



Strategic Plan 2015-2020

Supporting fulfilled and happy lives for
people with learning disabilities

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About Scotts Project Trust

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

People with a learning disability gain the confidence they need to lead fulfilled, happy and independent lives.

Mission

To deliver an excellent service in a friendly, nurturing environment where people with a learning disability can choose how they are supported, and develop their skills to realise their aspirations.

Values

Care

People with a learning disability enjoy homelike surroundings, are supported in a way that meets their individual needs and develop mutually enjoyable relationships, facilitated by:

- A friendly, nurturing environment which builds confidence so people can play a full part in their local community and wider society.
- An exemplary approach to safeguarding, so people can feel safe and 'at home' at Scotts.
- A beautiful, peaceful setting which provides contact with nature for therapeutic as well as aesthetic reasons.

Support

People with a learning disability can expect their mental, physical and emotional needs to be understood and supported with empathy, recognising the person rather than their physical or intellectual limitations. Each person is valued as an individual and this is shown through:

- Respect for privacy and dignity at all times.
- Continuity of care to enable people to flourish by building strong relationships.
- Support for each person's particular needs.

Develop

People with a learning disability are encouraged to realise their aspirations and potential, living as independently as they can through:

- Support to make decisions that affect them, including developing care plans and setting and monitoring personal goals.
- Gaining life-skills through continuous learning and development.
- Being supported to work where possible, in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Developing knowledge of the outside world and involvement in the local community.

'I didn't know I could do
all these different things.'

www.scottspj.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1051947 Scotts Project Trust,
Delarue Close, Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9N

Summary of Our Strategy for 2015-2020

We have identified the following strategic priorities:

- Strive to achieve the highest standards of care, support and development across all our services.
- Supply the increasing demand for high quality independent living accommodation with appropriate support.
- Seize the opportunity to create a Centre of Excellence at our Development Centre to support students to learn new skills or maintain existing ones.
- Improve our facilities and infrastructure.
- Optimise our fee income and review our working practices to ensure they are as cost-effective as possible.

To address them we will work to achieve the following objectives:

- Maintain and optimise our care standards, exceeding those we are required to meet.
- Carry out two major projects:
 - Purchase additional independent living accommodation for up to 10 people and provide an integrated service as landlord and service provider, drawing on our learning from Oaks and Willows.
 - Enhance our Development Centre, including significant changes to the building, in order to provide a superior service, focused on supporting individuals to develop life skills.
- Upgrade our facilities as needed.
- Benchmark our service against other providers to ensure we are market leaders for high quality provision while maintaining optimal efficiency.

To attain these we will:

- Raise sufficient funds to cover all our capital projects.
- Ensure our staff and volunteers are recruited, trained and developed to meet the objectives of the plan.
- Work closely with local government to mitigate the threat posed by funding cuts.
- Network with statutory bodies, other providers and umbrella organisations in order to enhance our service.
- Develop partnerships with other organisations where this will help us to achieve our objectives.

A new set of Key Performance Indicators will ensure we make appropriate progress towards our objectives.

Our History

The story of Scotts Project Trust started in 1990 when Jill and Denis Scott began looking for a suitable place for their daughter Henny to live. Henny was 24 and had a learning disability. Jill and Denis were determined she would enjoy a rich and satisfying life in a place she could truly call home, where she could make friends, contribute to the community, follow her interests and develop her skills.

They searched hard, but could not find anywhere to match their daughter's and their own aspirations. Jill mobilised a remarkable fundraising and publicity campaign in the local area, and thanks to the determined work she and Denis put in, Scotts has come a long way from the first ever fundraising event in a local village hall. In July 1998 St Peter's Row, near Tonbridge in Kent, opened its doors and Henny Scott became its fifth resident.

On the site was a dilapidated old barn, which Jill describes as having 'an earth floor, chicken run in the hayloft and dangerous floorboards'. Within three years she had transformed the barn into a centre for arts and crafts. The Delarue Hall was built to provide a performance space for dance and drama, and the two buildings formed the core of our Development Centre. As time went on the trustees recognised that some people with learning disabilities wanted to live more independently, and to meet this need we raised funds to buy and develop two further local properties, The Oaks and The Willows, in 2004.

