



## **Background and Procedures - public information** (April 2025)

The Foundation was formed in July 1979 via a Charity Commission scheme which remains our governing document. In October 1981 it was registered as an educational charity with responsibility for three large buildings. Our governing document does not mention the historic nature of these buildings, as it predates the 2001 inscription of Saltaire as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Currently the trustees are looking at a change of status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

### **BUILDINGS HELD IN TRUST**

- Victoria Hall (VH) - with parts of the basement and ground floor leased to Shipley College.
- Salt Building and Exhibition Building - on longterm leases to the College. Income from these leases makes it possible to keep Victoria Hall open.

Shipley College also operates from the Jonathan Silver Building (built by the College on Salt Foundation land with a peppercorn lease) and from its own freehold Mill Building.

### **FOCUS OF WORK**

Bradford Council held a long lease on Victoria Hall until 2002. While many people still assume that VH belongs to the Council, it has always been held in trust for educational and recreational benefit to local people. Proper use and maintenance of such a grand building has been a challenge since the doors first opened in 1871. VH's running costs have always exceeded its earnings, so a long-term aim is to move towards break-even.

The staff team employed by our Managing Agency continues to attract new bookings, especially weddings. The team includes the VH manager, wedding co-ordinator, event co-ordinator, front-of-house supervisor and around four sessional staff. Private and corporate bookings are vital to keep VH open. Another challenge is to remain 'open to all' as far as possible.

Marking Victoria Hall's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022 helped to clarify its status as an independent venue, and to raise the Foundation's very low public profile. A leaflet for visitors is available in the VH foyer, and a page about the Foundation was added to the VH website in 2024. [The Salt Foundation — Victoria Hall](#)

### **TRUSTEES**

The Charity Commission scheme states that "the body of trustees shall consist of nine competent persons who through residence, occupation or employment, or otherwise have special knowledge of Shipley". Any competent trustee may be re-appointed. A one-page renewal form is used at the end of a trustee's term to gather insights from that person's experience.

- Six trustees are nominated for four year terms by Bradford Council. While not specified in the scheme, representatives normally are affiliated to one of the main political parties, matching each party's strength within BMDC: one Green, one LibDem, two Conservative, two Labour. Normally the retiring trustee makes enquiries for a successor so that a name can be suggested to BMDC Members' Services for the appropriate party whip to authorise the nomination. This avoids long delays in filling a vacancy, and has produced very capable trustees.
- Three trustees are co-opted for five year terms. This was done by advertisement and interviews in 2012, 2022 and 2024. Our most recent co-optee stood down after eight months for family reasons. This is the vacancy for which applications are being requested at present.

Board participants (trustees and three staff) have access to a shared drive with online folders for meetings and strategic documents. A Clerk to the Trustees is employed for up to 100 hours per year, working closely with the Chair.

## **MANAGING AGENCY**

Since 2003 Shipley College has been the Foundation's managing agency for Victoria Hall. The Vice Principal for Finance & Planning oversees the Foundation's finances, with the Director of Physical Resources overseeing fabric management. VH staff are recruited and managed by the College, with contracts reflecting seven-day use of the building.

The relationship between Foundation and College is complex, as the College is both tenant and managing agency. There are six specific areas of co-operation:

- a. Leases for Salt Building and Exhibition Building
- b. Lease for the land on which the Jonathan Silver Building stands
- c. Agreement for use of offices, gymnasium and other shared space in the VH basement
- d. Agreement for use of VH's Fluke Room as the College's Centre of Excellence for Business.
- e. Managing Agency Agreement for the College to care for VH and employ a staff team.
- f. Service Level Agreement for the College to provide accounting services.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The role of the trustees is strategic oversight; operational responsibility is delegated to the Managing Agency and the VH team. Updates on finance, fabric and the VH action plan are given at Board and Executive Committee meetings.

The Foundation's budget and accounts are presented separately from VH operational costs. These are checked at each Board and Executive Committee meeting, along with a risk register and any policies due for updating. In July the Chair updates a Strategic Summary document focussed on four aims:

- ❖ To ensure competent long-term Board membership and leadership
- ❖ To ensure the Foundation's long-term financial stability.
- ❖ To ensure fabric maintenance of the three buildings held in trust.
- ❖ To increase public awareness and use of Victoria Hall.

## **FINANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Foundation's financial year runs from 1st August to 31st July. Detailed financial updates are presented at Board meetings. Bank accounts are held with the Charities Aid Foundation and with Shawcross Bank. Our electronic banking requires expenditure to be approved by two signatories.

Careful financial management has in the past allowed the Foundation a very small annual profit. On this basis, occasional grants have been made as room booking subsidies for one-off events with substantial community and educational benefit. These small grants can be applied for only after discussion with VH staff about the proposed event. An application form is then submitted to the trustees.

## **BOARD MEETINGS**

The quorum is four trustees. The VH manager normally attends, along with two Managing Agency staff and the Clerk. Meetings normally are held on Thursday mornings in October, December, March and June. Trustees have expressed willingness to alter the day in future, or to consider meeting around 5pm.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The "Exec" consists of the Chair, Vice-Chair and a third trustee agreed by the Board (with an additional trustee available as an alternate). It normally meets five times per year with the Clerk and other staff.

## **WORKING GROUPS**

Currently we have two working groups. One is preparing for our second National Heritage Open Day on 13<sup>th</sup> September. The other is exploring the steps towards creating a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

## **TRAINING**

At least one training/discussion meeting is held each year. In April 2025 the VH manager and Saltaire's new World Heritage Site officer will meet the trustees to explore VH's client base and marketing.

