



# GORDONSTOUN

Principal: Mark Pyper, BA

## GORDONSTOUN'S COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### I Historical Perspective

Gordonstoun School was founded by Kurt Hahn in 1933. Hahn had been a Headmaster in Germany and was expelled from that country for taking an ostensible stand against nazism. The ethos of his School, Salem, was rooted in service to the community based, as it was, in a former monastery and inheriting the responsibility for supporting and nurturing the surrounding district.

Kurt Hahn transferred this philosophy to Gordonstoun and created an ethos, unique at that time, of community involvement. Within ten years the School was an auxiliary member of both HM Coastguard and the Grampian Fire Brigade. The commitment to the sharing of resources with the local community was emphasised in the 1930s by the School's joining the King George V Playing Fields Scheme and making football pitches available to local clubs and schools.

This approach and ethos have been continuously developed and expanded since that time against Gordonstoun's fundamental objective of citizenship for all its students. The School's Mission Statement reads: '*Gordonstoun prepares students for a full and active role as international citizens in a changing world*'.

### 2 Extent of the School's Commitment

Involvement in, and service to, the local community is an integral part of both Gordonstoun's curriculum and the School's *raison d'être*. All students are involved in community service, and are specifically attached to one of the School's services, in their last three years. When counterparts in other schools might be members of a cadet force, students at Gordonstoun have to join a specific service relating to rescue, conservation or caring for those in need. This in turn has a financial impact as a proportion of the time (and therefore salary) of all members of staff is directed towards facilitating and leading this service element. The Service Co-ordinator is regarded as a promoted post of significance in the School. In its outreach work the School additionally provides all resources in the way of transport and equipment.

As will be seen below the School is very heavily involved in providing facilities, sporting and artistic, for the local community. This is subsidised to a substantial extent with many groups using the premises free of charge.

### 3 The Four Areas of Community Involvement

There are four fundamental areas in which Gordonstoun is involved in and with the local community.

These are:

- A Community Service
- B General community involvement
- C Provision of sporting facilities
- D Provision for the performing arts

A description of each of these areas now follows:

## **A Community Service**

Service in, and with, the community is central to the life and traditions of Gordonstoun. There are three categories of this:

### **1 Caring Service**

Over 80 students are involved in service activity in providing support work in 15 locations in the local community. These include hospitals, nursing homes, care centres, primary and nursery schools, creches and individual visits.

The School provides the premises and personnel – staff and students – for events on campus, eg weekly football sessions in the Sports Centre with disadvantaged children.

### **2 Rescue Services**

- (a) Gordonstoun is a full auxiliary branch of the Grampian Fire Brigade with 4 members of staff qualified to drive the School's two appliances, and 30 students involved in firefighting in support of the Elgin and Lossiemouth Stations on an average of two call-outs per week in term time.
- (b) The Coastguard Service is an auxiliary branch of HM Coastguards and works from a 'Watcher's Tower' on the coast, responsible for a stretch of the Moray Firth Coastline.
- (c) The Mountain Rescue Service is involved in supporting the Mountain Rescue Stations based at RAF Kinloss and RAF Lossiemouth. In particular the service plays a large part in exercises conducted by SARDA (Search and Rescue Dogs Association).
- (d) The Nordic Ski Patrol is involved in marshalling cross-country skiing events in the locality, particularly in Clashindarroch Forest working with Huntly and Nordic Ski School.
- (e) Other rescue services, mostly water based, are training services and are called out from time to time to assist in local searches for missing persons.

### **3 Environmental Service**

Over 30 students regularly, and a far greater number operating on occasional projects, work on environmental schemes in the locality. Items include: provision of coastal footpaths and steps, gorse and ditch clearing, beach clean-ups, provision of bird boxes, coastal pollution surveys etc, all in a wide range of locations. The School was recently awarded the Bronze Award in the Eco Schools Programme.

### **4 National and International Service**

Service to the wider community which does not have an immediate impact on the locality but which increase the stock of experience in the area include individual participation in projects such as the Family Service Unit

(Edinburgh), The People and Work Unit in South Wales and the Asian Community Church in West Sussex, as well as International Service Projects, eg Irrigation in Thailand, conservation in Sinai, nursing and educational work in AIDS hospices in Romania.

## **B General Community Involvement**

### **1 Access to School buildings and grounds**

Despite the challenges posed by security and child protection issues, Gordonstoun welcomes the public on the following occasions (in addition to music, drama and dance performances already mentioned).

- (a) Annual Gardens Open Day under Gardens of Scotland Scheme.
- (b) 'Open Doors' Days organised by local authority bodies.
- (c) Visitors to the School's two Chapels, St Christopher's and Michael Kirk under Scotland's Churches Scheme.

