trustee or connected person receiving any benefit or payment which is authorised by clauses 6 to 11.

Benefits and Payments to Trustees and Connected Persons

General Provisions

6. No Trustee or connected person may:

- (a) buy or receive any goods or services from the CIO on terms preferential to those applicable to members of the public;
- (b) sell goods, services, or any interest in land to the CIO;

- (c) be employed by, or receive any remuneration from, the CIO;
- (d) receive any other financial benefit from the CIO;

unless the payment or benefit is permitted by this constitution or is authorised by the court or the Charity Commission ("the Commission"). In this clause, a "financial benefit" means a benefit, direct or indirect, which is either money or has a monetary value.

Scope and Powers Permitting Benefits to Trustees or Connected Persons

7. A Trustee or connected person may receive interest on money lent to the CIO at a reasonable and proper rate which must be no more than the Bank of England base rate.

8. A Trustee or connected person may receive rent for premises let by the Trustee or connected person to the CIO. The amount of the rent and the other terms of the lease must be reasonable and proper. The Trustee concerned shall withdraw from any meeting at which such a proposal or the rent or other terms of the lease are under discussion.

9. A Trustee or connected person may take part in the normal trading and fundraising activities of the CIO on the same terms as members of the public.

10. A Trustee or connected person may receive a benefit from the CIO in the capacity of a beneficiary of the CIO but strictly on the same terms as other beneficiaries.

11. Providing they are acting outside their role as a Trustee, a Trustee (or connected person) may enter into a contract for the supply of services, or of goods that are supplied in connection with the provision of services, to the CIO where it is permitted in accordance with, and subject to the conditions in, sections 185 to 188 of the Charities Act 2011.

Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Loyalty

12. A Trustee must:

(a) declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, which he or she has in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the CIO or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the CIO which has not previously been declared; and

(b) absent himself or herself from any discussions of the Trustees in which it is possible that a conflict of interest will arise between his or her duty to act solely in the interests of the CIO and any personal interest (including but not limited to any financial interest).

13. Any Trustee absenting himself or herself from any discussions in accordance with this clause must not vote or be counted as part of the quorum in any decision of the Trustees on the matter.

Liability of Members to Contribute to Assets of CIO if it is Wound Up

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14. If the CIO is wound up, the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

Membership

15.1 The only members of the CIO shall be those persons who are appointed as Trustees of the CIO, and all persons appointed as Trustees shall be admitted as members;

15.2 Each Trustee shall be appointed by the Trustees. In the event of the number of trustees falling below 4, the Otford Parish Council shall have a residual power to appoint new trustees to ensure that the minimum number of 4 trustees are in place.

15.3 Each Trustee may serve for a term of four years once renewable.

16. Membership cannot be transferred to anyone else.

17. A member shall cease to be a member immediately that he or she ceases to be a Trustee of the CIO for any reason.

Board of Trustees

18. The CIO shall have a Board of Trustees comprising at least 4 persons and a maximum of 12. Such maximum shall include any Trustees invited to represent any special interests.

19. (a) New Trustees may be recruited to the Board at any time by the Trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as Trustees, the Trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

(b) The Trustees may, by and from their number and from time to time, elect such officers (chair, secretary, treasurer) as they see fit. The Trustees may also appoint Advisers to the CIO who shall not be Trustees.

First Trustees

20. The first Trustees are as follows:

John Barry Edwards-Winser

Keith Lawrey

Nicholas John Rushby

Rodney Stanhope Shelton

Jonathan Eric Verrall

Excluded Persons

21. Under no circumstances shall any of the following serve as Trustees:

(a) a person aged less than 16 years;

- (b) a person who is an undischarged bankrupt or has made any composition or arrangement with creditors;
- (c) a person who has an unspent conviction involving dishonesty or deception or who is otherwise disqualified by law from serving as a Trustee.

