



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES HELD ON THURSDAY
13th January 2011 AT 6:00 pm IN THE READING ROOM AT DUNWICH**

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present as Trustees: Mrs Angela Abell (Acting Chairman), Mr R Bessell, Mr D Cook, Mrs V Donovan, Mrs L Prior, Mr Keith Maunder

In attendance: Mr J Cary (Clerk and Treasurer),

Apologies for Absence: Mr Crispin Clay, Mr J Salusbury

The chairman welcomed the Committee, and Clerk

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2011

Mrs Donovan proposed and Mrs Prior seconded Mrs Abell as Chairman and Mr Cook as Vice Chairman, both for one year. All trustees were in favour.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 11th November 2010

Agreed after deletion of the date of the public meeting in 2011

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 11th November 2010

Grant to Dunwich PCC for cemetery and clock maintenance. The chairman explained that having done some background research it appeared that parishes were obliged to maintain a burial ground. The cost of this used to met by the Dunwich Parish Meeting, but some years ago it was agreed that the Dunwich Town Trust could pay for this, and the clock winding which had also been paid for by the DPM. If trustees were unable to see their way clear to approving of future grants of this nature, the DPM would be obliged to pick up the cost, thus increasing the precept for Dunwich residents.

Declaration of Interest: The policy outlined in the minutes of the DTT meeting of 12th November 2009 were re-examined in the light of Charity Commission guidance. Trustees did not dispute that when a conflict arose which had a possibility of personal benefit for trustee, that trustee should be excluded form any discussion or voting. On the question of conflict of loyalties (e.g. when a trustee was also a trustee of another body which may derive benefit from a DTT decision), trustees agreed that where possible trustees should be allowed to make a contribution to the discussion provided they had fully declared their conflict of loyalty. The contribution to the decision making process could vary from simply providing information through opinionated discussion to a full vote depending on the conscience of the trustee concerned. It was agreed that a register of trustees' interests and other loyalties should be started and administered by the Clerk.

5. CLERK AND TREASURER'S REPORT/ WORKS/ WINCH HUTS

a. Clerk reported that the Spinney was now costing a fair amount of money to keep empty, and no further interest had been registered by either selling agent. Partly on the advice of the selling agents, the Clerk suggested that the

trustees now decide to re-let the Spinney for the time being but for a minimum of a year. All agreed.

- b. Winch Huts: the Chairman and Clerk to arrange a meeting with Philip Holmes before the next meeting. Clerk to reply to a letter from Jubilee committee in respect of their request.
- c. Trustees agreed to fence off the spare plot next to No 1 Town House.
- d. The Treasurer presented the annual budget to the trustees, who did not wish to modify or change any items.

6. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- a. Further to the question of a performance bond, the Clerk had asked the architects to review its usefulness in the context of this project. The architects view was that as we had engaged a QS who would monitor expenditure very carefully, if a builder went bankrupt another could be found at very little extra cost. The trust could afford to wait until it had found a good replacement as there was no imperative time pressure. The cost of the bond could be significant, most likely much more than an extra costs associated with switching builders. The trustees suggested the building contract should have a penalty clause for over-running. (Breaking News: it appears the builders have included a bond of 10% of the contract in their price – which the QS recommends we keep, in the current climate).
- b. The building contract tenders had now been received and currently Blackburns of Harleston looked the best price. However the price (including a contingency) would put the project over budget. The trustees were asked to identify areas of saving having been presented with a list of costs of items which could be cut. Unfortunately the first item on their list was an addition for insulation. The items the trustees wished to be cut were Bedroom 1 rear dormer, skirtings and architraves from oak to softwood, wood burning stoves. Trustees were warned that if the contingency were called upon the project cost would be increased.
- c. The Clerk had attended a planning meeting at SCDC on 5th January for Planning Control North to consider the revised application for the two new houses. The committee approved the scheme unanimously except they asked the issue of affordability to be tightened up in the S106 agreement. The Clerk attended a subsequent meeting with SCDC legal team on 13th January to discuss any amendments to the S106 agreement:
 - i) The Clerk expressed his disquiet and concern that the agreement was being looked at again in the light of the fact that the last one took 4 years to agree. He questioned the validity of making any alterations as the project had not changed materially (other than design) from the one before.
 - ii) The Council's legal officer agreed that they shouldn't change anything but wished to clarify the issue of rent levels. Currently the agreement stated that the Council should approve any rents being charged – the proposal now was to state the levels exactly to ensure both sides were left in no doubt. The proposal put forward was to adopt the Local Housing Allowance Rates as the basis for the rents – currently this amounted to more than DTT was proposing. The trustees were satisfied that this formula would work and authorised the Clerk to accept the change via the trust's legal advisers.
- d. The discussion then passed to the question of tenancy selection procedures. Mrs Prior had already done a tremendous amount of work on this question

and had produced a very useful discussion paper. This had been circulated prior to the meeting with a questionnaire which sought opinions on some of the essential issues and which had been returned to the chairman prior to the meeting.

