



**Greater Morpeth
Development Trust**
Regeneration of town & countryside
www.gmdt.net

GMDT Annual Report

April 2020 - March 2021





A successful development trust

Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT)



Objectives and aims of GMDT

Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT) has been in existence since 2006 and the diverse range of projects carried out over the past fourteen years could not have happened without the support of our partners, funders and members. GMDT has continued its objective of developing partnership networks through facilitation to develop initiatives and through the skills base in the team adding value where ever possible to make Morpeth a quality place to live.

GMDT has developed a portfolio of projects to deliver these aims and objectives and the major capital schemes which have benefitted the town include the redevelopment of Morpeth Town Hall and Morpeth Railway Station which generate development revenue and a sustainable income to support the activities of GMDT. This has been achieved through the support of a number of funding bodies who have invested in the vision to redevelop key public assets within Morpeth – the main funders being Heritage Lottery Fund, Network Rail, Northern Trains Limited, Northumberland County Council, Railway Heritage Trust and North East Rural Growth Network.

The existing staff team is made up of 2 part time members supported by a range of professional associates to deliver a portfolio of quality projects and through engaging volunteers' support and strong partnership working we work to maintain our level of service delivery for the benefit of Morpeth. You can find more about our work on our website www.gmdt.net.

The front cover is from the GMDT Office.

GMDT is an independent company limited by guarantee and a registered charitable trust.

Company Registration Number 5676236, Charity Number 1117036, VAT Number 101 6832 50

Contacting GMDT

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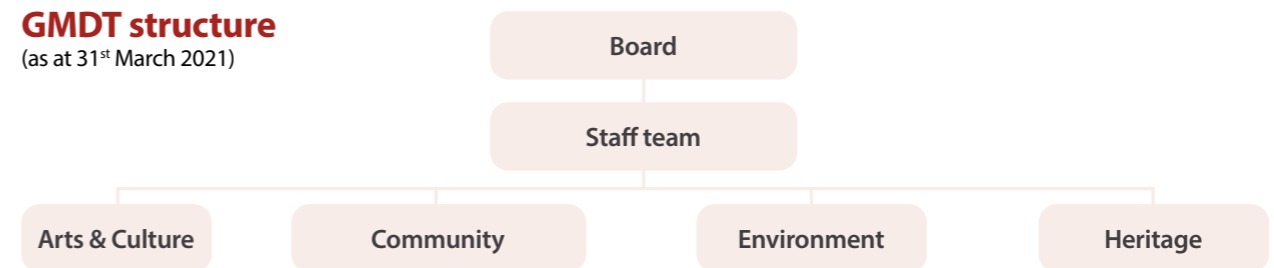
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GMDT structure and team

GMDT structure

(as at 31st March 2021)



The interest groups are made up of volunteers who help to develop and deliver regeneration projects and support other groups operating within the area. There are a number of projects that the interest groups work together on, like the Morpeth-wide signage and interpretation project and the events portfolio.

GMDT Staff



Linda Wilson
Office Administrator



Julie Hawthorn
Office Administrator

GMDT Board



Mike Willis
Chair and
Community Director



Karen Bower
Vice Chairman and
Community Director



Frank Rescigno
Arts and Culture Interest
Group Director



Kim Bibby-Wilson
Heritage Interest Group
Director



Hugh Edmundson
Environment Interest
Group Director



Barbara Martin
Community Director



Richard Burrow

Kevin Johnson Associate Director
Hayley Brown Associate Director
Katie Ridley Associate Director