Powers and Duties of Trustees

- 22. The Trustees shall manage the affairs of the CIO and may exercise all the powers of the CIO.
- 23. Any meeting of the Trustees at which a quorum is present at the time the relevant decision is made may exercise all the powers exercisable by the Trustees.
- 24. It is the duty of each Trustee:
 - (a) to exercise his or her powers as a Trustee in the way he or she considers to be in the best interests of the CIO's Objects and beneficiaries; and
 - (b) to exercise such care and skill as is reasonable in the circumstances having regard in particular to any special knowledge or experience that he or she has or claims to have.
- 25. The Trustees may act regardless of any vacancy in their body but, if and so long as their number is less than 3, the remaining Trustees may act for the purposes of increasing the number of Trustees or winding up the CIO, but for no other purpose.

Information for New Trustees

- 26. Each new Trustee must receive, on or before his or her first appointment:
 - a copy of the current version of this constitution; and
 - a copy of the CIO's latest Trustees' annual report and statement of accounts.

Retirement and Removal of Trustees

- 27. The office of a Trustee shall be immediately vacated if he or she:
 - (a) resigns his or her office in writing to the CIO (but only if at least 3 Trustees shall remain in office);
 - (b) is absent without good reason from three consecutive Trustees' meetings, and the remaining Trustees decide that he or she shall vacate office by reason of such absence;
 - (c) is removed from office for conduct prejudicial to the CIO by a majority vote of the Trustees, provided that any Trustee whose removal is proposed shall have the right to make representation to the meeting where the decision is to be taken;
 - (d) becomes bankrupt or makes any arrangement with his or her creditors generally; or
 - (e) is otherwise disqualified by law from serving as a Trustee.

Proceedings of the Board of Trustees

28. The Trustees may regulate their proceedings as they think fit, subject to any provisions within this constitution.
29. A meeting shall be summoned on the request of a Trustee by giving reasonable notice to all the Trustees. It shall not be necessary to give notice of a meeting to any Trustee for the time being absent from the United Kingdom.
30. A Trustee may not appoint an alternate or anyone to act on his or her behalf at meetings of the Trustees.
31. A meeting may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the Trustees in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.

Chairing of Meetings

32. Subject to clause 19(b) the Trustees shall appoint one of their number to chair their meetings and may at any time revoke such appointment.
33. If no-one has been appointed to chair meetings of the Trustees, or if the person so appointed is unwilling to preside or is not present ten minutes after the time appointed for the meeting, the Trustees present shall appoint one of their number to chair that meeting.

Quorum

34. No decision may be made by a meeting of the Trustees unless a quorum is present at the time the decision is made. "Present" includes being present by suitable electronic means agreed by the Trustees in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants.
35. A quorum shall be 3 Trustees.
36. A Trustee shall not be counted in the quorum present when any decision is made about a matter upon which that Trustee is not entitled to vote.

Decision-Making by Trustees

37. Questions arising at any meetings shall be decided by a majority of votes, each Trustee having one vote on any matter to be decided. In the case of an equality of votes, the chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
38. A resolution in writing or in electronic form agreed by all the Trustees who are entitled to receive notice of and vote at a meeting of Trustees shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Trustees.

Saving Provisions

39. Subject to clause 40, all decisions of the Trustees, or of a sub-committee of the Trustees, shall be valid even if it involved the participation of a Trustee who:

- (a) was disqualified from holding office;
- (b) had previously retired or was obliged to leave office;

Interests or otherwise:

if, without the vote of that Trustee and that Trustee being counted in the quorum, the decision would have been made anyway by a majority of the Trustees at a quorate meeting.

40. Clause 39 does not permit a Trustee to keep any benefit that may be conferred on him or her by a decision of the Trustees (or a sub-committee) if the resolution would otherwise have been void.

Sub-Committees

41. The Trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to one or more sub-committees or advisory panels consisting of such members of their body or the general public as they think fit and the terms of any delegation must be recorded in the minute book. The Trustees may subsequently revoke or alter a delegation. The Trustees may impose conditions when delegating, and will always include the conditions that:

- (a) at least one member of each sub-committee or advisory panel must be a Trustee;
- (b) the relevant powers are to be exercised exclusively by the sub-committee or advisory panel to whom they delegate;
- (c) no expenditure may be incurred on behalf of the CIO except in accordance with a budget previously agreed with the Trustees;
- (d) the sub-committee or advisory panel shall report regularly to the Trustees.

