

Walberswick Common Lands Charity

Founded 1901 - Registered Charity No. 206095

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Mrs Mary Mitson-Woods
Clerk to Walberswick Parish Council
Rose Farm Cottage
Mutton Lane
Brandeston
Suffolk
IP13 7AR

Dear Mary

**WALBERSWICK COMMON LANDS CHARITY (“the Charity”)
APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATIVE TRUSTEE BY WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL (“the Council”)**

Under the terms of the Charity’s Scheme the Council is entitled to appoint four Nominative Trustees to the Charity, each for a four year term. The total number of Trustees being seven. The Scheme was last revised in 2009 in consultation with the Council. At that time the following wording was included:

“The Parish Council shall endeavour to find Nominative Trustees that fit into the skills matrix adopted by the Trustees from time to time following consultation with the Parish Council”.

In addition it has previously been established that there is no legal requirement either under the Charities Act or our Charity’s Scheme to advertise vacant positions. The current Trustees being a mix of recruitment via advertisement, personal recommendation and the ex-officio position held by Rev. Brian Fisher.

Mr Jeremy Solnick was appointed as a Nominative Trustee by the Council in January 2014. His four year term expires on 31 December 2017 and we are writing to inform you that the Council is now required to make an appointment for the following four year term.

When Mr Solnick was appointed by the Council he replaced Mr Clive Brynley-Jones, who was appointed following an advertisement in the Village News in September 2009. Prior to that advertisement my predecessor as Chairman wrote to the Council explaining that there was a gap in our skills matrix for someone with a legal background. As a retired solicitor Mr Brynley-

Jones filled that role admirably and that is why Mr Solnick was recommended to the Council as his replacement.

The benefit of having a qualified solicitor amongst the Trustees has been demonstrated over recent years as we have faced difficult property issues, including past transactions which were handled inappropriately at the time, plus the general need to ensure that the Charity complies with a changing regulatory backdrop. Therefore while the Trustees acknowledge that the final decision on appointments is solely that of the Councillors, they would like to express their *unanimous support for the reappointment of Mr Solnick*.

Not all Councillors may be aware of Mr Solnick's background. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1980 and in 1984 started his own practice in Chiswick, West London which he ran successfully for 25 years. He specialised in residential and commercial conveyancing and general commercial work. Over the years he acted as legal advisor for number of small charities sometimes as a trustee. He also has experience in wills and probate and the formation and administration of trusts. Mr Solnick retired from practice in 2007 but remained a consultant until 2009 when he stopped professional practice altogether. Apart from his solicitor's qualifications, he has a BSc in Psychology and Computer Science, a BA honours in English Literature, an MA in Creative writing (poetry) and is currently working on a PhD in creative writing.

Over recent years we have worked hard to increase diversity amongst the Trustees and we believe that there has never been a more diverse group of Trustees in terms of age, gender, education, economic circumstances, professional skills and life experience. We do not see the re-appointment of Mr Solnick as being in any way negative to our diversity objectives. As far as gender balance is concerned it would maintain our current ratio of four female to three male Trustees.

Finally, we wish to express an opinion on conflict of interest for Councillors. In our view this appointment is not a conflict for either Council Richardson or Councillor Sutton. While they both have connections to individual Trustees the re-appointment of Mr Solnick; (a) is for the benefit of the Charity as a whole; (b) is unanimously supported by all Trustees and (c) does not provide an individual benefit to any Trustee.

We would be happy to answer any questions that Councillors may have either on this specific appointment or the work of the Charity in general.

Yours sincerely



James Darkins
Chairman