

# The Stricklandgate House Trust Ltd

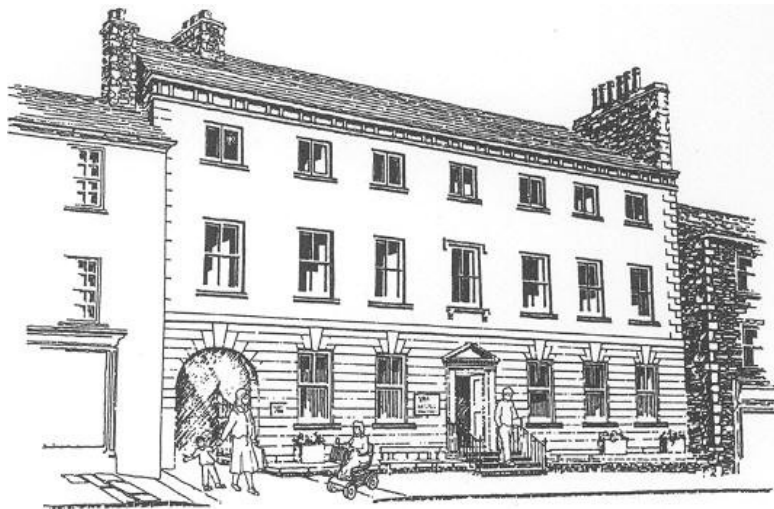
THE CENTRE FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN  
SOUTH LAKELAND



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Heritage  
Lottery Fund



# Annual Report

2009 - 2010

## **STRICKLANDGATE HOUSE**

### **THE CENTRE FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN SOUTH LAKELAND**

---

**The Stricklandgate House Trust Ltd** is a registered charitable trust that was formed in 1993 for the specific purpose of managing Stricklandgate House, in Kendal, as a Centre for Voluntary Organisations. Its declared Charitable Aims are “To promote and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of charities in the direct pursuit of their objects through the provision of premises and facilities for such charities”. The Trust discharges its responsibilities through the operation and administration of Stricklandgate House, an elegant Grade-II Listed Georgian Town House, for the benefit of its tenant charities and the respective clients whom they serve. Accommodation within Stricklandgate House is provided at charges that are significantly below those levied for equivalent premises available on the open market. Tenant organisations are thus able to direct relatively more of their resources to their own charitable aims. Resident charities also benefit from a single reception desk, shared service costs and fully-supported connection to Broadband Internet. Charities also benefit each other, in a variety of ways, through shared experience and through mutual support, advice and direct referrals, while their respective clients appreciate the anonymity of visiting Stricklandgate House, free of any social stigma that might attach to visiting one particular organisation.

The Trust employs a small staff, mostly on a part-time basis, led by a full-time Centre Manager. They are supported by a number of volunteers who, collectively, provide the reception and switchboard services. The Trustees are voluntary and give freely of their time and expert knowledge to ensure that the Trust fulfils its statutory obligations and that revenue and other income fully covers running the costs. The responsibility for maintaining and safeguarding its principal asset – Stricklandgate House itself - is also fully incumbent upon the Trustees.

The Trust encourages community ideals, striving to fulfil the needs and to support the activities of all who use the Centre, within a friendly, welcoming and caring environment.

## **STRICKLANDGATE HOUSE TRUST LIMITED**

---

*Company Limited by Guarantee (No.2856983). Registered Charity (No. 1027444).*

*Registered Office:* 92 Stricklandgate,  
KENDAL, Cumbria LA9 4PU

*Board of Directors*  
(as at 30 September 2010) Colin Reynolds (Chairman)  
John Cooke  
William Duxbury  
Sylvia Emmott  
Harry Jeffs  
David Threlkeld  
Alan Winstanley

*Company Secretary:* John Gallagher

*Reporting Accountants:* Moore & Smalley, LLP,  
Kendal House,  
Murley Moss Business Village,  
Oxenholme Road,  
Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7RL

*Bankers:* The Royal Bank of Scotland,  
6 Market Place,  
Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4TN

*Solicitors:* Thomson, Wilson, Pattinson,  
114-116, Stricklandgate,  
Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4QA

*Centre Manager:* John Gallagher  
Stricklandgate House,  
92, Stricklandgate,  
Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4PU  
Telephone: 01 539 742 600  
Fax: 01 539 742 628  
e-mail: [jgallagher@stricklandgate-house.org.uk](mailto:jgallagher@stricklandgate-house.org.uk)

