



# the almshouses Gazette

issue 259 summer 2020 price: £2.50

## Support for almshouses during health pandemic

During the ongoing coronavirus pandemic The Almshouse Association has been working hard to ensure that the challenges faced by almshouses are heard and understood by politicians across the UK.

We have contacted every MP with an almshouse in their constituency as well as specific individuals within the Cabinet, devolved powers and Civil Service. These calls and letters highlighted the challenges that almshouse charities across the UK are facing and

seek help and support from those who can provide it.

We are also engaged in a strategy to have almshouses recognised as appropriate recipients of Section 106 funding. The response we have received has been overwhelming, with scores of positive replies already and dozens still pouring in by the day.

The message sent out by the Association has reached many people with areas of significant responsibility in Westminster, the Welsh Government

and the Frontbench of the Opposition, many expressing their gratitude and thanks to almshouses across the country for the support that they provide to those in need.

### Positive action

Actions have followed. Ministers have provided clarity with written answers to our concerns; investigations into how almshouses and their residents can be kept safe have been started; MPs have pledged to write to members of the Government and hold them to account on our behalf; and MPs have put pressure on their local authorities to support charities struggling with the impact of Covid-19, just to name a few. The Almshouse Association is grateful for the support being provided and will continue to press ministers in areas where support is needed and policies that could benefit the movement are being considered.

It is our hope and our aim to maintain these positive relations with politicians from across the political spectrum and from every region of the country throughout and beyond the current pandemic.

## Annual meeting will be a webinar event

*The Almshouse Association's AGM 2020 was due to take place on June 4 this year but was postponed as a result of COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings.*

*It is important that an AGM takes place, therefore members are advised that this year's AGM will be a virtual event in the form of a live webinar on 1st September 2020.*

*Members will still have the opportunity to vote by proxy and pose questions, the details of which are being sent out to the main contacts of each member charity and posted on our website.*

*Please check you know the main contact for your almshouse charity and, if the details have changed, ensure you inform [admin@almshouses.org](mailto:admin@almshouses.org) with the updated contact details. For any questions, please contact CEO Nick Phillips at [Nickphillips@almshouses.org](mailto:Nickphillips@almshouses.org)*

## Over 1,100 cards for a cententarian's birthday appeal ... ... and a doorstep toast from village residents



Not to be outdone by the constraints of a coronavirus lockdown, the residents of a Surrey village

stood on their doorsteps to toast the 100th birthday of Winnie Wright (left) in May. She has lived at Capel Almshouses, Dorking since 1995 and was delighted to hear hit songs from her dancing days echo across the village.

Also celebrating a milestone birthday was 107-year-old Margaret Ellmore (above), who lives at Agnes House care home, administered by Wyggeston's in Leicester. She was due to enjoy a party with family and friends but when it was cancelled during the lockdown, staff launched an appeal for 107 birthday cards instead. It was wildly successful with over 1,100 cascading through the letterbox (full story on page 4).



CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S COMMENT

At the time of writing, we are just entering into the next, slightly less restrictive stage of lockdown. By the time this Summer Gazette hits your doormats, we may be well into another stage and already experiencing a greater freedom, although, I imagine, it will be tinged with much caution. We will all be scrutinising the regular Government reviews of risk and making judgements based on risk assessments.

Surgery with CEO

I know this lockdown is all taking some time to get used to and we are missing so many elements from our personal lives but, from my own work aspect, I very much miss the interaction with member charities. I hope I will have the chance to come and see your almshouses soon (thank you for the invitations) and share the good work going on and also help, if I can, with some of the challenges and developing opportunities. My visits have been cut out but the discussions have not. If you would like to discuss any matter about the long-term strategy of your almshouse or significant issues, ie. governance, policy, developing opportunities (I know some of you are hanging on with some really challenging issues), let's not wait for things to get back as they were - book a Zoom meeting with my PA, Karen McAdam, and lets see how we can move forward. Contact Karenmcadam@almshouses.org or call 01344 452922. I really look forward to speaking to you. Nick Phillips

CORRECTIONS

Almshouses Gazette Issue 258 Spring 2020, page 7: Trustee offers experience and advice on damp proofing. The Association would like to reiterate that this article was based on a trustee's own experience and we should remind everyone that all members must ensure they always consult with an expert and comply with all applicable legislation, particularly if their building is listed. The Almshouse Association 2019 Annual Report, page 4. The John Eastwood Homes are based in Todmorden, not Hebden Bridge.

At the Association we are all working from home. The new CRM (database) has been a great help in maintaining clear, safe, records and giving me a good overview of the member areas of support needed. The phone enquiry system is working seamlessly and our drive to maintain sound, timely and accurate information on the website has been maintained daily. Even though we are all working from home we are here to respond to your questions so please do continue to use us when you need to. Testing times but, as a movement, I know that almshouse charities will dust themselves off and get back to the business of providing safe and secure homes for our residents. It will, however, be some time before our anxieties have relinquished their grip on us. Supporting your residents so well and keeping such clear and consistent direction during this crisis cannot have been easy. Despite these great efforts I know that many of you are facing the loss of some residents. I believe that your efforts are showing that the almshouse world has responded with professionalism, care and pragmatism. The great work during this time has all too often been shouldered by a few people and even without the shadow of COVID-19, we are hearing clearly that you would like extra support on your Board. I hope that by raising the almshouse profile and encouraging the support of local MPs, your local communities will know more about almshouses and want to help in some way. I don't underestimate the challenge of attracting new trustees; let's face it, being a trustee of an almshouse, as you will know, carries a great deal of responsibility and can be pretty stressful at times - but it is greatly rewarding! With this aspect in mind we are dedicating a small part of our summer Gazette (see page 5) to giving a few pointers on building trustee boards and we will prioritise our support over the coming months. You may know much of this

anyway but as a reminder, I have included a few tips for attracting trustees. (See chapter 1.5 in the Almshouse Association Standards of Almshouse Management Guidance Manual at [www.almshouses.org](http://www.almshouses.org))

1. Set out clearly the skills and strengths needed on the Board.
2. Identify the key aspects of each role needed.
3. Review the most interesting and positive benefits to being on the Board. (History of the almshouse, interesting parts of the role.)
4. Don't underplay the challenges or the commitment (It will only come back to haunt you!)
5. Draft an advert and remember to be friendly and clear about the role and maybe a word or two about the other trustees. (One of the key reasons why people join boards is for the social contact with others.)
6. Review and promote to all your contacts, local groups such as Lions, Round Table, local business associations, parish magazines, etc.
7. Decide on your interview process and the board approval process. (See SAM) Interview any candidates to ascertain if they are right for the role and right for the team.
8. Have a clear induction plan so that they feel this role is important and they will be valued.

