

Bradgate Park Trust: A Vision for our Centenary

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The Bradgate Park Trust is at a key crossroads. Whilst our charitable objects are robust and have underpinned the development of Bradgate Park as one of the East Midlands' best loved visitor attractions, there is a need to consider how best to deliver them in a 21st Century environment of increased visitor expectations and greater legislative requirements, alongside a challenging economic climate and the uncertainty this brings.

The Trust does not propose to do anything that that would alter the special and unique characters of Bradgate Park or Swithland Wood. Instead, it proposes to focus on raising the quality, breadth and depth of the visitor experience, continually updating its facilities, and improving participation and engagement. It wishes to promote the heritage in its care to a wider audience, informed by a better understanding of our visitors' and our communities' expectations.

Whilst we are a local independent charity, we acknowledge we are part of a bigger tourism, conservation and heritage sector and that we cannot operate in isolation. In the coming decade, we need to strengthen our links within the statutory, voluntary and business sectors.

This Strategy defines the Trust's overall direction. It provides a broad framework for the delivery of our work and the ways in which we will seek to resource it, whilst still allowing the Trust the freedom to respond to new opportunities that may emerge.

These central themes can be summarised through five Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority 1

Providing high quality, accessible and diverse opportunities for all people (regardless of age or ability) to discover and enjoy Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood.

Strategic Priority 2

Conserving the landscape and heritage, both natural and manmade, that is in the Trust's care, fully meeting our statutory obligations as custodians of the Estate, so they are maintained and improved now and for future generations.

Strategic Priority 3

Delivering both informal and formal broad educational and learning experiences for visitors of all ages, so that our local heritage and the wider environment are better understood and cared for.

Strategic Priority 4

Raising sufficient funds, from a range of sources, to ensure the delivery of these objectives to meet the needs of the landscape, heritage and wildlife, our visitors and the wider community.

Strategic Priority 5

Building the capacity, and capability of the Trust to deliver its objectives, improve our services and support the growth and development of the Trust.

Bradgate Park Trust: A Vision for the Centenary

About Us – The Bradgate Park Trust

The Bradgate Park Trust, a registered charity, was formed in December 1928 with the gifting of Bradgate Park by Charles Bennion. The Trust's objects (charitable purposes) are:

“The provision of a public park and recreation ground, and the maintenance and improvement thereof, for the benefit of the inhabitants of the County of Leicestershire and of visitors thereto, with the object of improving the conditions of life for such persons”

And (added in a 1980 Charity Commission Scheme granted to update the original Trust Deed):

“To advance the education of the public in the appreciation and care of the environment.”

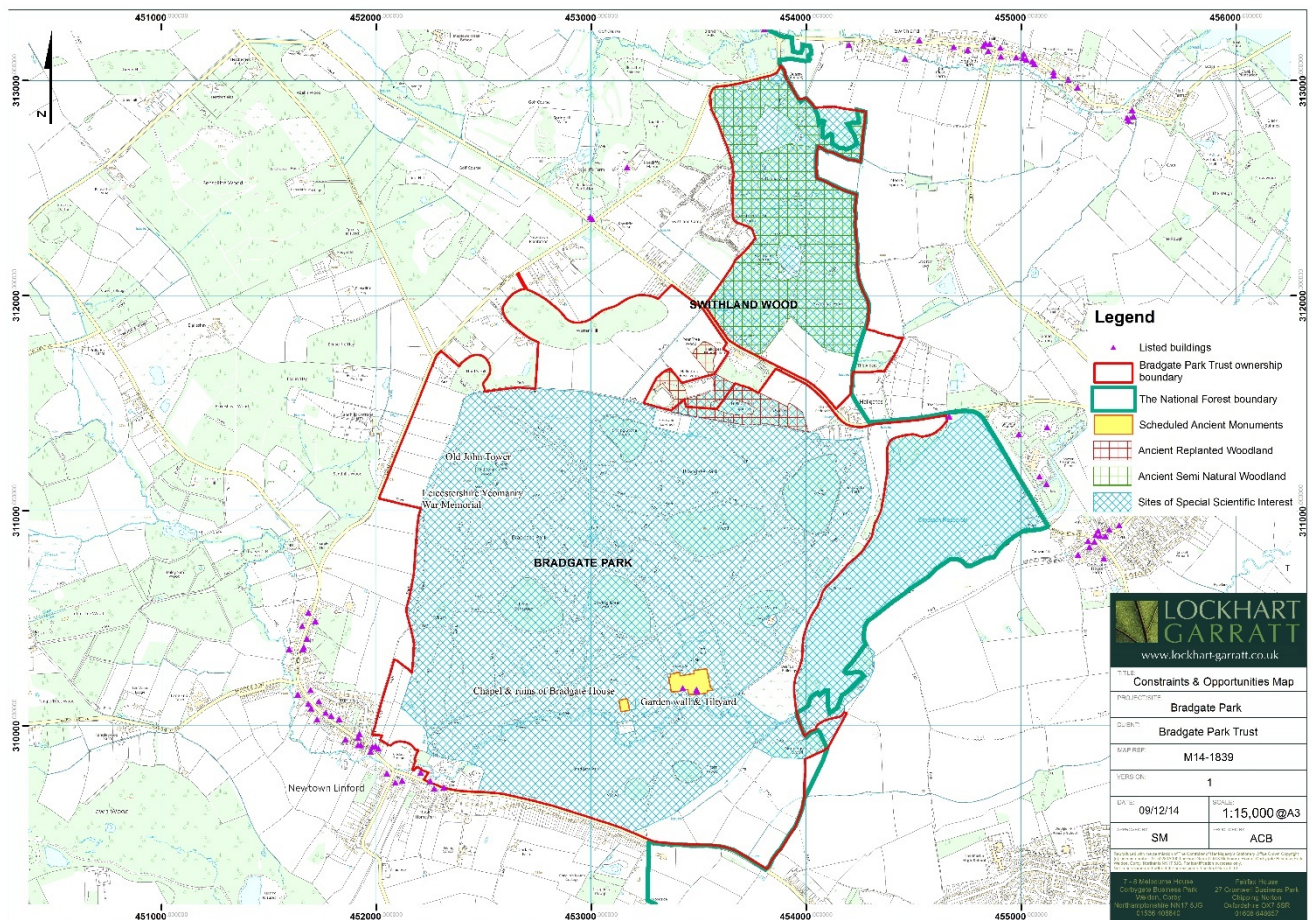
The original 1928 Deed of Trust sets out our founder's vision for his charity, which includes to *“preserve so far as may be the natural aspect and features and state of rural beauty and plant life of the Park...”*. In 1931 the ownership of Swithland Wood was transferred to the Trust, donated by the Rotary Club of Leicester, who had purchased this portion of the original Bradgate Estate of the Earls of Stamford to save it from development and preserve it as a place for public recreation.

The subsequent gifting of additional land (the most recent additions being White's Wood and Stocking Wood, purchased in 2014 with the support of Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, the National Forest Company and the Helen Jean Cope Trust) means that the Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood Estate today extends to over 510 hectares (1,260 acres) and includes 336 hectares (830 acres) at Bradgate Park, 59 hectares (146 acres) at Swithland Wood and also a peripheral belt of farmland and woodland which helps protect the boundaries of the historic deer park.

The landscape of Bradgate Park, together with its underlying geology, is nationally important and is legally protected by the Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is illustrated within the map. The 288-hectare parkland component of the SSSI is described by Natural England (the Government's conservation advisory body) as *“one of the finest remaining examples of ancient parkland in Leicestershire [and] contains some of the last remaining fragments of wet heathland in the county.”* Certain features including the Precambrian fossils and recently discovered upper-Palaeolithic archaeology are of international importance.

