

Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust Annual Report 2020

Mission

The Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust exists to support Gamekeepers, Stalkers, Ghillies and their dependents and families as well as those who wish to make gamekeeping their career.

Methodology

Financial assistance is given through individual, annual, welfare and educational grants in a range of circumstances including ill health, disability and hardship, starting out, in working lives and in retirement and later life.

Keeping in touch with the isolated, lonely and those who are struggling through ill health, disability, bereavement, redundancy, or in later life is an important feature of support proffered through telephone calls, texts, cards and small gifts.

Jamie's Helpline is a fundamental service which provides a telephone line to listen, support, and signpost to other assistance. This is available twenty four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days a year and non-discriminatory in terms of connection and longevity to gamekeeping and associated professions.

Attending colleges and sending student packs are an important means in keeping in touch and making young people aware of the services the Trust can offer and creating links are essential in creating links and relationships with those who wish to make gamekeeping their career.

Information in the format of fact sheets and webinars as well as training services through the Stag and Hind training is available at no cost to the gamekeeper or their partners which are designed to provide tools for individuals and families to make appropriate choices to improve their own circumstances. Being cognisant of mental health is central to any assistance provided and signposting as necessary.

A volunteer and supporter network underpins the work of the Trust as well as specific assistance from Alan Tweedie, Development Officer in Scotland, Ruth Kerr Social Media Manager and Ruth Benson who manages Rural Recruits which runs alongside support services offering specific assistance around employment.

Vision

To provide support to gamekeepers, stalkers, ghillies and their dependents, past, present and future as part of the "gamekeeping family".

Core Values

Respect	Integrity	Reliability	Empathetic	Continuous Development
Accountability	Innovative	Resilient	Commitment	Sustainable

Context

Gamekeepers, Stalkers and Ghillies and their families generally live and work in remote locations around the UK with all the associated benefits but also with considerable constraints around limited services and extra costs. Rural people and communities are used to and generally resilient to difficulties around these issues but are vulnerable when ill health or other issue affects their ability to work, or in retirement and later life. Housing is always a major factor as tied housing is generally accepted as part of the solution but also part of the problem. Rural housing and other services continue to create challenges, not least communication in broadband and mobile phone services. Limited services, which in turn can become a safety issue in lone and remote working as well as at home for people who live on their own.

Current Situation

2020 became a year of extreme challenges for everyone in the UK and across the World, due to the consequences of the Corvid 19 pandemic, and the gamekeeping community was no exception. Many shoots were curtailed in their shoot days or cancelled, whilst upland grouse moors, fishing and stalking was affected from the inability of guests to travel into the UK and restricted accommodation availability due to restrictions and periods of lock down. Lowground shoots were in the unenviable position of making forward planning decisions with limited information available to assess the shooting calendar whilst minimising risk of cost especially for those rearing and with game farms attached. A number of gamekeepers were made redundant, reduced wages, given the opportunity of alternative work, offered furlough whilst others were able to continue between lock down periods or relatively unaffected depending on the individual circumstances of the shoot or estate and its infrastructure.

Redundancy and external issues were the main problems encountered by gamekeepers who made contact with the Gamekeepers' Welfare during the year. External factors included the general Corvid 19 situation, sheer volume of walkers and visitors to the countryside with associated parking, litter and vandalism as well as an increasing minority of unpleasant and aggressive behaviour towards farmers and gamekeepers. Social media attacks have similarly been aggressive and bullying all of which has contributed to pressures hitherto at a reasonably manageable level. Changing and more restrictive legislation particularly in the Uplands and around SSI's have also created challenges and changing practices with inevitable costs attached. Mental ill health, financial issues and relationship problems were just a few of the internal factors which triggered calls to Jamie's Helpline.

The Year of the Gamekeeper began with a programme of plans and events which were cancelled after mid March, due to Corvid 19, with the exception of the SGA AGM, a presentation to the Game Feed group near Worcester and two presentations to a Sporting Agent keeper's meetings held in Wetherby, and Kinross respectively in February and early March. Of worthy note, was a Gamekeepers' ball, held in February 2020 which was extremely successful and created new interest, support and vital funds. The Game Bird Award was relatively low key but given in the window between restrictive movement and observing current safety rules to a worthy winner.

The majority of 2020 became a series of contact through social media, the website, pod cast and you tube as well as telephone and post. Beneficiaries and vulnerable individuals and families have received a series of letters/cards and small gifts which help to keep in touch and feel supported out with any financial support offered. An online festival was held which whilst modest in content, did reach a proportion of the gamekeeping community and maintained a presence throughout the

summer months. Other online improvements were made as the website was updated and refreshed which seems to be working well.

Fundraising has generally been curtailed however there have been generous donors, from Trusts, individuals and fundraising activities from groups and individuals which have been encouraging and equally helpful in raising profile. Being a visible and constant presence is essential to reaching those who require support; vital to the charity and community, as a whole.

The principal achievements of the Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust during the year and up to March of 2020 are summarised below in an infographic diagram (kindly provided by Ruth Kerr) as well as summary of social media updates.

Gamekeeper's Welfare Trust

FREE Gamekeeping for Life Packs for gamekeepers, stalkers & ghillies

FREE Ladies Packs for female partners & wives

FREE Information Packs for students

Housing Help

FREE helpline to call

Financial Help

Dependants Past & Present

Our support is for people in *gamekeeping jobs and their dependants past & present: partners, spouses, children, parents. Not sure? Give us a call free on Jamie's Helpline. What have you got to lose?

FREE STAG training for gamekeepers, stalkers & ghillies

Help Sheets to download from the website.

People who know your lifestyle to talk to.