Very sadly Henny Scott - who inspired this exceptional project - died in 2004, and Denis Scott passed away in 2012. Jill Scott continues to take an active role as a trustee. Much has changed since St Peter's Row opened. Government policy now puts the wishes and goals of people with learning disabilities at the centre of their care; this has reinforced the respect for the individual that has always been the Scotts approach. Jill Scott's passionate vision for the residents of St Peter's Row, that they should live the most fulfilling lives they possibly can in a place that is truly home, has been realised and has endured.

What Makes Us Unique?

We believe our offering is unique because it combines:

- A focus on each person as an individual who is respected and helped to achieve a sense of self-worth and confidence. This is reflected in the range of practical skills, hobbies and other interests that people are supported and encouraged to enjoy. For example, drama classes promote confidence and improve communication skills, balance and movement as well as offering the pleasure of performing.
- An emphasis on an attractive, non-institutional environment and the importance of supportive relationships which recognise the needs of the individual. Scotts has a very low rate of staff turnover, so people can develop strong, beneficial relationships over many years.

'It's funbeing here.'

www.scottsproject.org.uk

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Why We Are Needed

‘People with a learning disability are amongst the most vulnerable and socially excluded in society.’
Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st century, UK Department of Health (2001)

We believe people with a learning disability have a right to high quality care and support, so they can get the most from life. This includes having a safe and happy place to live, the chance to work, a social life and opportunities to develop their interests. Our experience is that for many people this is more difficult than it should be and this is borne out by research:

- Over 80 per cent of people with a learning disability of working age are unemployed¹.
- At least 65 per cent of people with a learning disability would like to work, but only one in five do so, compared to one in two disabled people generally².
- People with a learning disability who live in residential care are less likely than others to have contact with family members they don't live with, or with friends³.
- People with a learning disability are much less likely than the general population to have participated in choosing the décor of their home (13 per cent compared to 84 per cent)⁴. Most people take being able to make a place their own for granted, but many people with a learning disability are not given this chance.

The UK Government states that ‘all people with a learning disability are people first with the right to lead their lives like any others, with the same opportunities and responsibilities, and to be treated with the same dignity and respect. They and their families and carers are entitled to the same aspirations and life chances as other citizens.’ (*Valuing People Now*, UK Department of Health, 2009). Kent County Council (KCC)'s vision for people with a learning disability is: ‘to provide quality services in a personalised way so that each individual is getting the support they need, delivered in a way that enhances their independence’. We aim to work in partnership with KCC to provide these opportunities to the people we support.

1 Emerson, E and Hatton, C, Centre for Disability Research Report, May 2008

2 Mencap website

3 Skea, D, Quality of Life for Adults with Learning Disabilities in Residential Care, University of Huddersfield, 2008

4 Ibid.

Our Work

Scotts supports people to strive to reach their aspirations and make choices about how to live their lives through three interlinked services:

- St Peter's Row, our residential care home near Tonbridge, which provides exemplary care to 15 adults with a learning disability.
- Our Supporting Independence Service, which comprises two local independent living houses - Oaks and Willows - each housing four people who have chosen to share a house with others as a step to independence. There is also a flat for one person.
- Our on-site development centre, which welcomes over 70 students each week to a range of highly-regarded, practical courses designed to develop life-skills and confidence.

St Peter's Row

Fifteen adults live in St Peter's Row, which is made up of three terraced houses linked by a cloister outside and with access from each house to the others inside. Each house has a kitchen and sitting room and there is a spacious shared patio and mature, well-kept gardens. The communal areas are comfortable and welcoming and each resident has their own room, which they are encouraged to personalise as they wish. The tranquil site also contains our administration office, facilities for the Development Centre comprising a substantial hall, a Kentish barn and well-maintained gardens.

St Peter's Row provides outstanding care in a caring and nurturing environment, just as Jill and Denis Scott envisaged. The service is tailored to meet the needs and wishes of each resident. Residents who wish to move on to more independent living are encouraged and supported to develop the skills and confidence to do so.

