

Press release: Pension directors banned from running companies for 21 years

Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services (GBTS) and Gleeson Bessent Trustees (GBT), based in Preston, were wound up in the public interest by the courts in March 2017.

Investigations by the Insolvency Service into the conduct of the directors has led to the four directors giving disqualification undertakings totaling 21 years , which means they cannot run a company directly or on behalf of someone else.

Roger Bessent, of Lytham St Annes, and Tracy Park, of Freckleton, were directors of GBTS, while Roger Bessent, Matthew Bessent, of Preston, and Neil O'Donnell, of Poulton-le-Fylde, were all directors of GBT.

GBTS provided pension trustee and administration services to numerous occupational pension schemes and GBT was the trustee of three of those schemes.

In their undertakings, the four former directors accepted they failed to ensure GBTS and GBT properly performed their roles as a Trustee of the pension schemes and as a result, member's funds were exposed to greater levels of risk than that specified in standard guidance issued by The Pensions Regulator (TPR).

The former directors accepted six instances of unfit behaviour, including failing to comply with pension legislation and TPR guidance on what is expected of Trustees, as well as operating with a lack of transparency designed to persuade or encourage the public, who were not sophisticated investors, to transfer pension funds into pension schemes which relied on high risk investments.

With bans effective since last November, Roger Bessent is disqualified for 9 years, Tracy Park for 5 years and Neil O'Donnell for 3-and-a-half years.

And more recently, Matthew Bessent was disqualified for 3-and-a-half years effective from 27 June 2018.

Scott Crighton, Group Leader from the Insolvency Service, said:

Companies handling money on behalf of others have a duty to ensure that funds are properly managed.

Directors who fail in these duties will be investigated and removed

from the corporate arena for a lengthy period.

Notes to editors

Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd (CR0: 07235880) was incorporated in April 2010 and Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd (CR0: 08207804) was incorporated in September 2012.

In giving their disqualification undertakings, Roger Bessent, Tracy Park, Matthew Bessent and Neil O'Donnell did not dispute that:

- GBTS and/or GBT failed to comply with the terms of the Governance Statement of a pension scheme of which they were Trustee
- GBTS and/or GBT failed to comply with the statement of investment principle ("SIP") of a pension scheme of which they were trustee
- the Pension Regulator has issued guidance for Trustees outlining responsibilities placed on scheme Trustees and explaining what Trustees need to do in order to comply with the law, the Pensions Act 1995 and the Pensions Act 2004. GBTS and/or GBT failed to comply with that guidance or the provisions of the pension legislation
- GBTS and/or GBT made investments in companies where the accounts and instruments did not reflect the investment made. GBTS and/or GBT failed to carry out their functions as Trustees/administrators by failing to ensure that sufficient share certificates to support investments were received and/or to satisfy themselves that there was sufficient evidence of the existence of the investment
- GBTS and/or GBT operated with a lack of transparency designed to persuade or encourage members of the public, who were not sophisticated investors, to transfer pension funds into pension schemes which relied on high risk investments
- GBTS and GBT offered contrived and artificial 'employment' to members in order to circumvent what was considered to be the guidance at the time requiring the need for members to be employed by the sponsoring employer of the occupational pension scheme

For further details on Matthew Bessent's disqualification [click here](#).

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service administers the insolvency regime, investigating all

compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: Queen approves nomination to Suffragan See of Crediton

The Queen has approved the nomination of the Venerable Jacqueline Ann Searle, BEd, MA, Archdeacon of Gloucester, to the Suffragan See of Crediton, in the Diocese of Exeter. This is in succession to the Right Reverend Sarah Elisabeth Mullally, DBE, MSc, DSc, RGN, who was translated to the See of London on the 8 March 2018.

Notice: E C Drummond (Agriculture) Limited: application made to abstract water

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register

- when you need to comment by
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Press release: Smoother, safer Eden Valley journeys in £5 million A66 repairs

Major road reconstruction between Kirkby Thore and Low Moor east of Penrith, will start on Friday 7 September. It involves 7 successive weekend closures of the road – overnight between each Friday and the following Monday. Highways England is also using the opportunity to do other repairs and maintenance during the 17 days of work.

Highways England project manager Stephen Mason said:

The A66 between Kirkby Thore and Low Moor is on very old foundations and the carriageway needs total reconstruction and resurfacing to bring it up to modern standards.

This will provide a long-term fix to road surface issues we have had here over the last few years but we cannot do the work safely on this single carriageway section of the A66 without fully closing the road. We appreciate this will inconvenience some road users but we'll be taking advantage of the closures to do as much work as possible here and at other locations which will spare drivers future inconvenience.

Highways England has been carefully planning the work for months, including speaking to local councils, businesses and other key stakeholders.