There is more detail on the website in SAM chapter 1.5 and do contact us for advice on this matter or anything else. We are also reviewing our guidance on financial matters in light of the investment concerns and voids. As we begin to emerge into a cautious but hopefully more positive period, I am already looking forward to meeting up with you again just as soon as it is safe to do so. Thank you for all you are doing keeping the almshouse movement thriving under such challenging circumstances. Stay safe.

Nick Phillips, Chief Executive

Association provides loans and grants

£580,624.60 was awarded in loans and grants to 18 member charities in the first round of funding this year. We are currently processing the next round of applications and will keep all parties advised as soon as we have reviewed the applications. We look forward to sharing the results of the work carried out with the support from The Almshouse Association over the coming months. Information about grants and loans can be found on our website or please contact Sue van Leest at [susanvanleest@almshouses.org](mailto:susanvanleest@almshouses.org) if you need more information.

Regional Champions invited to support local members

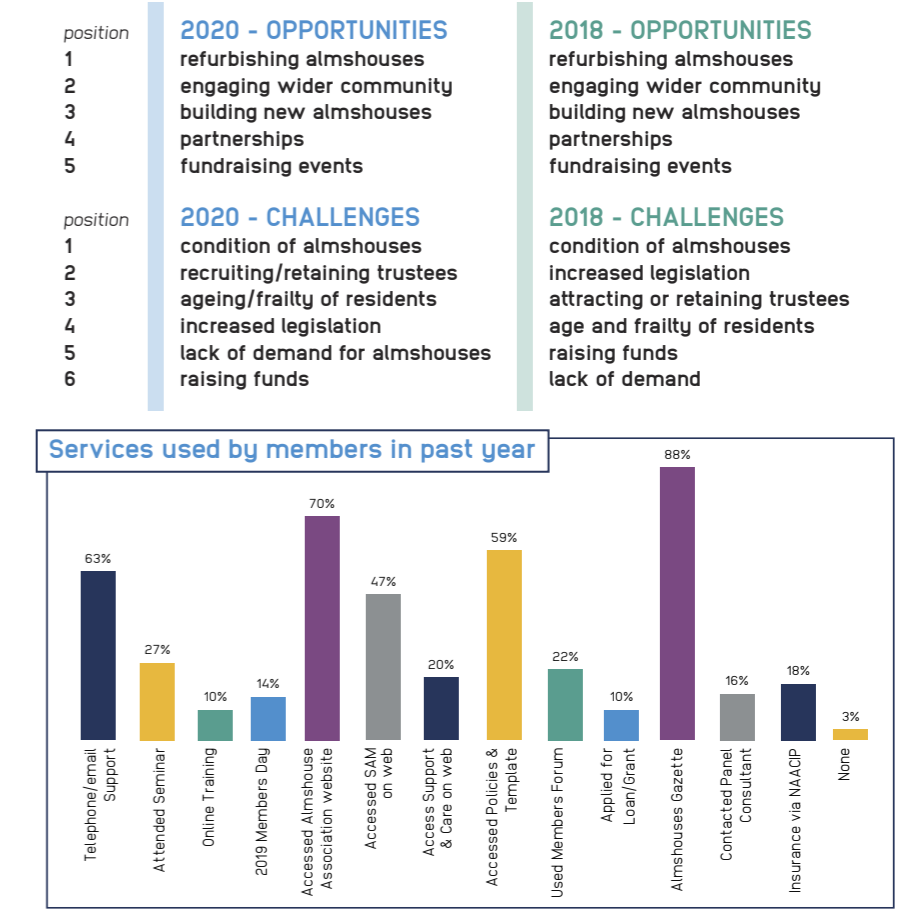
To better support our membership, develop our services and be able to gather information to inform and direct our fundraising activity, we are excited to announce that The Almshouse Association is recruiting 20 volunteer Regional Champions to co-ordinate activity that will be centrally supported by The Almshouse Association. The role of the Regional Champion is to represent focussed regional support, giving members a local point of contact. They will ensure any questions, concerns or issues are directed to the Association and, where appli-

cable, signpost members to The Almshouse Association team and/or website as well as alerting the Association to almshouse charities that may benefit from additional support. Networking events They would also act as a "sounding board" for The Almshouse Association team and we will support our Regional Champions by providing administrative assistance and material for their regional meetings. Staff members of the Association will be delighted to attend some of the regional meetings to talk on specific topics if and when

needed (either in person or virtually, as we may need to consider in the short term). We are also planning to support our Regional Champions with the delivery of local networking events (at least one per year) to focus on local issues, training and updates regarding policy developments. Although some people have already come forward to offer their support as Regional Champions, we will launch the details of the initiative post-lockdown in order for our new Regional Champions to be able to engage with both us and the members in their area.

Big response for Members survey

In February this year, the Association invited members to complete an online survey about The Almshouse Association services, asking members about the challenges and opportunities they face, our training, which services they use and what they would like to see from us in the future. We had a tremendous response and would like to thank everyone for their participation. You will be able to find the full report on our website but some of the results are shown in the accompanying table (right). Your comments have been of great assistance in helping us plan our support and resources and we look forward to implementing a number of your suggestions. Some are already happening - please see the articles about new online training courses (back page) and the appointment of Regional Champions (above) in this issue.