Supporting Independence Service

The Scotts Supporting Independence Service consists of two houses, Oaks and Willows, which have been adapted for people with a learning disability who wish to live more independently. Nine people live in the houses, with staff support tailored to the individual and varying from a few hours a week to 24 hours a day.

Each tenant has their own bedroom, some of which are en-suite, and the household shares a kitchen, a sitting room, additional bathrooms and a garden. A smaller property attached to the houses provides a self-contained studio flat. Each tenant has an individual support plan designed to help them live independently. Depending on the needs and aspirations of the person this could include menu planning, money management, cleaning and laundry, and addressing emotional or communication issues.

Our tenants choose to take part in a wide variety of activities during their day. Some participate in courses at the local college or make use of amenities such as the leisure centre, and others attend the Scotts Development Centre on the main site. They are encouraged and supported to seek paid or voluntary part-time jobs where they are able to do so.

Development Centre

The Scotts Development Centre welcomes over 70 students each week, providing a wide range of courses, stimulating lunchtime activities and the chance to make and meet with friends. Courses are designed to build confidence and essential life skills, and focus on enabling each person to develop their potential. This can include helping students to learn skills for work if this is important to them. The facilities include kitchens, a café, a large hall with space for performances, and a flexible space for classes like IT and relaxation.

Courses range from the liveliness of dance classes to the confidence-building thrill of performing on stage in drama; from the practical skills of catering, laundry or gardening to learning about the world through journalism and IT classes. Lunchtime sessions provide another opportunity to learn and to enjoy the company of other students as well as staff and volunteers; they include sports, board games, learning sign language or singing in the Scotts choir.

The centre enjoys a good reputation locally, particularly among people who use our service, their families and care managers. Our work is recognised for its distinctive emphasis on performing arts and the part this plays in developing people's confidence and willingness to try new things.

Governance and Management

Scotts is governed by a Board of Trustees with a wide range of experience drawn from careers in law, finance, charities, business and from volunteering. As well as providing strategic direction the trustees are closely involved in the daily life of the project, so they understand the needs of our residents, tenants and students.

Trustees

Tom Hoppe, Chair of Trustees Tom has enjoyed a successful city banking career and since joining Scotts he has led the successful fundraising campaign for the St Peter's Row extension.

Nicholas Ward, Company Secretary, is a retired chartered accountant.

Sue Bourne is a chartered accountant and non-executive partner of two small private equity funds. She has supported small charities with their strategic planning through the Pilotlight scheme.

Derek McMenamin is a retired solicitor; a former partner at Linklaters, the global business law firm. He is a non-executive director in the international aid and development sector.

Alasdair Paterson is a chartered surveyor. He has a daughter with a learning disability.

Dr Jessica Pocock is a retired ophthalmologist at King's College Hospital. Her daughter lives in St Peter's Row.

Jill Scott, MBE is the founder of Scotts Project Trust. Jill's daughter, Henny, inspired the founding of Scotts Project Trust.

Sara Tozzi is a qualified solicitor and a Magistrate, and has been involved with fundraising for Scotts for approximately 12 years.

Sub-committees

The Board of Trustees is supported by two main sub-committees which include trustees, managers and volunteers:

The Service Management Committee (SMC), which sets and maintains standards for all the services, including monitoring performance. The SMC submits regular reports of its activities to the Board and makes recommendations to the trustees. It ensures that all services comply with the most recent Government and Local Authority regulations, and addresses recommendations of the CQC and service specifications.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP), which reports to the trustees on all matters of finance, administration, premises and human resources as well as fundraising. The F&GP's responsibilities include setting and monitoring KPIs and financial performance standards, ensuring the organisation's financial sustainability, and monitoring and addressing risks. The committee also manages the organisation's budgeting process.

Other sub-committees include the Health and Safety and Policy Committees.

