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The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust launches new Corporate Plan

On Friday, February 28 Sir Trevor Soar KCB OBE DL, Chairman, The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, launched the charity's new Corporate Plan outlining the ambitions of the Trust for 2020-2025.

The publication of the Trust's previous Corporate Plan (2016-2021) coincided with the launch of Command of the Oceans, a ground-breaking preservation and learning project that has exceeded all expectations, winning numerous awards including the RICS National Best Leisure and Tourism Project and was shortlisted for the prestigious RIBA Stirling Prize 2017.

Since then, and very significantly, The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust has delivered its £8.2m Fitted Rigging House Project ahead of schedule. Completion of this landmark project has unlocked the financial sustainability of the charity on a revenue level based on its current levels of operation, enabling the Trust to face the future on a more sustainable revenue foundation.

With progress against the current Corporate Plan ahead of schedule, and not wishing to be an organisation that stood still, the Trustees took the opportunity to bring forward the development of the next Corporate Plan by one year, allowing the charity to align its vision for the future and support enhanced delivery against its charitable objectives of 'preservation' and 'education'. The Trust's position of financial sustainability on current operating levels has unlocked options of choice regarding how best to meet these charitable objectives for the first time in the organisations 35-year history – a unique position for a heritage site the size and scale of the Historic Dockyard.

The Corporate Plan 2020-2025 is built on an ethos of ‘evolution not revolution’ and sets out the Trust’s ambitions for the next 5 years. The strategy balances the preservation of the iconic buildings, ships, collections and heritage assets with the resources that they provide against the ambition to further develop the learning reach using an approach that is both physical and digital. A key message underpinning the Corporate Plan is a strategy of ‘1,000 small improvements that collectively make a big impact’ – recognising the role all staff and volunteers play in increasing the effectiveness to deliver against charitable objectives.

The plan has been developed following significant stakeholder consultation and extensive work with an external consultancy agency, to explore how the Trust can best meet its ‘education’ charitable objective. This work will see a focus on attracting more family visitors and delivering increased digital and outreach activities. The long-term “preservation through re-use” strategy remains the approach to meeting the Trust’s ‘preservation’ objective. The new plan guarantees that both charitable objectives are always in harmony, ensuring the unique balance of uses across the site are central to the development process.

Sir Trevor Soar, said: “I am immensely proud to be launching our new Corporate Plan, one year ahead of schedule. The early completion of the Fitted Rigging House Project has allowed us to reach a pivotal point in our lifecycle and, for the first time, we are in a position of achieving our charitable objectives through choice of direction rather than direction being dictated by need. We would not be in this position of choice without the generous support from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Medway Council, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), along with many other stakeholders and funders.”

He continued: “With 35 years practical experience and knowledge as a foundation, our new Corporate Plan has been developed using that valuable resource but also considering current trends and changes affecting our portfolio of activities.”

The event also celebrated the completion of the Trust’s Fitted Rigging House Project providing new rental spaces for commercial tenancy and much enhanced facilities for visitors, volunteers and the Trust’s nationally significant collection.

With the restoration complete and the building fully occupied, the Fitted Rigging House is now generating c.£350k sustainable income per annum. The completion of this project sees most of the Trust’s buildings in productive use, either as gallery spaces or to generate

income from a range of diverse uses. The site has been transformed from a dilapidated, empty, post-industrial site into a thriving, well-restored, world-class heritage location where people live, work and visit. The Economic Impact Assessment of the Historic Dockyard site has now been estimated to be in the region of £30m per annum to the local economy.

For further information about The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust and to download a copy of the Corporate Plan 2020-25 see thedockyard.co.uk/our-charity/

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MORE PRESS INFORMATION

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Historic Dockyard Chatham

thedockyard.co.uk

The Historic Dockyard Chatham is the only place in the world that lets you explore a complete dockyard from the age of sail. It's a unique destination that celebrates Great Britain's magnificent maritime past and unmatched contribution to the Royal Navy's shipbuilding excellence that led to worldwide command of the oceans.

Chatham offers unrivalled access to the ships that shaped the world, from a Victorian anti-slavery sailing ship, to a Second World War Destroyer or a Cold War submarine and the stories of the people who made them. From Chatham's historic buildings, The Commissioner's House and officers' quarters to the remarkable Victorian ropery, where the rigging for HMS Victory was made, to its collection of maritime archaeology, the Dockyard forms an indispensable part of Britain's naval history and its national heritage.

As a fully accredited museum, The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust collects, preserves, researches and exhibits objects and materials connected with the history of the dockyard and its people. It studies the development of Royal Navy warship design, construction and the use of the River Medway by the Royal Navy.

Visitors to and users of The Historic Dockyard Chatham are fundamental to its purpose and the economic reuse of the site and its buildings. Its staff and volunteers play a vital role in providing a high level of service and customer care. The Trust is also involved in the on-going regeneration of Medway and The Thames Gateway, with Culture and Heritage at its heart.

As part of the Trust's strategy of "Preservation through re-use" recent projects have secured the long-term financial sustainability (on a revenue basis) of the wider Historic Dockyard site. The economic outputs from the new uses of the recently opened Fitted Rigging House as well as other activities across the site will bring the total annual

contribution made to Medway's economy to £26.3m in 2019, building on the 2012 estimate of £16m (64% growth).