Decisions Which Must be Made by the Members of the CIO

42. Any decision to:

- (a) amend the constitution of the CIO;
- (b) amalgamate the CIO with, or transfer its undertaking to, one or more other CIOs; or
- (c) wind up or dissolve the CIO (including transferring its business to any other charity),

must be made by a resolution of the members of the CIO (rather than a resolution of the Trustees);

43. Such members' decisions may be made either:

- (a) by resolution at a general meeting; or

(b) by resolution in writing.

44. A resolution made at a general meeting requires a majority of at least 75% of the votes that are cast.

45. A resolution in writing requires the agreement of all the members on the date the resolution is circulated. The following conditions shall apply:

(a) a copy of the proposed resolution must be sent to all the members eligible to vote;

(b) the document indicating a member's approval of a written resolution may be sent to the CIO as hard copy or in electronic form. A member's agreement to a written resolution, once signified, may not be revoked;

(c) a written resolution lapses if the necessary number of approvals has not been received 28 days after the first day on which copies of the resolution were circulated to members.

General Meetings of Members

Calling of General Meetings of Members

46. The Trustees may designate any of their meetings as a general meeting of the members of the CIO. The purpose of such a meeting is to discharge any business which must by law be discharged by a resolution of the members of the CIO as specified in clause 42.

Notice of General Meetings of Members

47. The minimum period of notice required to hold a general meeting of the members of the CIO is 14 days.

48. Except where a specified period of notice is strictly required by another clause in this constitution, by the Charities Act 2011 or by the General Regulations, a general meeting may be called by shorter notice if it is so agreed by at least 75% of the members of the CIO.

49. Proof that an envelope containing a notice was properly addressed, prepaid and posted; or that an electronic form of notice was properly addressed and sent, shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given. Notice shall be deemed to be given 48 hours after it was posted or sent.

Procedure at General Meetings of Members

50. The provisions in clauses 29 to 37 governing the chairing of meetings, procedure at meetings and participation in meetings by electronic means apply to any general meeting of the members, with all references to Trustees to be taken as references to members.

Execution of Documents

51. A document is validly executed on behalf of the CIO if it is signed by at least 2 of

the Trustees.

Use of Electronic Communications

52. The CIO will comply with the requirements of the Communications Provisions in the General Regulations and in particular:

- (a) the requirement to provide a member with a hard copy of any document or information if they request it, to be sent within 21 days of the request;
- (b) any requirements to provide information to the Commission in a particular form or manner.

Registers

53. The CIO must maintain a register of Trustees/members as required by the General Regulations, which must be made available to anyone on request.

54. Except where the request to inspect the register is made by a Trustee of the CIO, a fee may be charged in respect of the costs of complying with the request.

Minutes

55. The Trustees must keep minutes of all:

- (a) appointments of officers made by the Trustees;
- (b) proceedings at general meetings of the CIO;
- (c) meetings of the Trustees and committees of Trustees including:
 - (i) names of the Trustees present at the meeting;
 - (ii) the decisions made at the meetings; and
 - (iii) where appropriate the reasons for the decisions;
- (d) decisions made by the Trustees otherwise than in meetings.

Accounting Records, Accounts, Annual Reports and Returns, Register Maintenance

56. The Trustees must comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 with regard to the keeping of accounting records, to the preparation and scrutiny of statements of account, and to the preparation of annual reports and returns. The statements of account, reports and returns must be sent to the Commission, regardless of the income of the CIO, within 10 months of the financial year end.

57. The Trustees must comply with their obligation to inform the Commission within 28 days of any change in the particulars of the CIO entered on the Central Register of Charities.

Rules or Bylaws

58. The Trustees may from time to time make such reasonable and proper rules or

bylaws as they may deem necessary or expedient for the proper conduct and management of the CIO, but such rules or bylaws must not be inconsistent with any provision of this constitution. Copies of any such rules or bylaws currently in force must be made available to any member of the CIO on request.

Disputes

59. If a dispute arises between members of the CIO about the validity or propriety of anything done by the members under this constitution, and the dispute cannot be resolved by agreement, the parties to the dispute must first try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation before resorting to litigation.

