

MUNICIPAL CHARITIES OF STRATFORD UPON AVON

Incorporating St Joseph's Homestead

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2019 AT 6.05 p.m.

GUILD COTTAGES, CHURCH STREET, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

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Present: The Mayor, Cllr John Bicknell (President) Mr Clive Hood Mr Peter Rowland
Mrs Mo Lancaster (Chairman) Mrs Sarah O'Grady Mr Mick Love
Mrs Jenny Howard Mr Jon Spencer Mr Andy Smith
Cllr Mrs Tessa Bates Mrs Maureen Beckett

Mr John Loscombe - Clerk Mr Doug Evans – Grants Administrator

1. **Apologies** were received from Cllr Lezley Bott, Mrs Carole Taylor, Mr Rob Fradley, Mrs Fiona Murphy and Mrs Shelia Price
2. **Members' Interests**
None.
3. **Minutes of Board Meeting on 21 November 2018**
The members present approved the minutes and the Chairman signed them as a correct record.
4. **Matters Arising from Board Meeting on 21 November 2018**
None
5. **To Note the following Committee Meetings that have taken place since the last Board meeting on 21 November 2018 and to approve the minutes of any Special or Ad-hoc meetings listed below:**

Date minutes were circulated are in red

Special	Relief in Need	Advisory	Property	Finance
13 Feb 2019 (to note internal moves of 2 residents and agree a mandate for Handelsbanken) 20 Feb 2019	12 Dec 2018 07 Jan 2019	5 Dec 2018 14 Dec 2018	23 Jan 2019 20 Feb 2019	6 Mar 2019 8 Mar 2019
	9 Jan 2019 12 Feb 2019	27 Feb 2019 3 Mar 2019		
	13 Feb 2019 12 Mar 2019			
	13 Mar 2019 (to follow)			

The meeting agreed to note the above meetings and approved the minutes of the Special Trustee meeting outlined above, minutes of which having been circulated to all trustees.

6. **Matters arising from any of the above noted Committee meetings that have taken place since the last Board meeting on 21 November 2018**
None.
7. **Appointment of Resident to Upper Flat, 6 Albany Road**
It was noted that a satisfactory GP reference had been received in respect of the proposed candidate. The meeting therefore unanimously approved the appointment of Christine Harvey to UF6, SJH with a licence to occupy as a beneficiary of St Joseph's Homestead.

The Clerk will liaise with Christine Harvey as regards a moving in date.

8. **Appointment of Resident to Upper Flat, 4 Albany Road**

The Chairman updated the meeting reporting that today a satisfactory GP reference had been received in respect of the proposed candidate. The meeting therefore unanimously approved the appointment of Janet Coldicott to UF4, SJH with a licence to occupy as a beneficiary of St Joseph's Homestead. The applicant is aware that the property may not be ready for 2 – 3 months while the kitchen refurbishment and redecoration are carried out. The Clerk is to regularly liaise with the applicant regarding the likely date it will be ready for occupation.

9. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman referred to her report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and invited any questions. No questions were raised. The Chairman wanted to mention that she had found her visit to Mrs Hunwick inspirational as to how she is dealing with her prognosis.

10. **Clerk's Report**

The Chair referred to the Clerk's report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and invited any questions. There were no questions, but thanks were extended. The Clerk gave some further comments about Mr Johnson in Flat 14 GC, who had recently returned from a lengthy stay in hospital, with regard to the care and support package in place or in the process of being put in place. Trustee Mrs Jenny Howard subsequently offered to speak to him and to the District Nurse to better understand his medicine regime for controlling his diabetes.

11. **Report of Chair of the Properties Committee**

The Chair of the Properties Committee referred to his report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and invited any questions. There were no questions, but Mr Mick Love wished to mention a couple of things.

- He asked about the status of the MNA railings issue. The Chair reported that she and the Clerk had met with a Mr Les Greenwood yesterday who had been recommended to us. Mr Greenwood is able to create drawings of the proposed installations, deal with the planning application, heritage statement and listed building consent. MCSonA would need to obtain quotes from fabricators / railing installers who could actually supply and fit the railings. It would appear that we therefore have a way to move this forward expeditiously. Mrs Maureen Beckett asked if Les Greenwood used to work for the council as the name was familiar from the planning department. The Chair and the Clerk were not sure, but it appears that Mr Greenwood helps a number of people who have potentially tricky planning applications.
- Mr Love mentioned the refurbishment and redecoration in upper flat 6, Albany Road and he encouraged trustees to go to have a look at the difference, before new residents move in. It was subsequently agreed that Mrs Jenny Howard, Mrs Maureen Beckett and Cllr Mrs Tessa Bates would make the visit on Thursday morning.