## **THE COMMUNITY OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS RESIDENT AT STRICKLANDGATE HOUSE**

---

The Alzheimer's Society (Area Office)  
The Alzheimer's Society (South Lakes Branch)  
Birchall Trust (formerly SCRAS)  
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)  
Community Transport South Lakeland  
Cumbria Alcohol and Drug Abuse Service (CADAS)  
Cumbria Council for Voluntary Services South  
Cumbria Personal Development Associates (formerly SCAI)  
Disability Association, Carlisle and Eden (DACE)  
Independent Complaints and Arbitration Service  
Kendal Family Drop-In Centre for Parents and Young Children  
Lake District Summer Music  
Making Space  
Sight Advice, South Lakes (formerly SLSB)  
South Cumbria Dyslexia Association (SCuDA)  
South Lakeland Community Alarms  
South Lakeland MIND

## THE STAFF OF STRICKLANDGATE HOUSE

---

Mr John Gallagher	Centre Manager
Mrs Dorothy Allonby	Caretaker/Cleaner (p.t.)
Mr Brian Hayton	Caretaker/Cleaner (p.t.)
Mrs Pauline McDougall	Caretaker/Cleaner (p.t.)
Mr Alan Sayers	Caretaker/Cleaner (p.t.)
Mrs Win Sayers	Caretaker/Cleaner (p.t.)
Mrs Ellena Williamson	Catering

## **VOLUNTEER STAFF**

---

The Trust is extremely grateful to its volunteers, especially those who, collectively, maintain the Reception and Switchboard operation and who are, therefore, in the front line of operations. Whether directing visitors, answering queries, providing information and, not infrequently, dealing with distressed members of the public, our receptionists are well able and prepared to offer reassurance, a friendly welcome and a constructive response to all callers. Other volunteers give invaluable support to the Centre Manager by undertaking routine office tasks and helping with administrative duties. Trustees, too, give their time freely to assist with specialist tasks. Occasional meetings of volunteers are convened through the year; these generally fulfil an important social function too!

### **Sincere thanks are offered to:**

Rosemary Cashell

Mary Harper

Elizabeth Jeffries

Margaret MacGregor

Tony Newman

Maria Pincott

Gillian Price

Margaret Smith

Ellena Williamson

Wilma Woods-Walters

Sheila Halden

Vera Hill

Rosemary Jones

Donna MacKenzie

Joyce Pilkington

Margaret Pook

Edith Rodham

Pamela Smith

Jean Wilson

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

---

The reporting year has been one of significant change, its successes bringing huge excitement and satisfaction, its adversities distress and disappointment. However, the core business has remained strong: although there have been several changes to the tenancies, the Centre accommodation continues to be fully occupied. Eighteen resident charities served a total of 10,423 client visitors, and they received 1,041 telephone enquiries through our switchboard (we have no record of calls dialled directly). We have experienced an expansion in the hire of meeting rooms to outside groups: the number of persons recorded to have attended these events is one of the largest we have noted, 4,359; this is despite the constraints imposed by weather and building work! Public use of Stricklandgate House has again been bolstered by two elections, as it was again selected for use as a ward polling station!

Our staffing has remained unchanged but there is an increased flexibility in working time. Regrettably, we have lost two members of the Board of Trustees; the vacancies have yet to be filled.

### **Conserving Stricklandgate House**

Outwardly, the biggest change has been to Stricklandgate House itself. At the year end, the extensive project to restore and conserve the fabric of the Grade-II listed building and to share its heritage more widely, supported substantially by grant assistance, most especially from the Heritage Lottery Fund, had proceeded nearly to completion. Under the skilful supervision of John Coward Architects of Cartmel, the main contractors, Wm Anelay Ltd of York, were able to complete most of the specialised conservation work within the contract time. They were delayed only by a period of horrendously wet weather at the end of November and by having to make good the damage to finishes incurred in the severe frosts of December. By common agreement, the restored lime plaster work, its colour matching precisely that of the original 1776 render, repairs to the fenestration and the restoration (after 70 years) of iron railings, all help to recapture the Georgian elegance of the front elevation. The renovation of the archway and side entrance, and of the render and the Venetian window at the rear of Stricklandgate House help to revive the gloriously historic appearance.