All Change at the Lodge - Annual report on staffing at GMDT

The last year has seen a complete turnover of staff at the GMDT office in the Lodge. All three former members of staff decided to retire in early 2021, so the trust bade farewell to David Lodge, Karen Tweddle and Caroline Clough. All three have served the Trust admirably. The successful completion of the renovation of Morpeth Station, a major and complex project, was due in no small part to their conscientious and skilled input. We wish them a long and very enjoyable retirement. The completion of the station project and the retirement of all the trust's staff provided an opportunity to review the staffing profile that would be necessary and sustainable for the Trust over the next period. With no projects on the books of a similar

complexity or scale to the station, it was decided that the Trust needed to focus less on project management skills so it was decided to prioritise office administration to ensure the Trust's broad programme of activities was supported. Job descriptions were drawn up and advertisements placed in January for office administrators to work on a part-time basis. Over 60 applications were received. The Trust was delighted by the volume and quality of the response. With difficulty we managed to produce a shortlist and to proceed to interview in February. We were delighted to appoint our two new members of staff, Julie Hawthorn and Linda Wilson, who took up their

positions in March. Julie joins us with a background working for the National Trust, while Linda has worked previously at Newcastle University and with a charity supporting people with eating disorders. They have settled in extremely well and, between them, provide an office presence at the Lodge on most days of the week. Our former staff have been enormously helpful in the thorough way in which they have organised and prepared the ongoing work of the Trust to ease the handover to our incoming staff. We look forward to working with Julie and Linda over the coming years.
Richard Burrow

Interest Groups Reports



Arts & Culture Director's Report

With the start of 2020/2021 events season we entered the Covid 19 pandemic. We were able to hold one event in March 2020 just before the lock down. We held an Authors evening with 3 published authors. The event was held on 13 March with Miles Hewitt, Alan Wilkinson and Miles Hudson.

This was a very successful event with 85 in attendance at St. George's United Reform Church.

Arts & Culture Director
Frank Rescigno



Heritage Director's Report

The Covid-19 pandemic stopped all Heritage Interest Group meetings from just before the start of the year covered by this report. The first GMDT activities to resume, greatly delayed by continued necessary restrictions, were the flagship projects at Morpeth Railway Station and Cresswell Pele Tower. Reports on these two successfully completed Community activities will be available in the overall GMDT annual report featured elsewhere, but it must be noted that the station received a prestigious Railway Heritage Trust award for the restoration work.

The normal programme of physical events in 2020 could not take place, with April's Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering and the town's contribution to the national Heritage Open Days in September cancelled. GMDT's involvement in two other Community partnership projects either saw no progress (the KEVI school archive) or came to an end (the Boys' Brigade building).

When permitted to open, the Chantry TIC saw some sales of GMDT books on local heritage by Bridget Gubbins, with the Trust's online shop luckily able to function regardless of lockdowns.

In February 2021 the Heritage Interest Group revived its meetings using the Zoom video conference facility, noting the sad loss of long-standing member Mary Creighton, fount of knowledge concerning life in Morpeth over the last 80 years. A new member, Andy Bates was welcomed, bringing

to the group professional expertise in many areas of heritage including ideas for promoting heritage craft skills such as leatherworking.



Despite the lack of formal meetings, planning continues for regular and potential projects. The annual heritage programme included the Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering, which was to be held online in 2021 with one day of a range of concerts, art and drama presentations, archive films and Zoom sessions for dance, music and song; and Heritage Open Days, which would depend very much on venues being able to open to the public, although online events could be a stop-gap. Looking to the future, we aim to expand GMDT's Signage and Interpretation provision by helping to revise and reissue the CMBC town trail leaflet, and to develop the plans for boards at Buller's Green and north Newgate Street featuring further research into the portrait of inventor John Rastrick, though funding for these strands still needs to be secured.

GMDT has continued to contribute via Zoom to the local heritage umbrella group Morpeth Heritage Network, and both organisations welcomed the news that former GMDT Heritage Officer and founding convenor of the Heritage Network, Tamsin Lilley, now based in the south, was to be married this summer.

Kim Bibby-Wilson

Environment Director's Report

Group activities were inevitably severely restricted by the pandemic, but two main activities continued during this year.

Our main focus has been on the station. In conjunction with the superb building refurbishment, we decided to ensure that the adjacent areas of land complement that project. In Winter 2020 we obtained consent and some funding from Northern Trains to "adopt" the station. This permits community groups to assist the rail authorities by implementing projects to enhance station environments. A scheme was designed by GMDT, and the first stage of work entailed saving, treating and planting existing wooden barrels on the platforms and forecourt. We have continued to weed land close to the forecourt, and have assembled a tool shed, and water barrel, in readiness for the main landscaping work in 2021/2, subject to the success of a further funding bid to Northern Trains. In Spring we were also delighted to obtain support from Morpeth Lions and Rotary Clubs who plan to develop raised planting beds, with GMDT adding a rockery. We are also very appreciative of ongoing support from Morpeth Litter Group.