There are two Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings within Bradgate Park. The Park is included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II. There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, comprising the remains of Bradgate House and a moated lodge site 200m west of Bradgate House, which investigations in 2016 show to have been a 13th century hunting lodge.

Swithland Wood is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest, as one of the largest remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland in Charnwood Forest.



Map showing the extent of the Estate and the statutory and non-statutory designations that apply to various areas and features.

The Trust currently has a total of ten trustees. In accordance with the terms of Charles Bennion's gift, three trustees are nominated by Leicestershire County Council, three by Leicester City Council and three by the National Trust. The Trust is governed by a Charity Commission Scheme of 1980, which updated the original 1928 Trust Deed. This was further updated in 2014 to increase the number of Trustees to a maximum of twelve and broaden criteria for their appointment.

The Trust is committed:

- to ensuring that visitors to Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood enjoy the time they spend with us;
- to continuing to seek ways in which the public's enjoyment and appreciation of the Park and woodlands can be enhanced;
- to provide diverse learning opportunities to visitors of all ages;
- to working in partnership to ensure that the Trust's properties and landscapes are preserved and maintained for the enjoyment of future generations of visitors;
- to making the best possible use of our resources and funding to achieve our Vision;
- to the welfare and safety of our staff and volunteers, providing training and development to enable them to fulfil their roles;
- as its custodians, to ensure good governance of the Trust so as to ensure public confidence in the management of Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood and their unique heritage now and in the future.

Our Vision and Values

Our Vision – our long-term aspiration for the land in our care

The Bradgate Park Trust's vision is that future generations, regardless of age and background, will enjoy, value, understand and celebrate Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood's inspiring landscapes and rich heritage.

Our Values

The Trust will strive to be:

Accessible: in the services and information we offer, adapting to diverse needs and ensuring equality of access.

Professional: acting with integrity in everything we do, being a trusted, fair and responsible organisation.

Inspirational: in terms of our achievements and the stories we tell of the heritage in our care.

Focused: the care of the internationally important landscape and heritage, and the quality of our visitors' experience are at the heart of everything we do.

Welcoming: to all visitors, ensuring a quality experience in a quality environment.

Educational: with a commitment to learning opportunities for all ages, and training of our own staff and volunteers.

Collaborative: working with others who share our values to achieve our goals.

Committed: to achieving the best and in supporting our staff and volunteers in their work.

The Story So Far: Our Living Inheritance.

In recent years, significant work has been done to ensure Bradgate Park develops a more comprehensive visitor offer. This work has:

- helped to ensure the nationally important historic and biodiversity-rich landscape is protected for future generations. In part, this has been through greater research to inform our management: links to universities and specialist groups have been made, helping the Trust better understand the natural and man-made heritage of the Park and the wildlife species it supports;
- provided new volunteering opportunities and wider educational experiences, through Forest Schools and Young Ranger programmes;
- provided new facilities to meet the expectations of visitors in the 21st century.

Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood currently provide the local economy with many benefits and provide employment for some 60 local people. The Trust has been working to maintain the Estate as a regionally important tourism asset. Facilities at Bradgate Park include:

- Car parks
- Opportunities for cycling and horse riding
- Recreation and leisure assets, such as benches and rest points
- Dedicated visitor reception staff seven days a week in the Visitor Centre
- Public conveniences, including baby changing facilities and accessible toilets with 'Changing Places' provision for visitors with disabilities
- Two tearooms open 360 days a year featuring locally-sourced produce, wherever possible. Between the two locations this provide seating for 78 inside customers, 130 outside and a family-friendly atmosphere with high chairs available.

Services offered include:

- Events and guided walks
- Conservation volunteering and training
- Heritage interpretation volunteering and training
- Holiday activities (currently limited with scope for development)
- Education programme (currently limited with scope for development)
- Information and retail
- Room, equipment, and event space hire (currently limited with scope for development)

The conservation volunteering pilot recruited over 80 volunteers with nearly 2,500 hours donated in the first year. Achievements have included extensive work on restoring the historic dry stone walls of the Estate, tree planting, charcoal making and assisting at events.

Visitor Experience Volunteers have been recruited for the Visitor Centre since opening in July 2016 and now make up some two-thirds of the staffing.

Bradgate Park is a place for sharing memorable experiences with family and friends. The Estate offers a unique mix of experiences around archaeology, history, geology, natural history, conservation and countryside skills, education and learning for all ages. The Trust works to help people to discover more about wildlife and nature, reconnect them with the outdoors and encourage them to lead healthier lifestyles, leading to improved health and wellbeing.

Revised management plans have been commissioned and are now being put into practice. These include the Parkland Plan and Woodland Management Plan. Our conservation work is overseen by national agencies, Natural England and Historic England, and there have been significant improvements in the quality of habitats and historic features in the Trust's care. The Ranger team has increased in size, recognising the importance of the land in our care, and the need to ensure visitor safety. Investment in new machinery and training has improved efficiency and productivity.

We are reviewing our governance to ensure that trustees, who are custodians of the Estate, have a sound understanding of their responsibilities and are able to represent the best interests of the Trust and champion its work. 2015 saw the first Board-appointed trustee and other recent changes in personnel have brought expertise from the heritage and charity sectors. A Finance and General Purposes sub-committee has been established to provide trustees with improved oversight of the Trust's increasingly complex finances.

Links have been developed with heritage organisations in the county to improve identification, recording and understanding of the Estate's natural history and human stories.

The use of social media and a comprehensive programme of visitor surveys starting in 2016 has enabled the Trust to become increasingly responsive to visitors' needs. In 2014 the Trip Advisor Travellers' Choice Awards named Bradgate Park as one of the Top 10 Parks in the UK. Social media and online reviews offer a positive overview of developments across the Estate and enable any issues to be identified and dealt with swiftly. The Trust has achieved Visit England Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme accreditation at Bradgate Park.

The Estate clearly sits at the heart of local cultural heritage and people care passionately about the Park and Swithland Wood. It is estimated the Park has 500,000 visitors per annum. Many people visit Bradgate Park throughout their lives, often first coming as a child and later returning with their own children and grandchildren.

In the early days of its existence, the Trust was entirely funded by its Holding Trustees, Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council. Over the past 20 years, local authority funding has declined from £250,000 (54% of total income) in 1995 to £34,000 in 2016/17 (less than 3%). This represents a real-terms reduction of some 91%. The final year of the current funding agreement will see council funding decline to £24,000 in 2017/18. Discussions have not yet begun about the post-2018 settlement, but early indications are that local authority funding will remain at broadly the same level.

Today, the Trust spends over £0.5m a year on managing and maintaining the Bradgate Park Estate. In order to become more financially self-sufficient, the Trust has developed its on-site income generation capabilities in the form of Pay & Display car parking, tearooms gift shop and events as well as venison, firewood and charcoal sales. Over 80% of income is now generated on site with the majority of the remainder coming from farmland and cottage rents and long-term land management grants such as Basic Payment Scheme and Environmental Stewardship. With changes in the UK's relationship with the European Union, the current schemes will disappear in the medium term, although early indications are of a continuing commitment to similar agri-environment funding by the UK Government in the future.

The Trust is now in a position where its operations are financially sustainable at their current level. The Trust has increased its reserves to ensure financial stability and to part-fund future capital developments. The reserves policy provides for a general reserve fund equivalent to six months of net operational expenditure.

