

SEVERN TRENT TRUST FUND



Annual Review 2014/15



SEVERN TRENT TRUST FUND

Severn Trent Trust Fund is an independent registered charity first established in 1997. The purpose of the Trust is to help individuals living in premises supplied by Severn Trent Water who are in need, poverty or distress and cannot afford to pay their water charges.

Trustees fulfil the charity's objects by making grants available to assist with essential and priority needs. There are two streams of grants available, for individuals and for organisations. Policy and grant making is overseen by independent Trustees who ensure that funds go where they are most needed.

Trustees have delegated the day-to-day management and administration of the Trust to Auriga Services which operates under the strict guidelines of a management contract.

The Trust relies on a generous donation from Severn Trent Water which is used to help people in genuine need. Without their valued support Trustees could not continue this work.



Chair's Report

I am delighted to present the Trustees Annual Review for 2014/15 which provides an insight into the ways that the Trust makes a real difference to people's lives when they are in need of support.

It is important to recognise that our work could not continue without the generous donation received from Severn Trent Water and Trustees wish to thank them for their ongoing commitment.

At a time when welfare reform changes are placing additional pressure on household budgets Trustees have been pleased to provide grants totalling £1.9m to individuals and families who needed support with their water charges and other essential household costs. In addition a further £434k has been reserved for applicants to our Partnership Payment Scheme which is a programme that makes it easier for people to get back on track with their payments in conjunction with a grant.

Over the last few years we have expanded our services to enhance the benefits of our grant making activities. This holistic approach has enabled us to provide additional help and guidance that encourages financial stability within households and improves general wellbeing.

Help offered ranges from simple budgeting advice to in-depth money management support along with welfare benefit entitlement checks. This work is vital and during the year we have identified unclaimed benefit entitlements for 300 applicants totalling circa £1m. On average this equates to an additional income of £3,300 a year for each applicant which can be life changing.

As well as helping individuals directly the Trust invests in local communities by funding organisations to deliver debt and money advice projects that benefit their service users. During 2014/15 The Trust continued to support nine projects with over 2,000 people being assisted to resolve their money issues. Trustees were also able to offer support to a further three organisations to deliver new projects. These services can be far reaching as helping individuals to become financially stable can have a positive impact on the whole family.

Looking Forward

Severn Trent Trust Fund was one of the first Utility Trusts to be established way back in 1997 and it is clear that we are achieving our aim to assist people in hardship. The help we provide is becoming more difficult to find and with the continued support of Severn Trent Water we will look forward to assisting more people in 2015/16.

The Trust receives support from many areas and on behalf of Trustees I would like to thank Auriga Services who administer the Trust so competently and efficiently along with all the advisers working in local communities throughout the Severn Trent area who are helping customers of Severn Trent Water. These advisers are tremendous supporters of our work and we encourage them to promote the Trust in the future.

As Chair I recognise the commitment of all my fellow Trustees who offer their time and expertise freely during the year and I wish to thank them for supporting me in my role.

This year Trustees welcomed Andy Phelps and Clive Mottram to the Trustee Board who bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience. All Trustees look forward to working with them in future.



Mrs L Pusey

Helping when most needed

The Trust aims to make a difference by improving the outcomes for individuals who need our support. We do this by providing a range of holistic services which include:

- Providing grants towards water debt and other essential priority costs/needs
- Guidance with budgeting
- Benefit entitlement checks
- Water and energy efficiency advice
- Debt advice where appropriate
- Routing individuals to Severn Trent Water's Priority Service Register (Access)
- Sourcing/signposting to other help available

This year 9,968 applications for help were received from individuals who applied to the Trust directly or via advice agencies acting on their behalf.

During the year the Trust also proactively contacted 7,323 individuals by letter to offer our support.

As part of this work home visits are carried out to encourage individuals to engage with us and assistance is given to make an application for a grant where appropriate.

These proactive interventions resulted in 1,312 applications for help being received.

As well as providing grants towards water charges we can offer further assistance to the most vulnerable individuals by providing essential household items or helping towards other priority bills such as gas and electricity.

This year we have received requests for help with:

9,155 Water debt arrears

4,914 Current water charges

2,774 Priority bills

1,639 Household items

123 Bankruptcy fees

To complement this work the Trust also supports local organisations that help individuals resolve their debt issues and gain control of their finances.