CONTENTS

- The products/services and claims made in the Almshouses Gazette have not been evaluated by The Almshouse Association. Articles that recommend products/services are for information purposes only and are not endorsed by the Association. At the time of publication, the content of this newsletter is correct to the best knowledge of The Almshouse Association's officers. Information is provided for the general guidance of trustees and clerks, who should take their own professional advice where necessary.
- 2/3 Chief Executive's comment; Recruitment of Regional Champions; Members online survey; Surgery with the CEO; Loans and grants
- 4/5 Community partnership builds new homes; Birthday card appeal for centenarian; How to find new trustees; David Scott remembered
- 6/7 Plans for inter-generational almshouse; Mental well-being in anxious times; Housing designed for social benefit; Ray Cargill tribute
- 8/9 Policy and governance news; Next generation guidance manual; Technology keeps friends and family in touch; 40 years service in Devizes
- 10/11 Fire risk assessment guide; Survival in economic uncertainty; Fish and chip supper celebration; Colin Huntley, passion for almshouses
- 12 Implications of employing staff from the European Union; Additional online training courses; Canterbury residents confirmation 'first for years'

## NEW BUILDING

# Partnership between almshouse and land trust builds new homes

A unique first has been achieved in the West Yorkshire town of Todmorden with the completion of a development of six independent-living bungalows, built through the combined efforts of two local community organisations. Calder Valley Community Land Trust, a community benefit society with charitable status, has worked in partnership with the Todmorden-based almshouse trust, John Eastwood Homes, created 50 years ago by a local man who left money to house older people in his home town.



above: Community Open Day. below: Ornamental cherry tree planted by the then Mayor of Calderdale, Cllr. Dot Foster and the then Mayor of Todmorden, Cllr. Ken White.



Under the partnership arrangement, John Eastwood Homes has acquired two of the new homes to add to their existing portfolio of twelve bungalows. The Community Land Trust (CLT) will retain the other four bungalows, although all six will be managed by John Eastwood Homes. The bungalows, which are in the village of Walsden near Todmorden, have been designed to be energy efficient and efforts have been taken to ensure that the site is equipped with a sustainable drainage system which includes permeable asphalt. The project has cost in total around £900,000, of which John Eastwood Homes is contributing two-sixths of the total cost.

The Community Land Trust has raised the remaining £600,000 in a financial package comprising £240,000 from Homes England's Affordable Homes Programme, a grant and interest-free loan from the Quaker Housing Trust and a £40,000 grant from Calderdale council, who also gifted the land. Local people have contributed £94,000 for the development in the form of withdrawable 'community share' capital. Commercial borrowing of £170,000 completed the funding package.

Calder Valley CLT is unusual in the community land trust movement in that it has successfully been granted Registered Provider status by the Regulator of Social Housing. This means that the CLT has been able to draw Homes England grant funding directly and will also act as the landlord to the tenants. Simon Brearley, Chair of Calder Valley Community Land

Trust, said: "We are naturally thrilled to have completed our first development and to be able to provide quality new homes to older people in considerable housing need. Our pleasure is tempered, though, by the knowledge that there are so many other local older people in significant housing need."

John Eastwood Homes' treasurer, Chris Barker, said:

"We're delighted to have worked with the local community land trust so that, together, we have managed to provide six much-needed bungalows for our local older people. We believe the almshouse movement and the CLT movement are obvious partners in the development of more community-led housing."

Calder Valley Community Land Trust, a member organisation with 160 local people as members, is now planning its second development of affordable housing locally. The Trust is also the legal custodian of a Grade II listed community centre in Todmorden.

**David Storah, Clerk  
John Eastwood Homes**

## Birthday cards appeal goes viral



Margaret Ellmore, who received 1,100 cards including one from HM The Queen, celebrates her 107th birthday with Care Manager, Louise Richards.

Agnes House resident Margaret Ellmore was looking forward to a birthday celebration on reaching her 107th year at Agnes House care home in Leicester on May 1st. But due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the original plan involving the local mayor and chairman of the county council was unable to go ahead. Instead, staff at the home had the idea of making a public appeal for people to send in birthday cards for Margaret, in the hope of receiving 107 cards to match her age. The request was picked up by local radio and BBC news and went out to the tabloid newspapers, with the help of The Almshouse Association. A Facebook post alone reached over 38,000 people - and then the cards began pouring in thick and fast, not only from all over the UK but also from America and Canada. Agnes House put on a fantastic celebration for Margaret, who was serenaded by a saxophonist and interviewed by BBC News. There were also donations from local businesses of balloons and a cake, along with countless bouquets of flowers.

By the end of the day Margaret had received over 1,100 cards, more than 10 times the original request. The Agnes House team and Margaret's family would like to thank everyone for their superb support and generosity.

Chris Jones, CEO, said the appeal has surpassed all expectations and was a fantastic achievement. Margaret said it didn't feel real but she was very pleased!

## Remembering David Scott former Association Director

We received the sad news that David Scott, former Director of the Almshouse Association, passed away in March of this year.

David was passionate about almshouses and the value they brought to society. He introduced new systems to help gather data on almshouses and their residents and wrote and spoke extensively about their great asset to communities round the country.

Former colleague, Heather Greaves, spoke to CEO, Nick Phillips, about his contribution:

"I joined The Almshouse Association in 1984 when David Scott was Director. He was the first Director after Leonard Hackett, who founded the Association and he stayed until his retirement in the mid-90s. David lived and breathed almshouses and was very keen to maintain improvements to residents' accommodation, in keeping with the housing expectations of the time. He instigated the introduction of a database to record the condition of charities' properties and their contact names. It was then that statistics showed that there were still almshouses without central heating and many were bedsits, so big efforts were made to encourage trustees to modernise. David's good humour and easy manner always made events very relaxed and good fun as well as disseminating valuable information. His other passion was playing the organ in the local church every Sunday and he continued his love of music, playing well into his retirement in Lincolnshire where he moved to be near family."