The Bradgate Park Trust is adding significantly to the Park's infrastructure and in the last two years this has involved utilising external capital funding and grants, in addition to the charity's own reserves. We will

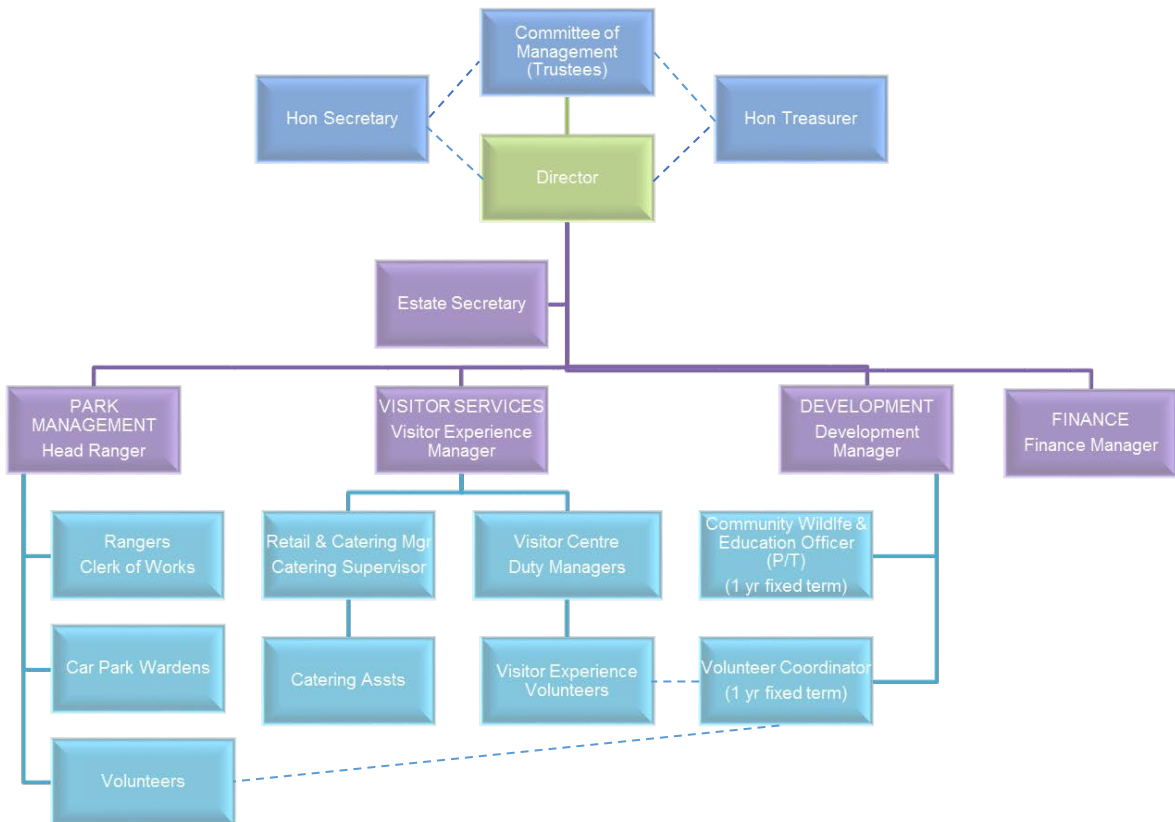
continue to seek creative partnerships, such as that with the Rotary Club of Leicester in 2015/16 to redevelop the Visitor Centre.

The “secondary spend” generated by on-site activities is an important source of funds to support the Trust’s charitable purposes and the sale of produce from the Estate provides a way of raising the profile of our management work, as well as being another valuable income stream. Outdoor theatre performances and live music in the Ruins have provided a new cultural tourism offer. The Trust has a stronger identity and brand as a charity, and work needs to continue to consolidate and build upon this. Stronger relationships with the media have been built and developed further in recent years.

There are opportunities for the further development of Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood as visitor attractions and better delivery of the Trust’s charitable purposes, that the Trust currently lacks the organisational capacity to take advantage of. It recognises the need for a more robust management structure, professional commercial operations and improved internal processes.

The Bradgate Park Trust has a dedicated and experienced team of staff and professional advisers, who perform a diverse range of functions in the management of both the Trust and the Estate. One of the main priorities will be the establishment of structures and procedures to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation. This was recognised with the Transition funding secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund in the autumn of 2016. This supports elements of this Strategy and evidence-gathering to enable future growth.

STRUCTURE CHART (2017)



Roles & Responsibilities

Committee of Management (Board of Trustees): Setting of policy, budgets and strategic direction and oversight of all Trust operations.

Hon Secretary (provided by Leicester City Council): Provision of “Clerk to the Trustees” services; provision of legal, procedural and governance advice.

Hon Treasurer (provided by Leicestershire County Council): Provision of financial support and advice; provision of payroll and internal audit services.

Director: Overall management and development of the Trust.

Park Management – Protection and enhancement of the Estate landscape and ecology, including park/woodland/deer management, maintenance, car parks.

Support Services: Finance and Secretarial.

Visitor Services: Visitor Centre; retail and Tearooms, developing the offer around the Ruins.

Development: Externally funded posts, volunteer/outreach, communications, fundraising and project development.

Strategic Priority 1.

Providing high quality, accessible and diverse opportunities for all people (regardless of age or ability) to discover and enjoy Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood;

(Please note: Many elements of the life-long learning activities, events and community outreach programmes outlined below deliver educational outcomes pertinent to Strategic Priority 3.)

Context for this priority

The Trust will work to maintain and enhance Bradgate Park's and Swithland Wood's reputation as quality countryside visitor attractions of regional significance, which are the first choice for tourism visits within the area.

Whilst Bradgate Park, in particular, has elements of visitor pressure that require management, the Trust needs to continue to attract visitors to Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood, although it does not aspire to increase numbers at Bradgate Park. We aim to provide enjoyable and memorable visits, encouraging people to stay longer to experience the rich heritage on offer. We will ensure that the offer is appealing to a wide cross-section of society, with no barriers to attracting the most diverse audience possible.

To achieve this, the Trust needs to provide much more than just well managed sites. We need to provide opportunities for recreation through events, activities and facilities that are high quality, exciting and create interest, as well as space for enjoyment, exploration of the wider landscapes and quiet relaxation, benefitting our visitors' education, as well as their health and wellbeing.

Primarily visitors can be grouped:

- Family visits (including visiting friends and relatives): somewhere to entertain children/grandchildren, attracted by easy parking, surfaced paths, play space, ad hoc events/activities (e.g. Woodlarks Forest School clubs and events), tearooms, high chairs/changing facilities.
- Education (schools, university students, uniformed organisations etc.) – although limited and mainly focussed currently at university links, an ad hoc programme of visits from primary (KS1 and KS2) schools do occur. *See Strategic Priority 3.*
- Community groups including youth and disability support groups.
- Naturalists (bird watchers, nature lovers, environmental charities etc.) and historians.
- Recreational (individuals, community groups e.g. carers; dog walkers; horse-riders, cyclists and runners; creative past-times including artists and photographers) – many are in the over 50 age range, local residents within easy reach of facilities.

With the accessible carriageway and free provision of the Big Lottery Fund-supported off-road mobility scooter, many less mobile visitors enjoy the Park. The Trust also offers 'drive-through' days where Blue Badge holders can bring cars on site. We are committed equality of access and will continue to seek new ways of widening participation.

This diverse audience presents challenges of meeting the different needs of a broad spectrum of customers. Social inclusion, health and well-being, education and life-long learning are all areas the Trust wishes to develop further, working with appropriate partners.

Both Swithland Wood and Bradgate Park provide a range of opportunities for cycling, walking and horse riding. The Trust Estate has 13 kilometres (km) of public footpaths, 3km of bridleways and 5km of

permissive horse riding trails (those within Swithland Wood are also used by cyclists). The Trust will maintain access to these as part of the recreational provision across the Estate, ensuring they are fully open and usable. The Trust aspires to extend access wherever this is compatible with the conservation of heritage features and the interests of other users. It recognises the need for increased signage and information to avoid conflicts and promote safe enjoyment for all.

