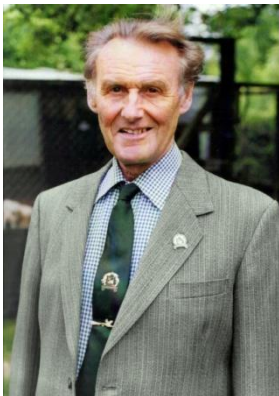


# The Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust

## Annual Report 2015

### Introduction



This report begins with recognition of our friend and founding Trustee who was also part of the original Gamekeepers' Association Don Ford who passed away in 2015. Don provided a standard which all gamekeepers aspired to with knowledge of the countryside and gamekeeping second to none.

A true gentleman and friend, The Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust (GWT) has a deep gratitude for his immense contribution to the Trust and the wider gamekeeping profession.

Work began on the Memory Tree which recognises loved ones who were part of the gamekeeping world and will be launched on the GWT website in 2016. We hope that this will give comfort to many who wish to recognise and remember their family and friends in this way. Like Don, their memory lives on in all they loved and achieved in their lives, imprinted in their families and on the countryside they cherished.

The world is changing and information has never been so readily available. However this means there is often less face to face interaction and in a profession where lone working is common this can cause problems of its own. Loneliness, social isolation and mental health are all features which are more prevalent. Gamekeeping is no exception.

For the retired, living in a familiar locality with friends and colleagues and in good health is a distinct advantage. Taking part in shoots maintains that vital link with the community, brings welcome additional income and keeping active is important to healthy living in retirement and into life for the elderly. When moving away due to lack of local housing or poor health this brings its own range of problems which can be incredibly difficult to overcome without help and support. Local initiatives and authorities as well as communities have a vital role to play here and the Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust is also active. A range of support in terms of visits, phone calls, letters and cards as well as liaising with local provision is well within the reach of the service provided and really makes a difference.

GWT volunteers are crucial to success ensuring the Trust is known both within and without the profession but most importantly on the ground, able to respond quickly and build personal relationships. The helpline continues to provide a lifeline through difficult times and has now

changed to a freefone line on 0300 1233088. Publicity material will reflect these changes as publicity material is renewed since the existing landline continues to exist.

### **Welfare and Educational Grants**

Being a small charity gives the flexibility to respond to need in imaginative and individual cases. From household goods to personal care, food vouchers or medical equipment each application is dealt with careful consideration and on-going support is proffered.

Welfare Grants are considered on an individual basis and are wide ranging. Examples in 2015 include personal care top up grants, wheelchair, food grants, assistance with transport costs, flooding emergency grant, and housing assistance.

Annual Grants continue to alleviate real hardship and give comfort to beneficiaries. These are restricted outside Scotland because of provision provided for gamekeepers and similar occupations through RSABI. Grants of £300.00 are restricted to households which are in receipt of benefits and usually distributed at the end of the year.

Educational Grants continue to provide support for students who would otherwise struggle to attend college and begin their gamekeeping career. A decision was made in 2015 to interview applicants and limit grants to £2000.00 except in exceptional circumstances where strong evidence is clear.