Trustees give their thanks to all advice agencies who promote the work of the Trust and the help they give to individuals who are in hardship.

In total 11,280 applications for support have been received in 2014/15.

We are pleased to have given £1.9m in grants and further assistance to individuals and families who were in need of our help.

An additional £432k was reserved for applicants who entered into partnership payment plans before receiving a grant.

“Thank you for giving me a grant towards my water bill it was a weight off my mind. I am now making regular payments and I have no arrears. This helped me to turn my life around.”

“Your help took a huge amount of pressure off me. My disability has meant my life has changed considerably but knowing there are people out there who care means a lot to me. I feel there is light at the end of the tunnel.”

Investing in local communities

Throughout 2014/15 the Trust has continued to fund nine community organisations to deliver a range of debt and money advice services to local people and offered support for three new projects at:

Direct Help & Advice (DHA-Derby)

Funding £94,907 over 3 years

Support provides a holistic advice service to help clients in crisis regain control of their finances and maintain future payment commitments.

Kim Miles, Director of Operations at DHA says, "It has become more difficult to provide specialist debt advice as many agencies that offered this service have been forced to close. The support from the Severn Trent Trust Fund has enabled us to employ a specialist caseworker to resolve immediate debt crisis situations and support clients over the longer term to help them regain control of their finances."

Gateway to Birmingham Advice Services/Birmingham CAB

Funding £128,146 over 2 years

This projects supports a generalist and a specialist debt adviser to deliver a tailored 'fast track' advice service within 6 local libraries across Birmingham.

Janice Nicholls, CEO at Birmingham CAB commented: "With the financial support of Severn Trent Trust Fund we launched 'Stay Afloat'. This has enabled us to help people with their water and other debts in community venues across the city. Many of these people have told us how relieved and grateful they are to have received this help".

The Haven (Wolverhampton)

Funding £55,558 over 3 years

A telephone debt advice service is being offered by this project for women affected by domestic abuse and who are fearful of leaving their homes to find support.

Laura Blackman Senior Officer at The Haven said: "For women being abused and controlled by their partner, physically escaping their environment to access support such as debt advice can be an impossible task. The Telephone Debt Advice project is paramount to offering debt advice and practical support to women who can't physically come to The Haven. Financial abuse can be a huge barrier to women escaping abuse and so this funding will break down this barrier, enabling The Haven to support more women to leave abuse behind for good".



Finances

Incoming Resources

Donations	£3,000,000
Investment Income	£18,531
Total Incoming Resources	£3,018,531

Resources Expended

Grants Payable and assoc. costs	£3,134,755
Governance	£7,525
Total Resources Expended	£3,142,280
Net (Incoming/Outgoing) Resources for Year	(£123,749)

Other Recognised Gains and Losses

Realised losses on investments	(£2,859)
Unrealised investment gains	£19,1908
Net Movement in Funds	£107,418

Fund balance brought forward 2013-2014	£1,353,328
Total Funds Carried Forward 2014-2015	£1,245,910

Balance Sheet

Fixed Assets	
Investments	£426,630

Current Assets

Debtors	£18,948
Cash in bank and in hand	£1,245,984

Creditors

Amounts falling due within one year	(£445,6520)
Net Current Assets	£819,280

Funds

Unrestricted Income Fund	£1,245,910
--------------------------	------------

Reserves

Trustees have taken into account risks and security of future donations and consider it appropriate to hold reserves of **£100,000** to cover contractual and legal obligations and any unforeseen contingencies.

Full accounts are available by writing to:

Auriga Services Limited
Company Secretary
Emmanuel Court
12-14 Mill Street
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B72 1TJ

<i>Trustees</i>	Mrs Liz Pusey (Chair) Mr David Vaughan Ms Alexandra Gribbin Mrs Lowri Williams Mr Clive Mottram Mr Andy Phelps
<i>Company Secretary</i>	Auriga Services Ltd
<i>Registered Company No.</i>	5338827
<i>Registered Charity No.</i>	1108278
<i>Auditors</i>	Mazars LLP 45 Church Street Birmingham B3 2RT
<i>Bank</i>	The Co-operative Bank Plc 118-120 Colmore Row Birmingham B3 3BA
<i>Solicitors</i>	Mills & Reeve 78-84 Colmore Row Birmingham B3 2AB
<i>Investment Manager</i>	Barclays Wealth 1 Colmore Square Birmingham B4 6ES

