

## STATEMENT FOR COUNCIL MEETING ON 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2013

A meeting of the Council acting as Trustee of the Townlands Charity was held on Monday 31st September 2013.

This was deferred from 4<sup>th</sup> September due to the small number of members present.

It was agreed that, at the suggestion of the Land Agent employed for advice in this matter, that the rent on the property owned by the Charity should be increased to £500pa (c.£100 per acre), paid in two equal instalments, and subject to a three-yearly review. (This more than doubles the current rent.) A larger increase would probably result in a review which would immediately wipe out any potential gains. It was noted that the tenant, Ken Hill Estates, benefited from £100 per acre annually in "entitlements" from the public purse, resulting in them getting the land effectively free of charge. The Charity's hands are tied in this respect due to a previous Council allowing the tenant to change its status, meaning they are guaranteed tenure.

It was agreed that the income of the Charity – even with this increased rent – was too small for it to remain viable as presently structured. The cost of administration and advice, if such were paid by the Charity rather than being absorbed by the Council as at present, means that alternative arrangements should be sought. After considering in detail each possible alternative it was decided that the Secretary should contact other local charities with similar aims, to see if they may be interested in a merger. This would give economies of scale and potentially increased influence. If this option was not viable, then the Charity would seek to have the Charity Commission take over as custodial trustee, removing the Council from its present role.

Finally, the question of the £2300 transferred in 2007 between the Charity and Council accounts was discussed. The evidence that exists is that this was approved by the Council at the time, and the Council have received no compensation specifically for this transfer. Therefore the Charity will no longer be seeking the return of this money, and regards the matter as closed.