

## **CHARLOTTE COXE TRUST COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Wednesday, 22 June 2022 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.10 am

**Present:**

**Voting Members:**

Councillor Robin Bennett  
Councillor Felix Bloomfield  
Councillor Freddie van Mierlo  
Councillor Jane Murphy  
Councillor Geoff Saul

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting            Richard Hodby (Solicitor (Legal Services)) and  
   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.*

**9 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2022/23**

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Geoff Saul was proposed by Councillor Robin Bennett, seconded by Councillor Felix Bloomfield and elected Chair nem con.

**10 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2022/23**

(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor Felix Bloomfield was nominated by Councillor Jane Murphy, seconded by Councillor Robin Bennett and elected Deputy Chair nem con.

**11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda No. 3)

There were no apologies for absence.

**12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Agenda No. 4)

There were no declarations of interest.

**13 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 5)

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2022 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

## **14 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS** (Agenda No. 6)

The Chair agreed to the following requests to speak:

Ian Hill, Watlington Parish Council stated that he had been involved in the Charlotte Coxe Trust since 2013. The Parish Council had experience of being Trustees of Watlington Town Hall through a charity and would envisage managing the Trust in a similar way. They already had a shadow committee in place consisting of three councillors and three members of Friends of Watlington Library which was ready to meet when the need arises.

Ian Hill responded to questions from Members as follows:

- He described his involvement so far as prompting council officers to move things along as well as engaging solicitors to prepare the necessary documentation for the transfer of the property in order to be ready for that.
- He saw it as similar to their management of the Town Hall in that they were proposing to create a charity to manage a building and generate enough income to sustain it.
- If it was decided to transfer the property, he would envisage it taking place within a year or so and they would formulate medium and long term plans in that period.

Gill Bindoff, Chair of the Watlington Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Board, stated that the survey of the cottage revealed that it was in a very poor state. The County Council's responsibility for the property was a legacy issue. The Parish Council acted as custodian for other buildings and green spaces and there were local people with the skills necessary to take on the project. She asked that they not be excluded from discussions at the Committee meeting.

Ian Hill added that if the decision was to maintain the Trust under the County Council, he would like to see more local representation on the Trust Committee and not just councillors.

## **15 FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE TRUST** (Agenda No. 7)

Members considered a report outlining options for the future management of the Trust. Members welcomed the enthusiasm of the local group. They expressed the opinion that more work needed to be done and they did not have the answers to all the questions yet. A site visit was also suggested.

Councillor Robin Bennett proposed that the Committee accept recommendation a) but not make a decision on recommendation b) at this stage. This was seconded by Councillor Freddie van Mierlo.

The Committee agreed recommendation a) and agreed to organise a site visit.

**RESOLVED: to agree that the preferred options for the future management of the Trust are permanently managing the Trust through the Committee or transferring the trusteeship to an external body (or group of people).**

**16 EXEMPT ITEMS**  
(Agenda No. 8)

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.

**17 EXEMPT MINUTES**  
(Agenda No. 9)

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

**18 RENT FOR WATLINGTON LIBRARY**  
(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee was asked to consider a report proposing that the lease terms which the Council put forward for Watlington Library should be amended, increasing the rent being charged to the Council to the sum recommended by the Trust’s surveyor in his report at annex 3.

The public was excluded for the discussion on this item because discussion of the matters in public was likely to lead to the disclosure to members of the public present of information in 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: that the lease terms which the Council put forward for Watlington Library be amended, increasing the rent being charged to the Council to the sum recommended by the Trust’s surveyor in his report at annex 3.**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing ..... 2022