The roof of the “Cottage” (in reality, the original Servants’ Wing) has been re-slatted, maintaining its beautifully crafted oak timbers that were found to be sound enough to last most of the next two hundred years! The repointing of the original blockwork and the window mouldings with lime mortar greatly enhances the rear of the property, while the replacement of the ugly, rusting fire escape by a new, enclosed spiral gave us the opportunity to reform another twentieth-century artefact, the flat-roofed passage linking the House and the Cottage. The slate roof of Stricklandgate House has been lifted to allow the insertion of a layer of reflective insulation. Its intended function is to improve heat retention in winter and to keep it outside in summer!

Following the departure of the main contractors, we started on the programme of internal decorations, as well as adding new carpeting in the main access routes. Both developments have brought an altogether less austere environment to Stricklandgate House, giving the Centre a warmer, friendlier feel. At the time of writing, we were about to install the Heritage exhibits, tracing the history of the House and its occupants, in relation to major developments in Kendal. We are greatly indebted to Kendal Civic Society, for the knowledge and pride invested in the narrative of the heritage exhibition, and to “The Next Step” of Milnthorpe, for work on the design and presentation of materials, in physical and electronic media, to be available shortly.

Not everything has gone as planned. A minor long-standing problem of damp penetration into the main Conference Room and adjacent areas was exacerbated by heavy November rains. The cause, which had been addressed in the specification for the HLF-funded project, was supposed to be the poor state of an adjacent flat-roof; however, the proposed repairs to a non-heritage structure were omitted when the expenditure budget needed to be trimmed to ensure that we remained within the grant allocation. Subsequent investigation traced the leakage problem to a more fundamental defect, the failure of the concrete encasing the steel pillars that support the main Conference-Room roof. We looked at various ways to overcome this defect, including the possibility of rebuilding, before settling eventually on a scheme to replace the concrete *in situ*. The cost of this can be covered out of existing budgets, without seeking it from service charges tenants, though this option leaves little available for current maintenance. The irony that the essential structure of Stricklandgate House (vintage, latter 18th century) proved to be so much more sound than that of the Conference Room (formerly the Council Chamber of South Westmorland Rural District Council, vintage, latter 20th Century), is not lost on us.

### **Changes in the Resident Organisations**

We are pleased to acknowledge with gratitude, the co-operation and understanding of our tenant organisations who stoically maintained “business as usual” throughout the main period of disruption. Closure of floors and passages, temporary relocation of offices and consulting space and, despite the excellent co-operation and best efforts of our contractors, extra noise and dust, were overcome to allow work to be continued largely without interruption.

These have not been the best of times for charities, as they suffer the twin consequences of economic recession – a greater call on their services and simultaneous strains on their incomes. Those whose work depends substantially on individual fund-raising are usually the most vulnerable to the vicissitudes of fluctuating finances. It is sad to see such valued self-help charities as Post-Natal Wellbeing having to close their services to the local community, after many years of excellent work. We have also lost the Westmorland Music Council (Music Links); the South Cumbria Mental Health Users’ and Carers’ Forum has moved to alternative accommodation; and Appletree School no longer had need of the separate facilities at Stricklandgate House.

At the same time, it is pleasing to be able to welcome new charities into our community: South Lakeland MIND and the Disability Association of Carlisle and Eden (DACE) each took up residence in recently vacated offices during the year. In addition, we may record that several existing tenants have changed their names, reflecting administrative variations or modified priorities. The Birchall Trust provides the similar advice and support to victims of rape and abuse that were previously offered by SCRAS; the South Lakes Society for the Blind was re-named Sight Advice, South Lakes; the South Lakeland Council for Voluntary Service is now the Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service, South Lakes.

### **Changes in the Trust**

Last year, we were able to report our success in appointing two new Trustees to the Board. This year, I am sorry to say that we have lost the services of two members during the year. Alan Varley resigned after serving for twelve years, during which he has brought to the Board not just his professional skills as an Architect and his knowledge of building structure but also a keen awareness of our statutory responsibilities to the public. Moreover, Alan’s involvement in the commercial and professional institutions of Kendal has introduced us to numerous helpful contacts and specialist expertise and even to some of our present Trustees!

Keith Durrant became an enthusiastic member of the Board, shortly after his retirement from the Planning Inspectorate. However, although he remained keen to support the Trust's work, concern for his own health led him to feel unable to fulfil his responsibilities as a Trustee. He informed us recently of his reluctant decision to stand down.

