



Relief in Need Charity Committee Terms of Reference

Membership

Appointed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee

Appointed annually from their number in the first meeting following the AGM of the Board of Trustees. In the absence of Chair or Vice Chair, the Committee shall choose an Acting Chair from their number for that meeting.

Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Committee, and for any vote on any matter at such a meeting, is one half (rounded up to a whole number) of the membership of the Committee but with a minimum of three Trustees.

Meetings

Monthly, and generally on the second Wednesday.

History

The Stratford upon Avon Relief in Need Charity, or **Relief in Need Charity (RINC)**, administers the charities of John Combe, Thomas Combe, Richard Smith for Bread, Thomas Durant, Hubert Gibbs and Annie Justins and is itself administered by the Municipal Charities of Stratford upon Avon. More detailed information regarding the individual charities can be found in the Governing Deed.

Extract from Governing Deed

The provisions of the scheme give the trustees a wide choice in the sort of relief that they can give out of the income of the charity so long as the need is clear. (This is set out in greater detail in the separate transcript of the relevant sections of the Governing Deed which relate to the RINC charity).

Core Purpose and Values

RINC exists primarily to provide financial assistance to individuals and families in conditions of need, hardship or distress living within the town boundary of Stratford upon Avon or, in exceptional circumstances, those living immediately outside of the Town who the Trustees deem would be eligible for grants if resident within the Boundary. In addition to grants to individuals, the Charity will also consider applications from organisations who wish to fund specific projects or initiatives where the beneficiaries fit the criteria detailed above.

Whilst RINC accepts referrals from agencies and organisations such as Citizens Advice South Warwickshire (CASW), The P3 Charity, Stratford upon Avon District Council, local churches and the Stratford upon Avon Foodbank, RINC distinguishes itself from some other relief in need charities by actively promoting self-referrals from individuals. This is facilitated by the Grants Administrator and dedicated Trustees who will assist an individual who is self-referring to complete the application form and identify supporting information required. This assistance is offered as there is an understanding that the individual self-referring may find it challenging, for a variety of reasons, to complete the application form.

Another distinguishing feature of RINC, again as a result of the dedication of Trustees, is to visit each self-referring applicant in their own home, if deemed necessary and appropriate. This serves to provide an opportunity to sense-check the applicant's circumstances, as set out in the application form, and, on occasions, the visit will demonstrate a greater level of need than initially indicated, thereby allowing RINC to respond appropriately. Self-referring applicants are also strongly advised to engage with CASW or other appropriate bodies, but a failure to do so may not necessarily preclude repeat applications for assistance.

Organisations applying for grants over £3,000 will be asked to give a presentation to Trustees at a RINC meeting, or be prepared to meet with nominated members of the Committee to explain the circumstances and rationale around their application. In certain cases, RINC would be prepared to co-fund a specific grant, in conjunction with other organisations. Where applications have been unsuccessful, either self-referral or organisations, signposting will be offered to more suitable grant giving bodies, where appropriate.

In addition to grants to individuals and organisations, RINC may also provide support to residents of almshouses owned by the Municipal Charities of Stratford upon Avon and St. Joseph's Homestead through the normal application process.

The efforts of the Committee to identify suitable candidates for grants include the following:

- The local knowledge and networks that each of the Trustees have, in and around Stratford upon Avon.
- The marketing efforts made by the Grants Administrator to raise the profile of RINC.
- Regular liaison by the Grants Administrator and Trustees with referring agencies such as CASW.
- Periodic invitations to organisations to outline their activities to RINC, therefore giving Trustees a better understanding of areas in which RINC could potentially support that organisation.

Grant Applications

Applications are subject to income and expenditure assessment and will be considered for a variety of reasons. Grants are not approved for the repayment of debts, rent or council tax arrears, nor are rental deposits provided. Documentary evidence in support of financial information will be requested and grants are not generally considered unless all statutory benefits are being claimed.

When applying for financial assistance in connection with a specific health condition, applicants will be asked to include, where possible, a letter in support of the application from an appropriate external support individual or agency such as a GP, Occupational Therapist, Nurse for Older People or Warwickshire County Council Adult Health & Community Services.

Applications are welcomed from individuals using a Municipal Charities application form or via support agencies, such as Citizens Advice South Warwickshire, where a current Financial Statement is submitted on behalf of the applicant. Applications from organisations are considered based on a brief business case.

Scope of Grants

Charities for relief in need operate in the same field as statutory services. Trustees who administer such charities should be careful to avoid repeating or abating those services. Charity trustees should therefore make themselves familiar with the system of social benefits, the effect upon them of grants from charitable sources and the gaps left by them which can be filled by charitable services or facilities to relieve those in need.

By consulting with the Local Authority, Social Care, the Department for Work and Pensions and any other relevant body concerned with people in need, Trustees can learn what assistance and services these organisations can offer in particular circumstances, by way of grants, and may be able to ascertain information about people living within the Charity's area of benefit who have needs which statutory services are unable to relieve completely.

Trustees should not regard themselves as being confined to giving relief in those cases of need which are also eligible for supplementary benefits or as being limited to providing those items which have been allowed for in calculating the amount of supplementary payments.

The provisions of the scheme give the Trustees a wide choice in the sort of relief that they can give out of the income of the Charity, so long as the need is clear. Whatever relief they give must be given only to assist the kind of people mentioned, must be related to the needs of each case and must be reasonable in the circumstances, taking into account what relief is available from other sources.

Trustees always retain absolute discretion in relation to all grant applications.

Examples of Grants

These include, but are not limited to:

- Help towards paying for essential items of furniture and household equipment such as beds, support chairs, cookers, microwaves, fridges, freezers, washing machines or other, more specific requirements, such as clothing, mobility aids or medical equipment and supplies.
- Grants for weekly allowances for a specific need or special payments to relieve sudden distress or sickness.
- Payment of travel expenses for hospital appointments or for transport after discharge, or for visiting relatives in hospital or care homes where more frequent visits are desirable but other funding is limited.
- The supply of tools, books or equipment or payment of tuition or examination fees to assist with work or career progression.
- Arrangements for a recuperative holiday or period of respite from caring for close relatives or dependents, especially with regards to the elderly, sick, convalescent or mentally or physically disabled.

Delegated Powers

- The Committee has the delegated power to make individual grants of up to £5,000. Any grant request over this amount will be referred to the Board of Trustees for consideration either at the next meeting or via email. All grants made will be reported to the Board of Trustees via the minutes of Committee meetings and the Grants Schedule report.
- The Grants Administrator and Clerk to the Trustees have the delegated power to authorise payment for goods and services, within reason, and outside the normal scope of approval at a meeting of the Committee, where an individual is in immediate distress or hardship. Such decisions, wherever possible, will be agreed via email communication with a majority of members of the Committee and will be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Committee. Such grants shall not exceed £500 in value.

Other Responsibilities

These include, but are not limited to:

- Receiving and reviewing the annual grant amount available for distribution.
- Ensuring that value for money principles are considered when determining expenditure.
- Reporting and monitoring expenditure via the Grants Schedules.
- Monitoring of expenditure trends and anomalies.
- Approving the writing-off of irrecoverable debts.
- Supporting the preparation and production of Statutory Accounts and associated audits.
- Producing and storing minutes of each meeting of the Committee and ensuring that these are shared with the Board of Trustees with recommendations for action where necessary.
- Ensuring that all grant applications are treated in the strictest of confidence, in line with GDPR legislation and the Data Protection Policy of the Municipal Charities of Stratford upon Avon.