Management

Day-to-day management of Scotts is delegated to a group of managers and a team of care and support staff, tutors, administrative and maintenance staff. The managers and Chairman of Trustees meet monthly to discuss any matters affecting the organisation, and each manager has an opportunity to meet regularly with the trustee responsible for their area.

Advisors and Consultants

Trustees and managers draw on the expertise of advisors and consultants in particular areas as required by the strategy. We have engaged an external consultant to monitor our service standards and guide improvements, a fundraising consultant to lead on our capital appeals and a training coordinator to ensure standards are maintained.

Financial Strategy and Management

The Essential Service

Fees from local authorities provide the funding Scotts requires to operate and maintain a service that meets Care Quality Commission (CQC) requirements. However, we wish to go further than the provision of an adequate service as we believe everyone with a learning disability should expect the highest quality care in a nurturing, inspiring environment.

Our Differentiated Service

For people who use our service this means enjoying a beautiful environment with characterful buildings set in attractive gardens; a highly professional staff team that takes pride in exceeding statutory standards, supported by a full range of policies and bespoke training; and fulfilling trips and activities that expand people's individual aspirations. We are delivering all this in an increasingly challenging funding landscape.

This additional provision is facilitated by Friends of Scotts, our dedicated volunteer fundraising group, which raises funds from local sources to enhance our facilities. Recent examples include refurbishing kitchens and bathrooms in St Peter's Row, and upgrading our IT equipment. Our differentiated service is possible because we own our premises outright and do not have to pay an economic rent for their use.

Capital Projects

In order to develop and improve the infrastructure of Scotts, we need to fundraise for capital projects. We have a successful track record with Trusts and Foundations as well as generous individual donors. In today's highly competitive funding environment we anticipate that raising money for our future capital projects will continue to be a challenge, but one we believe we are well-placed to meet.

We intend to raise funds for two large capital projects during the period of this plan. More detail is available on page 15.

Reserves Policy

For prudent financial management and contingency planning we retain a minimum level of reserves equivalent to at least four months operating costs. Where necessary we will also accumulate reserves to fund major projects.

Managing Performance and Risk

Managers work towards a set of KPIs determined by the trustees. The trustees monitor progress towards achieving them. The Finance and General Purposes Committee maintains a risk register, which is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.



'I have loads of friends here.'

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Our Achievements to Date

Major Projects

Since 1990 the Scotts team has successfully completed four large, complex capital projects:

- The development of St Peter's Row.
- Establishing the Development Centre, including building the hall and re-developing the barn.
- The purchase and re-development of Oaks and Willows.
- An extension to St Peter's Row which provides additional facilities to ensure residents with increasing needs can stay in the place they regard as home for as long as possible.

St Peter's Row

Our last Business Plan (2012-2015) outlined plans to extend the St Peter's Row building and upgrade the facilities we offer to residents. We have successfully completed the project on time and on budget. As intended it has delivered positive outcomes for residents whose mobility is restricted:

- Better amenities that meet their additional health and care needs.
- The chance to continue living in the place they call home as long as we can meet their needs.
- Greater privacy and comfort provided by the en-suite shower room and the new tracking hoists.
- The ability to move around the houses more easily when using a wheelchair.

Supporting Independence Service

In the last plan we set an objective to broaden the range of Supported Living services which is consistent with government policy and reflects the increasing range of needs and requests for our people in their quest for greater independence. Since then we have:

- Established a working group to develop the vision for new Supporting Independence flats.
- Canvassed the opinions of stakeholders.
- Researched the local property market.
- Established our fundraising needs and developed a summary case for support.
- Ensured our vision is consistent with that of Kent County Council.

Please see the Strategy section for more information about our plans.

The Development Centre

Since our last Business Plan we have implemented the recommendations from the 2011 review:

- Focusing on meeting the needs of individuals.
- Developing life skills.
- Providing a wide range of lunchtime activities.

These changes have been evaluated by questionnaires to students and care managers and feedback has been positive. We are seeing an increased demand for our service and we expect this trend to continue.