As well as the work along a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile section of the route between Kirkby Thore and Low Moor, other resurfacing work will be taking place at:

- M6 junction 40, Skirsgill roundabout
- Kemplay roundabout and spurs
- Temple Sowerby Bypass eastbound and westbound carriageways
- Sandford to Walkmill bends
- Kirkby Thore to Long Marton junction
- Brougham to Kemplay roundabout (westbound)

Highways England is reassuring drivers that diversions for different types of vehicles are being carefully planned and will be publicised in advance.

Mr Mason said:

Closing the road sounds daunting but many of the lorries and other commercial traffic will be re-routed along the A69 and can also use the M62 further south. Diversions for other traffic, including for people on local journeys, will be available from the A66 itself.

To explain the work, Highways England engineers are attending Brough, Temple Sowerby, Morland and Bolton parish council meetings over the next fortnight. Staff will also be staging several public drop-in sessions including:

- Kirkby Thore Village Hall Wednesdays 18 and 25 July and 1 August between 5pm and 7pm
- Appleby Public Hall, Boroughgate, Thursdays 12 and 19 July between 5pm and 7pm
- Highways England's New Squares, Penrith, office, every Friday evening until 31 August between 5pm and 7pm

Anyone who is interested in the project can contact Highways England at info@highwaysengland.co.uk or 0300 123 5000.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Regulator publishes new research into factors the public associate with trustworthy charities](#)

Being true to their values and the ability to demonstrate efficiency and impact join transparency among the most important ingredients of trustworthiness in charities, according to new research.

The Charity Commission has published the latest in a series of authoritative, independent studies examining the factors that the public associate with a trustworthy charity.

The research, carried out by Populus, reveals that demonstrating high standards of conduct and behaviour (being 'true to their values') is as important to trustworthiness as making a positive difference to a charity's

cause.

It identifies the key drivers of trust in charities as being:

- transparent about where money goes (8.8 of 10)
- true to their values (8.5)
- efficient in their use of resources (8.4)
- well-governed and well-managed (8.3)
- able to demonstrate making a positive difference (8.3)

The Charity Commission, the regulator of charities in England and Wales, says these findings underline that organisational ethos and values in charities matter to the public, and that rebuilding trust depends on behaviour change, not just on better communication.

The research finds that public trust in charities has plateaued since 2016, and remains low at 5.5 out of 10*. The public now trust charities less than they trust the average person in the street.

The Commission says that while trust in other social institutions has also declined, its aspiration is for charities to be among the most trusted institutions in society.

The research also reveals that a person's trust is closely associated with his or her donating behaviour; 52% of those whose trust has increased say they donate to charities more as a consequence, while 41% of those whose trust has decreased say they donate to charities less as a consequence. Similarly, individuals who do trust charities are far more likely to have recently made repeat donations to a charity than those who do not (24% vs 11%). Those who do not trust charities are more likely to have never given to charities (9% vs 1%).

Baroness Stowell, Chair of the Charity Commission, welcomed the findings and urged charities to respond to them:

Charitable endeavour is about benefiting society, adding value to our lives and communities – making the world a better place. This research shows that the public no longer give charities as institutions the benefit of the doubt in providing that value. What the public expect is not unreasonable: they want charities to be guided by their ethos and purpose in everything they do, and they want charities to use their money efficiently and responsibly. The public have seen evidence of charities failing to demonstrate these behaviours. So it is not surprising that trust has not recovered, and that the public are calling for greater transparency. This is proxy for a more profound issue: the public want evidence that charities are what they say they are.

But this research also contains good news for charities and those who care about trust in charities: it shows that the answer is not to impose more rules and procedures or to tick more boxes, it is

about attitude, ethos and culture. If we together respond to these findings and ensure everything charities do is driven by their purpose we can reverse the decline in trust. And more important than that: charities will improve as organisations, and as a result make a bigger impact on the lives of their beneficiaries, and in their communities and for society as a whole.

Baroness Stowell said the Charity Commission itself was drawing conclusions from the Populus research:

We are currently reviewing the Commission's strategy, and these findings are significant in informing our approach. We have a common interest and purpose here, and as Chair of the Charity Commission, I want to work in constructive partnership with charities to help us together respond to the public's legitimate expectations and strengthen the vital role of charities into the future.

The research findings indicate the public place value in the role of the Charity Commission as regulator. The vast majority (83%) of the public consider the Commission's role either 'essential' or 'very important'. Most of the public (55%) think that charities are regulated effectively in England and Wales, though 33% do not. The research was conducted by Populus; 2,059 adults in England and Wales were surveyed from 22-25 February 2018.

The full report is available on gov.uk.

*While the overall score is given as 5.5 in this year's report, compared to 5.7 in 2016, the researchers are clear that overall trust and confidence in charities remains at similar levels to 2016. The change in score results from a shift in research methodology. For more information, please see page 18 of the report.