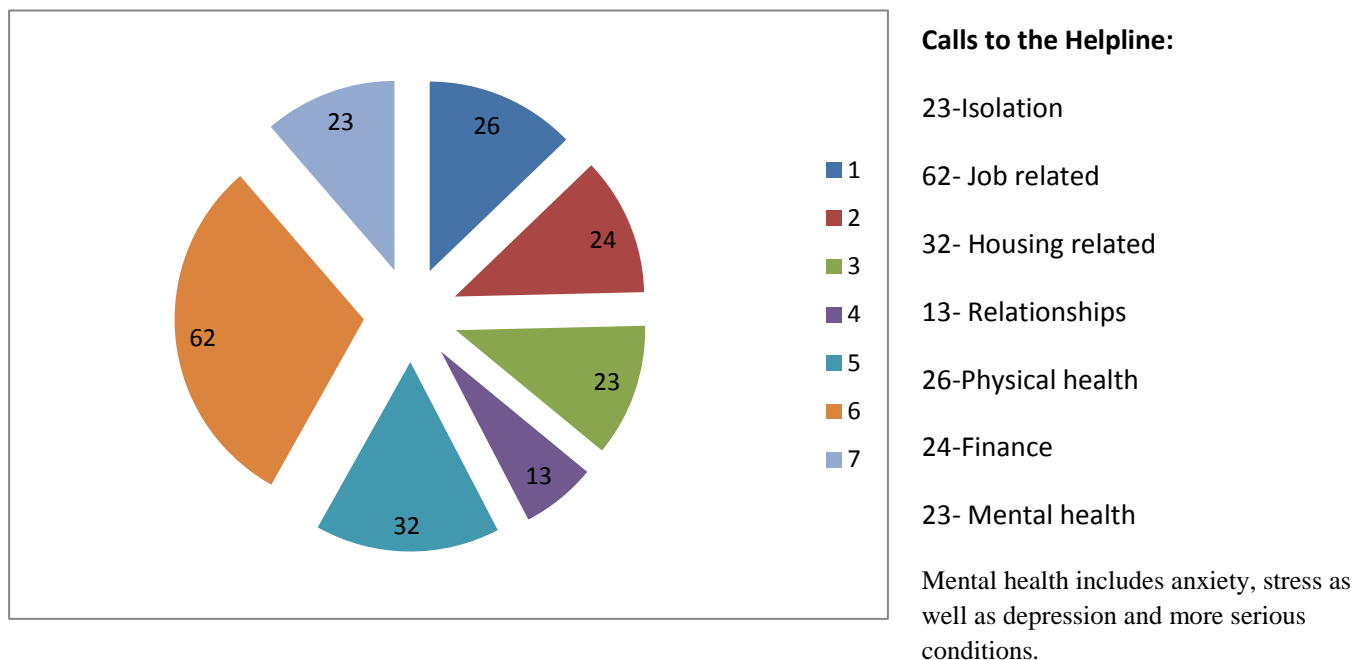
### **Helpline and Support Service**

The helpline and texting service continues to provide a lifeline and listening ear to many people during the year as well as single calls asking for information and signposting to other relevant professions and organisations.

Support is given on an individual needs basis and this may be required short term, specific need or an on-going help and be-friending service.

To make it easier to reach people the telephone line has now become a freefone number as given above: **0300 1233088**.

**Data records last 100 calls which are then broken down into the main problems and consequential issues therefore more than one difficulty is recorded where appropriate.**



We have been fortunate in being afforded support through the hard work of BASC staff and Trustees at The Shooting Show, Stoneleigh in February with donations given from the provision of refreshments. The Nettleton Lodge Clay Shoot In Lincolnshire hosted by Ben Jacob and his family through the auspices of Steve Smith and Countryside Clay Shoot for the second year at Six Mile Bottom, in May which is a triumph in bringing shooting organisations together for the common good through the hard work of BASC. Chirk Castle Clay Shoot and NGO Lancashire and Cumbria Clay Shoot have also consistently supported GWT which is always appreciated and never taken for granted. Support has also been given from the SGA rifle shoot and many more events throughout the year. We are indebted to all.

SGA AGM, NGO AGM and BASC Scotland Gamekeeper’s Meeting at Scone were attended along with Catton Gamekeeper’s Fair, Scone Game Fair, Great Yorkshire Show, CLA Game Fair at Harewood, Weston Park Game Fair. GWT is indebted to these organisations for hosting a presence. One display showed the main issues which are affecting gamekeepers and families in recent years.

**Publicity**

Gamekeeping organisations continue to provide space in magazines to promote GWT in terms of an advertisement as well as articles of interest. The Modern Gamekeeper and Shooting Times magazine are also key publications. Our listing in charitable professions on line provides an important link to health organisations and social services especially for the elderly and disabled. Contacts through this method are rising over time. College visits provide the opportunity to connect with young people entering the profession and who may require support or otherwise assist to promote services. Encouraging volunteers to spread the word is fundamental to effective support being available when required.