Facilities Improvements

In our previous Business Plan we said we would:

- Provide new computers and accessible teaching spaces for the Development Centre, and new IT equipment for use in the charity's administration. This work has been completed.
- Improve the external areas and disabled access. We have re-surfaced a section of the car park and provided a new access ramp.
- Create a new website to improve communication. This work was carried out in 2012 and we continue to evolve the website, particularly to support the fundraising programme.
- Carry out improvements and refurbishment to the premises to maintain high standards. We have made significant progress in this area and we are continuing to improve and refurbish our properties.

Our Strategy for 2015-20

Care Standards

We will continue to monitor our effectiveness closely using our current mechanisms and others which become necessary. At present an independent visitor meets every other month with our residents, tenants and students, discusses their experiences with them, records their feedback and makes recommendations to our Service Management Committee. We also hold regular forums where any issues can be discussed, from health and safety to plans for future holidays and trips out.

St Peter's Row and the Supporting Independence Service are subject to stringent statutory reviews which provide opportunities to improve our service. The Care Quality Commission inspected St Peter's Row in September 2013 and Oaks and Willows in May 2013, and commended our good quality care. The full reports are available on the CQC website www.cqc.org.uk. We will continue to ensure that staff learning and development needs are regularly reviewed, and addressed by both internal and external training.

St Peter's Row

Scotts aims to provide an excellent service, exceeding the standards we are required to meet by our contract with Kent County Council. These include:

- Requirements of relevant regulations, particularly the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Act and Health and Safety legislation.
- Standards laid down by the Care Quality Commission.
- Guidelines contained in the Social Care Commitment.

The charity will continue to monitor and evaluate the service, learn from the findings and ensure that we exceed all applicable standards.

Supporting Independence Service

In line with our strategic objectives we will endeavour to exceed the quality of service laid down in Kent County Council's Supporting Independence Living contract. We have achieved excellent results, supporting people to achieve things they could never have imagined were possible for them. As Mark* said recently: *"I have shown myself lots of new places and met new people; I want to keep looking to the future."*

*we have changed his name to protect his privacy.

Development Centre

Our Development Centre works with people's abilities and strengths rather than their limitations. We provide an environment where our people feel secure, accepted, and encouraged to express themselves and recognise their own achievements – from finding a job to writing their own name for the first time.

Our challenge for the future is to continue to provide a highly individualised service, focused on the fulfilment of each student, whilst implementing government policy to support those of our students who want to gain qualifications and find work. In order to do this we will need to significantly enhance our facilities.

Major Projects

In response to local need, we have identified the following initiatives to progress during the period of this Plan. It is essential that they are adequately resourced and effectively prioritised, so we intend to undertake a full review of each project by the end of 2015. An updated strategic plan, with further details and timings, will be published by mid 2016. An outline of each project is included below.

Redeveloping the Development Centre

Objective: To expand and upgrade the Development Centre, and to evolve the current good provision to become a centre of excellence which supports all students to make progress towards their chosen goals and aspirations, whether this is developing new skills or maintaining existing ones.

Our plans

We will carry out a full assessment of the needs of local people with a learning disability and ensure our facilities and course provision meets them. The focus of our work will be on building confidence and developing life skills to support students to be as independent as possible and play a role within the local community and wider society. Where appropriate this will include skills for work and may include accredited courses, as well as classes for pleasure such as gardening, art and music. It is important to build on our existing strengths to ensure we retain the essential aspects of our ethos as the number of students and staff increases.

Outcome

Expanded and improved facilities will enable increased numbers of Development Centre students to progress towards defined goals in a setting that promotes individual fulfilment and encourages the development of skills for independence.

New Flats for Supported Living

Many adults with a learning disability wish to live more independent lives in their own homes with support as necessary rather than in residential care or a shared house. UK Government policy is to provide greater choice and independence for people with a learning disability, including a choice of where and how they live. There is an acknowledged demand for this type of accommodation in the Tonbridge area and Kent County Council would like to see increased provision of independent supported living in Kent. Our plans are in line with their strategy.

Objective: To provide additional accommodation for up to 10 people in the Tonbridge area who wish to live in their own flat and need support to achieve this.