David is much missed by his family in Lincolnshire and his many friends. He is remembered with respect and affection by the Association and the wider almshouse community even after so many years. We all send our sincere condolences to David's family and friends at this time.



David Scott (right) being presented to HRH Princess Margaret at a service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey to celebrate the Association's 50th anniversary on 31 October 1996, which was also the day of his retirement.

## Top tips to find the right new trustees for your charity

Three quarters of charities reported to trustee recruitment charity 'Getting on Board' that they struggle to recruit the trustees they need. However, with 90% responding that they recruited most of their trustees through personal networks, is it any wonder that charities can't find the people they need?

How many of us would find our charity's next Director or Administrator solely by "asking around". Or, even more inconceivably, that we would employ someone without requiring an application and interview, or any references. But trustee recruitment doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. In fact, apart from your time, you don't need to spend anything on it at all.

The trustee recruitment process, ten steps to success:

- Read your governing document: how does it require you to recruit and appoint new trustees?
- Involve your trustees, members and staff: who is going to be involved and at which stage?
- Work out what is missing from your board.
- Write an engaging but honest advert and information pack.

- Advertise by targeting where you think people with the characteristics you need will see the advert.
- Shortlist and interview against agreed criteria.
- Invite likely appointees to observe a board meeting.
- Take references, check they are eligible to serve as a trustee and appoint.
- Let all applicants know the outcome: "reject well". These are potential supporters of your charity and potential trustees of other charities.
- Welcome, induct, train, signpost to Charity Commission and other resources, and regularly check-in with new trustees. If you fluff the induction stage, there's a real risk your new trustee will leave or coast.

Top tips for getting trustee recruitment right:

- Be diplomatic with your existing trustees. Trustee recruitment isn't a criticism of their contributions, it's about keeping the board equipped to support the organisation.
- Your senior staff should be involved in the process but

they shouldn't be deciding who to appoint. Trustee appointment is the job of the board (and/or wider membership) not the staff who are conflicted since they are recruiting their own boss(es).

- Go to potential trustees, don't expect them to find you.
- Don't assume that your future trustees already know that they want to be a trustee (don't even assume that they know what a "trustee" is!).
- Continue to use your personal networks to get your advert out there. But don't "invite" people to join your board.
- Induction is key, particularly if your new trustee hasn't been a trustee before.
- Don't draw the process out for months and months: you'll lose interested applicants along the way.

For more information and to download Getting on Board's free trustee recruitment guidance, go to [www.gettingonboard.org](http://www.gettingonboard.org)

Penny Wilson, CEO, Getting on Board

Getting on Board supports and trains charities to improve their board recruitment and helps individuals and their employers to find the best possible opportunities.

## Tributes to Ray Cargill, Devizes Chairman of Trustees

It is with great sadness the Association received the news that Ray Cargill, Chairman of Trustees for Devizes Almshouse Charity, passed away on Saturday 28 March. Nick Phillips, CEO of The Almshouse Association and Administrators Danielle Hughes and Susan Brooks met Ray when the charity hosted our Wardens Training Seminar last September. Our Head of Fundraising and Charity Support, Sue van Leest also met Ray with Chippenham Borough Lands Charity. Ray worked tirelessly for the Devizes charity and was also a great promoter to the wider almshouse world. We know from the charity that Ray had been working so hard putting in place all the measures to protect residents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic only weeks before his death, which came as a great shock to everyone. Ray is much missed by family, friends and so many local organisations that he supported and our thoughts are with his wife and his family at this very sad time.



## Vision for a 21st century almshouse in Bristol

Volunteers from The Anchor Society and the University of the West of England are developing the idea of opening an Inter-Generational Housing Community in Bristol, based on a pioneering project in Holland.

In September 2012, Dutch student Jurrien Mentink left home for the first time to study urban design at university in Deventer, Holland. He was nervous and exited in equal measure. After the first couple of months the initial excitement of student life and freedom began to fade and Jurrien realised that he had a problem. Not only was he feeling lonely and homesick but he was finding it really difficult to make ends meet.

### Kind and welcoming residents

Being a student was a costly business; he had next to no income and could barely afford his student accommodation. Jurrien decided to get a job and ended up working in the kitchens of the Humanitas Residential Care Home; he earned good money, he got to eat some decent meals and the elderly residents were kind and welcoming.

By Christmas, Jurrien had found out that the care home had a number of vacant bedrooms. He knew they needed more help in the kitchens and that some of his friends were unhappy with the high cost of student accommodation. So he persuaded the CEO of Humanitas, Gea Sijpkens, to allow him and five other students to come and live in the very first Inter-generational housing scheme. The younger residents agreed to volunteer to work 30 hours a month in exchange for free accommodation. The amazing result was that everyone was happier and that a new atmosphere began to fill the whole community. The young people were befriended by the older residents and began to teach them how to use the internet and make Skype calls; even how to work the remote control on the television. The mental health and well-being of both

age groups improved. The older residents became more alert and interested in life as they shared their stories. The students prospered and passed their exams. The scheme is still running seven years later. News of the Deventer success was picked up by the wider academic community as an example of successful inter-generational living. Alicante University heard of the scheme and persuaded the city council to build a large scale Inter-Generational Community in a disadvantaged part of the city. The Plaza America development contains 74 one bedroom flats, a number of community rooms and a garden. It also houses a GP practice, a non-residents day-centre and a two storey underground car park.

holders to develop a version of the Alicante Project which they call a 21st Century Almshouse. The Bristol vision would see post graduate students, or essential workers, living alongside older residents with both groups undertaking to support and encourage one another. The first pilot project, which may start on a small scale, would form the basis for academic research to help assess how best to measure the social impact of this type of community and to help fine-tune the design and building of more such communities across the UK. The Bristol Project includes The Anchor Society, with their long history of help-



A group of almshouse trustees and Bristol community leaders invited Nick Phillips, CEO of The Almshouse Association, to a meeting to discuss the inter-generational almshouse (from left): Bob Durie, Bill Marshall, Nick Phillips, Tom Blathwayt and Nick Bacon.