Amendment of Constitution

60. As provided by sections 224 to 227 of the Charities Act 2011, this constitution can only be amended:

- (a) by resolution agreed in writing by all members of the CIO; or
- (b) by a resolution passed by a 75% majority of those voting at a general meeting of the members of the CIO.

61. Any alteration:

- (a) to the CIO's Objects (clause 3);
- (b) to clauses 64 to 67 (Voluntary Winding Up or Dissolution);
- (c) this clause; or
- (d) that would have the effect of enhancing the benefits available to Trustees of the CIO or persons connected with them,

shall require the prior written consent of the Commission.

62. No amendment that is inconsistent with the provisions of the Charities Act 2011 or the General Regulations shall be valid.

63. A copy of every resolution amending the constitution, together with a copy of the CIO's constitution as amended must be sent to the Commission by the end of the period of 15 days beginning with the date of passing of the resolution, and the amendment does not take effect until it has been recorded in the Register of Charities.

Voluntary Winding Up or Dissolution

64. As provided by the Dissolution Regulations, the CIO may be dissolved by resolution of its members. Any decision by the members to wind up or dissolve the CIO can only be made:

- (a) at a general meeting of the members of the CIO called in accordance with this constitution, of which not less than 14 days' notice has been given to those eligible to attend and vote, by a resolution passed by a 75% majority of those voting; or
- (b) by a resolution agreed in writing by all members of the CIO.

65. Subject to the payment of all the CIO's debts:

- (a) Any resolution for the winding up of the CIO, or for the dissolution of the CIO without winding up, may contain a provision directing how any remaining assets of the CIO shall be applied.
- (b) If the resolution does not contain such a provision, the Trustees must decide how any remaining assets of the CIO shall be applied.
- (c) In either case the remaining assets must be applied for charitable purposes the same as or similar to those of the CIO.

66. The CIO must observe the requirements of the Dissolution Regulations in applying to the Commission for the CIO to be removed from the Register of Charities, and in particular:

- (a) the Trustees must send with their application to the Commission:
 - (i) a copy of the resolution passed by the members of the CIO;
 - (ii) a declaration by the Trustees that any debts and other liabilities of the CIO have been settled or otherwise provided for in full; and
 - (iii) a statement by the Trustees setting out the way in which any property of the CIO has been or is to be applied prior to its dissolution in accordance with this constitution.
- (b) the Trustees must ensure that a copy of the application is sent within 7 days to every member and employee of the CIO, and to any Trustee of the CIO who was not privy to the application.

67. If the CIO is to be wound up or dissolved in any other circumstances, the provisions of the Dissolution Regulations must be followed.

Interpretation

68. In this constitution:

"connected person" means:

- (a) a child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, brother or sister of the Trustee;
- (b) the spouse or civil partner of the Trustee or of any person falling within sub-clause (a) above;
- (c) a person carrying on business in partnership with the Trustee or with any person falling within sub-clause (a) or (b) above;
- (d) an institution which is controlled:

- (i) by the Trustee or any connected person falling within sub-clause (a), (b), or (c) above; or
- (ii) by two or more persons falling within sub-clause (d)(i), when taken together;

(e) a body corporate in which:

- (i) the Trustee or any connected person falling within sub-clauses (a) to (c) has a substantial interest; or
- (ii) two or more persons falling within sub-clause (e)(i) who, when taken together, have a substantial interest.

Section 118 of the Charities Act 2011 applies for the purposes of interpreting the terms used in this constitution.

“General Regulations” means the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012.

“Dissolution Regulations” means the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (Insolvency and Dissolution) Regulations 2012.

The “Communications Provisions” means the Communications Provisions in [Part 10, Chapter 4] of the General Regulations.

Subject to section 177 of the Charities Act 2011, “Trustee” means a charity trustee of the CIO.

“in writing” shall be taken to include references to writing, printing, photocopying and other methods of representing or reproducing words in a visible form, including electronic transmission where appropriate.

