

From: Peter Oakford – Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services

To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 29 July 2020

Subject: The Robert Thompson Charities

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary:

The Robert Thompson Trust has run the Village Hall and 8 adjacent almshouses in Saltwood since it was founded in 1899 by benefactor, Robert Thompson. The Chair of the Trustees has written to the County Council asking whether it would agree that its membership provisions could be amended to read “a person nominated by Kent County Council” rather than “the County Councillor for the Elham Division of Kent for the time being”. This report recommends that the request is agreed.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Robert Thompson Trust (known as Robert Thompson Charities) is based in Saltwood near Hythe. It has run the Village Hall and 8 adjacent almshouses in Saltwood since it was founded in 1899 by benefactor, Robert Thompson.

1.2 The existing Charitable Scheme provides for 1 Trustee who is “the County Councillor for the Elham Division of Kent for the time being”. Miss Susan Carey (Member for Elham Valley) is therefore automatically KCC’s representative even though, as a result of boundary changes, the Village Hall and almshouses are now in the Cheriton, Sandgate and Hythe East Division, for which Mr Rory Love is the Local Member.

1.3 The Chair of the Trustees has written to the County Council to explain that Miss Carey (who has been a regular attendee at the Trust meetings) has now been appointed as Folkestone and Hythe DC’s representative. The Trust has agreed that this is an opportunity to correct the current anomaly and has suggested that its KCC representative should be described as “a person nominated by Kent County Council.”

1.4 The Chair of the Trust has explained that there are two issues that would arise if the words “Elham Division” were to be simply amended to “Cheriton, Sandgate and Hythe East Division.” The first is that a good deal of Saltwood is in the Hythe West Division. The second, more weighty consideration, is that the Trust considers it to be “unduly prescriptive in today’s circumstances to insist that one person has to be on a trustee body irrespective of their other commitments and interests.”

1.5 If the Committee were to agree to the proposed amendment, it would also be its duty to nominate a representative. The logical candidates would be Mr Rory Love and Mr Martin Whybrow who represent the Chariton, Sandgate and Hythe East and the Hythe West Divisions respectively. It is recommended that the general Counsel be given delegated powers to make the nomination following consultation with these two Members.

2. Recommendations:

The Committee is invited to agree that the Robert Thompson Charities be advised that Kent County Council agrees to the revision of its Charitable Scheme so that its KCC representative is described as “a person nominated by Kent County Council” and that the General Counsel be given delegated powers to make the appointment once the views of Messrs Love and Whybrow have been sought.

Background Documents:

Correspondence between the Robert Thompson Charities and Kent County Council.

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