The rental income from the car park and other facilities is used to subsidise the costs of the accommodation and cover the salary of a "Guardian" who runs the building and facilitates the development of the community spirit and good neighbourliness between the generations. Up to a third of the flats are let to people under the age of 35 who stay for a maximum period of two years and commit to providing up to 30 hours a month to support and befriend the older residents, in exchange for subsidised rent.

The Alicante Project has been widely acclaimed, not least by UNESCO, and is now being used as the inspiration for similar initiatives around the world. The project team in Bristol are working to draw together a number of stake-

ing vulnerable and frail elderly, The University of the West of England through the Wallscourt Foundation, with a pressing need to provide housing for post graduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and The Bellevue Trust, who have made grants to fund start up social enterprises which support vulnerable young people and ex-offenders. Discussions with Bristol City and South Gloucestershire councils are progressing as the search for an appropriate site on which to build accelerates. The team is also in discussion with a number of housing associations and almshouse charities about new and existing buildings which could provide the location for a first pilot project.

Bob Durie, Almshouse Trustee

## Housing designed for greater social benefit

by Roland Karthaus, Director at Matter Architecture and Senior Lecturer at the University of East London.

Homes provide shelter and comfort for people to live in and the way they are designed and configured, their location and relationship to their surroundings, have enormous effects on people's lives.

Well-designed homes and communities have profound individual and

resilience and community cohesion. Roland Karthaus, Director at Matter Architecture and Senior Lecturer at the University of East London, has been developing a new model for housing that links social benefit with design and management, by rethinking the age-old form of intergenerational housing and reimagining its workings in a modern setting. Research from around the world



social benefits that are often overlooked, with housing options becoming increasingly segregated by age, care needs and affordability.

The current COVID-19 crisis has focused attentions towards preventing the spread of infection and this is having serious consequences on care homes and also, to some extent, on sheltered housing and almshouses. Though this is important, the longer-term effect of isolation and loneliness does also significantly affect people's health and longevity. There is a clear need for a new social benefit approach to housing design and management that can tackle both issues holistically through prevention, flexibility, social

shows that people, whether related or unrelated, benefit from sharing and supporting each other whilst maintaining independence. Often, however, the configuration of housing and the way that it is managed and used do not work well to support this. Matter Architecture are strong believers that health and well-being arises from friendships, security and support, and have identified some key points that could help to deliver these benefits to all forms of independent living:

- The home should give a sense of place and belonging over the long term. Currently, single-bedroom homes for older and younger people tend to be the most

inflexible and offer fewer of the amenities that are necessary for healthy living. The concept of a 'one bed plus' home that is large enough to be adaptable and future-proof would enable independent living for longer.

- More flexible support and care provision (eg. operating from local hubs) can deliver support to people in their own homes, allowing them to stay in their own community and friendship base for longer.
- A resident-centred approach to shared space design and management can drastically change the nature of their use and can be a catalyst for building powerful relationships that define a place.
- Post-occupancy evaluation can report against social benefit aims over the longer term so that schemes can learn from one another.

Almshouses are inherently resilient and adaptable because of their focus on local communities and neighbourhoods. They intrinsically understand the importance of social value in long term sustainability, a crucial ingredient that has been lacking in many modern housing developments. We have been working with several almshouse organisations to look at how new developments can capture the inherent social value of the almshouse model through the way they are commissioned and designed. For further information, follow the link to the interactive online publication: [matterarchitecture.uk/intergen](https://matterarchitecture.uk/intergen)

## Importance of recognising changes in mental well-being

Mental health problems are thought to affect one in four people. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are understandably worried and are perhaps feeling more isolated and anxious than usual so it's important any changes in mental well-being are recognised and addressed at an early stage.

Many of our members are doing their best to support residents and staff; calling residents regularly, providing puzzles and quizzes and sending regular updates by post and email. They are allowing staff to work from home, providing personal protective equipment to those who need to go

to their properties, and carrying out more regular cleaning of communal areas. All these actions will help reduce stress and maintain a sense of community.

Some people may need additional support, however, and there are a number of organisations that offer resources and support services to help combat stress, anxiety, loneliness and isolation. These include: Mind - [www.mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk) Samaritans - [www.samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) Age UK - [www.ageuk.org.uk](https://www.ageuk.org.uk) Mental Health Foundation - [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk) We recommend making a note of

these organisations and passing their details on to your staff and residents in case they need them. People suffering from stress, anxiety and/or depression can also access help offered by their local NHS trust, including talking therapies. A GP referral is not required, although they may find it helpful to contact their GP in the first instance so that they can be directed to the most relevant services for their needs. Don't forget, The Almshouse Association offers a free, online Mental Health Awareness course to our members. Visit our website to find out more.

## Charities and Charity Law

**Charities and Charity Law Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 review:** DCMS has [published](#) a review of the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016, which aimed to:

- Provide new and strengthened powers for the Charity Commission
- Extend the criteria for automatic disqualification from charity trusteeship and apply disqualification to senior management positions
- Strengthen the transparency and accountability of charity fundraising
- Give charity trustees an explicit legal power to make social investments.

**The Charity Commission has published new guidance for the charity sector in relation to the coronavirus outbreak:** The guidance covers:

- Charity objects: understand if you can help with coronavirus efforts
- Support to pay charity staff
- Using reserves and restricted funds
- AGMs and other meetings: postponing or cancelling meetings
- Holding meetings online or by telephone
- Reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission
- Keeping people safe.

