

Regulator investigates charity over potential risk to charitable funds

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The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes Grand Lodge of England Comprehensive Trust Deed (the Charity).

The charity is associated with a non-charity, unincorporated association with a similar name known as the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes Grand Lodge of England ('the GLE'). The charity and the GLE are separate, but linked organisations.

The charity's objects are for the relief or benefit of the members of the GLE and their dependents who are in need.

The Commission opened a compliance case into the charity in September 2023, due to a dispute between the charity and the GLE over ownership of substantial funds. The Commission also engaged with the charity's trustees about general governance matters, and the charity being in multiple default of its legal obligations to file its accounting information. The charity's trustees currently named on the register claim they have been unable to submit accounting information as records required to prepare the accounts have been withheld as part of the dispute.

Despite prolonged engagement and an Action Plan issued by the regulator, the charity remains in default of its accounting obligations for the last seven years.

Recently a serious governance issue has arisen with competing groups claiming to be legitimately appointed as the charity's trustees.

The Commission is concerned that, as a result of the longstanding dispute between the charity and the GLE, a substantial amount of charitable funds may be at risk.

The inquiry will examine the extent to which the trustees are complying with their legal duties in respect of the administration, governance, and management of the charity, with particular regard to:

- the trustees' compliance with their legal obligations for the content, preparation and filing of the charity's accounts and annual returns.
- determining whether any of the charity's property has been or is at risk and to take action to protect such property.
- whether the charity is being managed in accordance with its governing document and whether the governing document is fit for purpose

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional regulatory issues emerge.

It is the Commission's usual policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing the issues examined, any action taken, and the inquiry's outcomes.

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Notes for Editors:

- The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its ambition is to be an expert regulator that is fair, balanced, and independent so that charity can thrive. The Commission has a wide range of regulatory powers which it can use to support charities and protect charitable assets. Further information about the Charity Commission and its work is available at The Charity Commission - GOV.UK.
- On 28 January 2026, the Charity Commission opened a statutory inquiry into the charity under section 46 of the Charities Act 2011('the Act') as a result of its regulatory concerns that there is or has been misconduct and / or mismanagement in the administration of the charity.
- A statutory inquiry is a legal power enabling the Commission to formally investigate matters of regulatory concern within a charity and to use protective powers to protect the charity and its beneficiaries, assets, or reputation. The Commission has not reached any conclusions and the opening of the inquiry is not a finding of wrongdoing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulator-investigates-charity-over-potential-risk-to-charitable-funds>