

Girton Town Charity

Trustee Report for the year 1st July 2020 – 30th June 2021

Prepared For Girton Annual Parish Meeting 11th May 2022

Key Points

- Appointees moved into Suffolk Terrace, three new Almshouse cottages on the High Street 1st April 2021
- Barnes Construction started on site at Dovehouse Court, High Street to build 15 Passivhaus Almshouse apartments for over 55's on 23rd August 2021

Introduction

The current Girton Town Charity (GTC) is a Company Limited by Guarantee incorporated on 28th May 2009 and registered as a charity on 22nd June 2009. It was amalgamated with the former Town Charity (Charity No. 203217) on 24th June 2009. The Trustees filed their Statutory Annual Report and Accounts for the period 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021 with the Charity Commission on 14th April 2022; these can be obtained by using 'search' for charity number 1130272 at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission

Financial data in this report is taken from the Audited Accounts for the year ending 30th June 2021, except where otherwise stated. Information about the size of grants made is taken from Minutes of Trustees' Meetings.

Trustees

There are normally seven Trustees who serve five-year terms. Five are currently appointed by Girton Parish Council (GPC) and two by the Board of Trustees. We are delighted that Dan Buck joined us in December 2020 and Andrew Muston in July 2021. Both are GTC appointments.

The selection process for PC appointments, agreed between the Trustees and Girton Parish Council, follows guidelines made by the Charity Commission. Vacancies for Trustees are advertised in the *Girton Parish News* and on Village notice boards when they occur. We are currently looking for at least one new Trustee and we always welcome expressions of interest from residents of the Village.

The Trustees in office in April 2022 were:

Mr Marc Bermann *Finance Lead*

Mrs Ann Bonnett *Chair*

Mr Dan Buck

Mr Colin Carr

Dr Robin Hiley

Mr Andrew Muston

Ms Patsy Smith

All Trustees sign a declaration of acceptance of office and of eligibility on first appointment and submit a Declaration of Interests that is amended as necessary during the year. The minutes of each meeting record any Conflicts of Interest declared by the Trustees with regard to the business being considered.

INTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Trustees' Meetings

The Trustees met (virtually) ten times between 1st July 2020 and 30th April 2021 to consider the regular business of the Charity in addition to participating in an Extraordinary Meeting and two Strategy Meetings. The Annual Strategy Day held prior to COVID-19 was replaced by a series of virtual meetings to review specific areas of interest, in particular Dovehouse Court construction, appointment strategy and policy for the Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC). The Strategy Meeting also considered distribution of Trustee responsibilities. The Risk Register is reviewed regularly at Trustee meetings.

Financial Management and Investments

Our investment policy is intended to deliver an income with a constant purchasing power and our Investment Managers have been instructed to manage the endowment so that its value keeps pace with inflation over the long-term. Two investment

companies, Cazenove and Quilter Cheviot manage the Charity's funds on a discretionary basis. Trustees agreed to appoint CCLA to manage a cyclical fund to cover future maintenance of all Almshouses. The Trustees receive the managers' Quarterly Reports at their regular meetings, and our Investment Committee separately reviews the overall strategy and the managers performance and makes recommendations to the Trustee Board.

The Charity's main source of income remains that arising from investments, which amounted to £640,000 (2020: £888,000). In addition, there was £110,000 (2020: £100,000) of income arising from the provision of almshouses, and £14,000 (2020: £22,000) of income from the Community Centre. The Charity itself also received a Gift Aid payment of £56,059 (2020: £76,290) from its wholly owned subsidiary GTC Developments Ltd during the year this figure mostly represents reclaimed VAT from the new building works.

The Charity also received £12,000 from SCDC in support for the closure of the Community Centre during the Government-imposed lockdown as well as £17,000 from an insurance claim for the damage done to the Sculptural Railings as a result of a car driving into them.

Charitable expenditure was £505,000 (2020: £800,000). The amount continues to reflect the multi-year commitments made during the year and the year past as well as revisions made to these commitments. Investment Management Fees were £117,000 (2020: £144,000). The net income before investment gains or losses for the year was £157,000 (2020: £76,000).

The end-of-year revaluation of the Charity's investment assets produced a net gain of £3,960,000 (2020: loss £1,198,000) which reflects the recovery in the value of financial assets following the onset of the Covid pandemic. Total funds at the end of the year were £39,919,000 (2020: £35,802,000) of which unrestricted funds were £2,517,000 (2020: £2,059,000).

At the end of the financial year, Girton Town Charity had readily available cash or cash equivalents of £1.6m (2020: £1.3m) which is sufficient to meet its current objectives.