Our plans

In keeping with our values we will seek to provide choice, a sense of community and the personalised support people need to develop and maintain both practical skills and self-assurance. For some people this will offer a path from residential care via shared housing to supported independent living.

Outcome

Tenants who wish to live more independently will have their own comfortable, non-institutional place to live and the support they need to lead a fulfilling life.

Facilities Improvements

Our attractive, well-maintained surroundings play an important role in ensuring the homelike environment that is central to our work.

Objective: To ensure our high-quality environment is maintained to a standard that meets the needs of the people who use our service and reflects our values.

Our plans

During the period of this plan we will:

- Ensure our premises are accessible to people with physical disabilities.
- Invest in IT to provide a better service for residents and students; streamline administrative processes; and improve communication with service users, staff and external stakeholders. We will continue to develop the website and our online marketing to meet the needs and interests of fundraising audiences in support of our objectives.
- Carry out improvements and refurbishments to the premises, for example replacing the kitchens in St Peter's Row and purchasing replacement vehicles.

Outcomes

- CQC, health and safety and accessibility standards continue to be met.
- Residents, tenants and students benefit from an improved environment, equipment and facilities.
- Continued efficiency in the administration function.
- Increased value of tangible fixed assets on the Balancesheet.

Approximate capital cost: £60,000 per year

Supporting the Strategy

Working Closely with Local Government

Since we wrote our last business plan the scale of cuts in social care has become increasingly apparent, and they are set to continue. In its financial plan for 2014-17 Kent County Council (KCC) emphasises that demand in all areas of social care is increasing while funding has been reduced to an unprecedented extent. The impact on the budget for people with a learning disability is not quantified in the financial plan but we anticipate that our existing income streams will be affected. Furthermore, the Council has stated publicly that it prefers to work with larger providers and perceives this as an effective cost-saving measure. We continue to work with KCC to understand their strategic priorities and to align our work with them as far as possible within our Mission and Values.

Operational Efficiency

We will continue to review the way we provide our services and optimise the funding for which we are eligible, as well as to seek operational efficiencies wherever possible without compromising our Mission and Values. In doing so, we will ensure the availability of fundraised income for capital projects and reduce the need for some areas of our service to subsidise others. We will do this while benchmarking our services against other providers, to ensure that we are market leaders for high quality provision while maintaining optimal operational efficiency.

Fundraising for a More Secure Future

In our last Business Plan we recognised that funding cuts would mean that fee income would be sufficient only to cover our core service and not to support our differentiated service or future developments. This requires Scotts to raise additional funds. Since the last plan we have:

- Appointed a professional fundraiser.
- Developed a Case for Support and a suite of fundraising materials for the St Peter's Row project.
- Raised £370,000 to fund the St Peter's Row extension project, much of it from new donors.
- Been successful in one in three grant applications against a sector average of one in seven.
- Secured £250,000 towards future capital projects.
- Set up a Friends of Scotts group to carry out fundraising in the local area and with new audiences. This group has a fundraising target of £40,000 per year towards ongoing facilities improvements.
- Reviewed our website and made enhancements to support fundraising.
- Established a fundraising database.

'I can sit at my own table and have a lovely cup of tea.'

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During the period of this plan we will:

- Fund the Supported Living and Development Centre projects using grants and donations from individual, institutional and corporate donors.
- Raise sufficient funds through the Friends of Scotts group to carry out facilities improvements, such as refurbishing the St Peter's Row kitchens and purchasing new vehicles.
- Broaden our funding base, particularly among individual donors and corporations, while continuing to building closer relationships with existing funders.
- Establish a donor development programme for individual supporters, including regular giving and legacy promotion.
- Use the new database to support the development of the fundraising programme.
- Utilise the website and social media to engage and retain new supporters.
- Build our profile with local fundraising audiences through networking in the community, Friends of Scotts events, community fundraising and press work.

