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18. WHO CAN APPLY FOR HELP FROM THE CHARITY?

As before, anyone in the village (or someone on their behalf) can apply for help in case of need, to any Trustee. But the Trustees will also be willing to consider applications from organisations and individuals in the village for help in other ways, especially where the help would be of benefit to the community as a whole, or a reasonable proportion of the inhabitants of Brigstock. The Trustees cannot undertake responsibility for running or arranging projects in the village but will gladly consider giving financial help towards them. The Trustees cannot undertake to give more than once to a cause, although they may decide to do so.

19. WHERE CAN I SEE THE ACCOUNTS?

A copy of the accounts is sent annually to the Charity Commission.

20. IF I HAVE A QUERY OR COMPLAINT ABOUT THE CHARITY, WHAT DO I DO?

If it is a straightforward query apply to the Secretary or one of the Trustees; if it is a complaint put it in writing to the Charity Commission, St. Alban's House, 57-60 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4QX.

Mrs P. Adams  
Mrs D. B. Allen  
Mr. R. S. Batty  
Mr. J. W. Chudley  
Mrs G. P. Dixon  
Mrs P. J. Escombe

Mrs M. M. J. Hancock  
Mr. C. V. Hector  
The Rev. R. D. Howe  
Mrs D. H. Keyworth  
Mr. M. J. Moyer

March, 1988.

1. WHAT IS THE BRIGSTOCK CONSOLIDATED CHARITY?

According to the 1907 Deed it is an amalgamation of four charities: Roger Montague's Charity (Duke's Dole), John Phillipps's Dole, The Town Estate, and Mrs Wath's Charity.

2. WHAT IS THE CHARITY FOR?

When the Charity Commissioners set up the 1907 Scheme they took into account the purposes of the four previously separate charities, so that part of the annual income was destined for the maintenance of the parish church and part for the relief of the poor in the village. Later schemes drawn up by the Commissioners have continued these purposes, and in the present scheme (November 1987) the purpose of the three quarters of the income due to the poor has been extended for wider purposes in the village.

3. WHO RUNS THE CHARITY?

It is run by 11 Trustees with the approval and advice of the Charity Commission. As with all charities the Charity Commissioners are responsible for making sure it is run correctly.

4. WHO ARE THE TRUSTEES?

Three, the Vicar and the two Churchwardens, are appointed by virtue of their office as laid down in the 1907 Scheme and have no choice in the matter. Six are chosen by the Parish Council but do not have to be members of the Parish Council. These nine Trustees co-opt two other suitable local people to complete the eleven. As with the wider law of trusteeship they cannot benefit from the Charity or be a tenant of the Charity.

5. WHAT OFFICERS ARE THERE?

There are a secretary and a treasurer who may or may not be trustees as well. Until the new scheme (1987) there was no "permanent" chairman, and someone had to be elected at the start of each meeting. The new scheme allows for the Trustees to elect one of their own number as chairman annually. The Charity Commission encourages charity trustees to take expert and professional advice and at present the Trustees have a land agent for the administration of the land owned by the Charity.

6. WHERE DOES THE CHARITY'S MONEY COME FROM?

From two sources: first from rents from allotments and other lands in Benefield Road, and secondly from investments (and interest) made after the sale of part of the charity land several years ago, and in due course from compensation for land taken by the By-Pass. Expenses and outgoings are

deducted from this income before it is divided - 25% for the parish church and 75% for the poor etc. (1980 Scheme).

7. HOW MUCH IS IT?

In 1987 the nett income was £2,700.77. Most of the income is from investments and in some years the outgoings of the allotments have exceeded the rents received. Clearly, the charity would have had little or no income if part of the land had not been sold several years ago.

8. CAN ANY MORE CHARITY LAND BE SOLD?

The Trustees have no plans at present to do this. However, they could do so, with the Charity Commission's approval, at a future date. The purpose of the charity land, according to the Charity Commissioners, is to provide the best possible income for the beneficiaries and it is the duty of the Trustees to achieve this aim. At present most of the land is used as allotments but this land could also be used for agriculture or grazing etc.

9. ARE NOT THE ALLOTMENTS FOR THE USE OF THE POOR?

No. The land is now part of the endowment of the charity and is to provide income for the charity's purposes.

10. WHAT IS THE ALLOTMENT RENT?

From the Autumn of 1988 it will be £5 a year for a ten pole allotment, or just under 10p a week. (A penny per pole per week). The Trustees took advice from their Land Agent in arriving at this new rent - the first increase for eight years.

11. HOW DO I RENT AN ALLOTMENT?

By applying to any of the Trustees who will place your application before a meeting of the Trustees for consideration.

12. HOW HAS THE MONEY FOR THE POOR BEEN DISTRIBUTED?

With difficulty! Nobody has ever been able to say exactly what "poverty" is, because it varies from place to place and time to time. The Trustees cannot (and would not) apply any sort of means test. They have to rely on applications made to them by people in need, or on their behalf, and on their own local knowledge, which like everyone else's is imperfect. But charity law does expect trustees to act according to their discretion. All gifts/payments to individuals are confidential, of course.

Recent gifts have included money for heating, assistance with visiting relatives in hospital, household items urgently needed and funeral expenses etc.

13. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHRISTMAS SHARE OUT?

For some time in the past the elderly of the village received a small gift of money from the charity at Christmas. This was discontinued when the Charity Commissioners ruled that this was not in line with the purposes of the charity, since many of the elderly would not have been "poor". The charity is supposed to help the poor of the village of any age, and not specifically the elderly.

14. CAN THE INCOME BE USED OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE?

Only in very exceptional cases, such as someone living immediately outside the parish, who would otherwise be eligible, but whom the Trustees consider should be treated as though they lived within it, or someone living temporarily in the parish whom the Trustees agree should be treated as a resident.

15. CAN THE INCOME BE USED FOR A LOCAL CAUSE? e.g. A HOSPITAL?

No. The Trustees in 1987 did agree to donate to two local charities in this way subject to the Charity Commissioners' judgement. The Commissioners ruled that under the terms of the charity this could not be done, partly because the charity was only to help the "poor" and not specifically the sick (unless they were poor as well), and partly because there was no way in which the money given to a local cause could be identified as benefitting Brigstock people in particular.

16. WHY DID THE TRUSTEES RAISE THE MATTER OF GIVING TO A LOCAL CAUSE?

Because of the difficulty in using up the accumulation of income for the poor. The scheme (prior to the new one of 1987) placed the Trustees in a dilemma; they were on one hand obliged to manage the charity in order to bring in a good income, and on the other hand were given the almost impossible task of disposing of it among villagers who they were to reckon as being genuinely "poor". They were prevented by the earlier Schemes from giving it to the sick or the elderly unless they also happened to be "poor".

17. HAS THIS DILEMMA NOW BEEN RESOLVED?

Yes, with the new scheme of 1987. Under this scheme the first priority is still the poor, but if any money is left over from this in any one year, it may be distributed for the general good of the village or to help individuals who may have a need without necessarily being "poor". A number of people sent in objections to this new scheme, but their objections seemed to have been based on misunderstandings - expressed in the orange coloured Brigstock and Sudborough Challenger produced by our District Councillor and circulated in the village at the time - and the objections were resolved or over-ruled and the scheme went ahead unchanged. It is now in force.