Limited public transport in the area means the primary mode of transport is the private car, leading to pressures on car parks and, at busy periods, surrounding roads. In 2016 the Trust began discussions with both the councils responsible for highways and enforcement of on-street parking. The Trust wishes to be a 'good neighbour' and so will continue to work to find solutions to the impact of visitor numbers on local residents.

The Trust will continue to work with the local authorities and also transport providers, to try and improve opportunities for non-car borne visits. This includes seeking external funding to encourage more visitors by cycle. At Swithland Wood the Trust has been working with local cycling groups around off-route mountain biking provision and has offered to assist groups in raising funds to take forward a dedicated trail in the medium term.

The Trust recognises the constraints of the carrying capacity of the Park's environment and visitor infrastructure. These affect the quality of the visitor experience and stretch the capacity for tolerance of neighbouring communities to having a major visitor attraction on their doorstep. In addition, a fundamental constraint is the existing team capacity.

The Trust wishes to expand community engagement and volunteering, linked to its charitable purpose around "advancement of the education of the public in the care and appreciation of the environment".

To achieve this, it is recognised new energies need to be centred on activity that:

- generates greater community engagement and discussion, fostering a greater understanding of how the Estate is managed and maintained;
- encourages a greater understanding of the heritage of the site for all ages, with new interpretation and communication initiatives, making use of new technologies as they become available;
- allows a reconnection, celebration and experience of the Estate's unique natural and historic environment. We wish to understand more the cultural links of communities to Bradgate Park as we head towards the charity's centenary;
- fosters greater community ownership and support, through the provision of more volunteering opportunities.

New partnerships will be sought to develop a wider range of events that appeal to all ages and deliver life-long learning, creative inspiration, benefits to health and well-being, heritage or conservation awareness, as well as family days out that acknowledge the special value of the Estate to local communities. Events appropriate to the nature of the Estate and the Trust's vision could attract visitors in the shoulder season, increase income and bring new audiences.

The Trust will explore creative ways to make the most of the Estate's assets in order to deliver new opportunities. It is recognised in the next 10 years this might mean future building and redevelopment work (where appropriate), as well as exploring opportunities to enhance the estate through strategic acquisitions.

There has been a dramatic increase in visitor expectations since the Trust was established. Feedback and reviews have shown that the quality of facilities offered is an important factor in visitor choice. The Trust will continue to invest in improving facilities to enhance the visitor experience, but financing this is often a challenge as this type of investment falls outside most external funding schemes.

The volunteering programme launched in 2015 has shown great benefit across the Bradgate Park Estate, with habitats enhanced, features restored and new income streams, such as Charnwood Forest Barbecue Charcoal, developed. The involvement, dedication and hard work of the Trust's volunteers, who contribute a wealth of different skills and experience, is fundamental to our work. Our ability to involve, inspire and empower local people to take positive action is essential to achieve our aims for the future. We will extend and develop opportunities linked to the Visitor Centre, heritage interpretation, event management and wider conservation and estate management. New opportunities will be targeted at under-represented sections of the community and agencies supporting vulnerable groups as part of the Transition project.

Volunteering opportunities will be extended to help achieve this through the development of more guided walk leaders under the themes of heritage and natural history. In house training will be provided and materials developed with local experts from the specialist communities. Linked to this will be standard talks to promote and market the Estate. These will be offered free as part of an awareness campaign around the Estate's management and importance. This links to our Strategic Priority 3 around education and our second charitable purpose.

Specifically, during the period 2017 – 2027 we will:

Short term (years 1-3)

- Working with appropriate agencies, improve information and signage to encourage visitors across the five car parks that the Bradgate Park Trust manages and improve facilities and payment methods at these;
- Improve signage and information at entrance points and within the site to promote events, visitor orientation and understanding;
- Using new technology introduce new payment options for events and season-tickets, alongside a full review of information on the Trust's website;
- Through the establishment of a Memorial Wood at Bradgate Park, in partnership with Leicestershire Freemasons and Leicestershire County Council, provide an area for reflection and remembrance of loved ones; (links to Strategic Priority 4)
- Establish a pilot programme around mindfulness, reflection, creativity and health and well-being through time spent outdoors working in partnership with others; (links to Strategic Priority 4)
- Deliver a wide range of courses, talks, events and activities, plus other opportunities that enable people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with nature and experience wildlife and the heritage in our care at first hand, as well as off-site through an outreach programme; (links to Strategic Priority 3 and 4)
- Develop and run relevant information campaigns, communication and engagement programmes through social media, press, our website and varied media (including free talks) in order to increase people's understanding of, and support for, the work of the Trust; (Links to Strategic Priority 3)
- As part of the celebrations of the Trust 90th anniversary in 2018, establish a programme linked to the cultural connections that people have with the Estate, resulting in an archive of relevant material and training for volunteer champions;

- Further develop volunteer engagement (including corporate volunteering) and provide focused support and training, so tasks can be led by volunteers (as well as staff) and new talks and tours on heritage themes can be led by volunteers, acting as 'Community Champions'; (links to Strategic Priority 2 and 5)
- Develop greater links for communities to play a role in Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood through sponsorship events and greater opportunities to 'play a part'; (Links to Strategic Priority 4)
- Support and deliver a range of high quality events, which are appropriate to our charitable purposes and that generate income; (Links to Strategic Priority 4)
- Play a lead role in championing tourism in the Charnwood Forest area, wider county and region.

Medium Term

- Develop greater interpretation around heritage and wildlife, particularly focussing on on-site information at the Ruins, Old John and along the main carriageway through the Park (subject to external funding). This will be supplemented by developing more heritage volunteers and tours for face-to-face support of visits;
- Continue to research and understand our visitor profile through surveys, installation of visitor counters and providing varied formats for gathering data. Analysis of business intelligence data and event feedback will inform work plans;
- Achieve Investing in Volunteers accreditation.

Aspirations subject to funding, include:

- Development of a base for education and volunteering activities;
- Provision of catering at the Hunts Hill entrance;
- Refurbish toilet facilities at Hunts Hill and Hallgates;
- Expansion of the Deer Barn tearooms;
- Development of a three-year project for community opportunities at Swithland Wood, including recreation, education and greater volunteering opportunities, alongside car park and welfare facilities, signage and information;
- Establish greater access to the upper areas of Bradgate Park through a new circular path suitable for use by all visitors;
- Investigate the feasibility of an overnight stay offer on the Estate outside the historic deer park wall such as "glamping".

Strategic Priority 2.

Conserving the landscape and heritage, both natural and manmade, that is in the Trust's care, fully meeting our statutory obligations as custodians of the Estate so they are maintained and improved now and for future generations;

Context for this priority

The management of the nationally important heritage, historic landscapes, habitats and wildlife these support is a part of our primary purpose. The importance and designations are outlined in the preliminary background sections to this Strategy. Full information on these designations can be found in the approved Parkland Plan for Bradgate Park, which was adopted by the Trust in 2014.