Naturally, we wish to express our thanks to Alan and Keith, for their dedication and for their valued respective inputs into the development of the Trust. We offer to both of them our best wishes for the future.

The Trust will be addressing the new "vacancies" on the Board (in fact, there is no fixed quota of Trustees – like other charitable trusts, we seek to maintain a range of collective experience and skills appropriate to our objectives); our thinking is that the forthcoming re-opening of the restored Stricklandgate House and the Heritage exhibition will provide an ideal opportunity to attract and engage new Trustees able to bring relevant strengths to the body as a whole.

### **Staff**

The fundamental task of running and looking after the Centre for Voluntary Organisations, has been fulfilled by our capable and loyal members of staff: Brian, Ellena, Alan, Win, Dorothy and Pauline have continued to do an excellent job for us without complaint, despite the upheaval imposed by the conservation works. We have also experienced changing demands on the requirements of staff duties and presence: we are grateful for their willingness and flexibility in accommodating adjustments to their hours, while, as ever, maintaining their high standards of service. The continued excellence of our volunteers is, once again, gratefully acknowledged; our receptionists have, collectively and individually, maintained their reputation for charm, calm and courtesy in the manner in which they welcome and guide our visitors to Stricklandgate House.

Through the opportunities that our specialist-group structure provides, all our Trustees – who always give their time voluntarily - have been particularly active in helping us to fulfil the statutory requirements incumbent on a charitable business. I am especially grateful to Alan Winstanley and Harry Jeffs for taking such an active part in managing the Project on behalf of Trustees. Our responsibilities towards the health and safety of all users of Stricklandgate House, especially in the context of variations resulting from the Project and the additional

public access that we are currently encouraging, are kept under the scrutiny of the Staff, Health and Safety Group, ably led by Cllr Sylvia Emmott.

Trustees will also join me in acknowledging the work of the many people who have continued to support our activities. They include the efforts of our network engineers, our service providers, specialist advisers and the provision of employment services and auditing are particularly acknowledged. It is appropriate, too, to record our appreciation of the professionalism and co-operation of our architects (and of Mike Darwell, in particular), of our main contractors and, especially, of the site foreman, Craig Halliwell; it has also been a pleasure to work with Trevor Hughes, with his colleagues in Kendal Civic Society, and with Matt Tansley and Craig Birtles of Next Step Internet, on the implementation of the heritage exhibits at Stricklandgate House.

Trustees also join me in expressing the appreciation and gratitude for the continued dedication, hard work, loyalty, resourcefulness and reliability due to our Centre Manager, John Gallagher. His ability to maintain a gentle disposition, despite the frequently trying circumstances of dealing with contractors, decorators and engineers as well as tenant needs is something we all value greatly. The trust and respect he receives from our staff, tenants and visitors alike are richly deserved.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

---

The Stricklandgate House Trust is pleased to record its gratitude to the several individuals and organisations who, during the past year, have continued to make gifts, grants or services in kind, in support of the operation of Stricklandgate House. We thank:

**Heritage Lottery Fund**  
**South Lakeland District Council**  
**The Frieda Scott Charitable Trust**  
**The Hadfield Trust**  
**Kendal Town Council**  
**W W & M G Wilson**  
**J R Peat**  
**The Multimedia Shop**  
**Kendal Civic Society**  
**The Next Step**  
**The Maude Family**

## **RISK MANAGEMENT FOR CHARITIES**

---

In accordance with the requirements of the Charity SORP 2000, the Trustees confidently confirm that the major risks to which the charity is exposed have been carefully reviewed and evaluated and that systems and checks have been established to mitigate these risks.

In accordance with the requirements of the Charity SORP 2006, the Trustees are able to confirm that the members of the Board bring a cross section of collective experience that covers general management, building services, property management, finance and legal activities.

When a vacancy occurs for a Trustee role, the experience, knowledge and networking skills of the Trustees is applied to filling it. Trustees are given responsibilities for particular areas of activity as well as the fulfilment of their overall Trustee roles.

## **GOVERNANCE**

---

The Trustees of Stricklandgate House have reviewed the principles and recommendations of the National Governance Hub, issued in June 2005. Trustees have carried out a detailed assessment of current practices and have satisfied themselves that these, together with the additional measures that they have decided to implement, bring the Trust into full compliance with the recommendations.