

NOVEMBER 2023 NEWS

The Trustees of the Benevolent Fund meet six times per year and the most recent meeting was on 21st November 2023. Seven Trustees were present with one apology for absence.

It was again a busy meeting, for applications received for assistance, for correspondence regarding ongoing cases and, on this occasion for “Any Other Business”.

Six awards were made with grants of £32,000 and loans of £389,463.

Nine cases were reviewed. These are cases where a loan has been made previously and remains outstanding. The Trustees review such cases at intervals of no longer than two years. Occasionally, a beneficiary might offer to start making repayments; more often, it is appropriate to offer additional assistance. On this occasion, no action was considered necessary for five cases and put back for a further review in two years time. The remaining three were carried over to the next meeting for a variety of reasons.

A further 22 cases were considered, either as a result of actions arising from previous meetings or from correspondence received.

Further to the report of the meeting in September 2023, the Trustees approved a proposal to replace the existing Trust Deed of the Charity with a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Trust Deed is based on Charity Law as it was in 1929 while the CIO is a very new form of structure that has many advantages. Stakeholders will be fully consulted on the proposed changes. Stakeholders are the members of the Catenian Association plus some other beneficiaries and donors. The latter are mostly widows of deceased brothers. The consultation process will open on 1st February 2024 and end on 30th April 2024.

No changes are intended to the Object of the Benevolent Fund, to relief financial difficulty, or to the definition of the beneficiary class, namely members of the Catenian Association and their dependants. The name of the new CIO will be the Catenian Association Benevolent & Children’s Fund CIO.

A Policy on the Management of Conflicts of Interest & Loyalty was adopted at the meeting and will be published on the website.

An updated Declaration of Willingness and Eligibility to serve as a Trustee was adopted and follows recent Charity Commission Guidance.

In the previous report, of the July 2023 meeting, it was noted that, as part of a risk reduction process following a Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission, to change the Appointing Council for Trustees. Central Council was consulted and had indicated that it objects to the proposal. The Trustees instructed solicitors who wrote to Central Council explaining the reasoning behind the request. At the time of this meeting Central Council had not replied to the solicitor’s letter though

it had indicated to the Trustees that it continued to object. The next steps will entail consulting with stakeholders of the Charity.

The next meeting of Trustees is on Tuesday 16th January 2024.