Rural Recruits jobs, CV, support & more

FREE HIND training for wives & female partners

FREE Counselling

*Cost when we say gamekeepers: it's short-cut, and always includes stalkers and ghillies

Planning for retirement Seminar available to view on YouTube

Bereavement support

www.thegamekeeperswelfaretrust.com

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

8 March 2021

FACEBOOK

Facebook is our most established social media platform, dating back to September 2011. OWT has 87761 likes and 9413 Followers. We reached 22,214 people in the last month (8 Feb - 7 Mar) and gained 50 new Followers/likes. We post on Facebook once a day.

FACEBOOK GROUPS

We post key OWT content into 20 relevant Groups, with a total membership of 192,751 people. Groups include stalking groups, fishing group and general fieldports groups.

TWITTER

OWT's Twitter account was opened in November 2013. We have 1330 Followers. Our Feb, we received 17,000 impressions (this is the number of times a Tweet has been seen on Twitter). Our the last month we have gained 25 new Followers. We Tweet at least once a day.

INSTAGRAM

OWT's Insta account was opened November 2019 and we have 2397 Followers.

LINKEDIN

OWT's LinkedIn account opened October 2020 and we currently have 70 Followers. We post on LinkedIn at least once a week.

UPDATES BY RUTH KERR

Areas of Concern

Gamekeepers and their families are under considerable pressure due to a changing environment and economy as well as increasing dissent from minority groups. The long term future for gamekeepers especially in the Uplands is under greater threat and therefore reinforces the need to support those who are affected. Increasing need within the NHS and Social Care Sector will inevitably affect those who require medical or social care aid. The Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust has an important role to play in supporting those who need help, and it is anticipated need will rise in all sectors i.e. both working and retired and in later life. Every age group and sector in the gamekeeping profession is under pressure which means specific and targeted assistance is required to ensure this hard working and independent community continue to maintain their independence whilst enabling each individual and family to thrive and flourish.

Statement of Commitment

The Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust has a moral duty to provide interim and long term assistance and is committed to supporting the people within its remit.

Planning Ahead

Achieving effective, timely and appropriate support is the fundamental aim of the Trust whilst continuing to build on strong and dependable foundations in a responsible and structured approach.

Current forward plans have been implemented in the following regard:

A survey designed and implemented by Ruth Kerr, GWT Social Media Manager was published in June 2020 which demonstrates the key areas gamekeepers and their families feel they would benefit from in terms of further support and these are as follows:

- i. Financial planning
- ii. Retirement planning
- iii. Work related legislation
- iv. Employee rights
- v. Housing in retirement

The full report is in appendix 1.

Further implementation of the current aims and objectives of the Five Year Plan as published in the Annual Report 2018/19 are as follows with the full report in appendix 2.

- vi. Counselling service now offered free of cost
- vii. The Hind course has now run and continues to be offered online to gamekeeper's partners and wives
- viii. Podcasts and webinars have become part of the toolkit offered to individuals and families requiring specific information around financial planning.

On review of the project through analysis via the Swot matrix, it was considered that the five year plan should be renewed and amended to implement a range of objectives which address identified strategic and operational requirements.

The Five Year plan is designed to consider succession and a long term strategy for the Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust adapting to need and the changing nature of the profession of gamekeeping as well as housing needs and health and social care in later life.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

1. A well known brand within the profession.
2. Entirely independent from any membership organisation
3. Adaptable to need and individual requirements.
4. Provision of a wide range of services.
5. Well respected and trusted within the profession.
6. Operating throughout the UK

Weaknesses

- Relatively unknown in the health care and social care profession
- Not a membership organisation and therefore often overlooked in policy and decision making in the profession
- Overlooked for fundraising due to the nature of the work and increasing anti – field sports sector
- Less opportunity for fundraising due to a relatively small population of gamekeepers and their families.
- Difficult to overcome pride and stoicism in the community and confidential nature of many issues
- A range of methods in terms of communicating effectively with the gamekeeping community is required which creates administrative and implementation challenges.
- Risk through too few staff and no succession plan

Opportunities

- Communicating and engaging more effectively with employers, agents and factors
- Communicating and engaging with the health and social care profession
- Building a more effective and comprehensive volunteer network
- Legacies and Trusts
- Countryside Community Trusts and local funding opportunities
- Building a more effective relationship with companies and organisations
- Building a more engaging relationship with press
- Develop skills within the organisation through volunteers and staff engagement
- Become SMART in developing new tools to support people more effectively
- Consider developing regular income through a supporter and/or membership scheme

Threats

- Greater need anticipated due to government budgeting
- Greater need anticipated as the profession continues to be targeted from changing environmental and extremist groups
- Less potential funding through a potential collapse in the economy
- Increased costs around regulation and legal requirements
- Skills and capacity to provide effective support
- Continued difficulty to reach the “hard to reach”

Strategic Aims and Objectives 2021-2026

1. Deliver an efficient, effective, and timely service to individuals and families and ensure continual support as required.
2. Develop a comprehensive support service across the UK with a network of volunteers and underpinned by a range of collaborative local and national groups and institutions.
3. Develop and maintain appropriate and legislative practices for policies, practices and procedures.
4. Provision of sustainable and increased income through shared and collective objectives with relevant organisations, to effectively respond to anticipated need.
5. Create appropriate training for Trustees and volunteers to respond to evolving demands.
6. Provision of appropriate information and training to individuals and families as need arises.
7. Develop effective systems for succession with particular emphasis to key members of staff.

Future plans for 2022 include proposals for a number of events to celebrate the Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust's 30th Anniversary in place of the publicity and promotion campaign which was organised as part of the "Year of the Gamekeeper 2020" campaign.

HMJB
Chief Executive
09.03.21