This constitution was adopted by the persons whose signatures appear below:

Appendix B Trustee biographies

Nick Rushby

Nick Rushby has been working in the area of educational and training technology for over 50 years. Following a first degree in Electronic Engineering, he gained his postgraduate Diploma from Imperial College in Computer Science, specialising in artificial intelligence applications in computer assisted learning. During his career he has coordinated projects for the National Development Programme in Computer Assisted Learning, directed an international information centre for the use of computers in education and training, led multimedia training activities for PA Consulting Group, and headed the engineering team developing a novel multimedia advertising system for airports and subway environments.

He has worked with a wide variety of clients in most business sectors and at all levels of their organisations including consulting at board level. Nick is particularly interested in the rail and motorsport industries. He co-founded the training consultancy Conation Technologies in September 2001. Nick Rushby is the author and editor of a number of books and papers on technology-based learning and training. He was editor of the *British Journal of Education Technology* from 1993 to 2015, Co-Editor in Chief of *Education & Self Development* from 2016 to 2022, and is currently a senior editor for the Data Notes section of *Cogent Education*, published by Taylor&Francis.

Nick was a founding trustee of the APCT and serves as its secretary, dealing with administration of the Trust, with a particular interest in the restoration works.

Elizabeth Anderson

Elizabeth is the Chief Executive of the Digital Poverty Alliance, a national charity working across the UK. She manages their programmes, operations and stakeholders to end digital poverty once and for all, working with corporate partners such as Currys and Barratt Redrow, and sitting as part of the Department of Science Innovation and Technology's Digital Inclusion Action Committee. She is also a Trustee of heritage and animal welfare charities, a Kent Ambassador, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Previously she was Chief Executive of a membership body for those working in the space sector. Prior to that, she was the Head of the President's and Chief Executive's Office at the Royal College of Surgeons, overseeing a major overhaul of governance within the College, as well as leading her team to support governance, compliance, ceremonial, and high level stakeholder engagement.

Before that she managed the development of the new Kensington Aldridge Academy. In 2011 Elizabeth was delighted to be able to organise the opening of Darwen Aldridge Community Academy by Prince William of Wales and Miss Catherine Middleton (now

Princess of Wales). She completed an MSc (Merit) Corporate Communication and Public Affairs through the Aberdeen Business School at Robert Gordon University whilst working full time.

Skilled in governance, communications, project management and relationship development, with a core desire to see projects through to the end, she is creative and able to work with others to develop suitable new ideas, and to find those who are appropriate with whom to work. Projects have included governance restructuring,

strategy, compliance and GDPR, as well as working in corporate communications, leading on stakeholder engagement and being part of fundraising bid teams, as well as supporting a major capital redevelopment for a Georgian heritage building in central London. She is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, holding Freedom of the City of London. She is also a Chartered PR Practitioner. Elizabeth was appointed as Kent Ambassador in 2025.

Her other interests include heritage and culture, energy policy, politics, international affairs, the environment and animal welfare. In November 2011 she was named Woman of the Future - Public Service at the Awards run by Real Business magazine.

Stewart Baird

Sewart spent the main element of his career in the private equity investment market, founding and leading a niche private office investment house. Much of his career was in consumer businesses including Virgin and Eurostar. He is now semi-retired but maintain several board positions.

He has sat on the board of both large and small organisations and have always dedicated an element of his personal time to charitable work. He was a Trustee of Kent Search & Rescue for 13 years, sitting alongside Lord Evans of Weardale, the Deputy Chief Constable of Kent Police and the Chief Fire Officer from Kent Fire & Rescue Service.

Sewart moved to Otford in 2023 and is married (to Joanne). They have three grown up children and two dogs.

Robyn Codlin

With extensive experience in education and heritage, working both individually and as part of a team, Robyn passionate about bringing history to all audiences, fostering a love of lifelong learning, and increasing accessibility to the discipline.

Following a first degree in Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of Brighton, Robyn went on to achieve a Masters in History from the University of Southampton and a Postgraduate Certificate of Education from the University of Sussex. She has held posts in a number of museums and currently teaches history at Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys.

John Edwards-Winser

John has lived in Otford all his life and went to school in Otford then The Judd at Tonbridge. After leaving school he worked at a local Ministry of Defence research establishment as a research physicist/engineer. In his spare time he designed and built his own house and subsequently fitted several kitchens for his children.