### **2 Events at which the public are welcome:**

- (a) Gordonstoun holds an annual 'Challenge' competition for local Primary Schools. In 2007 12 schools, involving 72 children with over 200 supporting visitors, attended.
- (b) The Junior School, Aberlour House, holds an annual Highland Games. This is both a competition in which local Primary Schools participate and a highland event open to the public.
- (c) The School holds a Community Service Christmas party each year with a large number of guests attending from the institutions which students visit.
- (d) Each year a number of local charity groups and associations are welcomed and hosted.

### **3 Outreach Works**

- (a) The School's Sail Training Vessel, Ocean Spirit of Moray, is used for the benefit of local groups and institutions in a charitable context, for example a week long voyage for 'Young Carers' from Moray.
- (b) The School is involved with an average of 10 groups in the community each year for eg charitable street collections, 'shopmobility' (assisting disabled people with shopping).
- (a) Visits are made to a number of local groups or institutions to make presentations as part of their meeting/lecture programmes.

### **4 Accessibility Strategy**

Over the past four years the School has been working to increase the physical access to its buildings as part of its overall Accessibility Strategy. Significant progress has been made, including the provision of better access to buildings, improved paths and lighting around the campus, and clearer parking facilities.

The new Ogstoun Theatre has already been used for a number of public performances. It has been fitted with a hearing loop and is due to have designated disabled parking provided. The Junior School at Aberlour House has recently had a large extension and the whole building has full disabled access throughout.

The Strategy and the ongoing improvements it brings will continue to have a marked impact on the accessibility of our resources to the local community.

## **C Provision of Sporting Facilities**

- I The following regional/local events tournaments are held annually on Gordonstoun premises for which no charge is made:

- (a) Moray Half-Marathon; assembling, changing and starting point (250+ competitors)
  - (b) North of Scotland Cross Country Championships (350+ competitors)
  - (c) Marie Curie Charity Tennis Tournament (70+ competitors)
  - (d) Keith Lawn Tennis Club monthly junior tournaments (3 occasions, 30 participants each occasion)
  - (e) Moray Tennis Forum inter-school competition (40 participants)
  - (f) Highland Schools District hockey trials and training sessions (4 sessions, 160 participants per session) Astroturf as home base for Moray Hockey Club, ten matches per season.
  - (g) North Schools' Football Cup Finals in 3 age groups (40 participants)
- 2 Use of various sporting facilities at Charity (subsidised) rate of £10 per hour.  
(As numbers change figures show annual average of 2002-2004)

| Facility       | No of different Groups | Total no of sessions | Total no of hours | Total no of individual persons using facility | Total no of person hours |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Astroturf      | 8                      | 102                  | 217               | 210   | 2933                     |
| Sports Hall    | 10                     | 189                  | 332               | 190   | 4835                     |
| Floodlit Grass | 4                      | 22                   | 44                | 80  | 1430                     |
| Swimming Pool  | 8                      | 154                  | 166               | 130   | 2983                     |
| Climbing Wall  | 3                      | 6                    | 8                 | 32  | 64                       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>33</b>              | <b>473</b>           | <b>767</b>        | <b>642</b>                                    | <b>12245</b>             |

## **D Provision for the Performing Arts**

### **1 Within School**

- (a) The School runs and administers a Concert Society for the local community, supported by Enterprise Music Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council. Seven concerts per annum, average attendance 100.
- (b) Several school concerts, workshops, plays and dance shows (average 8 per year) are open to the local community each year.
- (c) The Ogstoun Theatre is established as a touring venue in association with North East Arts Touring company.

### **2 Outreach work:**

- (a) Music groups play in local hospitals, nursing homes, senior citizen clubs, nursery schools and other public events, average 8 occasions per year.
- (b) Drama productions tour local Primary Schools, on average six schools visited once or twice per year.
- (c) The Gordonstoun Community Dance Company perform and deliver workshops in local Primary Schools, these happen regularly on Wednesdays afternoons throughout the year.

## **4 Future Developments and Conclusion**

As community involvement is central to the life and ethos of the school, the extent of provision will continue at, or above, its present level. The School has recently completed new facilities for the Performing Arts, both Drama and Music, and is now planning a complete refurbishment of its main sporting facilities. There is no current intention to apply for public money in the funding of any of these projects; however they will be widely available to members of the local community.

Gordonstoun has always been widely involved in the life of the local community to the benefit of both parties. The School is proud of its achievements but also pleased that its students have the different opportunities which this involvement brings. It is the School's view that the results are of very considerable benefit to the local community which would be very much the poorer if the various aspects of contact and involvement mentioned in this report did not exist. The School is of genuine, and very considerable, public benefit to the locality.

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