

Village Hall Liaison Report June 2023

Legal Issues

The VHT is in the process of converting from an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. One of the issues that has arisen is that BVHT received a grant from the Millennium Commission to build the current Hall. As part of that grant the Parish Council agreed a lien against the building with the Commission. The commission have now agreed to cancel this lien given the passage of time. The VHT informed the BPC that it should file the appropriate documentation and send it to the Big Lottery Fund (successor to the Millennium Commission).

The successor to Millenium Commission, The National Lottery Fund, have advised the VHT and the BPC that that the original Millennium Commission grant is regarded as historic, and they confirmed that the Fund considers the liabilities relating to this grant to have expired. They also stated that in order for the registered security to be released, solicitors acting for Buckden Parish Council (as registered owner of the property and grant recipient) should liaise with the Fund's legal team, to complete and register the appropriate documentation

The funds legal team have now contacted BPC to ask which solicitors will be acting for Buckden Parish Council in this transaction. We were also advised by the legal team that documentation to release the security was also issued some time ago, in December 2014. While they understand that the Parish Council's officers may have changed since that time, they have asked whether we know of any reason why the transaction did not proceed. Cllr Underwood has emailed a previous Chair and a resident involved in the original grant to ask if they have any knowledge of this.

A further complication is that Cllr Thelwall has liaised with the VHT Administrator about the documentation and he is of the opinion that the correct course of action is for the VHT to instruct solicitors to contact the successor to the Millenium Commission to explain to the MC that the BPC is only the Custodian Trustee and, as such, has no legal right or powers to deal with any legal matters affecting the VH title. The VHT solicitors should ask the MC to send the necessary form to them and that they will deal with registering at the Land Registry.

Although the BPC was party to the 1999 deed, in Cllr Thelwell's view it should not have been as all legal documents should be entered into and signed by the VHT trustees, notwithstanding that the BPC is Custodian Trustee.

Once I have heard from the previous Chair and liaised with Cllr Thelwall, I will contact the NLF to seek to clarify the position.

Annual Tea Party

The Village Hall Trust have expressed an interest in running an annual tea party for the older residents of Buckden. Two very successful tea parties have been held recently; one for the Jubilee and another for the Coronation. The VHT would like to carry on this recently established tradition.

Cllr Underwood