The following conclusions and decisions were reached:

- A. Firstly determine whether an applicant was in need of the accommodation sought
- B. Secondly whether the applicant was sufficiently 'in need' of affordable accommodation – i.e. was their single or joint income low enough
- C. How well did the applicant fit into the S106 criteria
- D. How much of a positive contribution to Dunwich would the applicant make.
- E. The trustees were in favour of an independent selection panel, of 3 people with one appointed DTT trustee to sit on it as an observer/ advisor – Keith Maunder volunteered. Trustees all ranked all names put forward for the selection of panel members.
- F. All information about the applicants would be kept totally confidential – Clerk to check with Data Protection Act to see how long forms could be kept. Forms would be passed to the panel with all names (and clues to names) deleted so the panel had no prejudice about the candidate.
- G. Any trustee would need to declare an interest if they had a member of their family or close friend applying for one of the houses
- H. The merits or not of a points system were discussed. Trustees decided against a points system but having a very detailed list of criteria for the panel to use in the selection process.
- I. It was decided to hold a special meeting of the trustees to discuss this one subject alone, in February

7. GRANTS

- A. An application received over the Christmas period by a Parishioner for emergency repair work was approved in full.
- B. An application for a grant by a Parishioner for essential work on their home was approved in full/
- C. An application from a Parishioner for a retrospective Christmas grant was approved in full.
- D. An application from a Parishioner for some major building work was rejected.

8. GREYFRIARS

The Clerk updated the trustees on progress being made in respect of Greyfriars friary and woods. So far the steering group had met twice and a major meeting between the following parties had been called on January 7th:

- i. Dunwich Parish Meeting
- ii. Dunwich Reading Room and Museum
- iii. Dunwich Town Trust

- iv. Suffolk County Council
- v. Suffolk District Council
- vi. English Heritage
- vii. National Trust

SCC explained their policy to devolve all their countryside sites by April 2011. They were looking for 'takers' and were not going to spending any more on the site after April 2011. They were unsure what they would do if no-one took the site.

The Dunwich organisations asked about costs of liability, particularly the Ancient Monument, including public liability insurance. SCC do not have insurance as they 'self insure', as do National Trust and English Heritage so no information was forthcoming on that point.

English Heritage pointed out that owners of Ancient Monuments had no legal obligation to maintain them, though EH would support the owner as much as they could to maintain it, but would expect the owner to have strong aspirations to maintain and improve the monument. Apart from grass cutting and very basic maintenance the biggest cost would be a quinquennial survey and carrying out any works recommended on that. A report had been completed for SCC which has suggested the site could cost as much as £400,000 to repair it.

EH were not interested in guardianship, National Trust were unlikely to want to take on such a property without a large endowment. SCC were not offering an endowment or transitional funding.

Trustees were anxious not to get stuck with a site which would absorb the trust's funds for ever. The Clerk suggested that the plan devised by the steering group would involve setting up separate body to own, fund raise and administer the site. This would ring fence the liability for the one site, and enable it to apply for grants from a range of organisations (including DTT) as it saw fit. Even the plan for a separate trust was not final at this stage .

Trustees agreed that if a separate trust were formed to operate Greyfriars they would be happy to send a representative to sit on that committee.

9. AORB

- a **Seals.** The Clerk reported there were currently 17 seals in the DTT's possession. What was the policy of trustees in respect of handing out free seals? The seals should only be given only to:
 - 1. Parishioners who live in the village permanently and who;
 - 2. are local electors and providing the distribution is limited to;
 - 3. one seal per household.
- b **Clerk's contract:** The Clerk reported he had logged his hours from September to December inclusive. He had worked extra hours in that time, as against the hours allocated in his contract. Trustees agreed to pay for Clerk's time pro rata and for the Clerk to continue using the same system pro temp.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 10th March– Reading Room at 6:00pm

Meeting terminated at 9:45 pm