



**BLENHEIM**  
Annual Update



## We are delighted to present to you the latest update on the progress of the Estate over the last twelve months.

This has been an exciting time and we were particularly pleased to see so many of you take advantage of free neighbour tickets to Countryfile Live 2018 – over 9,000 of you!

We are sure that most of you noticed the shrinking Queen Pool – not drought but a test-lowering of the water in preparation for our largest ever conservation project, the dredge of Queen Pool and the restoration of Grand Bridge in 2020.

We are very grateful for your support through the year as we pursue the never-ending battle for Blenheim. We hope that you have enjoyed your visits and look forward to seeing you back very soon.



The 12th Duke of Marlborough



## The Story Continued...

We are now 20 months into our journey, a journey that culminates in us being the lifeblood of the local economy, while enhancing the lives of our fellow residents and sharing and protecting this extraordinary place. I have been delighted by the remarkable progress we have made in the last year and even more so by the foundation that has been put in place for delivering our 10 goals.

We drive our goals through our three distinct business elements:

1. We are a world-class visitor attraction.
2. We are a focused property business.
3. We are a sustainably focused business that aims to protect the provenance of Blenheim Palace.

Our teams involved in the three businesses come together in different ways to help us achieve these goals. All three businesses play a part in delivering our 10 strategic goals and are intrinsically linked to drive delivery. Everyone at Blenheim contributes to our purpose and goals.

We understand how both our successes and our failings impact the communities around us and we always work to be the best neighbour we can be. I firmly believe that we get it right far more often than we get it wrong, but am always grateful for the patience, support and feedback we receive from the local residents around us when we make mistakes. We appreciate that we will only flourish in the long term when those we are lucky enough to share this area with also flourish. This notion drives all we do.

Despite a deliberate (but very short-term) contraction in our construction business, we have maintained our economic contribution at around £90million, and we expect to see that increase significantly next year. More crucially, in terms of the difficulty of the challenge, we have now secured planning consent for all of our 300 affordable houses, and we are just about to hand over the keys to the first of them. We are proud to have kept our promise to deliver a 40% discount on affordable rent.

The planning consents also take us more than halfway towards achieving our goal to build a £45million endowment that will secure the perpetuity of the World Heritage Site. Even more amazing is that we have done this in the midst of a fearsome restoration programme that is comparable to that seen in the early years of the 5th Duke, and all while welcoming higher visitor numbers than we have ever seen before.

We are blessed by neighbours who care as deeply about the success of this area and its people as we do. We may not always agree, but we will always be there for each other.

Thank you for your support.

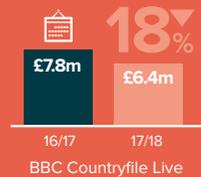
**Dominic Hare**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# Blenheim's 10 Goals Update

We have been working throughout the last year to achieve the following across each of the goals:

## Triple Our Economic Contribution

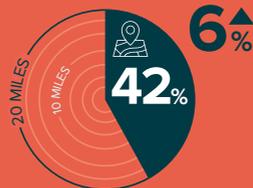
- Our second Economic Impact report (17/18), working with Oxford Brookes, showed that our economic impact was 4% (£3million) down compared to the 16/17 report. This was due to fewer property developments (-£5.5million) and a scaled back BBC Countryfile Show (-£1.4million). Excluding these two specific elements we grew by about 4.4%. This is positive and shows us growing well above inflation, but we believe we can do a lot more.



- We ran the Blenheim Start Up Competition where two winners were given a contract in our East Courtyard shop for a year. In addition they are being provided with cross business support and advice on growing their businesses. Our first two winners (Neve's Bees and Kathryn Croxton) have grown rapidly and can be seen both in our shop today and at the Christmas Gift Market.

- 9,000 free tickets were given away to residents of our local villages and towns for BBC Countryfile Live.

- % of our spend in the local area has risen by 6% to 42%. Direct jobs at Blenheim increased by 9%.



- 15 jobs were brought to the area through the old Estate office being used for local business offices. More than 100 jobs were created at our Home Farm, Cowyards and Windrush developments.
- Promotion of the local area to drive multi day visits, both in marketing and infrastructure terms.



## Train Over 100 New Apprentices

- We currently employ 10 apprentices in roles across the Estate. This will increase to 12 by the end of 2018.

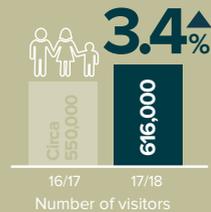
## Build High Quality, Affordable Homes for 300 Families

- We now have a unique delivery partnership with West Oxfordshire District Council.
- We are delivering housing at a 40% discount, which is market leading.
- Keys to our first affordable homes are being handed over by the end of November 2018.
- We are building 60 homes today and Local Planning have approved a further 250, at least. We anticipate more and are determined to reach our affordable housing goals as soon as possible.
- Key workers, that will include staff from Blenheim, will be a primary focus in delivering this goal.



## Achieve Annual Paying Visitor Numbers in Excess of 750,000

- Last years paying visitor figures were around 550,000 and are now at 616,000. We are aiming for more, but this year has been difficult. The weather has been a strong influencing factor throughout the year with a wet and rainy start and then a very hot summer.
- We will invest extensively in Christmas 2018 with a new market and daytime Palace Cinderella experience. We therefore anticipate corresponding growth.
- We launched an Audio Guide in May and will continue to invest in its content development.
- Our summer event programme trialled the 'Great British Garden Party' event. With this innovation we are aiming to create an evening event that spans the summer and draws visitors to the area for multi day visits. This was a lovely local occasion, but as this clearly won't be the main attraction for our summer footfall, other ideas are being considered for future years.
- It is expected that the main drivers for growth will be the summer evenings and Christmas. There is likely to be high investment and high production to accommodate visitor demand, which is greater than ever. We aim to anticipate and control growth so that we can both maximise visitor experience and also ensure a measured impact on Blenheim and the local community. Expectations are high for growth this Christmas and for next summer too.