On retirement he made up his mind that he was not going to sit and watch TV for the rest of his life so he joined the Parish Council, on which he served for 15 years and was chairman for eight. During his time on the PC and being well known within the village, he wanted to grow his challenge from just helping the local residents to helping others outside the parish. He applied for and became a District Councillor 12 years ago.

In order to satisfy his interest in local history he joined the Trustees of the Otford Palace

Conservation Trust, where his primary role has been acting as liaison with SDC Planning, Conservation and the Estates teams. He has also used his engineering and house construction knowledge to become an active participant in the refurbishment of the palace.

He is a volunteer at the Forget-me-not café which meets monthly in the village hall, where those less fortunate than ourselves that are suffering from Dementia are entertained. He is an active member of the Sevenoaks District Senior Action Forum which campaigns for better housing and improvement in bus services for the elderly. His hobbies are gardening and beekeeping – not necessarily in that order.

Elizabeth Fettes-Neame

Elizabeth Fettes-Neame is currently an Executive Assistant at the Clean Air Fund, supporting the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and the Chief Impact Officer, with a remit that includes ensuring the efficient operation of their teams and the smooth running of cross-team projects. Her current positioning is in corporate philanthropy, CSR, social value and citizenship. She has a strong interest in organisational culture and impact.

Career trajectory and sectors

Over her career, Elizabeth has worked internationally across several sectors, including private equity, hospitality and philanthropy, before moving into roles associated with major cultural and corporate institutions. Immediately prior to joining the Clean Air Fund she led operations for London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE, a visitor centre and cultural site supported by Bloomberg, which suggests experience in cultural operations, public engagement and stakeholder relations. Earlier in her career she appears in charity and funding guidance as a trust officer at Kleinwort Benson, indicating experience in trust administration and student or educational grant-making

Roger Gough

Roger Gough is a British politician and former Leader of Kent County Council (2019–2025). His career spans both local government and the private sector, with a strong focus on education, children's services, and regional policy.

Roger served as the Leader of Kent County Council from October 2019 until 2025, overseeing England's largest shire authority during a period that included the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition following Brexit. He represented the Darent Valley division (now Sevenoaks North and Darent Valley) from 2005 to 2025. Throughout his tenure, he held several senior Cabinet roles, including Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, and Education, as well as other portfolios focused on health reform and strategic partnerships.

He has played a significant role in regional and national policy. He was a member and ultimately vice-Chair of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People Board and chairing the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration Board. He has also contributed to national debates through his work with influential think tanks such as Policy Exchange and Localis

Before entering local government, Roger Gough spent sixteen years in investment banking, including a three-year period living and working in Japan. This experience

provided him with a strong foundation in finance and international business, which he later applied to public service and policy development.

Andrew Goymer

(His Honour) Andrew Goymer was born in 1947 and educated at Dulwich College. He then read law at Pembroke College, Oxford, and was called to the Bar, Gray's Inn in 1970. He practised as barrister on the South-East Circuit from 1972 to 1999 and was Recorder of the Crown Court from 1991 to 1999. He sat as a Circuit Judge from 1999 to 2017 and then as a Deputy Circuit Judge from 2017 to 2022.

Andrew has been a resident of Otford since 1976. He became a Trustee in 2018 and, since 2019 has chaired the Board of trustees.

Roger House

Roger House has overseen the management and expenditure of many millions of pounds in both private and public sectors. His strategic leadership spans his own enterprises and a range of public-private organisations.

He holds a BA(Hons) in Interior Design and exhibited at the London Design Centre during his studies. His early career included design work in Germany and interior design roles with major London architectural firms. He later freelanced internationally for Ramada and Grand Metropolitan hotels.

Roger became director of a commercial flooring manufacturing company and went on to found a London-based agency specialising in advertising, marketing, public relations, and exhibition design. The agency served international clients, won the Anglo-Dutch Award for Industry, and evolved into a business development consultancy. He played a pivotal role in launching three multi-million-pound businesses, directed a 30-acre working farm park, and founded the National Centre for Micro Business. Over a decade, he collaborated with Kent local authorities to deliver publicly funded training and mentoring to around 1,000 entrepreneurs.