**The Charity Commission has provided financial guidance and links to support during the coronavirus pandemic:** Go to the Charity Commission link to financial support for charities during [The Pandemic](#).

## Housing

**Risk of non-compliance before new Rent Standard:** The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has published an [addendum](#) to its [Sector Risk Profile 2019](#) that identifies the areas that are most likely to increase the risk of non-compliance with rent and data quality requirements.

**The Regulator of Social Housing** has warned registered providers and local authorities about a range of circumstances which make non-compliance with rent requirements more likely to happen, in advance of the new Rent Standard scheduled to come into force on 1st April 2020.

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)** has published [guidance](#) for landlords, tenants and local authorities on the

Blue text denotes a web link to the full article. Please visit the Almshouse Association website for all links at: <https://www.almshouses.org/news/policy-and-governance-latest-developments>

## Housing (continued)

private and social rented sectors in the context of COVID-19. This includes guidance around changes to the repossession of property during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the majority of legal changes do not impact almshouses, it is worth noting that licensees that are protected by the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 will not be able to be set aside 'non-essentially'.

**MHCLG** has [published](#) a letter that outlines the support that the Government has put in place for social housing residents. While the letter is not specific to almshouses, it contains several useful points, including information around moving residents in and out, changes to maintenance and gas safety work, support for vulnerable people and much more.

## Adult Social Care and Support

**Action plan to support adult social care sector - The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)** has [published](#) an action plan to support the adult social care sector in England. While this plan is not tailored to almshouses, it contains useful information on and links to how to manage and avoid an outbreak, PPE provisions, accommodating those coming out of NHS care and advice and support on how to keep living arrangements safe.

**Loneliness plan during coronavirus lockdown - The Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)** has launched a campaign aimed at tackling loneliness and social isolation during this period of social distancing. The [campaign](#) aims to encourage people to talk openly about loneliness and guarantee £5m for national loneliness organisations.

**Provision of home care:** The Department of Health and Social Care has published a [collation of guidance](#) that aims to answer frequently asked questions from registered providers, social care staff, local authorities and commissioners who support and deliver care to people in their own homes, including supported living settings, in England. This guidance is useful to any almshouse charities who have any sort of care role over their residents.

## Property and Planning

**Necessary building safety improvements can continue:** MHCLG, mayors and local leaders have [pledged](#) to ensure vital building safety improvements can continue during the coronavirus pandemic. It is clear that the safety of buildings remains a top priority and measures have been put in place to ensure that vital work can continue and should not be put off as a result of lockdown. It is important to note that the removal of non-ACM cladding is considered to be vital work. For further guidance, see [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## Health and Safety

**Gas safety:** The HSE [guidance](#) includes specific information for residents about what to expect, how engineers will work safely and what to do if you are clinically extremely vulnerable or experiencing symptoms and also sets out a number of scenarios to help landlords understand what may be considered reasonable steps, to demonstrate compliance with duties to check appliances annually. Many of these scenarios are likely to apply to almshouses.

## Taxation

**Digital links requirement for Making Tax Digital postponed -** The Charity Tax Group [reports](#) that HMRC has confirmed the postponement of the requirement for digital links for Making Tax Digital, in order to support organisations through the coronavirus outbreak. HMRC has postponed the requirement until April 2021.

**Refunding tickets for cancelled charity events during coronavirus -** HMRC has published [guidance](#) on changes to help charities process refunds, collect donations and claim Gift Aid for events cancelled due to coronavirus.

## Miscellaneous

**Coronavirus business support finder tool:** The Government has [launched](#) a coronavirus business support finder tool to help organisations easily access the support that they are eligible for during the coronavirus pandemic. The tool will ask organisations to fill out an online questionnaire, where they will then be directed to a list of all the financial support that they may be eligible for.

## Residents have high-tech link to family

Leading information technology firm Softcat has generously loaned tablets to Thorngate Churcher Trust in Gosport which were quickly put to use by residents to contact friends and family.

Thorngate Chief Executive, Anne Taylor, said: "Within hours of arriving, the tablets were being used by residents who are really missing their friends and family. We have a tablet at each of our three sheltered housing schemes in Gosport and in our care home, with free data for three months."

She said residents were impressed with how easy it is to use the tablets. Softcat Chief Executive, Graeme Watt, said: "In these unprecedented and challenging times, we wanted to get behind an initiative that would make a tangible difference in supporting the community and those in need. This small gesture is not only a thank you to all of the critical workers continuing their great work but we hope it allows vulnerable people the ability to keep connected with loved ones at a time when it's needed the most."



Patricia and Roy Crooks with a tablet.

## The next generation of almshouse management

At the beginning of the year, we sent out an open invitation to members asking for volunteers to attend a workshop to develop the next generation Guidance Manual for operating almshouses. We were looking for 10 to 12 members reflecting the diversity of membership so that we could hear their views and ideas on how The Almshouse Association should deliver its guidance in the future.

The response was overwhelming, 41 members offered their help and it was quite a challenge to shortlist 12 members. On the day, seven members were able to attend the workshop in February and they continue to be involved in this exciting project.

They are: **United St Saviour's Charity, London; Taunton Heritage Trust, Somerset; Letters Managing Agent, York; Eastbridge Hospital,**

**Canterbury; Girton Town Charity, Cambridge; Lapworth Charity, Birmingham; Chester Municipal Charities, Chester.**

Almshouse Management, as we wanted to take a fresh approach to developing the next generation Guidance Manual. However, the key messages were:



A big thank you to all the members who registered their interest and those who have submitted a written contribution. Thank you also to Southwark Charities for providing the venue to host the workshop. We made a conscious effort not to refer to SAM, Standards of

- The Guidance Manual should be available online, able to be printed and in print. It should be a loose leaf manual where updates can be easily inserted.
- There should be only one Guidance Manual.
- The current Guidance Manual 'SAM', Standards of Almshouse Management, is comprehensive and provides a breadth of information; it is accessible, well written and clear; it is pitched at the right level and there are no gaps.
- SAM is the 'go-to' Guidance Manual and it is unique to almshouse charities.
- 'Do not reinvent the wheel': the Guidance Manual should not move too far away from the existing one.

