

BLENHEIM

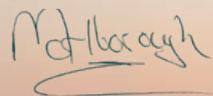
— Our Annual Update 2020 —



I am pleased to report on our achievements in the year to 31 March 2020, yet clearly our pride in an exciting year is overshadowed by our sadness at the traumas faced by our neighbouring communities in the nine months since. We have kept Blenheim (especially Blenheim Park) open throughout to provide as much peaceful space as possible beyond the footpaths and have been delighted to see so many of you on a regular basis.

Some conservation work has continued, notably the restoration of the Chapel and repairs to the Apron of the Dam at the end of the lake. The latter work gives us greater flexibility in the way we do the Queen Pool dredge.

We have been extraordinarily grateful for the support of our visitors and neighbours which has kept us going.



The 12th Duke of Marlborough

BLENHHEIM





The story continued...

We are now four years into our journey, a journey pursuing our purpose ‘to be the lifeblood of the local economy, to enhance the lives of local people and to share and protect this extraordinary place.’ Today in this report we report on our short-term aims that help us explain how we intend to go about delivering that purpose.

We deliver our goals through our three distinct businesses:

- 1 | our visitor attraction
- 2 | our property business (now including Pye Homes)
- 3 | our land management business (caring for the countryside around us)

We are delighted to announce that these businesses flourished in the 12 months to March 2020. The visitor attraction drew in a larger number of visitors, spread more evenly across the year (in fact Christmas has become our busiest time rather than the time we are shut down). We were helped by the wonderful but sadly loss-making Shakespeare’s Rose Theatre as well as a buoyant final BBC Countryfile Live, but also by significant growth in Christmas.

The acquisition of Pye Homes, which occurred just before Christmas 2018, has bedded in well and we are now building some wonderful new communities in Woodstock, Hanborough and at Radley College. This purchase helped to retain 30 existing jobs and keep a huge amount of economic activity in the local area which would otherwise have gone elsewhere. It also ensures that all of the profits from the developments can be invested into delivering our goals.

Our land management businesses traditionally have the lowest profile but that could be about to change. Very soon we will be able to share with you our exciting proposal for how we plan to nurture the countryside around us. Ideas include developing sensibly planned public access and using sustainable farming and forestry practices. We are also hard at work using our resources to improve public health.

We also stand on the cusp of delivering on our commitment to generate more renewable energy than we consume. At the same time, we are training more apprentices than ever and are closing in on 50 truly affordable homes.

In overall economic contribution terms, we have sharply grown both the economic contribution (up 26%) and jobs supported in the wider economy.

Thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Don H.', set against the green background.



Our 10 Year Goals

We continue in our quest to be the lifeblood of the local economy. Our commitment to share our magnificent palace and enhance the lives of local people remains steadfast. As we complete our fourth year of economic impact measurement, we have moved closer to achieving a number of our stated goals. This makes us exceptionally proud.



Triple

our economic contribution to the local area.



Build high quality, affordable homes for **300** families.



Achieve annual paying visitor numbers in excess of **750,000**



Double our charitable contributions to the community.



Complete **£40 million** of vital restoration work.



Reacquire or borrow **key works** from the Palace's lost collections.



Become a net generator of **green energy**



Train over **100 new** apprentices in roles across the Estate.



Become one of the **UK's top 100** employers.



Secure endowment of **£45 million** to conserve our World Heritage Site.



Triple our economic contribution

Our GVA total economic impact surged by 26% to £126.8m

With seven years to go before our target date, we are pleased to report that the strong progress this year means that our annual economic growth target has dropped to a tough but achievable 11.5% p.a. The bad news of course is that the pandemic and its likely enduring economic impact has presented us with a real challenge in terms of meeting the target.

This goal is not an academic exercise for us; the value of our assets and those of our communities is inextricably linked to the value of the economy around us. As we have noted earlier, some of the most important drivers of the economy do not give us significant direct payback:

- Nearly half of our total contribution is the spend of our visitors outside of our gates. This means that we invert the normal approach of attractions and instead encourage our visitors to spend time and money elsewhere
- Our big events (Horse Trials, BBC Countryfile and last year Shakespeare's Rose Theatre) often have a negative or only mildly positive impact on us but deliver significant economic contribution

Blenheim start-ups

Due to the pandemic, we were unable to run the start-up competition this year. However, we have continued to sell the bespoke, fine jewellery of last year's winners - Wild & Fine in the Gift Shop as well as Neve's Bees delightful range of beauty products and Kathryn Croxson's fabulously colourful collection of pieces. We will be back with the competition in 2021.