## Become a Net Generator of Green Energy

- We are very proud to have been awarded Gold level from Green Tourism, where the standards required to achieve this status continue to rise.
- We now have four electric charging points and six electric vehicles.
- All of our purchased electricity now comes from renewable sources thanks to a two year partnership with the renewable energy provider, Good Energy; this includes our Windrush Industrial Park.
- 15% of our energy used was generated by us last year, and we are looking at plans to make Park Farm (our commercial hub) almost entirely self-sufficient.

## Become One of the UK's Top 100 Employers

- Our employment is up 9% as a result of increased training and support.
- We achieved 'One to Watch' status and were 6.2 points away from 1 star (the highest category) in our first Top 100 survey.
- We have implemented various initiatives across the Estate, working with staff in our journey to become the best employer we can be.



## Transform the Palace and Park with a £40 Million Restoration Programme

- We will have spent £3.1 million on projects by the end of the year, which include the West Colonnades and Bladon Bridge restoration, and the Palace heating and fire compartmentation works. We are now starting work on the West Quadrant area of the Palace.
- This is slightly short of the required run-rate of £4 million per year, but within two years we will overtake this target and will provide the approximate £12 million required for the Great Lake dredge and Grand Bridge repairs.

## Re-acquire Key Works from the Old Collections and Establish a New One

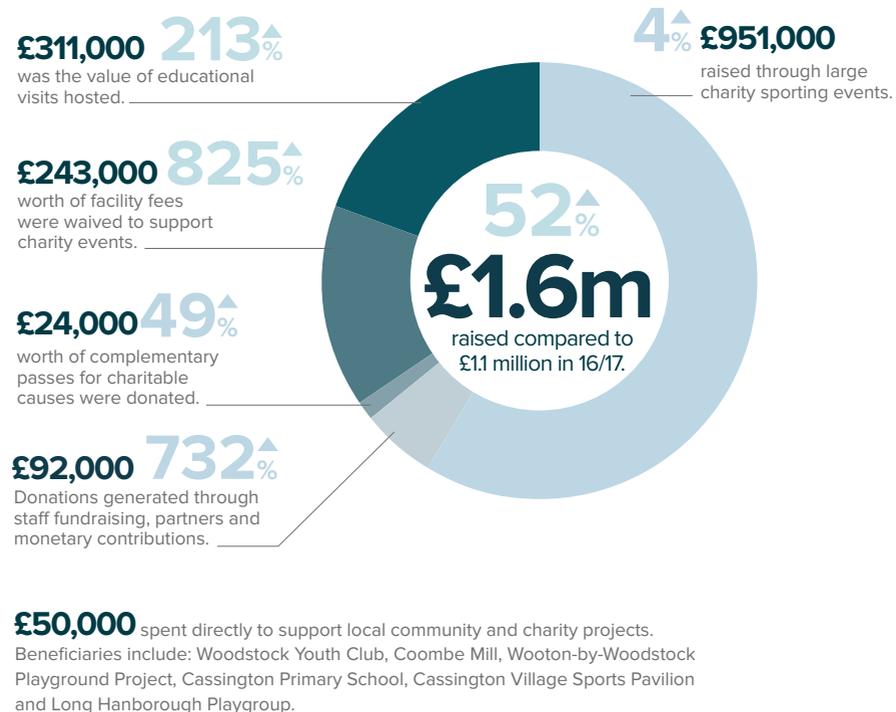
- Public awareness of this goal has subsequently seen lots of generous loan offers. Some of these are for Winston Churchill's paintings, a number of which will be on display next year.
- We have re-acquired a Consuelo by Helleu portrait and a wonderful Boldini portrait of Gladys Deacon.
- We have also acquired a significant collection from the estate of Victor Churchill, much of which will go on display next year.

## Secure Endowment of £45 Million to Conserve and Enhance our World Heritage Site

- £6 million has already been generated towards this goal through property developments. This will, however, all be required to fund the vital Great Lake dredge and Grand Bridge restoration, unless funds are secured by other means.
- Long Hanborough and Woodstock East will generate an additional £25 million.

## Double our Charitable Contribution to the Community

We have grown our charitable contribution in one year from £1.1 million to £1.6 million.



# Key Headlines 2019:



Working with Experience Oxfordshire and Oxford Bus Company we will launch the Oxford Card. We hope that this will increase multi day visitors, as it will include offers at several other local attractions and amenities.



The first houses in the Woodstock East property development will go on the public market by March 2019.



We will continuously review and refresh the events calendar for the visitor business and are set to have a 10 week Shakespeare theatre experience, along with a Turner and Churchill art exhibition.



We will continue to find ways to become a greener Estate and convert more vehicles to electric.



We will continue to secure planning for affordable homes and offer a warm welcome as more people move into our Long Hanborough development.



We will continue to improve our visitor experience to make sure everyone leaves feeling special. We will launch direct debit annual pass membership and will explore a more flexible form of membership for local people.



We will continue to develop the Blenheim Schools Partnership, where we offer those who need support the chance to experience our site for free.



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