12. **Financial Matters**

The Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee gave a verbal report:

- a) Investments. The move from BlackRock to Handelsbanken was being concluded in the next few days.
- b) Accounts / Auditors. The Auditors had now commenced work on the MCSonA 2018 audit. Thanks expressed to the Clerk and the Grants Administrator for their work here.
- c) Website. The new website is now up and running.
- d) 9 + 10 Guild Street. Various discussions had taken place about these freehold interests within the William Tyler portfolio.
- e) Policies. The Finance and Risk Committee were presenting various policies tonight for adoption by the Board.
- f) Risk Register. At the next meeting of the Finance & Risk Committee the overall risk register will be reviewed, and these reviews will be carried out annually.

13. **Report by the Deputy Chair of the Relief in Need Charity Grants**

Mrs Maureen Beckett delivered a verbal report to the meeting, and a list of grants awarded in 2019 to date was tabled and noted. Mrs Beckett's comments were:

- RINC started the year with £104K of funds available, which was probably a record high.
- Two substantial grants have been made; £3,000 to the Food Bank and £1,200 to Warwickshire Vision Support. Regarding Warwickshire Vision Support, Louise Jelley had been invited to speak to the RINC Committee on their work and as a result of this, RINC is minded to support them further.
- As of 13 March, all RINC grants are up to date, i.e. have been delivered to recipients.
- RINC is starting to spread the net wider, particularly through Citizens Advice, the Town Trust and the Parenting Project.
- We are in the process of seeking legal advice in the context of reviewing what we have used RINC funds for in the past and if we can continue to do so; particularly regarding funding fabric enhancements to almshouses (notably John Roberts and St Josephs).
- There were 38 recipients of Christmas gifts in the form of Tesco, Morrison and Asda vouchers. We are currently engaging with those recipients to see if we can offer any additional help during the year.

Mr Andy Smith asked if we were confident that we would not continue to build up RINC reserves. Mrs Maureen Beckett responded by suggesting that we shouldn't, given we are identifying further recipients, notably through the Parenting Project and the Food Bank. Mrs Mo Lancaster expanded on this point by emphasising all the work that the Grants Administrator had been doing to raise the profile of RINC.

Advisory Committee Report: The Chair explained that there was no report for the Advisory Committee because discussions were taking place amongst members of that committee concerning its role. Elements of the present Advisory Committee were simply report-backs on the activities of other committees (property / finance / welfare matters) where no decisions were being made by the Advisory.

An email had been circulated to members of the Advisory suggesting a change of emphasis in its work, with more "task and finish" activities and with the possibility of changing its name to the Policy and Governance Committee. The Chairman indicated that a further report would be made at the next Board meeting.

Mr Mick Love asked that because of the recent work on a range of policies, there would surely be less time spent going forward on policies. The Chairman agreed that although we would need to be mindful of changes in legislation, this particular committee might need to meet less regularly going forward.

14. **Staff Matters**

Update by Chairman on Ad-Hoc HR Committee's discussion on 6-monthly trial of J Loscombe and D Evans in amended roles. *The Clerk and the Grants Administrator left the room for this section of the meeting.* The Chairman referred to the objectives which had been set for both the Clerk and Grants Administrator at the start of the 6-month trial period and was delighted to be able to report that their objectives had been met and in some cases exceeded. In recognition of this fact and also that no overtime had been claimed by either during the 6 months, it was proposed and agreed that an extra week's salary should be paid to both. This hopefully will be arranged in time for the March payroll.

The Chairman then explained that the Clerk has expressed his wish to gradually reduce his working hours with the ultimate goal of stepping down from his role with Municipal Charities in June 2022. He and the Grants Administrator were proposing a gradual transfer of responsibilities whereby Doug Evans would increasingly assume the Clerking role as the Clerk reduced his hours and ultimately just lead on the treasurer role for a year. This would necessitate the need to recruit someone to assist on the clerking side.

This would give us the opportunity to “grow” that person to be increasingly supportive of Doug as he then took a lead on the treasurer’s role.

The HR committee had met to discuss this proposal and were supportive of it as they felt that it would enable the Board to put in place a succession plan and ensure that both roles were adequately covered during a very gradual handover of personnel.

After some discussion, the proposal was accepted with the proviso that from June of this year, both the Clerk and Grants Administrator submit monthly timesheets so that the Board is able to monitor the hours that are being worked. It was also proposed that we may need to consider recruiting an additional person sooner than the proposed date of 2021.

The Scheme Managers. The Chairman reported that in a recent discussion with the Deputy Scheme Manager, it appears that she will soon be signed off by her vascular surgeon. This is encouraging news.

Increase in Legal Minimum Pension Contributions. After discussion it was agreed (proposed by Mrs Jenny Howard and seconded by Mrs Mo Lancaster) that MCSonA would meet the legal minimum from April 2019 of 8% of qualifying earnings by asking employees to contribute 4%, to be matched by a further 4% from MCSonA.

15. **Trustee Matters**

Mrs Lancaster reported to the meeting that Peter Rowland’s term as a trustee expires in June 2019. Peter had indicated his willingness to serve for a further term for which we are most grateful, and consequently we had written to the vicar of the Holy Trinity church to seek his agreement for Peter to serve for a further term, as a representative of the Holy Trinity church – reply awaited.

