

## **GARDEMAU CHARITIES REPORT FOR CODDENHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024.**

There are three Coddenham Gardemau charities: the Gardemau Church Charity (GCC), The Lady Catherine Gardemau Educational Foundation (LCGEF), and the Poor Charity. All were founded by the Rev Balthazar Gardemau and his wife Lady Catherine in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. All the trustees are local people, who claim no expenses for their work. More details on the origins and purpose of the charities can be found on the Community Website, [coddenham-parish.uk](http://coddenham-parish.uk)

The GCC has the greatest resources of the three and is permitted to transfer funds to the other two charities. It also owns two small areas of land.

One of these plots is the Old Lock Up in School Road, and the patch of land behind it. In the past, this has been rented to adjacent properties for car parking and has generated a modest income. This arrangement has now ceased and the land has become a liability to the charity, rather than an asset. Having taken advice, over the past year or so, the GCC has focussed on obtaining Planning Permission for a small house on the land, which would then be auctioned, thereby generating funds which can be invested in order to produce more disposable income for the charity. The house is intended to be suitable for a small, preferably local, family, thereby helping to address the need for affordable housing in the parish which was identified in the 2022 Village Survey.

Although none of the neighbouring property owners have objected, and the application is supported by the Parish Council and other CCRG members, the planning process has been a slow and painful one, not helped by objections from a very small number of individuals, none of whom live close to the site in question. However, recent discussions with MSDC have been constructive and positive and we are hopeful the revised application will be successful.

The other key focus for the GCC has been supporting the current appeal for the restoration of our beautiful village church, St Mary's, which requires around £60,000 of urgent repairs. The GCC has given £10,000 to the appeal and promised another £10,000 in match funding. Fundraising by the church is going well and the meeting will, no doubt, receive a more detailed update from the PCC.

It has been suggested that the GCC could pay for all the necessary repairs itself, thereby removing the need for fundraising by the church and contributions from villagers. It has also been suggested that the proceeds of the sale of the Lock Up plot could be used for this.

Unfortunately, this is not possible. Firstly, outright funding of the repairs would use up nearly all of the GCC's current disposable income. The proceeds of the land sale are (a) not yet available as it has not been sold and (b) would represent a capital asset, which the charity is not permitted to dispose of without specific permission from the Charity Commission. Secondly, the charity's legally-defined primary objective is 'the furtherance of the work of the Church of England in the Parish of Coddenham'. The

maintenance of the church building is only a secondary purpose. It is extremely unlikely that the Charity Commission would give permission for the GCC to use a large part of its current disposable income, or that released by the sale of a capital asset, on what is only a secondary objective of the charity.

The GCC has also made another of other grants, for example, helping to pay for publicity for the church's fundraising campaign and prizes for the Christmas Tombola.

The LCGEF, too, has had a busy year. It continues to financially support the brilliantly-successful Babies and Toddlers Group, run at The Coddenham Centre (TCC) by volunteers from the church. It pays the Group's rent and has provided additional equipment such as play tables.

Building on the success of its previous free First Aid courses at TCC, the charity also arranged free defibrillator training for about 20 villagers in January. It continues to pay for information leaflets on the Coddenham Nature Trail and Historic Coddenham Buildings, which are available free to villagers and visitors, and has also provided substantial funding to Stonham Aspal Primary School, which is attended by most Coddenham children.

The Poor Charity is funded by money transferred from the other charities. For many years, it has paid £400 a month to Families in Need, the award-winning Ipswich charity which, as its name implies, supports struggling families in a wide range of ways. We have recently increased this payment to £500 a month.

Lastly, we would like to pay tribute to the Rev Philip Payne, Priest in Charge of Coddenham, who is retiring this summer. Philip has been an *ex officio* trustee for many years. His contributions to the work of the charities have been thoughtful and constructive throughout and we will miss him. We wish Philip and Mary all the very best for their retirement.

If you would like to learn more about the history and work of the Gardemau charities, or to apply for a grant, please contact:

Chairman, David McDonnell [deborah.mcdonnell3@btinternet.com](mailto:deborah.mcdonnell3@btinternet.com) or [mcdonnellda59@gmail.com](mailto:mcdonnellda59@gmail.com)

Treasurer, Tim Thomas [tim.thomas100@btinternet.com](mailto:tim.thomas100@btinternet.com)