Charity Office and Administration

Following the demolition of 22 High Street, the GTC office moved temporarily to the Parish Office at 42 Church Lane and it remained operational throughout lockdown thanks to the dedication and efficiency of our Administrators, Mrs Rachel Allchorne and Mrs Gilly O'Brien. Both are key members of the GTC team and provide full-time support to Trustees, professional partners, and beneficiaries of the Charity. The Office has daily core opening hours of 10.00-14.00 and can be contacted by email (gtc@girtontowncharity.co.uk) or telephone (01223 276008).

COVID-19

The onset of the Coronavirus pandemic in March 2020 had a significant impact on GTC's achievements and performance. Trustees reviewed the Charity's activities at the outset of the pandemic, and it seemed likely that the Charity's income would decrease. Trustees agreed a reduced budget for grant giving in 2020/21. It was also clear that there would be a significant reduction in bookings (and therefore associated income) at the William Collyn Community Centre and requests for support from organisations such as CAB and Relate would decrease markedly when these organisations curtailed face-to-face meetings. The property development activities were protected, in part because all the funds needed for the building programme had been placed on short-term bank deposits as far back as December 2019. Overall, however, financial investments performed well over the Charity's financial year 2020/21.

ALMSHOUSES

The Charity's prime purpose is to provide almshouses in the Village with an emphasis on housing the elderly. The Charity currently has 13 homes within Girton, occupied by residents over 55 and families from the community. Over 55's and anyone with a registered disability are appointed as permanent residents; families are appointed for three years.

There are seven homes at Centenary Court in Wellbrook Way, three at Suffolk Terrace, High Street and one house each in Girton Road, St Vincent's Close and Fairway. All are managed on the Charity's behalf by the CHS Group, based in Histon. The Management Charge in 2021 was £18,000 (2020: £17,000). We continue to be grateful to CHS for providing valuable advice when we are considering applications for almshouse vacancies and in providing information to GTC and to its almshouse residents, as well as a maintenance service.

In the last year, two vacancies arose at Centenary Court, and they were promptly filled from the applications received after they were advertised in the *Girton Parish News* and on Village notice boards.

As vacancies occur infrequently, we do not keep a waiting list, though we do receive regular enquiries. Applications are only accepted from those who wish to live in the homes and not from their relatives.

Repairs and maintenance of the almshouses in 2021 cost £12,000 (2020: £17,000).

Suffolk Terrace

Three new family homes at Suffolk Terrace on the High Street were completed and ready for occupation in April 2021. Work on the site started in February 2020 and only six weeks of the construction programme were lost as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown. Following a review of applications with the Lead Housing Officer from CHS Group, a shortlist was drawn up and interviews held. The successful applicants moved into their homes at Suffolk Terrace on three-year appointments at the beginning of April 2021. The final cost of construction was £646,000 which was financed from cash reserves.

Dovehouse Court

The major project to redevelop the central almshouse site on High Street, has continued through the year. The new Dovehouse Court development will provide 15 comfortable and attractive homes for people over the age of 55 who are residents in, or who have a strong connection with Girton as well as a new office for GTC. A favourable decision was delivered at a South Cambridgeshire District Planning Committee Virtual Meeting in June 2020 for a mix of bungalows and apartments built to Passivhaus standards. Following a rigorous tender process conducted by GTC Project Managers, Northmores, Barnes Construction was appointed as contractor in March 2021. A fixed term contract of 63 weeks was agreed at a fixed cost of £4.6m. Enablement works were carried out during 2021 with Barnes Construction starting on site on 23 August 2021.

The Trustees agreed to apply for a grant towards the building of these homes from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. An application was submitted in May 2021 and a grant of £675,000 approved by the Authority in January 2022.

The William Collyn Community Centre, Wellbrook Way

The William Collyn Community Centre opened in April 2019. In order to establish it on a firm footing, the Charity appointed Cambridgeshire ACRE, a charity specialising in the support of community facilities, to provide management for an initial period from January 2019 to March 2021. The aim was for Girton Town Charity to take over full management during 2020-21 and to use membership of Cambridgeshire ACRE to give support to ensure continuation of good practice. The TUPE process commenced in July 2020 with a view to a transfer date of 1st October 2021. Following COVID-19 Lockdown in December 2020, the Centre was again closed, and staff put on flexible furlough until May 2021.

GTC had budgeted an income of £30,000 for the Centre. However, closure of the Centre in March 2020 meant that no user income was taken for the last three months of the financial year and up to September 2020 resulting in a lower-than-anticipated £14,000 of realised income. The shortfall was partially compensated by a grant of £12,000 received from SCDC and also through Business Rates Relief for the period during which the Centre was closed. Total costs, including allocated support costs but excluding depreciation, for running the Centre were £96,000.

