

BRIEF HISTORY

The assets of the City Parochial Foundation derive from the philanthropy of the people of London. Around 1,400 separate charitable gifts and bequests, some of them 400 years old, were held by the 112 parishes within the City of London, to be used for the benefit of the churches or, more often, the poor of those parishes. During the 19th century, the City grew to be a world financial centre and the income of these charities, many endowed with City properties, rose substantially. In contrast, the numbers of beneficiaries fell. Some parishes had no residents at all.

On 10 August 1878, a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the parochial charities of the City of London. Its report resulted in the City of London Parochial Charities Act, 1883. This Act provided that the five largest parishes should continue to manage their own charitable endowments, but that the bulk of the remainder should be administered by a new corporate body, to be known as the Trustees of the London Parochial Charities, with perpetual succession and a Common Seal. The Act further provided that the Charity Commissioners should prepare Schemes for the proper application of these funds. It defined the area of benefit as the City of London and the Metropolitan Police District of London, the largest boundary definition available for Greater London. The outcome was a Scheme promulgated on 23 February 1891 which brought all the endowments together into two funds, a City Church Fund and a Central Fund. Together these constituted the City Parochial Foundation, with the Trustees under the 1883 Act serving as the Foundation's Central Governing Body.

In 1986 the Foundation became the Trustee of the Trust for London. At the outset the Trust was endowed with £10m derived from the sale of the Greater London Council's assets. It targets small locally based community organisations which are independent of larger bodies.

The Foundation is governed by the 1891 Central Scheme and various subsequent amending Schemes and orders.

At 1 January 2002 a single Common Investment Fund was established to pool the investment assets of the Central and City Church Funds and manage the endowment in a more effective and efficient manner.

The entitlement of the participating funds in this Combined Fund is 60% Central Fund and 40% City Church Fund, such proportions being settled by reference to the ten year historical average of distributable income of each fund.

ORGANISATION OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The Central Fund and the City Church Fund receive funds from the Combined Fund into their income funds. Use of income from the Central Fund is restricted to the area of benefit. It cannot be used for the advancement of religion but may be spent on furthering any charitable purpose which is directed to the assistance of poor inhabitants in the area of benefit. The income may also be applied to assist poor persons who are for the time being located within the area of benefit. In furtherance of these objects, the Trustees make grants to charitable organisations or projects that work, directly or indirectly, to benefit poor inhabitants of that area.

In 1992 the charity applied funds to the conversion of a property to house the London Voluntary Sector Resource Centre Limited now known as the Resource Centre (London) Limited (the Resource Centre) at 356 Holloway Road, London N7. This branch of the charity is itself a registered charity and is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. The objective of the Resource Centre is to provide office accommodation, and meeting and conference facilities for London voluntary sector organisations.

In 1997, the charity took direct control of Bellingham Recreation Project Limited. The Project operates playing fields owned by the Foundation in Lewisham, London SE6, for the benefit of the local community.

Income from the City Church Fund, apart from a number of minor prepayments, is applied in the following proportions: one third is given to the City churches within the City of London and two thirds to the six Dioceses of the Church of England, in whole or in part within the area of benefit, in such proportions as are determined by the Church Commissioners. These proportions have always been according to population. The purposes to which the City Church Fund has to be applied are essentially religious including repairs to churches, the maintenance of services and the payment of stipends.

TRUSTEES, OFFICERS AND ADVISERS SERVING DURING 2002

The 21 Trustees, who make up the Central Governing Body of the Foundation, also serve on seven main Committees in order to ensure that the policies of the Foundation are implemented and that the work is properly managed. The Trustees are appointed by a variety of nominating bodies and only four Trustees are directly appointed by the Foundation itself. Unlike many other grant making trusts, it is guided neither by the spirit of a founder nor by family pride or ethos. It is more akin to a public body. The Trustees are always concerned to take a long-term view, particularly important in relation to property endowments, and to work to ensure that all its activities benefit the poor of London. The Trustee body has an appropriate balance of skills and experience in the field of estates and finance, as well as that of grant-making.

Sadly, Lord Limerick, who was due to retire later this year, died in office in early January. During his thirty-two years as a Trustee of the Foundation, he served as Chairman of the Finance (1990-2003) and the Staffing and General Purposes (1991-1993) Committees, and for four years (1992-1996) he was Chairman of the Trustee Body as a whole. Lord Limerick will be remembered for his sound judgement, invaluable insights, robust integrity and meticulous attention to detail, financial detail in particular. He will be enormously missed both by the Trustees and by the staff of the Foundation.

The terms of office of Mr Robin Sherlock, Mr Pat Haynes and Mr Roger Payton, three trustees with long service to the Foundation, ended this April and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

A staff team, currently 14, works to the Trustees providing appropriate input into the policy debates, and the means of implementing all the decisions taken. In addition another 6 are employed by the Resource Centre and one at the Bellingham Recreation Project.

Whilst the more visible part of the Foundation's work relates to grant-making, the work of the financial and administrative staff is equally important; any ineffectiveness in that area has the direct consequence of reducing the money available to benefit the poor of London. Efforts continue within the Foundation to develop the staff team as a whole, emphasising the contribution that each and every one makes to the ultimate purpose of the Foundation.

The advisers to the Foundation, namely the Solicitors, the Property Investment Managers and Surveyors, the Investment Managers and the Auditors, play a vital role in raising issues and working with the staff on preliminary policy papers. The close collaboration between staff and advisers is important in the light of the demands made upon the voluntary sector through the Charities Act 1993 and recent accounting regulations. The more collaborative the relationship between the Foundation, Trust and advisers, the more effective the Foundation and Trust become.