Cllr Tessa Bates’ term expires in August 2019. She is not standing for re-election to the Town Council and therefore assumes that someone else from the Town Council would be proposed. She thinks it will be on the agenda for the July Town Council meeting. It was also noted that Mrs Bates could offer to serve in a non-Town Council capacity which has happened before.

Mrs Lancaster mentioned that her own trustee term expires in September 2019.

Cllr John Bicknell reminded the Chair that his terms as Mayor would expire in May. The Chair took this opportunity to thank him for his valuable input throughout the year.

Cllr Tessa Bates was asked how Mrs Sheila Price was after her operation today. No update was available. The Trustees agreed to send her a token to let her know we are thinking of her.

The Chairman concluded this section by indicating that there would be a training event for trustees on Tuesday 25th June at Tyler House (12 noon until 2pm, as last year). The first speaker will be Alison Orr, talking about Safeguarding (Mrs Fiona Murphy has recommended her following a talk she witnessed at the Shakespeare Hospice). The second speaker will be Mrs Sarah O’Grady speaking on Governance issues – thanks to Sarah for agreeing to deliver this.

Mrs Jenny Howard raised the issue of Deputy Chairman, since Mrs Sheila Price had indicated she did not want to become chair in the future. Mrs Mo Lancaster needs a Deputy Chair with a view to that person assuming Chairmanship in 2020. Mrs Mo Lancaster asked the trustees to think about it and for anyone interested to please give her a ring to discuss.

As an aside, Cllr Mrs Tessa Bates and Mr Mick Love commented that whilst Mrs Sheila Price had not been able to attend meetings in recent months, she was fully involved in reading all material and in providing guidance on ST Joseph’s Homestead refurbishment issues, etc.

16. **Ratification of Policies**

After discussion, the following policies were formally adopted by the Board, with the indicated review frequency:

Policy	Review Frequency
A2. Investment Management Policy	24 months
A4. Conflicts of Interest	24 months (but the Declaration form will be reviewed annually)
A5. Financial Procedures	24 months
A11. Reserves Policy	24 months
A2. Legionella Risk Management	Annually
A6. Complaints	Annually

Re: policy A9. Equality and Diversity, Mrs Sarah O’Grady raised the point that there is an Almshouse Association template policy for this, and there are a couple of key points in that template that were not reflected in our draft. It was agreed therefore to review this policy further, with reference to the Almshouse Association template, and bring it back to the next Board meeting for consideration.

After discussion, the proposed terms of reference (TOR) for the Properties Committee, the Finance & Risk Committee and the Relief in Need Committee were agreed by the Board.

17. **Any Urgent Business**

Legal Advice from Brabners: The Chairman outlined the background to this approach to Brabners and the advice that had been sought, after the Clerk having provided copies of the Governing Deeds to this firm. The Chairman indicated that the request to the Board tonight was to agree that expenditure could be incurred to move forward on some of the issues.

Mrs Sarah O’Grady expressed her view that before any approach to the Charity Commission we need to have internal discussions to decide exactly what we want. As an example, should we be considering RINC for almshouse fabric claims or should we consider fundraising? She further expressed the view that we should have a wider discussion to look at the whole estate.

After further discussion, it was proposed by Mr Peter Rowland and seconded by Mrs Maureen Beckett that we should move forward with Brabners on Subjects 1, 2 ,3 (Subject 3 being progressed with Andrew Clarke of Peter Clarke & Co) and 4, which would imply some cost. It was agreed that Subject 5 should be deferred for the time being.

“Walk through History” Spine. Mr Mick Love introduced this topic. This refers to footpath patterns and messages outside the majority of historic buildings in central SonA. It was felt that these spines helped people focus on the road rather than peering through residents’ windows. Mrs Sarah O’Grady made the point that perhaps it was not obvious that the building in Church Street was residential. Some discussion ensued as to whether this was good use of charity money and would it raise the profile. It was agreed that Mr Mick Love would find out what’s involved and what it would cost.

18. **Meeting Dates in 2019**

Mrs Mo Lancaster drew trustees’ attention to the next meeting of each committee as outlined on the agenda, and specifically the fact that the date for the November Board had changed. Mr Mick Love reminded the meeting that if at all possible, the first Wed in the month should be avoided for meetings since it clashes with another committee that more than one trustee is involved with.

Apologies were given by Mrs Jenny Howard re meetings on 10th April and 17 April. Apologies were given by Mr Andy Smith re the Trustee training event on 25th June.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 1935

Signed

Date

Distribution:

The Town Mayor, Cllr Mr John Bicknell
(President)
Mrs Mo Lancaster (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs Tessa Bates
Mrs Maureen Beckett
Mrs Jenny Howard

Mr Mick Love
Mrs Sheila Price
Mr Rob Fradley
Cllr Miss Lezley Bott

Mr Peter Rowland
Mr Andy Smith
Mrs Carole Taylor
Mr Clive Hood

Mrs Sarah O'Grady
Mrs Fiona Murphy
Mr Jon Spencer

Mr John Loscombe (Clerk)

Mr Doug Evans (Grants Administrator)