

## **Background & History – Campton United Charities**

Campton United Charities has a very long history of public benefit locally dating back to the early 1700's. For many years it comprised of three historical charities each having been regulated by recorded schemes of the Charity Commission dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 1865, 16<sup>th</sup> August 1912 and most recently 21<sup>st</sup> April 1971.

Until as recent as 9<sup>th</sup> May 2010 these three historical charities, operated under a single umbrella charity registration (Charity Commission Registration 200251 – United Charities). They were: -

- The charity of Thomas Kentish for Poor (200251-1)
- The charity known as Poor's Land (200251-2)
- The charity known as Poor's Stock (200251-3)

British History Online provides the following information about these historical charities: -

- Thomas Kentish's Charity, Will 1712 – The sum of 10s. a year, formerly paid out of an estate known as the Bury Farm in this parish is now represented by £20 consols with the official trustees. In 1904 the rent of £3 was distributed in shares of 5s. each to twelve poor widows, and the dividends on the stock, amounting to £31 1s 4d, were applied in gifts of money among seventeen aged people.
- Poor's Land – The parish is in possession of a small piece of land in Clifton Fields, conveyed in 1730 by John Kelyng unto Sir Daniel Osborn and others on trust to apply the rents and profits towards the relief of poor and indigent persons in satisfaction of a bequest of 2s. a year to the poor left by the will of his father Antelminelly Kelyng. The land is let at £3 a year, which under the title of the Gunpowder Charity, is applied on 5<sup>th</sup> November with the other charities for the benefit of the poor.

- Poor's Stock – Consists of £103 5s consols (with the official trustees) representing the benefactions of Dr. Thomas Osborn and Danial Goldsmith, the trusts of which were by a deed dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1812, declared to be for distribution of the income among the poor inhabitants.

Apart from the minimal expenses of managing charity assets all income from the aforesaid charities was applied for “the relief of poor persons resident in the Parish of Campton”, “either in gifts in kind or grants of money”. In general, small grants of money were disbursed annually on November 5<sup>th</sup>, often to widows and widowers of the Parish. These disbursements have, by tradition, acquired the name “Bonfire Money” and the charity has also been referred to as the “Gunpowder Charity”.

On 9<sup>th</sup> May 2010 the Charity Commission de-registered the charity; we understand this decision was taken under the assumption that it had ceased to operate. It seems that prior to that date correspondence from the Charity Commission was not received by the nominated trustee at that time, and annual returns had not been made by remaining trustees due to a series of unforeseen circumstances. These issues only came to light when all trustees retired, and new trustees were appointed by the Parish Council in 2014. However, the charity had continued to operate throughout this period.

Given the deep-rooted history of the charity the newly 2014 appointed trustees attempted to reverse the de-registration by the Charity Commission. Detailed and lengthy correspondence with the Charity Commission between 2015 and 2017 concluded that the turnover of the charity was insufficient to re-instate the original registration(s) and trustees were advised to register Campton United Charities afresh as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and this new registration took place on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017 (registered charity number 1174972). A new document of constitution was agreed being based on the earlier Charity Commission Schemes.

Campton United Charities currently has six nominative trustees (of a maximum of seven) and an ex-officio trustee. Twice yearly meetings are held, disbursements of bonfire money made annually, and official returns are published online with the Charity Commission. Paper records of minutes and annual disbursements of the historical charities exist dating back many years. To ensure continuity of charity and its benefits the constitution names Campton & Chicksands Parish Council as a backstop; the council being able to appoint up to four trustees. This reflects a responsibility held by the Parish Council in historical schemes of the charity.

The charity's income is from the rent of "Poor's Land" for farming and from charity monies invested in COIF Charities Investment Funds. This income is very small; currently less than £150 annually and the real value of annual disbursements has clearly been eroded by time. However, trustees continued to target the elderly, widowed and most vulnerable parishioners with grants of "Bonfire Money" annually until 2015. In 2016 the current trustees took the innovative step of donating the annual disbursement to a local charitable "Food Bank" to better target support to those on limited incomes within the Parish.

Current trustees are very aware that public benefit is currently very limited by the charity's minimal income and are looking to the main asset of the charity, "Poor's Land" and its potential to increase income and therefore opportunities for public benefit. A change of use for the land might allow for an increased rent, or sale of all or part of the land might offer the potential to increase the charity's holding in the "Poor's Stock" CCLA investment fund. The trustees are actively researching several options and their viability within the current governing scheme of the charity. It should be noted that this land was vested in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands by order of the Commissioners dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 1865.

Trustees are also looking to how the charity might evolve and improve the "extent" and "spread" of benefit within the community,

and in so doing further the charity's purpose of benefiting parishioners in future years.