

CHARLOTTE COXE TRUST COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 13 March 2025 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.00 am

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Geoff Saul – in the Chair
Councillor Robin Bennett (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Freddie van Mierlo

Officers:

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

The 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.

6/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Murphy.

7/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

8/25 MINUTES (Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2025 were approved.

9/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS (Agenda No. 4)

The Chair accepted a request to speak from Gill Bindoff on item 5.

Gill Bindoff spoke in support of the recommendations and urged the Council to get an up to date valuation of all the Trust property including garages and parking spaces. She asked that the local working group have input into the transfer process.

Richard Hodby clarified that the terms of the transfer would be decided by the Committee at this meeting.

There followed discussion on the Council's role in the proposed Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Richard Hodby stated that he anticipated that the County Council as a body would be a member of the CIO and expected that the Cabinet would nominate an officer to attend meetings. The Local Member could be elected a Trustee by the CIO as well.

10/25 TRANSFER OF THE CHARLOTTE COXE TRUST TO A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION

(Agenda No. 5)

The Chair moved "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." The Committee agreed.

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

1. Information relating to a particular individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial and business affairs of any person (including the authority holding that information); and
5. Information in which a claim to Legal Professional Privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

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.

The Committee discussed the report in private session and agreed to amend recommendation f) and append recommendations g), h), i) and j).

RESOLVED to:

- a) Approve the incorporation of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation to be called the Charlotte Coxe Trust CIO;
- b) Approve the appointment of the 8 people who have put their names forward as potential trustees (details of whom appear in Annex A) along with the Council (as a permanent member) as the initial trustees and members of the CIO;
- c) Approve the transfer of the trusteeship and assets of the Charlotte Coxe Trust from the Council (as current sole trustee) to the CIO subject to the CIO (a) providing an indemnity in respect of liabilities which arise after the date of the transfer and (b) entering a legal obligation to grant a rent-free lease of Watlington Library back to the Council;
- d) Authorise officers to instruct Geldards LLP on behalf of the Trust to support them with the incorporation of the CIO and other specialist legal work associated with the transfer and leaseback of the library;

- e) Authorise officers on behalf of the Trust to approve the terms of the constitution of the CIO based on advice from Geldards, subject to the constitution containing the provisions detailed in the report; and
- f) Agree on behalf of the Trust that the Council should retain the right to appoint a certain number of trustees, in the event that they are not appointed organically, and ensure safeguards are included in the constitution of the new CIO such that OCC can retain an ongoing interest in the CIO (amongst other things) to protect 33-35 High Street as a community asset for the long-term benefit of the people of Watlington;
- g) For the avoidance of doubt, there is nothing to prevent the Local Member being a member of the CIO;
- h) Approve legal costs for the incorporation of the CIO and transfer of assets up to £10,000 plus VAT;
- i) Not seek to recover costs of officer time from previous years;
- j) Encourage officers to progress transfer of the garage and parking spaces to the CIO once incorporated.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2025