In Spring 2021 we commenced a further audit of the 120 or so information signs around Morpeth. We last surveyed these 5 years ago, some are now decaying, and others have been vandalised. Morpeth Town Council has assisted with repairs to some signs, but a larger refurbishment project is now being developed, subject to obtaining funding, which might also include new signs originally envisaged as part of the Castles Woods and Water project, but not implemented. This project is continuing in 2021/2.

Our final more passive activity is a continuing "junior" partnership role with the marvellous Morpeth Litter Group. Although MLG activities were constrained by the pandemic in 2020/1, the group continued to develop initiatives, the most notable of which has been the "Adopt-a-Street" scheme. This invites residents, or other interested parties, to take responsibility for litter clearance in their own streets. Around 80 participants have now adopted Morpeth streets. The MLG Annual Report 2020 can be viewed on the GMDT website.



JHE/ August 2021

Community Director's Report

Our group of supportive volunteers has been unable to provide active support over the last year due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and associated restrictions and lockdowns.

We have started to discuss possible working with partners in Morpeth and recently put out a call for volunteers to support the Wansbeck Foodbank. A few people offered to help with delivering goods and managing stock and names were shared with the Foodbank. When working in partnership like this the partner organisation needs to register our volunteers within their system. Two new partnerships are currently developing, one with Barnabas Safe and Sound and one with Morpeth Library. More news on these in the coming year.

Looking forward to 2021/22 there are plans to restart some activities with a community cinema screening in June and the Annual Picnic in the Park event in July (both pending any national changes to Covid restrictions).

Thanks to everyone for continuing to support GMDT.

Karen Bower
GMDT Deputy Chair

GMDT publications – On-line shop



Our on-line shop has continued to attract interest over the last year, in particular for the sale of the Walking in and Around

Morpeth' guides, a pack of 12 A5 sized maps. In the first two months sales of these exceeded the previous year's total suggesting, perhaps, a renewed interest in the local area during the pandemic daily exercise restrictions.

Our volunteer, Simon Cox, has done a great job over the last year in keeping the website 'back office' up to date so that we could get these and other publications sent out to customers.

CEO 2020/21 Update Report



Where to start on such a busy year! Well, ok not really. I took over being the Chair of GMDT on 1st April 2020. The last year has been one like no other. All of the amazing events that we had spent many hours planning such as Picnic in the Park, the monthly cinema and so on have had to be cancelled. This has been terribly frustrating, but of course totally understandable given the events of the year.

However, we simply do not just put on or run events in the local area. Events are something that we are known for organising and running, but this is not the full extent of our work and achievements.

Over the past few years, we have been actively fundraising and project managing the renovation of the Morpeth train station, which for many years had been allowed to fall into a poor state of repair. GMDT, largely through the work of our recently retired CEO David Lodge and previous chair Doug Philips secured £2.2m (yes million) to renovate the station to an amazing standard, winning a prestigious national award in the process.

The station now boasts a new waiting area, café (soon to open following covid), as well as some high-quality business units which can be rented by local businesses. We are extremely proud of completing this project given the circumstances of the last year.



Station Office



Station Office

Covid did set back the completion date by several months, and has adversely affected potential tenants, but we are in a good position now as life begins to open back up.

We have exciting events planned for the future and already have advanced plans in the pipeline for a Literary Weekend next year, and for the introduction of a "Man-shed" project that we are working in partnership with Barnabas Safe and Sound.

We will also be starting the planning for Picnic in the Park. No doubt I will get an email from Frank at 12.01 on 1st January 2022, asking me if the churches will be doing the BBQ again next year. The answer is of course yes, but if I could make a plea not to stop and chat on that day, otherwise you will be receiving a burnt offering of burgers.