For 30 years, Roger was an active member of the Federation of Small Businesses, serving as Kent Area Chairman, South East Policy Chairman, National Board member, and liaison with the Sector Skills Council. He founded the South East Business Forum, whose membership included CEOs of major national business organisations. His lobbying work extended to Brussels, Westminster, and local councils across the South East. Roger held senior regional roles, including Vice Chairman of the South East Regional Assembly and Chairman of its Select Committee for Manufacturing. He served on the Kent and Medway Economic Board and multiple County Council committees. Since 2007, he has been a Kent Ambassador. Locally, he served as a Parish Councillor from 2011 and Vice Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils, retiring from council duties in 2023.

Currently, Roger has established a local Villages Community Trust, having secured a six-figure start-up capital and a guaranteed five-figure annual sum for the next 40 years.

A passionate historian, Roger has traced his family lineage back to 1520 and compiled the House Family Handbook as a legacy for his children and grandchildren, and is now researching and writing a biography of William Warham for the Trust.

Charles Shee

Charles qualified in 1974 and practised for 40 years as an NHS consultant physician in respiratory and general medicine in SE London. At Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, amongst other innovations, he set up from scratch a lung function laboratory, a bronchoscopy service, ward-based acute non-invasive ventilation, and a cancer information and support centre. During his training he spent a year at McGill University, Montreal, on a scholarship studying lung mechanics. He is the author of several dozen peer-reviewed medical papers and four book chapters, on topics such as muscle function and intracellular pH, respiratory muscle fatigue, non-invasive ventilation, and palliative care in respiratory disease.

Following retirement, as a volunteer, he did periodic CQC (Care Quality Commission) hospital inspections for several years. Later, he spent over 3 years as a Board member of Maidstone Prison IMB (Independent Monitoring Board). This is a voluntary role, appointed by the Ministry of Justice, and involves frequent prison visits and monitoring.

In retirement he became increasingly interested in history, landscape and archaeology. At Madingley Hall (adult education department of Cambridge University) he did certificate courses in "historic landscape", "mediaeval history" and "early mediaeval history". He has since joined four archaeological societies and is on the committee of the Otford Historical Society and am Treasurer of the West Kent Archaeological Society. He is also a Trustee of the APCT and Chair of its Collections sub-committee.

He is very much an amateur archaeologist, but on a steep learning curve. He has practical experience of excavating Bronze Age, Roman and Tudor sites and is currently involved in the excavation of a Roman villa in Otford, whilst also helping sort and classify artefacts elsewhere in the Darent Valley. He has recently (early 2023) attended a course on identifying Roman pottery. He also has experience of archaeological geophysics in the field (resistivity) and experience of "ground-truthing" the findings of a recent high resolution Lidar survey in the Darent Valley, Kent.

Charles has overseen and written up a number of archaeological watching briefs in the vicinity of the Archbishop's palace, Otford. He also helped with the recent archaeological excavation of trial trenches in a medieval agricultural building near the Tudor Palace. After some training in archive management, he supervised a group of volunteers in organising, safeguarding and cataloguing the extensive paper archives of the Otford and District Historical Society.

Neil Williams

Neil is a Chartered Accountant (retired life member) currently engaged with a number of charities as a Trustee. The Archbishops Palace Conservation Trust, The Freshwater Habitat Trust – dedicated to preserving wildlife in the countryside and another non charity company engaged in pensions.

He retired over a decade ago from The Society and College of Radiographers, a membership organisation and trades union with a separate charity arm acting as the professional body. He was appointed to significantly rebuild the finances as Director of Finance. These bodies now support over 30,000 members and has helped develop the radiography profession. Part of the role was to maintain the pension fund (still open) and by becoming a Trustee until very recently.

Neil benefitted hugely by being articled to a medium sized general practice city firm, moving to Deloitte Plender Griffith after qualifying for 3 years before a move into Industry. 14 years at Imperial Group plc Head Office as a Group Accounting manager and other tasks. Following the Hanson takeover in 1985 he moved to an interesting rôle at The Tobacco Manufacturers Association as Finance & Admin manager for 10 years.

He has interests in travel, reading, gardening and fast cars.