

# Letter to The Gleaner

Dear Sir

This is a mission statement and a bit of background you required to me in order to get some informations related to the Free Winnifred Commettee proposals and ideas.

We do wish to respond to what we see as an attack on the efforts of the community to ensure that the public will always have the right to access Winnifred Beach WITHOUT CHARGE.

Our only motive is to ensure that Winnifred Beach is a place where rich and poor alike can enjoy one of Jamaica's most beautiful natural assets free of cost and where we would love to promote sustainable tourism and environmentally friendly development.

Winnifred Beach has been traditionally used by the community, visitors and Jamaicans for over 50 years. It was originally owned by Frederick Barnet Brown, a Baptist missionary. By his will dated May 14, 1918, Mr. Brown established The Winnifred Rest Home trust.

In his will Mr. Brown bequeathed ownership of the beach and surrounding land to his wife, Annie Brown, for the remainder of her life and on her death the property together with houses, furniture, fixtures, live and dead stock would be converted into and called "The Winnifred Rest Home".

According to clause 17 of the will, the purpose of the trust was to:- "be used and kept up and maintained for the purpose of a Rest Home for Missionary Workers, Teachers and respectable poor persons, where they can come for a limited time to rest, such time to be in each case decided on by the Board of Trustees of the "The Winnifred Rest Home".

The beach and most of the surrounding land were sold to UDC in the 1970s. In the firm belief that Jamaicans need accessible community spaces, the community has over the years trained lifeguards, vendors on proper environmental management and maintenance of the beach and has also implemented garbage disposal and plastic recycling initiatives on the beach without assistance from UDC.

This year the Society has won a Jamaica Environmental Action Award for Best Environmental Community and an award from the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica and Michael Manley Foundation.

What is our vision:

A free beach where funds are provided by projects and community cooperation.

A beach which should become a gathering place for churches, students, elders and families

A beach where each month a workshop arranged by PEPA AND Jet will provide students an environmental knowledge and the possibility for them to do some active follow up

A beach where development is thought without any damage to the environment .No cement, no big buildings, eco bathrooms ,rain water collection

A safe beach with life guards and security

A beach where reef, turtles ,and fauna will be protected. Therefore no jet skys, no engine boats, no parking near to the sandy area

A children beach where swimming classes will be held along the holidays and workshops will be teachin to use with respect our beloved beach.

A plastic collection and recycling activity will be involving Fairy Hill Community

Some cultural events to be organized every two months with the presence of poets, lecturers, traditional dancers

A parking lot can be built in the back of the beach and another can be planned on the top of the parochial road

Vendors on the beach(around 30 persons) will be taught and trained in order for them to respect normative related to health, environment, safety.

Our proposal is to have a Commettee composed by local stakeholders running the beach

Commette should be composed by members of UDC, members of Free Winnifred, Health Department, Parish Council, PEPA, Hotel Association, Fairy Hill Community, Youth Club

In their hands the beach could be dvelopped with a deep knowledge about local matters and a serious commitment not to damage the beach teaching community and visitors to recognise the gift of such a blessed place

Funds for beach management should be acquired through valuable eco projects and teaching activities

Plus some donations will be provided by the events organized at the beach

These efforts are to ensure that Winnifred Beach is a clean, safe place for everybody to enjoy for free.

As a result, Winnifred Beach will become one of the few free public beaches left in Portland and wil remain a source of livelihood for members of the community.

Yours sincerely,

**Carla Gullotta, Chairman**  
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