Minutes of the Meeting of John Bousfield and Kipling Charities

held at Bowes Hutchinson's School on 12 November 2024

Present

Cllr Carlisle, Cllr Hughes, Cllr Redfern, Cllr White, Cllr Tipping, Mrs Val Hobbs, Mr Ross Woodley

1. ## Appointment and Trustees and Office Holders

Mr Woodley explained that he had called the meeting because the charities had not met for at least five years and had effectively been dormant as a result. Those invited were the trustees of the two charities last time they had met. They were the five councillors of Bowes Parish Council and Mrs Hobbs, who had fulfilled the role of non-councillor trustee. As the charities purpose was the relief of poverty in the parish the Council was forbidden from acting as sole trustees but expected to play a role in ensuring that trustees were appointed with the Clerk and RFO serving as an office holder. Cllr Carlisle added that if the Council acted as sole trustees there would be additional governance and accountability requirements. The two charities had so few transactions that the Charities Commission had de-registered them several years ago and consequently the governance and accountability requirements were limited.

It was resolved that:

- There would be seven trustees – the five councillors currently in post, Mrs Hobbs, and Mr Woodley.
- Cllr Hughes would be Chair of Trustees – reflecting his experience as a trustee of other charities;
- The Clerk of the Parish Council would be Secretary of the charities and the Responsible Financial Officer of the Parish Council would be Treasurer of the charities, noting that currently Mr Woodley performed both roles;
- There would be no other office holders; and
- None of the trustees or office holders would be remunerated.

AT THIS POINT Cllr HUGHES TOOK THE CHAIR

2. ## Frequency of Meetings

Mr Woodley explained that Charities Commission guidance suggested charities meet at least twice a year. However, as these charities had infrequent transactions and were not registered with the Charities Commission an annual meeting might suffice. Cllr Carlisle proposed an annual meeting and Cllr Hughes suggested Mr Woodley arrange the next meeting for May 2025 (so thereafter the charities meet annually immediately before the Annual Parish Meeting). All agreed that this would be efficient and maximise village participation.

It was resolved that:

- There would be an annual meeting of the charities before each Annual Parish Meeting in May.

3. ## Bank Mandate

The Clerk provided a verbal update on progress updating the bank mandates with Barclays (John Bousfield) and Nat West (Kipling). These were needed to add him as the Treasurer and update the business address to his home address. The Barclays form was signed at the meeting and he agreed to contact the relevant authorising trustees when the Nat West form was available.

All agreed that the signing rules should be simple.

It was resolved that:

- any two trustees would be required to sign cheques and authorise online transactions administered by the Treasurer through either paper forms or if the banks allowed dual online authorisation.

4. Purpose and Use of Funds

(a) Both funds must be used to provide relief from poverty for Bowes residents. This was clear from the wills of the former residents that established the charities through bequests. Cllr Hughes explained that this could be interpreted quite widely so funds could be used on any measure targeted to help those most in need in the local area. This could be achieved through direct donations to local residents known to be struggling with the cost of living or by donating to not-for-profit organisations that provided services accessible by Bowes residents.
(b) The only income is bank and investment interest, except for a small rent paid every five years by the descendants of the original benefactor of the Kipling charity.
(c) No payments have been made for several years. Trustees considered if they wished to make payments in 2024/25. All agreed that they were not aware of any urgent hardship that required addressing before the May 2025 annual meeting, but a special meeting could be convened if this position changed.

It was resolved that:

- There would be no expenditure before the May 2025 annual meeting unless a special meeting was convened to address an urgent case of hardship that became apparent to a trustee.

5 Options for future of the Charities

Mr Woodley explained that identifying residents experiencing genuine financial hardship was challenging and this was a major factor in the charitable funds been used so rarely. Trustees could decide to simply dissolve the charities by donating all the remaining funds to a local charity providing services targeted at the most deprived households in the area. Cllr Carlisle asked if as the two charities had identical purposes it might be better to combine them into a single new charity. Cllr Hughes said that any merger or dissolution could potentially be met with challenge from the descendants of the original benefactors and it might be better to work with a local charity to target annual donations.
Mr Woodley stated that his research had identified one local charity (Teesdale Community Resources – TCR) that was based in nearby Barnard Castle and provided foodbanks and other services designed to relieve hardship in the area. Cllr Hughes declared an interest as a trustee of the charity but confirmed that TCR would be a legitimate target for donations. He agreed to ascertain the best way of targeting donations at relieving poverty in Bowes.

It was resolved that:

- The two charities would not be dissolved and would instead annually meet to consider donations to other not-for-profit organisations already working at relieving poverty in Teesdale; and
- Cllr Hughes would work with TCR to identify how they could best use donations from the charities to relieve poverty in Bowes and report back to the next meeting.

6 AOB

All agreed that there was no other business. However, Mr Woodley would examine the records relating to the two charities before the next meeting to establish any restrictions on use of funds that trustees were unaware of. He would call the next meeting when the timing of the May 2025 elections was established as the Annual Parish Meeting would need to closely follow the elections.