Community Gardens

The Sensory Garden at the entrance to Wellbrook Way continues to be much appreciated by the many who visit or just pass it on their way through the Village. The family of a village resident asked to plant an ornamental tree in the garden in his memory as he had spent happy times in the garden. The Trustees have renewed the maintenance contract with the originator, as this seemed the best way to ensure that it continued to be kept in prime condition. The cost last year was £8,500

GTC re-acquired an area of communal land between the Play Area and Bowls Green Car Park from Girton Parish Council. This has been designated the William Collyn Community Garden to be used for the benefit of local residents. The Charity has appointed Majestic Garden Services to regularly maintain this area along with garden areas around the Bowls Green Car Park, William Collyn Community Centre, and Centenary Court communal areas at a cost of £2,750 pa. Majestic has rejuvenated and replanted the garden areas at a cost of £5,000 and two village residents have donated fruit trees. Angus O'Brien provides ad hoc garden services for the Almshouses.

GRANT MAKING ACTIVITIES OF GIRTON TOWN CHARITY

After maintaining its almshouses, GTC can use any income remaining to make grants, firstly for "relief in need" and, secondly, "for any charitable purpose for the general benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Girton". Grants awarded and Schemes running in the year are summarised below. Applicants will generally be expected to meet part of the costs from their own resources.

The following is a summary of the types and purpose of the grants and commitments made during the period.

Education and youth work: -£26,000 (2020: £137,000)

We regard the provision of prompt assistance and an enriched school environment to be essential for the wellbeing and educational progress of the young people of the Village. Grants for enrichment support had been awarded to Girton Glebe Primary School although much of this activity did not take place due to the pandemic. Following the School's conversion to Academy status in a multi-academy trust, the Trustees reviewed their policies and agreed to cease funding direct educational support. Family and child support continued to be funded and delivered by Relate Cambridgeshire for families-in-need identified by the school. It was agreed that Activity Clubs would continue to be supported although they did not run due to the Pandemic, nor did Residential Visits which resulted in no requests for support for families with children on Free School Meals.

As a result, the total of new educational grants made to institutions shows a net reduction to the commitments made by the Charity at the start of the Financial Year.

Our Educational Grant Scheme provides assistance in buying books and equipment for recent school leavers who have moved on to further and higher education. We also meet other educational needs on an individual grant basis. During the period, individual awards totalling £7,400 (2020: £11,000) were made to 33 recipients (2020: 45).

The Girton Youth Project run by the YMCA and financed by GTC started in 2005. During the past year, the number of young people attending the sessions on Monday and Thursday evenings had declined from up to 40 per week to fewer than 10. Following regular reviews with the YMCA Youth Leader and Management, the Trustees decided to reconsider the grant in April 2020. However, the onset of Covid-19 resulted in the closure of the Club and with no prospect of it continuing in its current form, notice was issued at the end of August 2020 for the agreement to cease on 30 November 2020.

During 2021 the Trustees investigated options to offer a Youth Group from a new provider and in December 2021, were pleased to award the Connections Bus Project a grant to commence a weekly youth group as soon as recruitment of the necessary staff and the pandemic allowed.

Welfare and Personal Development of People in Financial Need: £9,000 (2020: £11,000)

Grants were made to 15 people during the year (2020: 22), ranging from helping with costs such as essential household goods, support for special needs, enhancement of mobility and contributions towards the costs of coping with medical conditions. Three grants were made to individuals to enable them to access specialised education or training.

Medical: £44,000 (2020: £109,000)

GTC aims to increase well-being in the Village by supporting a wide range of specialist providers to enable them to give support and advice to Girton residents. Three-year commitments made to the Arthur Rank Hospice, East Anglia's Children's Hospices, and Headway, a brain injuries charity, came to an end in 2019-20 after payments of £48,500. After review of the effectiveness of the support given, new commitments were made during the year, and these will total £15,000 per annum in the next financial year (Note: this is the revised sum after the Covid-19 review detailed review on Page 3). Macmillan Cancer Support received £15,000 this year and payments of £7,500 will be made for a further two years. The size of any commitment is always directly related to the deemed impact the external charity has on the residents of the Village.

The Charity's Care Plus Scheme continues to meet a significant demand for assistance and payments of £45,600 (2020: £52,300) were made to providers during the year. 38 residents (2020; 36) benefited from the help provided. The objective of the scheme is to assist Girton residents to live independently by providing additional short-term care over and above any statutory care to which they are entitled. It was always anticipated that there would be a strong demand as the authorities reduced the adult care provision, which in turn increased the need for respite care and placed additional demands on private sector providers.