Bradgate Park is a diverse and fascinating place, with notable geological, archaeological and biological features throughout its historic parkland, which supports national and local rarities. Bradgate Park is currently managed under a Higher-Level Stewardship Agreement that runs from 2013-2023. The management priorities and objectives are set out in the 2014 Parkland Plan. The plan sets out the following:

Bradgate Park will be managed to reflect its national importance as a medieval deer park with a multitude of interests, providing an invaluable free resource for the people of Leicestershire and beyond. The unique geology, with some of the oldest rocks and fossils in England, will be appropriately conserved for the benefit of future generations. The rich archaeological record, including the Late Upper Palaeolithic Site of international importance, will be conserved and interpreted and will be better understood through further survey. The deer herd at Bradgate Park will remain in perpetuity as a direct link to the Medieval past and as the only populated deer park surviving in Leicestershire. The outstanding collection of veteran and ancient trees will be conserved through appropriate management, providing an invaluable ecological resource whilst testifying to its ancient origins. Bracken will be systematically managed throughout the park to encourage a mosaic of wood pasture, grassland and heathland habitats rich in wildlife whilst enhancing landscape character and archaeological protection and understanding. The ruins of Bradgate House and its surrounding gardens and outbuildings will be appropriately conserved and interpreted, befitting their national significance and their historical associations with Lady Jane Grey. Access and interpretation will be enhanced throughout the park to enable the ongoing and improved enjoyment of visitors to this inspirational resource, which will be provided in perpetuity for the people of Leicestershire and beyond in accordance with the wishes of benefactor Charles Bennion.

Top level objectives include:

- to maintain and enhance the rich visitor offer at Bradgate Park, whilst ensuring that the property's historic fabric and spirit of place are conserved and enhanced;
- to protect and interpret the wealth of above and below ground archaeology found across the Park;
- to conserve the outstanding collection of veteran and ancient trees;
- to enhance the nature conservation value of the Estate;
- to conserve the Park's unique geology;
- to continue sympathetic and traditional management of the Park's red and fallow deer herds in perpetuity, as a direct link to the Medieval past and as the only continually populated deer park in Leicestershire;
- to protect the immediate rural setting of Bradgate Park and its context within the Charnwood Forest.

The management of the woodlands across the Estate is directed by the approved Woodland Management Plan adopted in 2014. This covers Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood, which is nationally important as one of the largest remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland within Charnwood Forest.

The Vision in this plan states:

The long-term vision is to protect the woodlands as important landscape features, ensuring their longevity into the future whilst retaining their ecological importance and historical characteristics.

The woodlands will be enhanced to create diverse wildlife habitats attractive to woodland birds and other wildlife, in turn improving the aesthetic appearance of the woodlands for the educational and recreational visitors.

The sensitive management will be carried out in-house through a well-structured plan and the sustainable wood products produced as a result will generate an income to help support the management operations.

Specific objectives include;

- maintain the longevity of the woodlands in the landscape and increase their resilience against threats from climate change, pests and diseases;
- retain and protect the historical characteristics and biodiversity value of the Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands and Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- protect the aesthetic and amenity value of the woodlands for continued public enjoyment;
- enhance and diversify the woodland habitats to attract more wildlife, particularly woodland birds;
- Provide sustainable wood products through structured management and sound silvicultural practice.

The Trust has a legal obligation to maintain and conserve the protected monuments, structures and features that reflect past habitation. The Trust will seek to allow the maximum level of public access, consistent with fulfilling these obligations.

The Trust works with our tenants to ensure that their land management complements that undertaken by the Trust. Tenancy agreements, which include conservation-related clauses, inform this work. Agreements include historical Agricultural Holdings Act tenancy (for life), as well as 5-year Farm Business Tenancies and seasonal grazing licences. Renewals and reviews consider conservation issues and impacts, whilst accepting this land offers an important buffer zone around the Park and income to support the wider Estate. There is scope to further extend this work to create better wildlife corridors and green connections with the adjoining countryside. One of the Trust's tenancies includes an area managed as a Local Wildlife Site. This is an area The Wildlife Trust and county Historic and Natural Environmental Partnership have identified as one of the most important meadows for wildlife that is not protected by law. The Trust is committed to managing this as an essential feature of the wider countryside.

The Estate has many more stories to be discovered in terms of wildlife to be recorded and our understanding of past communities that have lived and worked within its boundaries. The Trust is committed to working with partners to research and understand more about the 15,000 years of human history at Bradgate Park. This includes working regionally with partners on a future Heritage Lottery Fund project application, which will seek to highlight the importance of the Estate's role within the national human settlement story.

We will maintain and strengthen our relationship with key agencies and partners that work with us in the conservation, preservation, maintenance and study of all aspects of the heritage in our care. This will include

statutory agencies such as Natural England and Historic England, the Environment Agency, local authorities, commercial neighbours such as Severn Trent Water, tourism partners and businesses, and conservation bodies such as the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and National Forest Company, as well as local universities and heritage organisations.

We will consider any opportunities to make strategic acquisitions of additional land that offer benefits in terms of heritage conservation or public amenity and preferably both.

An over-arching factor in all landscape work is that the environment is constantly changing, so there is a need to build into our plans ways in which to adapt to, or mitigate against, future climate change. This includes monitoring for pests and diseases such as ‘ash die back’, as well as producing baseline data on wildlife populations. Documenting and recording can help build resilience within the local landscape and inform conservation management. The Trust needs to take a long-term and balanced view of the landscape and ecology. We will ensure the timely replacement or succession of woodlands and feature trees, thinking of the landscape future generations will inherit. The Trust needs to be mindful that the Estate falls within a major water catchment area and will seek to work with partners around projects that protect this.

To manage and protect the landscape to a high standard, we will continue to support local strategies for enhancing heritage, wildlife and biodiversity. The Trust will continue to strengthen its voice as a key conservation and heritage educational charity and champion the needs of the land and features in our care. We will seek to attract funding that supports the protection and interpretation of these features.

The Trust will review and update detailed habitat management plans and policies, guided by improved monitoring and study, working in partnership with local special interest groups, universities, researchers and national agencies. The Trust will manage land in its care appropriate to its status, function and use. The Trust will work to share the messages of the importance of the landscape, heritage features and biodiversity and its management work with all visitors. Through this it is hoped to create better understanding, linking to the charity’s educational objectives around public engagement and education (Strategic Priorities 1 and 3).

Specifically, during the period 2017 – 2027 we will:

Natural Heritage:

- Implement Environmental Stewardship work programmes and adhere to compliance regulations to obtain payment (or any future schemes in light of changes within membership of the European Union);
- Facilitate, support and introduce appropriate biological and geological recording and monitoring procedures for our wildlife and habitats;
- Play a key role within the Living Landscape priority areas of Charnwood Forest, the National Forest, and Charnwood Forest Regional Park;
- Support and promote appropriate local and national campaigns that champion our heritage features or ambitions;

Built and Archaeological Heritage at Bradgate Park:

- Prioritise work to increase our understanding of the past residents and residual features from habitation (such as identified archaeological sites and Bradgate House) within land cared for by the Trust, working with partners and agencies as needed as part of a planned approach to study, and interpretation;

- Attract funding for an archaeological investigation in the gardens of Bradgate House and other pertinent investigations;
- Working with volunteers and groups establish an archive of material around Bradgate Park, its residents and visitors;
- With support of external funding establish an interpretation plan, online resources, educational modules and tours around the heritage of Bradgate Park based on the findings from research, including work from the Bradgate Park Field School and the excavation of the Late Upper Palaeolithic site.

Strategic Priority 3.

Delivering both informal and formal broad educational and learning experiences for visitors of all ages, so that our local heritage and the wider environment are better understood and cared for;

(Please note: Many elements of the life-long learning activities, events and community outreach programmes referenced in Strategic Priority 1 deliver educational outcomes pertinent to this priority.)

Context for this priority

The Trust believes that it is vital to provide opportunities for people to learn about the natural world and local heritage, and the need to safeguard them for the future. In addition, we have a responsibility to educate the next generation, so that they in turn will play a crucial role as future guardians of our environment and heritage. This priority is fundamental to our charitable purposes and in tune with the manifesto for Education Outside the Classroom.

Research has shown that contact with nature can have a positive effect, especially for children who do not do well in a classroom environment. Bradgate Park offers a 'learning outside the classroom' opportunity, with the added benefit for the Trust of generating repeat visits when children encourage their parents to bring them back at a later date.