Anyway, I would like to thank everyone on the team – both directors and volunteers for their wonderful help, effort, and endeavour of the past 18 months, and look forward to an exciting year to come. Roll on 2022!!



Station Cafe

Greater Morpeth Development Trust Financial Report 12 months to March 2021

Statement of Financial activities for year ended 31st March 2021

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2021 Total funds £	2020 Total funds (restated & Unaudited) £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM				
Donations and legacies	5,338	42,616	47,954	1,603,907
Other trading activities	15,086	5,030	20,116	27,120
Total	20,424	47,646	68,070	1,631,027
EXPENDITURE ON				
Raising funds	520	2,333	2,853	16,178
Charitable Activities	32,824	184,210	217,034	139,578
Total	33,344	186,543	219,887	155,756
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	-12,920	-138,897	-151,817	1,475,271
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total Funds brought Forward	18,715	2,255,969	2,274,684	799,413
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	5,795	2,117,072	2,122,867	2,274,684

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2020

	£	£	2021 £	2020 £
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets			1,853,632	1,833,225
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors			779	51,298
Cash at bank & in hand			269,631	393,911
Total	-	-	270,410	445,209
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year			1,175	3,750
Net current assets			269,235	441,459
Net assets	-	-	2,122,867	2,274,684
Funds				
Unrestricted income funds			5,795	18,715
Restricted income funds			2,117,072	2,255,969
Total Funds			2,122,867	2,274,684

These financial statements have been audited under the requirements of Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011

Financial Report

The past year has seen continued focus on the core operating costs and the emphasis on the generation of sustainable income streams through project management, events and retail activity. The end of the year saw the completion of the Railway Station and the challenge has been of letting out the business units (several offices, taxi caboose and café) given the economic conditions due to covid. This has led to delays and a deterioration of our reserves as compared to what we had forecast.

Our cost base has also reduced substantially due to the retirement of our CEO and two Administrators. We have employed two P/T administrators in order to continue to support our operations and the long term future of the trust.

The trading company remains dormant, but the intention is now to close this down as it is surplus to requirements. It is the intention of GMDT to remain sustainable going forward building on previous successes and developing new enterprise and social opportunities such as the redevelopment of the Railway Station.

And finally...the plaque is unveiled



Panel Members

- Andy Savage - Executive Director of RHT and Trustee of NRHA
- Theo Steel – Chairman of Trustees of NRHA and Member of RHT Advisory Panel –
- Jerry Swift – Secretary of the NRHA and Member of RHT Advisory Panel
- Clive Baker – Chairman of Judges of NRHA

Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT) was the recipient of the National Railway Heritage Trust Conservation Award at an on-line ceremony in December 2020 but due to the ongoing pandemic and lock down restrictions it took another 4 months for the plaque to be unveiled at a small ceremony on the 29th April 2021.

team led by his predecessor Doug Phillips and recently retired CEO David Lodge which culminated in the Award. Mr Steel expressed his delight at seeing for himself the quality of the work done to preserve the history and heritage of this listed building whilst providing opportunities for small businesses to lease the newly refurbished office suites.

Enterprise Fund, the Railway Heritage Trust, Northumberland County Council, Network Rail and train operators Northern, to support its idea of restoring the station to its former glory.

Along with the restoration a key element of the project was the desire to encourage and support local business; the result, following the converting of the empty and disused office space in the main station building, was the creation of an enterprise hub, with unique accommodation for up to seven small local businesses.



This prestigious national conservation award, which attracted entries from all over Britain, recognised the high quality work that was undertaken over a seven year period. The project, led by GMDT, gathered a partnership team of the National Lottery Heritage

The Board of Directors of GMDT and a small group of invited guests eagerly awaited the arrival of the 14.35 train bringing a delegation from the National Railway Heritage Awards panel. With masks in place our Chair, Mike Willis, welcomed the panel of Andy Savage, Theo Steel, Jerry Swift and Clive Baker to the Station. Mike praised the work of the partnership

‘Morpeth can once again be as justifiably proud of its railway station as it was when it was first opened very nearly 175 years ago’
Mike Willis

