

Unstone Grange Trust

Annual Report

to Jan 31st 2011

It is with great pleasure that I report back on another successful year at Unstone Grange: another year in which we have continued to offer our services to the community and give something positive back to the collective.

Giving & Receiving

We are full of appreciation for all the energy and enthusiasm that the many and varied groups and organizations coming to use our facilities bring to the Grange. Thank you all for coming - where would we be without you? We have recently taken to revisiting our aims at every meeting, not really because we thought we might forget, but to keep the Unstone Grange Trust vision fresh in our minds, so that we can be sure that we are truly here in service to the collective. It helps to keep us on our toes! We hope that what we offer to everyone who comes, is opportunity - the opportunity to learn and grow from participating in an activity, workshop or event, the fruits of which can be taken back to feed communities, whether of interest or place. We hope that whenever people visit the Grange they will leave feel enabled and empowered by the love and care that we show for this place, and inspired by our guiding principles. The world is changing, in ways we often find challenging. If those who visit Unstone Grange leave us having re-charged their batteries, it helps to make our work worthwhile; all the more so if they take away with them renewed hope for what the future offers, and for the world we pass on to our children and our children's children.

Special Mention

So many people have played a vital part over this last year. Thank you all. I would like to give special mention to the resident volunteers who have been walking their own personal and spiritual paths as they continue to serve all who come here. My thanks to Bobby, Tim and their girls; to Leela, who has supported us by looking after the bookings; and to our newer residents, James and Emily. This ever changing posse of volunteers are constantly vigilant to people's needs, and I more than appreciate the care they bring to this task. Many thanks also to both Dale and Bhakti, who have now moved on to new ventures. I hope that they will always have fond memories of Unstone Grange, as we have of them.

I also give my thanks to our dedicated band of Trustees. They have the important duty of paying attention to the bigger picture, keeping the Unstone Grange Trust true to its vision and purpose, as well as on track financially and practically. A very big thank you to Alec, Sue, Gill, Mary and Elaine. My very special thanks to Alec, for all the extra support he has given to the staff this year; and to Mary for continuing to bring beauty – the Grange has never been as easy on the eye as it is now becoming.

Our wonderful organic gardens are still going from strength to strength, despite the lack of outside funding. Instead, our resident staff upped their game, encouraging, supporting and sharing their skills with the many volunteers who come to join them every Wednesday. A sizeable team of people show up regularly to, quite literally, learn and grow. The resident staff team takes care of the whole estate - no small feat. There is never any shortage of work to be done, and new volunteers are always made welcome!

Looking Forward

As we turn another corner, we look to what the future holds. Over the next year I would like to see us develop our membership base, and offer more groups and organizations the chance to sample the Unstone Grange experience.

It may not be easy. The economic situation remains uncertain, with people having less “disposable income”, and we too envisage having to husband our resources. Bookings and income are down on previous years, and we have found it even harder to find money for improvements. Nevertheless, we are used to economising, and managed to maintain a healthy financial balance. The many skills of our resident staff have enabled us to do vital repairs and maintenance. We are really looking forward to ploughing extra resources into bringing our bathroom facilities up to date in the coming year, replacing the outdated baths with showers, and combining cleanliness with modernity at last. I know that some of our most long standing guests came to love the baths, but showers are so much more environmentally friendly! This upgrade has been a dream of ours for what has seemed like an eternity, and I can now say with confidence that “this is the year”. I would like to thank all our user groups for their patience!

We’re making steady progress, but we aren’t complacent and we won’t be resting on our laurels. In 2011/12 we will continue to offer a warm welcome to everyone who comes to the Grange. We look forward with confidence to a vibrant and productive year ahead for the Grange and everyone associated with the Unstone Grange Trust.

Steve Baker
Chair