Pre-booked school groups bring the Park to life during mid-week term time and the Trust aspires to develop these as part of off-peak and shoulder-season marketing of the site. The Trust aspires to achieve best practice standards and relevant accreditation for future educational models.

The Trust recognises the opportunities the Estate offers for research and study for individuals, special interest groups and universities both local and from the wider UK and abroad. The Trust is increasingly developing links with the three Leicestershire universities and recognises the value the research of students and academics, alongside that of special interest groups, brings to our understanding of the heritage of the Estate.

The Visitor Centre is central to future educational offers for all visitors and the Trust will continue to review and update displays and training for the Visitor Experience Volunteers. Life-long learning opportunities for adult-focussed educational talks/sessions will be established, alongside broader informal heritage learning programmes, working in partnership as needed.

The Trust will continue to support Forest School groups using the Estate. It also aspires to develop new informal opportunities for younger audiences around volunteering and educational outcomes. This might include for example establishing a Wildlife Watch group, supporting uniformed and other youth groups using the site and further development of the existing Young Rangers scheme. Where possible this work will be in partnership with others and the youth sector.

Specifically, during the period 2017 – 2027 we will:

Short term

- Further develop and market the outreach and education programmes, primarily for primary school children, home educators' networks and community groups, aiming to bring greater awareness of all aspects of the heritage in our care. (This is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2017)

- Develop resources for hire to support self-led learning (based on assessment of opportunities); (this is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2017)
- Incorporate comprehensive wildlife and heritage information and related educational resources on to the Trust's website and other appropriate outlets. The Trust will work with volunteers and local experts to collate and develop this resource; (this is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2017)
- Support the training of trustees, staff and volunteers around all aspects of the heritage of the Estate, so that they can act as champions and ambassadors; (this is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2017)
- Work with local schools and colleges to develop more opportunities for work placements and job shadowing at the Trust;
- Deliver a wide range of courses, talks, events and activities, plus other opportunities that enable people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with and learn about nature and the heritage in our custodianship at first hand;
- Work with educational institutions and groups of all levels to offer opportunities for appropriate research and study (including opportunities such as Bioblitz and Wildlife Weekend, which might have wider appeal than educational outcomes);
- Achieve appropriate accreditation for our educational delivery.

Medium Term

- Develop greater on site-interpretation for visitors as part of our life-long learning objectives, subject to external funding;
- Establish a network of volunteers to help deliver educational sessions, walks and talks;
- Work with partners to develop codes of conduct and events that promote appropriate behaviour, for example dog walking events, with appropriate guidance for visits. A particular focus will include the issue of inappropriate mountain biking on the Estate.

Aspirations subject to future funding include:

- Develop an educational offer at Swithland Wood;
- Establish a base for educational and learning activities either through redevelopment or strategic acquisition.

Strategic Priority 4.

Raising sufficient funds, from a range of sources, to ensure the delivery of these objectives to meet the needs of the landscape, heritage and wildlife, our visitors and the wider community

As context for this priority

In the early days of its existence, the Trust was entirely funded by its Holding Trustees, Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council. Over the past 20 years, local authority funding has declined from £250,000 (54% of total budget) in 1995 to £34,000 in 2016/17 (less than 3%). This represents a real-terms reduction of some 91%. The final year of the current funding agreement will see council funding decline to £24,000 in 2017/18. Discussions have not yet begun about the post-2018 settlement, but early indications are that local authority funding will remain at broadly the same level.

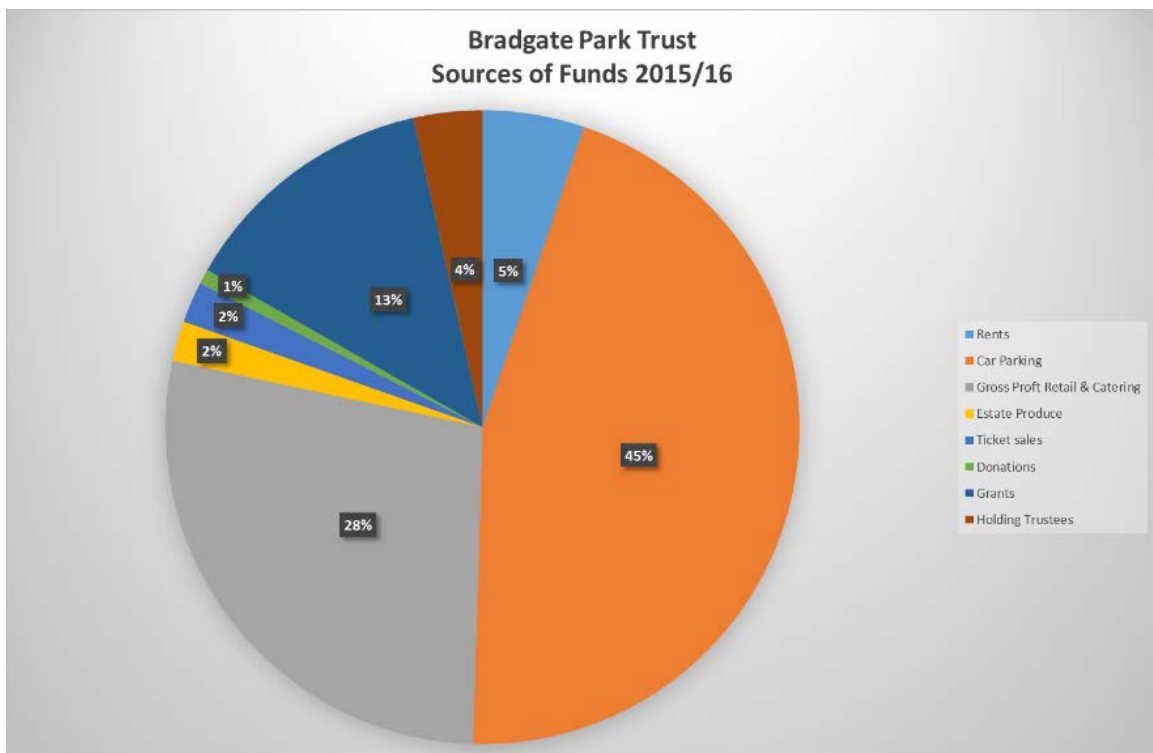
As the Trust moves towards greater self-sufficiency, we must work with local councils to agree ways of support in the future, whether in-kind or financial.

The Trust is now primarily self-financing, raising 80% of its income through its onsite activities. This will be a key marketing message going forward, along with how this income generated supports all work on the Estate. The income from these sources allows the Trust to cover its operating costs and generate sufficient surpluses to fund ongoing maintenance and periodic renewal of vehicles and equipment.

In addition to these ongoing activities, the Trust aspires to attract funding for any future capital development works and to build an endowment fund of sufficient size to enable it to fulfil its charitable purposes into the future.

Figure 1 outlines the Trust's sources of income 2015-16.

FIGURE 1: FUNDING SOURCES 2015-2016



There is a need to further develop a diverse funding approach to avoid over reliance on individual funders and reduce financial uncertainty going forward.

In 2015, the Trust commissioned consultants to develop a fundraising strategy for the charity. This identified gaps such as potential to secure grants, lack of marketing and management of media messages, as well as potential funding sources and approaches. It also recognised the need to develop services and for investment in infrastructure. To achieve the latter, it was recognised that new sources of funding and in-kind support need to be found. It is increasingly hard to fund capital programmes and also core development and support service posts. This is set against a background of increasing visitor expectations and regulatory pressures on charities.

In order to take forward some of the areas of work identified in the consultants' report, in 2016 a new role of Development Manager was established.