At the time of writing we are in the process of commissioning Rebecca Mollart to put together the Guidance Manual. She is the Chief Executive of Erosh (the national network for older people's housing and support services) and a freelance consultant specialising in training, tutoring and on-line learning materials development. We will keep you posted as progress is made.

## Thanks for 40 years service in Devizes

After 40 years service as the secretary of St Mary's Church and Poorlands Charity in Devizes, Gloria Chapman has retired after working with four different chairmen and many local trustees, supporting residents of the 12 almshouses in Victoria Road, being on call 24/7 and making regular visits to their homes. One of the year's highlights being the annual trip to Bournemouth.



Gloria has seen many changes since 1980. All the properties have been extended and improved and a communal garden room built in 2003, officially opened by the Earl and Countess of Wessex. Due to the pandemic the leaving party was postponed, however, residents arranged for gifts to be delivered to her home. Gloria will be sad to leave but feels that at the age of 85 it may be time to retire and look forward to more holidays with her husband! She has received many letters of thanks from businesses who have been involved with the almshouses over the years.

## 25th celebration at Ann Edwards Mews

Residents and their families joined with staff, committee members and the local minister to celebrate the 25th anniversary and give thanks for the almshouses at Ann Edwards Mews, Gloucester.

Everyone enjoyed a fish and chip supper at Christchurch Abbeydale and had the opportunity to chat about their experiences of life at the Mews. A fantastic cake was made by a member of the Resources Committee, which the residents cut together. Bishop Rachel shared a few words, giving thanks for the legacy of Ann Edwards, a curate's



wife from South Cerney who left money in her will to set up a charity to build the homes, originally for widows and daughters of

deceased clergy within the Diocese of Gloucester. The charity scheme has widened since then and it is also now open to anyone with an active Christian faith who is in need, although still with a preference remaining for widows and children of deceased clergy.

The eight Mews homes consist of two bedroom houses and one bedroom bungalows set around an attractive courtyard next to the church. It is opposite a large supermarket and near many amenities, including a local bus route into the city centre. The charity also has two other properties in Hucclecote and Cirencester.

Kathryn Warner, Clerk to the Trustees

## Almshouse safety ... guidance for fire risk assessment

Each year, it is important to carry out a review of fire safety arrangements for almshouses - especially those buildings that have been subject to the statutory fire risk assessment as required by The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Article 9 (3).

(England & Wales only, Scotland & N. Ireland have their own equivalent legislation).

The frequency of a review has no defined time scale; this is left to the 'Responsible Person's' decision but should take place with sufficient frequency to keep the assessment up to date with any changes to the risks.

The Fire Safety Order suggests that should there be a reason to suspect that the risk assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change(s) in the matters to which it (the Fire Risk Assessment) relates, the Responsible Person must make the required changes without delay, ie.

- When the premises/building, special, technical and organisational measures, or organisation of work undergo significant changes, extensions or conversions.

- Where changes to an assessment are required as a result of such review the Responsible Person must make them.

When the Order came into effect on the 1st October 2006, the National Chief Fire Officers Association provided guidance for Fire Service Enforcement Officers to follow when visiting an address to ensure consistency of enforcement.

### Constantly under review

The legislation underlines the principle of 'dynamic risk assessment'. In other words, the risk assessment is an ongoing process, suggesting the Responsible Person should not forget about it; it must be kept constantly under review. There is no definition of the term 'regularly' but an annual review is generally accepted to be the best practice.

Where the fire risk assessment refers to 'any group of persons that are especially at risk', eg. almshouse residents or residential staff, special considerations should be given to those who may be considered especially at risk, whether due to their location or any other factor. People who are unlikely to be protected by the building's general

fire precautions, ie. contractors working in the roof spaces, should also be considered within this group.

The following list might be considered as being especially at risk in case of fire:

- Those who have limited mobility,
- Workers in remote locations,
- Residents who may at times be under the influence of medication,
- Persons sleeping on the premises,
- Those members of staff engaged in 'lone working',
- Unattended 'Young Persons' who may be on the premises alone visiting relatives.

A copy of the completed Fire Risk Assessment Review Report should be kept on the premises and readily available for inspection by an Enforcing Authority. Ideally, it would be seen as best practice to keep a copy with the latest fire risk assessment report. There is no legal problem with a copy being kept electronically, either on site or at a 'Head Office' location.

Harry Paviour,  
Fire Safety Consultant (Almshouse  
Association Panel Member)  
[harry.paviour@btinternet.com](mailto:harry.paviour@btinternet.com)

Visit the Almshouse Association website to download  
the Fire Safety Audit checklist at:  
[www.almshouse.org/model-policies-and-templates](http://www.almshouse.org/model-policies-and-templates)

## A question of time - survival in economic uncertainty

The title of M&G's article in the Spring Gazette was: 'Multi Asset Investing: A longer-term perspective.' At the point of writing, the coronavirus was only at the periphery of the collective consciousness: many saw the problem as contained to Asia, and the US equity (company shares) market was on its way to hitting all-time highs. Few of us had grappled with the reality of lockdown and the huge impact on everyday life that would follow.

### Falling stocks and bonds

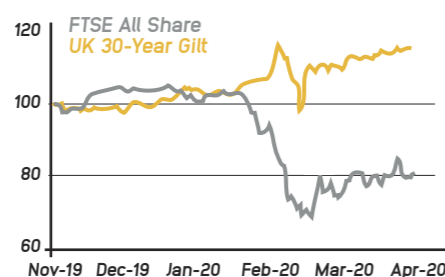
The reality of such events can make 'a longer-term perspective' almost impossible for many of us. In periods of stress, our survival instinct takes over and looking beyond the day-to-day feels like a luxury that few can enjoy. Hoarding toilet rolls and hand sanitiser is one manifestation of this and so is a rush to close out investments to raise cash.

