

MPC(21)99a
THE MELTON TRUST
REPORT FOR MELTON PARISH COUNCIL
SUMMER 2021

Background

We presented a paper (copy attached below) to the council earlier this year outlining the problems the trustees were experiencing and ways we thought the Parish Council might be able to help.

To summarise, this came down to providing publicity and a link with the community (via the web site) and some clerking support.

It was agreed at the meeting that the council:

1. Recognised the valuable contribution the Trust makes to local residents
2. Noted the challenges the Trust has in reaching individuals and families in need
3. The council was willing to provide more support and that the clerk would liaise with the Trust to articulate their requirements in more detail and jointly develop a proposal, incorporating any associated costs, for consideration by the Council.

Action

The two trustees nominated by the Council, Tony Thompson and Katy Martin, met with the Parish Clerk on the 26th May and discussed the requirements in detail. It was agreed that we would produce another paper for the Council to be tabled at the September meeting.

We considered a table of activities undertaken by the trustees and quickly identified those that needed to be done by trustees and those that could be actioned by a clerk. A list of these can be found in Appendix A.

Request

In order that the Melton Trust can continue to operate in its present form, we are asking for the Parish Council to provide support for the Trust but we are not asking for the Council to take it over or to take on any of the Trust's responsibilities.

The support we would require is basically a clerking service to cover the administration tasks and the accounting routines needed to run a Charitable Trust. If possible it would also include providing an electronic payment facility for applicants where paying for an item by cheque is not possible.

We estimate this would amount to, on average, a maximum of one day a month in total.

Appendix A

Task	Frequency	Average Amount of work
Point of contact for: Charity Commission Barclays Bank Investments	Ad Hoc Monthly Quarterly	15 mins a month?
Management accounts: Update spreadsheet Prepare and circulate "Trust on a page"	Quarterly	1 hour a month?
Annual accounts: Prepare draft accounts Co-ordinate trustee review and manage feedback	Annually	4 hours a year?
Annual report: Draft annual report Co-ordinate trustee review and manage feedback	Annually	4 hours a year?
Charity Commission: Update trustee details Prepare draft Annual Return Ensure trustees appropriately informed of Charity Commission Areas of Focus and any subjective judgements	Ad Hoc Annually Annually	4 hours a year?
Monitor and circulate post / emails	Ad Hoc	10 minutes a month?
Meetings: Prepare agenda Draft and circulate minutes	Twice yearly	16 hours a year?
Banking: Maintain cheque book Obtain signatures	Number of cheques in last 5 years:	1 hour a month?

Distribute cheques Make electronic payments	Max 13 Average 5	
		Total 4.75 hours per month?

MPC(21)42

REPORT TO MELTON PARISH COUNCIL [February 2021]

RE THE MELTON TRUST

Background

The recent history of the Trust shows that it was administered by St Andrew's church. By the time of the latest update of the Trust Deed in the 1960s, it was demonstrably clear that the aim was for the Trust to be jointly overseen by the Church and the Parish Council; the Rector being an ex-officio Trustee, the Parish Council nominating 2 Trustees and the remaining three Trustees being members of the community.

Currently, the Parish Council also supports the Trust by being the postal address for receipt of applications, etc.

Since 2015, there has been an additional link with Melton Primary School through appointing a Trustees with a link to the school.

The Trust has an income of c£12,000 p.a. from an endowment fund recently valued at £422,000. In most years, income has exceeded grants and the excess has built up an unrestricted fund that now stands at £46,000.

Issues

1. The strategic direction is to engage with those in need through 4 pillars:
 - The church – using the ex-officio Trustee's parochial role to identify individuals in need and put them in touch with the Trust. Currently, we have very little engagement from the Rev. Hambling due to his other obligations. We have regular "adverts" in the Melton Messenger but these have resulted in limited applications. Also, as result of COvid-19 the Melton Messenger is only available on-line which will have an impact on its circulation.
 - The Parish Council – using their knowledge and awareness of disadvantaged families and initiatives to support them. This has not been very successful but the link with the Good Neighbour Scheme has been more successful.

- Melton primary School – using their knowledge of disadvantaged families and various initiatives to support them, This has been successful with the Trust providing grants to support a number of school-lead projects and also direct grants to families.
- Partner organisations operating in this sphere – we have had limited success. We get some referrals through Social Services. We get support from the Disability advice Service in validating applications and have provided funds for initiatives such as the Salvation Army Food Bank.

In summary, the strategy is not yet successful in addressing the difficulty in identifying applicants

2. The active Trustees are acting as administrators, accountants, social workers. This has been exacerbated by the Covid restrictions and the need to operate virtually. Two of the Trustees are retiring this year and one next year. These are our most experienced Trustees.
3. Safeguarding requirement present ongoing challenges in meeting with applicants to understand their underlying need, validate the application and provide support (goods, services or cash). This has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 restrictions.
4. Banking challenges – the Trust operates a dual signature system on cheques and have not identified an appropriate internet banking alternative. This is a problem if the applicant has no bank account or cannot get to their bank to pay in a cheque. It is also a problem when we need to pay for goods directly, e.g. when paying for white goods from Hughes.
5. Limits due to wording of Trust Deed:
 - We can only support residents of Melton except under specific circumstances.
 - We can only operate in the defined area of “relief of need” though we try to interpret this to include areas which may be thought of as social inclusion.
 - We cannot substitute for statutory provision so the Trustees must ensure that all relevant benefits have been claimed when assessing an application.

In summary, a lot of care and effort is needed to validate applications.

Ways the Parish Council could provide more help

Provide an easy-to-find Melton Trust page on the council web-site.

Allow the clerk(s) to act as Clerk to the Trust: opening applications and forwarding to the Trustees, managing the accounts, help with difficult payments using a secure process agreed with the clerks. The size of the Trust’s annual income restricts its ability to pay for this service.

Help to rewrite the Trust Deed to make it less restrictive (William has the necessary expertise).

Use the Council grants process to identify applicants (individuals or organisations) who could be redirected to the Trust.

Encourage all councillors to be aware of the Trust and to spread that awareness through the community.

Recommendations

The Council is asked to:

- recognise the valuable contribution the Trust makes to local residents
- note the challenges the Trust has in reaching individuals and families in need
- consider whether it is willing to provide more support to the Trust and, if so, request the Trust to liaise with the Clerk to articulate their support requirements in more detail and jointly develop a proposal, including any associated costs, for consideration by Council

Cllr. Katy Martin

25th February 2021