

CHARLOTTE COXE TRUST COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 4 November 2022 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 Jane Murphy
Councillor Bethia Thomas (In place of Councillor Robin Bennett)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Richard Hodby (Solicitor (Legal Services)); Colm Ó Caomhánaigh (Committee Officer)

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.

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Robin Bennett (substituted by Councillor Bethia Thomas).

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

21 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 4)

The Chair agreed to one request to speak.

Gill Bindoff reminded the Committee that Watlington Parish Council had been negotiating over the Trust for ten years. They believed that they could manage it

more effectively. They hoped that the library would continue to flourish. They planned to refurbish the cottage. They wanted to work collaboratively with the Council on this.

The Chair invited questions to the speaker and Gill Bindoff responded as follows:

- There were no costings yet on the refurbishment. They would need an engineer's report as there were likely structural problems. It was hoped to raise sufficient funds for this from various sources. If the cottage could be refurbished and let out, that would provide funds for the Trust in the long term.
- She was not suggesting it would be easy to raise the funds but OCC did not have the money either.
- They were initially planning to make the cottage safe and to construct a community building in the long garden to connect with the library extension.
- She hoped the Committee would support the transfer of the Trusteeship in principle. She hoped they could negotiate over OCC's professional costs. The cost of repair would have been much less if there had been proper maintenance by OCC.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded since it is likely that if they were present during the discussions 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.

23 EXEMPT MINUTES
(Agenda No. 5)

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

24 TRANSFER OF TRUSTEESHIP OF THE CHARLOTTE COXE TRUST TO WATLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
(Agenda No. 6)

The information in the Annexes in this case is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed category:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

RESOLVED to:

- a) **Approve the transfer of the trusteeship and assets of the Charlotte Coxé Trust from Oxfordshire County Council to Watlington Parish Council,**

provided that Watlington Parish Council provides an indemnity in respect of liabilities which arise after the date of the transfer;

- b) At the time of the transfer, place a legal obligation on Watlington Parish Council to grant a lease of Watlington Library back to Oxfordshire County Council on the terms summarised in Annex 5; and
- c) Request Oxfordshire County Council to report to the Committee after completion of the transfer with a justification of any professional fees requested for the financial, legal and estates work its officers have carried out, which it (or the Committee) may then seek to recover from the Trust.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 202