The Game Bird of the Year was split into England and Scotland in 2015 for important reasons.



The late Sheila Beattie was the secretary of the Scottish Gamekeepers Association and held in high regard by all who knew and worked with her. A presentation was given in July at The GWCT Game Fair Scone, Perth to Sheila in recognition for her work with gamekeepers, ghillies and stalkers in Scotland. Sheila lost her fight with cancer in December and was a real inspiration.

The Game Bird of the Year for England was presented by Sir John Scott Bt MFH honorary president of the Gamekeepers’ Welfare Trust and Trustee Lady Scott at Weston Park in September within the NGO stand. Julie Camody was a worthy winner and this was followed by a presentation for the Game Chick to twins Hannah and Katie .... A truly joyous occasion.



Hannah and Katie – Game Chicks of the Year

The video “David’s Story” on U Tube and later the GWT website kindly produced by James Marchington has been well received and has become a vital tool in presentations around the county which illustrates support in an individual case. It is hoped that a d.v.d. will be produced which incorporates other examples in due course.

A newsletter was produced in August to inform supporters of the year to date and encourage fundraising and highlight the presence of GWT to gamekeepers and their families. This was sent electronically as well as hard copy available at shows/game fairs and in student packs. A portfolio of fact sheets continue to provide information at a critical time with Bereavement, Anxiety and Stress topics providing the latest tips for coping strategies. Student packs continue to provide vital information of use during college and thereafter seeking positions and beginning placements and full time positions.

Social media continues to grow in importance to promote the constant message that the Gamekeepers’ Welfare Trust is available for anyone who may need support.

### **Merchandise**

Sales of cards, beanie hats, aprons, books, badges, ties and wrist bands provide a point of interest at shows and game fairs as well as welcome income.



### **Princes’ Countryside Fund**

This grant has enabled work to expand in alleviating isolation in rural communities and specifically for gamekeepers and their families. There are six monthly reports available if required throughout the three year life of the grant which completes in August 2016.

### **Job Register**

A majority of applications for positions vacant are now sent on line and many jobs are advertised through various websites and social media. The established database is responding to these changes by using Rural Recruits website closely associated with the Trust and run on a social enterprise basis as well as email alerts to positions not advertised. It is anticipated that physical forms will be phased out over time to ensure a more effective service for applicants and employers. Providing other assistance, with letters and c.v.s for example can really help in bringing people back into work or enter the profession for the first time.



### **Paid Assistance**

Ruth Benson continues to provide invaluable support in managing the job register and associated services. Sarah Rogerson joined the team as administrative assistance paid through the Princes' Countryside Fund programme editing the latest newsletter and website information. Thank you to both ladies for their cheerful and enthusiastic support.

### **Volunteers**

Our volunteers continue to make a significant contribution both in terms of social media which keeps our charity active and current. Other important work has included fact sheets and publicity at events as well as supporting individuals and families. With a small staff our volunteers perform a vital role in working to capacity and responding to need. Presentations, Game Fairs and other events are feasible because of practical support in this way. Thank you to everyone involved. A special thank you is given to Ruth Kerr who runs facebook with a creditable and dedicated following.

### **Partner Organisations**

We continue to be grateful to the British Association of Shooting and Conservation, National Gamekeepers' Organisation, Game and Wildlife Conservation and Trust and Scottish Gamekeepers' Association for their support in various ways. We aim to be present where gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies are found in social situations. Having a stand within these organisations saves funds and provides this opportunity.

RSABI provides support to people who depend or have depended on land based occupations and this includes gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies. We work closely together to provide effective support and value this close relationship. Perennial and the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) are also close partners in providing support to people who may have depended on gardening, farming and gamekeeping throughout their career.

### **Donations**

Tribute is given to many donors from Trusts, shoots and individuals. This income is vital to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust and the ability to respond to changing and rising need in various ways.

### **Sponsors**

Finally sincere appreciation is recognised to all GWT sponsors in 2015 who are crucial to enabling aims and objectives in reaching those in need, providing an excellent service and being known to the profession, allied services and industries and organisations.

Helen M J Benson  
18.03.16