Trustees will agree policies, structures and resources for fundraising activities and maintain oversight of regulatory compliance, recognising the need for agreed delegation to the Trust's senior staff to enable them to respond to opportunities and offers of support, particularly for small-scale revenue grants.

Legacy impacts of grants in terms of business risk and additional revenue costs will always be considered. However, the Trust will actively seek grant support for existing and aspirational projects linked to this Strategy. No fundraising activities will be undertaken that compromise the charity, or support organisations whose own objectives are in conflict with those of the Trust or where there are ethical/political concerns.

The Trust will aim to work in partnership where possible to reduce financial burdens on the Trust. It is recognised some projects might lead to experimentation (including failure), but the Trust will not be afraid to be at the leading edge, developing creative solutions to challenges. Projects will involve real collaboration and partnership. To avoid misunderstandings and unfulfilled expectations where money is given to the Trust, details of the sponsorship/support will be agreed and confirmed in writing.

Future fundraising and income generation will take a diverse approach. In all fundraising activity, we will adhere to the new fundraising regulatory regime, the Code of Fundraising Practice and Charity Commission guidance.

Potential avenues for future fundraising include:

Charitable Trusts and Foundations

Charitable trusts and foundations give about £3.6 billion in grants to charities (including religious organisations and universities) in the UK each year. There are almost 10,000 UK charitable trusts and they vary a great deal in both size and scope. A small percentage give away large lump sums and Trusts are often flexible around outcomes of donations. There is also potential to develop long-term relationships, with particular local trusts. However, this is not a sustainable income stream and will be related to new projects, as opposed to a focus on core delivery. As a heritage, educational charity, the Trust is well

placed to approach trusts around core charitable purposes. Development work will be undertaken in 2017-18 around the initial project banks identified.

Individual Giving

Currently the Trust has unbranded donation boxes in the Tearooms and Visitor Centre. Research has identified donation box products that are more interactive and might attract greater donations. Promotion of the educational work of the Trust might attract greater support as 'children' receive a much higher proportion of donors and total amount than 'environment'.

Individual giving should also be seen as part of a wider engagement with our audience/visitors, fostering loyalty, repeat attendance and advocacy. Audience/visitor fundraising can be used as a solid base for the promotion of legacy donations, a potentially major source of income for the Trust in the future, due to the 'local value' people place on Bradgate Park.

In the medium term, it would be hoped to link to local running clubs that train at Bradgate Park and organisations that race on the site to promote opportunities to raise funds through sponsorship challenges.

Major donors are a significant potential source of funds and will often repeat their donation on an annual basis. Often wealthy people make gifts because they have direct relationships with, or are known to, trustees of a charity. Trustees will play a major part in initiating a major donor programmes as the Bradgate Park Trust does not have a supporter/donor base at present and this will need to be established, working alongside the Board.

Online Giving

Through social media and the website, limited promotion has been given to monthly and one-off online giving. Smaller donations can add up and time will be invested in promoting and championing monthly small giving.

The Trust website links to a third-party provider's online giving portal that does not direct donors away from the website and the branding of the donation page remains that of the Trust. The provider claims Gift Aid on the Trust's behalf. A full review will be undertaken around online giving looking at the best models for increasing regular and one off donations.

Legacies

The Trust has never received a significant legacy or major donation from an individual. Promotion has been low key and ad hoc, with small gifts occasionally received.

The Trust recognises that Bradgate Park is held in great affection by local people. Effective legacy marketing and promotion can result in legacies in the medium term, however it is not a guaranteed income stream and whilst national charities can attract around 6% of their income through this form of fundraising, the Trust is unlikely to achieve a regular flow of funds. However, legacies can be useful for building and maintaining financial reserves, for providing investment in service development etc. The Trust will therefore invest in a wider 'awareness raising' campaign, which would place it firmly in the minds of potential donors, who may wish to leave a lasting legacy to benefit local people.

Corporate (Company Giving)

How companies support charities is changing with a continuing reduction in financial gifts and increased non-financial giving. Five years ago, nearly 70% of support was in the form of cash contributions. Today, that figure is 54%, as the proportion of giving made up of 'employee time' and 'in-kind' contributions has risen sharply. Many are now tied to Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR) policies.

Corporate sponsorship normally takes the form of marketing benefits to the sponsor in return for payment, e.g. branded literature, hire of venues for meetings for corporate entertaining. This definition distinguishes the commercial nature of the sponsorship from the corporate donation for which no benefit is sought or delivered. The term 'partnership' is increasingly used in preference to 'sponsorship' as it allows for a more flexible type of relationship, but it has the same essential element of reciprocity which distinguishes it from the corporate gift.

Company gifts could be used to fund a wide range of the Trust's Strategic Priority activities including capital projects and education and outreach work.

This is an area for potential growth and also patronage for the Trust to explore. Links will be built with Leicestershire Cares, a local organisation that brings charities and businesses together.

Creative delivery partnerships, sponsorship, donation and new ways of bringing resources through in-kind assistance need to be developed. This approach has recently borne success with refurbishing the Trust offices, saving revenue spend that would otherwise have been needed.

Payroll giving

Payroll Giving or Give as You Earn is a scheme whereby employees can authorise their employer to deduct charitable donations from their pay before calculating PAYE. The employee selects a charity to receive the gift and then gets tax relief at their top rate of tax on the donation. The employer has to agree to operate the scheme. Whilst the scheme has not proved very popular since it was introduced in the 1970s (currently only about 2% of employees participate) this has potential for promotion to large local employers. This will be explored for smaller regular donations.

Community Fundraising (Links to Strategic Policy 3)

Community fundraising can be hugely beneficial as it can often bring in money for very little financial outlay. This can raise unrestricted cash, whilst increasing promotion of the Bradgate Park Trust as a charity. It can also provide a way to engage new fundraiser volunteers. The Trust has a strong local presence, is well known and well respected and has a healthy influx of willing volunteers and visitors who have demonstrated a willingness to 'give something back'. Developing this stream links to the Heritage Lottery Fund Transition programme and new Volunteer Co-ordinator and Community functions.

The Trust will consider opportunities to work with volunteers within fundraising programmes. Training will be given to all community fundraising volunteers, including trustees who act as ambassadors for the organisation and offer links to potential major donors and can champion future legacy bequests.

Growth of additional enterprise activities:

Over recent years the Park has developed a range of enterprise activities which are proving to be popular. There are many other possibilities which could be explored, these include:

- Birthday Parties
- Retreat Weekends/walking weekends as part of a package with a local hotel
- 'Sleepovers' in the Park/glamping

Some services within Bradgate Park are delivered through ad hoc and informal historical working relationships with business partners, such as ice-cream sales and Forest School activities. These are inconsistent in process and there is a recognised need for harmonisation.

This will professionalise the Trust's relationship with contractors and event suppliers and also lay the foundations for future business developments such as adult craft/inspiration workshops, photographic sessions, celebrant (e.g. renewing vows/naming ceremonies) and health and wellbeing events. These approved and licensed activities could provide a regular percentage of turnover.

Any new activities will be reviewed against our charitable purposes and their potential impact on both the Park's environment and neighbouring communities. We believe there is potential to accommodate additional events without compromising other aspects of the Park and its landscape if these are sensitively planned and managed.

Capital appeals/Crowd funding

Capital appeals and crowd funding can support major projects within the Estate, such as improving facilities (such as the Deer Barn Tearoom, or access and interpretation developments). Some core costs e.g. for administering the project, can be added to the fundraising target, provided these are explained in appeal literature, along with the benefits it will bring to people and/or donors.

External communications

The Trust will make continuous improvements to the availability, content, quality and accessibility of information about its work and opportunities for people to support this, and will seek to provide information in a variety of formats.