Double our charitable contribution to the community

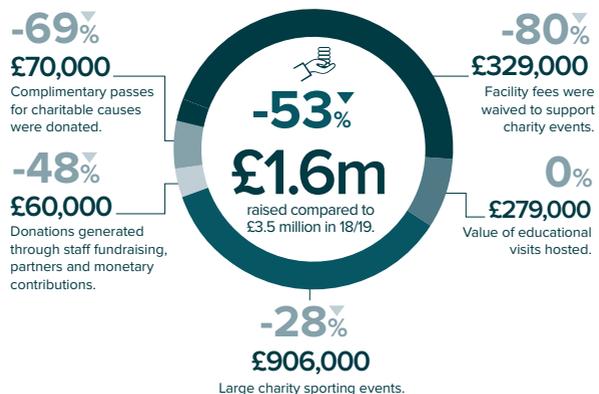
One of our ten goals is to double our charitable contributions over the ten-year period from an opening level of £1.1m pa. We are fulfilling this promise in a number of ways. Our direct charity contributions this year totalled £60,000, with money going to Archway, Macmillan and Oxford Playhouse.

Each year, also, via our Blenheim Bursary, we commit to support a wide range of local organisations that follow the year's chosen gifting theme. The bursary is open to applications from organisations located within a 20-mile radius of the Blenheim site. This year, our theme was 'Wellness and Outdoors'. The theme was divided into five main areas; Wellbeing and Outdoor Activities, Social Prescribing in the Community, Creation of Green Spaces for Leisure Activities, Collaborative Communal Projects, and Community Infrastructure Support.

Groups receiving funds from the Bursary included: FarmAbility, Oxfordshire Youth, Stonesfield Allotments, Sustainable Woodstock, Forrest Bathing and West Witney Primary School. We also gave grants to Woodstock Youth, WUFA, Yarnton Scouts, Yarnton Primary School, Oxfordshire Play Association, RDA, Citizens Advice Bureau, Beautiful Barton, Children's Allotment, Finstock Primary School, Girl Guides Woodstock and Hailey Primary School.

£906,000 was raised from charitable events such as the Bloodwise Triathlon, Pink Ribbon Walk, British Heart Foundation, Blenheim 7K and Sobell House.

We provided rooms and facilities at an estimated value of £329,000 and the imputed value of educational visits and guided tours provided by Blenheim to schools and other institutions is estimated at £279,000. Complimentary passes were worth £70,000.



Build high quality, affordable homes for 300 families

Pye Homes has been part of the local community for 90 years. Its full acquisition by Blenheim this year, has forged a uniquely robust property development operation. We are well on our way to creating the 300 truly affordable new homes outlined in our goal pledge. Unlike many commercial property developers, we are inextricably linked to the local community. We are building quality homes, responsibly; homes that will enable local people to stay in our community and prosper. We are committed to ensuring that the local area remains a thriving centre of economic activity.

34
Truly affordable homes delivered in the year

We have a unique moral obligation and desire to improve our shared prosperity. As both the landowners and developers, we are here for the long term. We are passionate about ensuring we build considerately and for lasting benefit. We are as dedicated to building sustainably, as we are to creating aesthetically beautiful homes. This is our legacy, one of which we are inordinately proud.

Achieve paying visitors in excess of 750,000

950,000 visitors (unpaid and paid) came to Blenheim in the year ended March 2020. The total spend by our visitors outside of our gates was £53m (up from £47m). Our rich and imaginative programme of events, in conjunction with our 300-year heritage, stunning grounds and opulent palace, draws them in from around the world. Many of our visitors come back time and again, spending an average of £46 each (day visitors) or £58 each (overnight stays) in the local area. We are proud that our visitors contribute so much to the cafés, restaurants and hospitality businesses in the wider area.

Visitor surveys confirmed that once again, our events are the primary reason many of them came to Blenheim this year. The breadth of events spanning art exhibitions, historical tours and grand events such as our magical 'Christmas at Blenheim' attracts a delightfully broad visitor demographic and ensures a steady flow of people into the businesses in the surrounding towns and villages.



Transform the Palace and Park with a **£40m restoration** programme



As one of our core goals, we have pledged to complete £40m worth of restorations around the site within ten years. We are currently in the process of conducting major restoration works to the 300 year old Chapel at Blenheim – the resting place of the former Dukes of Marlborough. The current works are primarily concerned with the stabilisation of the internal environment of the chapel. Over the centuries the chapel has sustained considerable structural damage and decline; this has been a mixture of water damage and that caused by ambient humidity and temperature changes. The current restoration will ensure the preservation of the chapel for the future.

Of course, as with so many things in 2020, some of our restoration works have been subject to delays. One such project is the restoration of the Queen Pool and crucial repairs to the 250 year old Grand Bridge (Vanbrugh's glorious creation). This circa £9m project will, amongst other things, uncover areas of the Grand Bridge that have remained unseen for over 100 years.

Finally, we are delighted that Blenheim has received a £1.9m grant from the government's Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage as part of a nationwide rescue scheme to safeguard some of the UK's most important cultural sites in the wake of the pandemic. The grant will allow us to create a brand new exhibition on the life of Winston Churchill, who was born at the Palace. It will be designed specifically to appeal to a family audience and will incorporate newly-created audio visual guides.