The Charity supports a hospital transport scheme which provides a subsidised taxi service to help patients get to hospitals on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Brookfields Hospital in Mill Road, and the ARU University Eye Clinic. This continues to be a greatly appreciated programme and currently has 230 members (2020: 206). Grants also continue to be made where more specialist transport is required and five grants of this nature were made in the year.

14 Individual grants totalling £6,000 (2020: 15 totalling £2,000) were made during the year to help individuals meet needs arising from a range of requests.

Community Support in the Village: £118,000 (2020: £137,000)

The Charity funds the Village's Community Warden Scheme provided by Age UK. The Warden continues to help and give reassurance to around 20 villagers who subscribe to the Scheme. Grants of £11,700 were made during the year to support this initiative. Age UK also provide an Older Residents' Co-ordinator who is funded by Girton Town Charity by a grant of £9,300. Cam Sight will also receive £2,000 per year for three years.

The Charity also made a three-year grant of £8,400 per annum to Relate which provides a counselling service in the Village though this has been in abeyance during the pandemic because of the restricted availability of counsellors and removal of face-to-face support at the William Collyn Community Centre.

Most of the payments last year were made to the Cambridge CAB which provided help to Village residents on many issues, particularly those relating to personal finances, employment, and housing. These sessions have also been suspended during the restrictions due to Covid-19 and are under regular review by GTC and CAB.

The expenditure under this heading also represents completion of projects, such as the work around the Sculptural Railings and maintenance of the Sensory Garden. No new projects have been financed this year and none are planned for the immediate future.

Performance monitoring and review

Grant payments are only made against actual expenditure incurred. For projects that extend beyond one-year, regular detailed reports are required, and further funding only approved where the grant conditions have been met. The Charity seeks to achieve a consistency in its grant making methodology and looks for measurable outcomes in order to assess value for money more objectively.

MAKING APPLICATIONS: ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

The Trustees provide guidelines to help with preparation of applications either from individual Girton residents and families or from organisations providing for inhabitants of the Village. These outline the procedures followed by the Trustees when considering requests. There are also simple forms that may be used to apply for grants, though applications can also be made by letter or email. However, use of a form helps ensure that we have all the information we need to make a decision. Administrators in the Charity Office, will be happy to supply copies of the forms or the guidance sheets on request. Any Trustee can be consulted in confidence before an application is made.

An application will usually be considered at our next meeting after it is received, providing it arrives at least one week before the meeting. If we decide more information is needed before a final decision is made, we may ask for details to be supplied in writing or ask for supporting information from an appropriate adviser or professional.

The information collected from individuals is used solely for the purposes of considering a grant application and for the subsequent administration of any award. It is not transferred out of the Charity without the specific consent of the applicant. The Charity's Minutes contain the applicant's name, the purpose of the request, the decision, and the reason for that decision. The Minutes are only used within the Charity.

500 YEARS OF THE GIRTON CHARITIES

2021 marked the 500th anniversary of the Girton Town Charities established in the time of King Henry VIII by the generosity and social concern of William Collyn and they have evolved into the present Girton Town Charity.

The Trustees had hoped to mark this milestone with a series of Village celebratory events to ensure a high degree of recognition of the Charity and its ability to relieve need in Girton. COVID restrictions prevented any significant gatherings and celebrations to mark this milestone and Trustees will review when restrictions permit.

We expect other Trustees to step down shortly, and so we would welcome expressions of interest in becoming a Trustee from residents. We would be very pleased to hear from people with HR, accountancy, legal or property management experience which they could bring to the board. The main qualification is, however, enthusiasm for the work of GTC and the time to give to the duties of a Trustee and I am grateful for the support of the current Trustee body and their dedication to the positive impact GTC has for residents of Girton.

I must also express my thanks to our Administrators, Mrs Rachel Allchorne and Mrs Gilly O'Brien, who support Trustees in all aspects of their work and, despite being unable to receive visitors to the office during the pandemic, offer telephone and email advice with warmth and a generosity of spirit that is much appreciated by residents. In turn Rachel, Gilly and Trustees very much appreciate the messages of grateful thanks received from residents for the grants, awards and advice received.

Our most important challenge over the next year is to work with our Project Manager's, Northmores, and with Barnes Construction to complete on time the Dovehouse Court development. Trustees hope to be welcoming Michael's Close residents (who have been rehomed at Gretton Court for the duration of the demolition and build) back into their energy-efficient new homes by Christmas 2022 with a phased appointment of further residents during 2023. Once this is achieved GTC Almshouses will total 28 in Girton.

Ann Bonnett

Chair of Trustees

Girton Town Charity