

CHARLOTTE COXE TRUST COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 25 January 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.00 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Geoff Saul – in the Chair
Councillor Felix Bloomfield (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Freddie van Mierlo
Councillor Ian Middleton (In place of Councillor Robin Bennett)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Richard Hodby, Solicitor; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

1/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Robin Bennett (substituted by Councillor Ian Middleton) and Councillor Jane Murphy.

2/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3/24 MINUTES
(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

4/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda No. 4)

The Chair agreed to two requests to address the committee:

- Gill Bindoff
- Parish Councillor Denise Mallan

Gill Bindoff stated that the cottage had been renovated to a good standard. An energy rating would be sought which they were hoping will achieve level C. She thanked the Council for extending the term to August for the family living in the property. She supported the idea of an informal meeting to move things on.

Denise Mallan added that the work of the welcome committee and commitment of the local people to help the family in the cottage was a good example of how the Watlington community can work together.

In response to a question from Gill Bindoff, Richard Hodby explained that the lease for the library cannot be completed until the transfer to Watlington Parish Council takes place because the County Council cannot be landlord and tenant.

5/24 FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2023
(Agenda No. 5)

The Committee considered the Statement of Financial Activities for the year to 31 March 2023 and the recommendation to authorise its submission.

It was clarified that the accounts followed the usual local authority format whereby income is denoted with a minus number.

Richard Hodby confirmed that there was no tax liability as the interest was exempt for a charity.

RESOLVED to:

- a) **Approve the Statement of Financial Activities for the year to 31 March 2023 annexed to this report and**
- b) **Authorise a Council officer to submit data from the Statement to the Charity Commission online before midnight on 31 January 2024 so that annual financial reporting obligations are complied with.**

6/24 33 HIGH STREET, WATLINGTON AND THE TRANSFER OF TRUSTEESHIP OF THE CHARLOTTE COXE TRUST TO WATLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
(Agenda No. 6)

RESOLVED that the public be excluded during the consideration of the report since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda.

Members discussed the report and proposed to amend recommendation b) as follows:

To instruct officers of the Council to write to Watlington Parish Council on behalf of the Trust (i) expressing its ~~disappointment~~ **concern** ~~at the fact it allowed the family into~~ **with the** occupation of the property **by a family** without going through the

procedures mandated by the Committee at its meeting on 28 April 2022, (ii) advising that occupation on the current basis ~~should~~ **must** not carry on beyond 31 August 2024 **without formal arrangements being in place** and (iii) advising that occupation beyond 31 August 2024 will require further renovation work to be carried out at the property so its energy performance rating is improved; **and (iv) reiterating the offer to work collaboratively, including a face to face meeting, to resolve any issues with the occupation of the property and enable a timely transfer of the Trust to Watlington Parish Council;** and

The amendment was agreed and the recommendations as amended were agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To allow the family of Ukrainian refugees currently occupying 33 High Street, Watlington to remain there until the earlier of 31 August 2024 and the date when the transfer of the Trust to Watlington Parish Council has completed (at which point the management of the property will cease to be the Council’s responsibility);**
- (b) To instruct officers of the Council to write to Watlington Parish Council on behalf of the Trust (i) expressing its concern with the occupation of the property by a family without going through the procedures mandated by the Committee at its meeting on 28 April 2022, (ii) advising that occupation on the current basis must not carry on beyond 31 August 2024 without formal arrangements being in place, and (iii) advising that occupation beyond 31 August 2024 will require further renovation work to be carried out at the property so its energy performance rating is improved; and (iv) reiterating the offer to work collaboratively, including a face to face meeting, to resolve any issues with the occupation of the property and enable a timely transfer of the Trust to Watlington Parish Council; and**
- (c) To agree not to pay any of Watlington Parish Council’s legal fees.**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2024