Specifically, during the period 2017 – 2027 we will:

- Establish a list of 'project banks' suitable for external funding, meaning the Trust can seize short notice grants and sponsorship opportunities;
- Establish a patronage scheme for individuals and businesses. This is supported within the Transition Heritage Lottery Transition Fund award and linked to the Celebrate event supported by the Big Lottery for the launch of the 90th anniversary of the Trust. A launch of this scheme will take place Autumn 2017;
- Increase links with the business sector for in-kind and sponsorship opportunities at various levels of support, and the development of more corporate-charity partnerships;
- Increase the visibility of donation boxes around the site and support these with attractive and appealing promotional material;

- Promote the Trust as a charity to attract fundraising and donations by third parties, including promotion of more challenge events for public participation;
- Develop a major donor programme;
- Introduce new marketing material and wider promotion of donation and supporter opportunities, highlighting how different 'gifts' support the work of the Trust e.g. winter cost to feed the deer; support of a school visit etc. This will be developed in 2017 for further roll out in coming years;
- Establish and promote opportunities for in-memory giving through the development of the Memorial Wood, and legacy donations and bequests. The Memorial Wood launch is scheduled for 2017 and promotional material and mailshots will be undertaken for this;
- Establish template agreements to allow new revenue-generating partnerships, where income is generated through commercial activities delivered by others on the sites. This links to the Transition Programme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Establish guidance around filming and charges for commercial photography on site;
- Develop partnerships for fundraising campaigns/appeals for major developments and projects, such as the development of the tearooms at the deer barns or improved path access;
- Establish a retail strategy which links to investment in the retail outlets, alongside developing bespoke retail items;
- Invest in enhancing the brand of produce from the Estate such as venison, firewood and charcoal;
- Review and develop the Trust's relationship with local authorities and grant-giving bodies so they are aware of proposed developments and opportunities at Bradgate Park.

Strategic Priority 5.

Building the capacity, and capability of the Trust to deliver its objectives, improve our services and support the growth and development of the Trust.

Context for this priority

The Trust acknowledges there is a need for further professionalisation of its operations as we enter a new era of our development. This has been reflected in the Trust applying for, and being awarded, a Transition Grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for 2016-17 to facilitate organisational change (particularly around governance, HR and finance) and to give an evidence base in some areas for potential development. This year-long support will facilitate opportunities for self-assessment, alongside evidence gathering to help inform longer term development of the Trust.

The Trust will work to maximise and protect our resources through robust asset and risk management policies, engaging with others around best practice and through encouraging wider debate and dialogue with our stakeholders, staff and volunteers on the progress and delivery of our objectives.

The Trust will continue the improvements in governance that have been made since 2014 with the Board of Trustees and review and strengthen all policies and procedures (particularly HR and Health & Safety). This is again endorsed within the Transition grant, but will be an ongoing process due to the changing nature of the charitable sector.

We wish to see a strengthened Trustee Board empowered to champion the work of the charity and perform effectively at a time when demands on trustees are increasing. We seek to help and encourage our trustees to become more engaged with the work of the Trust.

Work on governance will focus on:

- supporting trustees to ensure they can provide leadership in the delivery of organisational purposes;
- establishing specialist working groups that allow trustees to be engaged around key operational threads such as heritage, learning and outreach;
- developing staff, volunteers and trustees' knowledge of the heritage we care for;
- training in monitoring and evaluation, alongside risk management;
- reviewing HR structures and policies to ensure harmonisation, compliance and effective organisational design;
- updating financial and associated processes to ensure that the "back office" keeps pace with the "frontline".
- development of new communication and review channels.

The Trust will continue work to ensure that all policies, procedures and processes are of the highest standard. New systems of performance management and monitoring, including financial systems, will be implemented in the short term.

Ensuring high standards of management, motivation and development of our staff and volunteers will be a key priority, through achieving and retaining Investors in People and Investing in Volunteers status. The Trust will succeed in attracting and retaining staff (and volunteers) with a passion for heritage, the

countryside and excellence in visitor service. We will also not lose sight of the fact that our most valuable and appreciated communication is often through our Trust staff, trustees and volunteers, and will therefore ensure that our team remains visible (with distinctive Bradgate Park and Bradgate Park Trust branding), approachable and knowledgeable about Bradgate Park, Swithland Wood and the heritage in our care, so all can act as our ambassadors and champions.

It is recognised that, for the Trust to develop further as an organisation, our staffing structure needs to support our strategic vision and have the capacity to deliver on our aspirations. Elements of staffing are prioritised with a year-long Transition Project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2017. This will see the new staff structure implemented that seeks to generate:

- a more efficient organisation, freeing the Director to pursue strategic priorities, support trustees and spend less time dealing with day-to-day operational issues;
- greater customer-focused marketing and information is produced in standard, branded formats;
- more community consultation and greater community 'ownership' via new communication and feedback channels;
- better facilities for staff and visitors alike;
- a more professional organisation in terms of processes and work planning and delivery, alongside better trained and supported staff;

In addition, the Heritage Lottery Fund support will allow for evidence gathering and review of volunteering and educational opportunities. This will lead to more volunteers and broader offers to schools and communities. New opportunities for volunteering will be developed to support the educational, visitor experience and fundraising work of the Trust.

Gaps in staffing identified for addressing over the next ten years include:

- A new dedicated Volunteer Coordinator (permanent f/t). This role would also lead on promoting volunteering within the Trust. (This is supported for one year through Transition to establish the policies, documentation and communication channels needed to support a well-managed volunteering operation);
- A qualified accountant to lead the finance and support services function as the Trust grows in size and complexity;
- Development and external funding support by establishing a full-time Development Manager, providing strategic support to the Director and trustees;
- Community Education Officer and teacher-naturalists (freelance educational activity leaders) to support education work.

Internal communication within the organisation is vital and needs to take account of geographical spread and shift and part-time working patterns. New systems will be established to ensure our staff remain knowledgeable and engaged. Heritage training will be offered to all. Staff feedback and review, alongside greater recognition of Trust successes will be encouraged.

It is recognised there is a need to invest in IT systems, as well as to establish dedicated office space for staff. The Trust will develop facilities for staff and visitors incorporating adequate office space, meeting/classroom/training area, workshop and tool store, equipment/archive/general storage.

New communication channels to the wider public, stakeholders and supporters will be established, supported by trained staff. This will ensure external communications are optimised to inform visitors of new developments. This will include development of the Trust's website, e-newsletters, events leaflets and information boards across the Estate. The Trust will continue to improve how data is used, which will demonstrate our achievements and help us celebrate successes as part of our learning process. The Trust will seek to increase media coverage and profile of its work by developing better and more active links with local press and media, thus celebrating achievements and sharing key messages.

Specifically, during the period 2017 – 2027 we will:

- Utilise national standards to guide ongoing continuous improvement and development of the Trust's work;
- Identify and,
- where appropriate, respond to potential threats and opportunities presented by the rapidly changing external environment and political and economic contexts and adapt as required;
- Review all our policies, procedures and processes to ensure they are relevant and up to date;
- Continue to invest in trustee training and development as a high-performing charity requires a high-performing Board;
- Develop and publish a set of simple performance indicators to demonstrate the progress that the Trust is making in meeting its aims;
- Encourage a high level of motivation and enhance morale amongst staff and volunteers by investing in their skills and personal development to demonstrate our values. We will also invest in the development of a leadership programme;
- Host an annual event for Trust stakeholders and a staff conference to review our progress and to debate any new challenges and opportunities;
- Develop a masterplan for the future development of the Estate;
- Review of the storage and space within the Pheasant Garden compound, which has potential to provide a central base for the Rangers, volunteers and equipment, should there be a need to free up space in the Deer Barn complex.