



## Introduction

Life continues to be challenging, making it impossible for the fund raising group to meet or organise any events. We are most disappointed that we shall not be able to have our Christmas at Marrick celebration, but hugely grateful for the messages of support we receive from many of you. Thank you. May you all stay safe and well until we are able to meet in person once more.

With all good wishes, *Judith, Chair of the Friends.*

## Annual General Meeting of Marrick Priory Trust

A report from the Chair of the Board of Trustees - September 2020.



### Covid-19 Impact

The past 12 months have to be divided into before and after 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, when PM Boris Johnson, introduced the nationwide lockdown due to the pandemic Covid-19. Before March we had been extremely positive with excellent occupancy levels and feedback from groups and their leaders. The repeat bookings were strong and the advance bookings, including Duke of Edinburgh Awards, were looking good for the rest of 2020 and 2021. Our last group left on 20<sup>th</sup> March. On 24<sup>th</sup> March we closed the Priory and utilised the furlough scheme for all the staff, except Jim Gleave the Head of Centre, who continued to be fully employed.

Our work was mainly with schools, church and youth groups. Unfortunately, since March the government has not recommended a return to residential courses until next year and schools have only had key workers' children until now when all schools reopened. However, schools are now particularly busy catching up with course work and getting to grips with new routines including social distancing. During the summer we have tried to find ways to offer day courses to key workers' children and families, but there were too many hurdles to cross before we even looked for new business.

### Outlook

We do still have a number of residential bookings for this year and bookings for 2021 are looking particularly strong, we wait to see if they materialise. Our focus now has to be offering day courses to other sectors for the remainder of the year. We are hopeful the bookings for next year will be fulfilled. However we may need to make adjustments to our residential offering. Confidence in the market place is key and only when both parents and teachers are happy to leave the safety of their schools and homes, and Marrick Priory can be seen to have done all the risk assessments and necessary preparations, will we see a return to significant numbers at Marrick.

With many thanks to Rishi Sunak, our MP and Chancellor, we have enjoyed the government's generosity and financially have survived the lockdown. At present our finances are in a healthy state, though the difficulty is going to be balancing the lean period ahead, until we have gained enough income, with the staffing levels.

A special Covid committee of trustees and Head of Centre was formed at the beginning, meeting regularly via Zoom, to keep an eye on the finances and most importantly work on reopening the centre, ensuring as many staff are un-furloughed and retained as soon as possible. During the summer we did un-furlough part time administrative staff to do general bookkeeping and work on new business. The Covid committee will continue to meet until Marrick Priory is reopened and we have a better understanding of the future.

There have been very few staff changes over the year but no more or less than usual. The staff are all up to date with training and the instructor qualifications cover a great number of activities.

## Future Developments

The trustees have been busy writing a strategy for the next 5 years. We very much hope to have this published shortly.

The outdoor classroom is to have electricity brought in which will increase its versatility. We are now looking at renewing the low ropes course.

Building repairs continue as outlined in the quinquennial survey done in 2018 with much maintenance work being done by the multi-skilled staff. Funding for the replacement of the Prioress house roof and other minor repairs has been on hold during Covid. We are hopeful the work will be done next summer, as we are too late for this year.



**Picture:** The Outdoor Classroom

We are still aspiring to create a new facility on site which will replace the bungalow and kit store. However, since Covid our priorities may alter and our strategy will help drive the next chapter at Marrick Priory.

## Board of Trustees

There have been some changes among the Board of Trustees since September 2019. We have welcomed a number of extremely well qualified, young professional persons, a number of which are Bishop's nominees. Their skills are already benefiting the future of Marrick Priory. Our board encompasses, not only those nominated by the Bishop of Leeds as stipulated in our Articles and Memorandum, but also the needs of an Ancient Monument set in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and should reflect the diversity of our guests.

We continue to prepare for the return of our guests, safeguarding the fabric of the buildings and equipment and implementing risk assessments for the safety of our guests and staff. The excellent work done in the past by all so far ensures we are prepared for flexibility, as the future is not clear. We look forward to the day when we can open our doors once again and welcome all who come to Marrick Priory.

***Rolline Frewen, Chair of the Trustees***

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## The Friends of Marrick Priory

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