Human Resources and Volunteers

Our residents, tenants and students are supported by experienced and qualified staff, with whom they build strong relationships. We believe this continuity is essential in supporting people to develop the confidence to enjoy living more independently. We consider our employees to be key to our success and we continue to attract and retain people of the highest calibre. We do this through:

- Continuing to provide opportunities for staff to exchange information and ideas.
- Encouraging staff to pursue training towards relevant qualifications, in addition to ensuring all statutory training is provided.
- Evaluating training needs frequently and providing training, particularly to support residents, tenants and students in any new challenges they face.
- Keeping under review our existing staff structure to ensure it meets the changing needs of the organisation.
- Monitoring staff turnover to ensure it remains low as the size of the team increases.
- Enabling people who use our service to play a role in the recruitment of staff wherever possible; for example by helping to decide interview questions or sitting on the interview panel.

The trustees are grateful to the many volunteers who generously give their time and skills to Scotts - working in the Development Centre, charring committees, supporting the administrative function and fundraising for us. They enhance our work, providing new knowledge and often a different perspective. During the period of this plan we will:

- Ensure each Manager reviews the use of volunteers within their own area so that Scotts provides opportunities matched to each volunteer's interests and makes the most of their skills.
- Task the management team with identifying any gaps in existing volunteering support and actively recruiting support to meet particular needs within the service.

Networking

It is essential to understand and to seek to influence government in the appropriate development of care policies for adults with a learning disability. It is also critical to ensure adequate funding for ongoing operational costs during times of economic austerity. Consistent with Scotts' ambition to continue to improve facilities and the learning environment, it is important to observe and network with organisations providing similar services, determining and adopting best practices.

We have identified a lack of external perspective as an area to develop

in our work, so trustees and managers will be responsible for networking with other providers in their area and benchmarking our services. Our Managers have already commenced this work:

- Attending networking events and seeking informal networking opportunities, for example with KCTA Workforce Development Service and Kent Community Care Association.
- Visiting other providers to compare their work with that of Scotts.
- Meeting with senior members of Kent County Council to discuss their future priorities and understand the funding plans for the period of their next financial plan.
- Seeking the views of service users, parents and others about our relative strengths and weaknesses compared to other local organisations.

Partnership

We will consider partnerships with other organisations to help deliver our strategic aims in the most efficient and cost-effective way. In particular we will consider:

- A shared service arrangement for some back-office functions such as payroll.
- Partnering with other day service providers to expand and tailor the range of sessions available to service users as well as building on existing arrangements.
- Working with other bodies such as housing associations to help finance an expansion of facilities, which will support greater independence for the people with whom we work.

Appendices

Appendix 1: SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Very good reputation in the local community, as a result of successful projects, delivering tangible benefits to people with learning disabilities.
- Skilled and committed trustees with a broad range of skills and strong strategic direction.
- Sound financial management and a track record of delivering capital projects, with a good reputation among fundraising audiences.
- Qualified and effective managers and staff, with low turnover providing continuity of care.

Weaknesses

- Lack of an external perspective in some areas of the service. Networking with statutory bodies and comparable service providers should be improved.
- High costs in some areas of the service must be managed closely in a challenging funding environment.
- Limited fundraising constituency, particularly among individual donors and corporations. A broader fundraising base is needed to ensure long-term success.
- Increased use of volunteers in some areas of the service should be pursued.

Opportunities

- Scotts should demonstrate more clearly how its emphasis on quality reaps results – key to raising awareness and differentiating the charity.
- Developing an expanded SIS project and validating the effectiveness of the landlord/care provider model on a larger scale.
- The Development Centre should meet some of the demand in response to limited provision of day centre activities around Tonbridge.
- Life expectancy for people with a learning disability is increasing: Scotts can offer exemplary care and support to people as they get older and their care needs increase.

Threats

- Reduced Government funding could result in cuts in fees from KCC to the extent that operating costs are no longer covered.
- Government's ongoing search for cost-efficiencies is creating an extremely competitive environment where cost rather than quality is the main consideration.
- Kent County Council's stated preference for working with larger providers could disadvantage Scotts.
- Scotts may not be fully aware of the services offered by other providers, missing the chance to learn from best practice.

Appendix 2: Sources and Uses of Funds

