



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

Miss Jane Letts Hollowell Charity, also known locally at the Jane Letts Trust is registered charity number 202272.

REGISTERED ADDRESS

March Barn
Church Hill
Hollowell
Northamptonshire
NN6 8RR

Email: janelettscharity@gmail.com

The governing documents requires that there are three trustees: currently Emily Curtis, Allen Eaton, and Graham Leah.

STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The primary Governing Document for the Charity is an extract from the will of the founder, James William Boothe Letts, who died in 1940. The trustees also adopted a constitutional document drawn up on 22nd January 2020, which is intended to provide guidelines for the day-to-day management of the Trust. This document has been registered with the Charity Commission.

The charity is constituted as a charitable trust and trustees must all be current members of Hollowell & Teeton Parish Council. They are formally appointed, at an ordinary meeting of the council and membership of the trustee board is reviewed once a year by the council.

The trustees meet in person at least twice a year. Meetings were held in May 2023 and November 2023. There have been no changes to the Board of Trustees during the current year.

The charity's banking arrangements are with the Co-operative Bank and electronic payments are made by dual sign off by two trustees, or by cheque with two trustee signatures required.

On appointment to the Charity's board, any new trustees must sign a Declaration of Eligibility and Responsibility Statement confirming that they are willing and eligible to act as trustees and that they understand the Charity's purpose. This statement commits them to giving their time and expertise to the board.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVES

The Charity's original objective was to purchase coal or blankets for distribution amongst the "poor widows and other deserving poor" of the Parish of Hollowell & Teeton. The Charity also now contributes towards household electricity bills. The Charity is also responsible for maintaining four Letts family graves, two in Guilsborough and two in Hollowell, as detailed in the original will. The trustees aim to inspect the graves and assess the need for maintenance and repair once a year.

ACTIVITIES

The trustees referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in setting the grant making policy for the year. The trustees have sought to raise public awareness of the existence of the Jane Letts (Hollowell) Charity and of the grants available. The Trustees ran advertising in the parish magazine and on local social media and made personal approaches to those who were thought to be eligible for help.

The Board has reviewed the Charity's grant-making policy in line with the wishes of James William Boothe Letts, as detailed in his will of December 1940. Details of how to apply for assistance from the Charity are available on Hollowell & Teeton Parish Council website and were included in the advertising campaign detailed above.

The Charity does not actively fundraise and seeks to continue the charitable work desired by the original benefactor through the careful stewardship of its existing resources. This year however the trustees were very pleased to receive charitable donations from Hollowell Steam Rally and other smaller donations. These were particularly appreciated in a year of continued high inflation and elevated energy costs and meant the charity could provide an enhanced level of assistance to recipients.

On inspecting the graves and headstones in May, the trustees made two short videos to show the location of each pair of headstones in Guilsborough and Hollowell Churchyards. These videos will be stored on the Charity's shared google drive, to assist future trustees.

POLICY ON GRANT MAKING AND INVESTMENTS

The Trustees have agreed that in order to broaden the Charity's reach and to ensure that those most in need within the parish are provided with assistance, they require evidence that recipients are in receipt of a means-tested state benefit.

The original endowment of £1,000 was invested in Defence Bonds in 1942. The endowment is now invested in the COIF Charities Investment Fund and is managed by CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities) Investment Management Ltd. This is an investment company specialising in managing investments for charities, religious organisations, and the public sector. The market value of the investment in December 2023 was just under £18,800, up just over £1,600 on the previous year.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The JWBL will requires payments to beneficiaries be made around Christmas time, but most payments were made in early November this year, as the necessity to purchase fuel arose. Requests were made for duvets, coal, oil, and electricity.

The trustees continue to pay particular attention to the requirement in James William Boothe Letts' will to maintain four family graves: those of his parents in Guilsborough and his own grave and his sister's headstone in Hollowell. The trustees are aware of frost damage to the rear of the headstone marking the grave of James William Letts senior, in Guilsborough. A company was commissioned to carry out repairs, but this work has not yet been completed.

Two years ago, the trustees commissioned some historical research into the origins of the charity and its creator, James William Boothe Letts and this research has continued. This endeavour was sparked by the discovery of a colourful article from the Northampton Mercury & Herald from 5th December 1941 which carried the headline "*Village Recluse Wore Rags and Tatters, but Charities Rejoice at his Will*". Although not entirely accurate, this article reports in detail on the life of Mr Letts, who left a substantial sum of £13,948 when he died.

Village residents, Jan Craig (JC) and Viv Benjamin (VB) obtained a full copy of the Letts will, which showed that he endowed 3 hospital beds for Grafton Ward, at Northampton General Hospital, to be marked with brass, hospital bed plaques in the name of his mother Elizabeth Sykes Letts. Trustee EC joined VB and JC on a trip to the archive at Northampton General Hospital in August to try to locate the plaques. None of those donated by JWB Letts, in memory of his mother, still exist, but they did find evidence in the hospital's annual reports that JWBL made annual donations in 1939 and 1940 of £3 and 3 shillings. They also visited Northampton Museum to which JWBL donated 5 wool work pictures. All the pictures were catalogued and available to view and were in beautiful wood frames which may have been made by JWBL himself.

The trustees would like to thank JC and VB for all their research. The information and photographs collected, will be conserved and passed on to future trustees of the charity.



All trustees gave their time voluntarily and received no remuneration, or other benefits during the year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Charity currently holds £1,000 ring-fenced reserves for the maintenance of four Letts family graves.


Cash at bank at 31/01/2023 was £1511 in unrestricted funds. The Charity's work is usually entirely reliant on the income and investment returns from its endowment, though this year we were pleased to receive several donations. The trustees consider the variability of investment returns on the permanent endowment to constitute the Charity's major financial risk.

DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

E-J Curtis
Chairman
9th May 2024


Trustee
9th May 2024