

Bourne End Bucks One Place Study Society

A Member of Society for One Place Studies

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BEBOPSS CIO Application

Explanatory Note for In Principle resolution

The Proposal: The Committee is seeking your authorisation to begin the formal process of transitioning our Society into a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**.

Why are we doing this?

This change is designed to modernise our governance, protect our committee and members, and ensure that our research remains secure for future generations.

What is a CIO? A CIO is a legal structure designed specifically for charities. Unlike our current setup, a CIO is a legal "person" in its own right. This brings several key benefits:

1. Protection for Trustees and Members (Limited Liability) Currently, because we are unincorporated, the Committee members (and potentially the membership) could be held personally liable for the society's debts or legal obligations. As a CIO, the charity itself is responsible for its own liabilities, providing a "legal shield" that protects the personal assets of those running the society.

2. Access to Grant Funding Many major grant-making bodies (such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund and various local community trusts) prioritise, or require, applicants to be a Registered Charity. Achieving CIO status will "open doors" to funding that we currently cannot access, allowing us to fund special projects, digitisation, or community events.

3. Enhanced Status and Public Trust Being a Registered Charity provides a "stamp of approval" from the Charity Commission. This official status increases our credibility when we approach local archives, families, or other organisations for historical data or partnerships. It confirms that we operate for the public benefit and are held to professional standards.

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4. Advanced Digital Infrastructure Registered Charities are eligible for Google NotForProfits. This provides us with professional-grade tools, including 100 TB of free, secure cloud storage. This will allow us to safeguard our growing digital archive—photographs, maps and research data—in a centralised, permanent location that belongs to the Society, rather than sitting on individual members' accounts.

5. Website hosting Registered charities are eligible for free website hosting. This will allow us to safeguard our websites in space owned by us rather than sitting on an individual member's account.

6. Long-term Continuity A CIO continues to exist regardless of changes in the Committee. It makes it much easier to hold property (like website domains) and enter into agreements in the Society's name, ensuring that our "One-Place Study" survives as a permanent resource for the village.

What does the vote at the AGM mean? This vote is a "Permission to Act." By voting **YES**, you are authorising the Committee to:

1. Submit an application to the Charity Commission.
2. Use the "**Association Model**" constitution—this is vital because it ensures the Society remains membership-led. You will keep your voting rights, your AGM, and the power to elect the Committee.
3. Set up the necessary banking and technical infrastructure so everything is ready for a potential switch.

Is this the final step? No. The AGM is not the day we close the old Society. The Committee is simply getting the "paperwork" in order. Once the Charity Commission approves the application and the new structure is ready, the Committee will return to the membership for a final, formal vote to transfer our assets and "go live" with our new Charity.