Re-acquire **key works** from the old collections and establish a new one



With all of this year's restrictions, we have been sadly unable to make any re-acquisitions. We are of course still working closely with both private collections and auction houses to ensure 2021 includes progress in this regard and we can get back on track to achieve this aim.

Become a net generator of **green energy**



Within the next seven years, our goal was to become a net generator of green energy. We know that the actions we take today in this regard will help protect our natural resources for the future. We are thrilled that with the planned addition of a 7Mw solar generation facility in the North East of the Estate, in fact we are on target to achieve this by 2022 due to our use of biomass, solar, hydro power and various other green technologies.

The recent installation of 196 solar panels near the site of our bottling plant and rural offices is set to generate 50kW of electricity and save the bottling plant around £4500, a year.

Our biopower (replacing two old, inefficient boilers) generates 250kW, providing enough green energy to power our Pleasure Gardens facilities, greenhouses and offices. At the Bladon Cascade, a 10-metre Closed Compact Screw system is supplying homes on the Estate with 78,000 kWh of energy.

Whilst clearly of huge benefit from an environmental and sustainability perspective, an additional key benefit is that the money saved by energy inefficiencies can be re-directed to our other projects.

'Too Good To Go' – Blenheim quest to reduce food waste.

As part of our sustainable procurement policy, this year Blenheim has joined a host of other organisations such as Accor Hotels, YO! Sushi and Planet Organic in partnering with the 'Too Good to Go' app. Our goal is to significantly reduce the amount of food waste we produce. The app was founded in Copenhagen in 2016 and is now the world's largest app fighting food waste.

'Too Good to Go' connects businesses with unsold fresh food to local consumers who buy it, collect it and eat it. Our catering partners, Searcys, now sell 'Magic Bags' filled with £12 worth of Blenheim's high quality, sustainably sourced leftover food for just £4 at the end of each day. The bags, which can be purchased at any time via the app, include items such as homemade cakes, sandwiches and salad boxes. These can be collected from The Oxfordshire Pantry at 4pm.

Nearly 90% of ingredients used by Searcys in the cafes are sourced within a 25-mile radius of the Palace, supporting local producers and growers.



Train over 100 new apprentices

According to the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR, 2014), the national economy is estimated to gain almost £21 for every £1 invested in apprenticeships. That is why - as well as the huge contribution to the local community local apprenticeships represent in terms of providing employment - we are so committed to our apprenticeship goal. With eighteen new apprentices this year across all areas of the business, we are delighted to be ensuring the development of a wealth of both traditional and innovative skills in the community for the future.

18 ^{80%}

apprentices

(10 females and 8 males) were employed in 2019-20 in diverse roles and key divisions such as rural, game, human resources, Pye Homes, and operations.

Become one of the UK's top 100 employers

With 2486 jobs supported in total locally and 431 people directly employed by Blenheim, we are a key employer in the local area. We are absolutely committed to engaging our people and helping them to achieve their own personal career goals, as well as rewarding them for their commitment and energy. Of course this year has been challenging for everyone, but we have strived to make the working environment as safe and fulfilling as possible, even in this difficult time.

We truly value our team and their contribution to the continued prosperity and preservation of our unique World Heritage Site for future generations.

 **10%**
391 **431**
19/20

Directly employed members of staff

431
people directly employed

Secure endowment of £45m to conserve and protect the World Heritage Site

We have a responsibility to fund our restoration and conservation initiatives ourselves as a landed estate. To this end, we set the goal of securing £45m endowment over ten years. The completion of our acquisition of Pye Homes has been a significant step in the right direction and the various new home developments we have planned will push us ever closer to our goal with an anticipated £25m due by way of return from current planned developments.

Key 2020 headlines



Park View Woodstock
wins 2020 Housebuilder Awards
Best Designed Development for 3 storeys or fewer (and Pye Homes wins Best Small Developer)

Grant secured to contribute to the first phase of the restoration of Grand Bridge, as well as grants to support our COVID-safe opening next year

After a big consultation, an application is being prepared for a **100% Passive-Haus certified community** on the North edge of Woodstock

Christmas Light Trail, has been run again - very safely. Around **140,000 eager visitors** were expected in total to do about the only safe Christmas event they could

34 truly affordable homes delivered in the year, including affordable rent and shared ownership

Working with local partners, established the **Help Hub**, to offer **free online video support** from counsellors for those who need it

Apron of Capability Brown's **dam rebuilt** across the Summer

Blenheim Park opened every day through lockdown, allowing local people to explore well beyond the footpaths to stay fit and healthy during this time

First major consumer events in the region held at Blenheim in September, with Salon Privé and Blenheim Triathlon running successfully and safely – highly distanced!

Consent secured for new solar arrays to bring us to the point of being a net generator of green energy



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To find out more visit [blenheim.org](https://www.blenheim.org)