There were many signs of this in March. At one point both global stock markets and global government bonds were falling at the same time, even though the latter are traditionally seen as a 'safe haven' in times of stress.

At the point at which UK stocks reached their lows, UK government bonds had failed to provide much of an offset for

multi-asset investors. The fact that we were seeing correlated falls in assets at this time suggested that investors weren't thinking about the long term. Instead the 'rush for cash' seemed to reflect a shortening of time horizons as that survival instinct kicked in. Since that period, we have seen a recovery in both stocks and bonds.

UK stock market (FTSE All Share) and government bond (30-year gilt) returns  
rebased as at 29 Nov 2019, source Datastream 7 May 2020.



In the case of stocks, in particular, this has been a source of confusion for many; how is it that stock markets can rise when the news apparently continues to deteriorate?

There are two things we need to keep in mind in this regard. First, if it is indeed true that some of the market declines in March were more about panic than changes to economic fundamentals, then we should not be surprised if the

reversal of those declines is also unrelated to economic news. Secondly, we must remember that stock markets are not driven by the news today but about expectations for the future.

The bad news we are seeing now was already anticipated in March and as that near-term panic starts to abate, we might expect investors to once again look toward the end of the lockdown and beyond. As time horizons become more normal, more considered assessments can begin to hold sway.

From here it remains to be seen what the real long-term impact on economies will be and we should not be surprised if markets periodically return to 'panic mode' in the period ahead. However, for those investors who are able to maintain a focus on the long term, the volatility associated with these periods should be viewed as a source of potential opportunity, rather than something to be feared.

The value of the M&G Charity Multi Asset Fund's assets will go down and well as up. We are unable to give financial advice. If you are unsure about the suitability of your investment, speak to your financial adviser. The views expressed in this document should not be taken as a recommendation, advice or forecast.

Tristan Hanson, M&G Investments  
7 May 2020



## Colin Huntley 1942-2019

Earlier this year, the almshouse movement lost a passionate and committed member of their family. Colin Huntley was born in Ceylon, moving to the UK when he was six. He studied law at Leeds University where he adopted and was very proud of Yorkshire, finally settling down in Halifax where he lived with his wife and family for the last 40 years.

His family home is adjacent to a row of almshouses and in the early 1980s he became clerk to the local Charity of Elizabeth Wadsworth and managed the cottages for over 30 years, generating funds for a complete refurbishment and bringing the buildings back to modern specifications. For the majority of that time he did this on a voluntary basis and was rightly proud of his achievement. He also took on the care of Butterfield Homes in Bradford, becoming clerk to the trustees and responsible for the running and upkeep of the homes until the day he died.

Mark Silver, Chair of Butterfield Homes, said: "Colin had a vast knowledge of almshouses and was always very professional. He was an excellent clerk to the committee over many years and will be greatly missed by my fellow trustees and me." Colin Huntley served as an Almshouse Association board member for 15 years, leaving in 2018. Nick Phillips, CEO, said: "The board of trustees and staff at The Almshouse Association are deeply saddened by the news of Colin's death and send their heartfelt sympathy to his wife, Jan and the family. They know many in the almshouse family feel a debt of gratitude for Colin's generosity, energy and passion for the almshouse movement."



THE  
ALMSHOUSE  
ASSOCIATION

PATRON  
HRH The Prince of Wales,  
KG KT GCB

VICE PATRON  
HRH The Duke of Gloucester,  
KG GCVO

Advisory Body  
Ray Kenney CEng MIMechE FCMl  
Francesca Quint LLB AKC  
Prof Cameron Swift PhD FRCP  
FRCPi

The Board of Trustees  
Meryl Aldridge  
Andrew Barnes  
John Broughton JP  
Clive Cook  
\*Rob Douglas CBE DL  
Quentin Elston  
\*Elizabeth Fathi (Chair)  
\*Willie Hartley Russell MVO DL  
David Healey  
Jim Kennedy  
\*Richard Knipe  
Paul Mullis  
\*Tricia Scouller  
Adam Sedgwick  
\*Margaret Stewart  
Richard Waite

(\*Finance & General Purposes  
Sub-Committee)

Chief Executive  
Nick Phillips

Head of Member Services  
Rosie Sweeney

Head of Policy and Engagement  
Christopher Targowski

Head of Fundraising  
and Charity Support  
Sue van Leest

Head of Finance  
Michael Drake

The Almshouses Gazette  
is published by:  
The Almshouse Association  
Billingbear Lodge  
Maidenhead Road  
Wokingham  
Berks RG40 5RU  
Tel: 01344 452922  
Fax: 01344 862062  
email: [AlmshouseSupport@almshouses.org](mailto:AlmshouseSupport@almshouses.org)  
web: [www.almshouses.org](http://www.almshouses.org)

Registered Charity No. 245668  
Company No. 04678214

## Residents confirmation ‘first for years’

The Bursar at St John’s and St Nicholas’ Hospitals in Canterbury, Sharon Keenor, sent in this wonderful photo of the confirmation of two of their residents and a member of staff by the Bishop of Dover. It was the first confirmation service conducted by Bishop Rose in the Diocese and they believe it was the first St John’s confirmation for several hundred years!

Left to right: Roger Keys, resident; Sharon Keenor, Bursar/CE; The Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin; and Dennis Voller, resident.



## More courses added to online training library

The Almshouse Association is pleased to announce that more online training courses have been added to our website course library.

With many of us working from home, you may find you now have the time to take one or more of the courses on offer. Most are no more than 30-40 minutes long, are CPD accredited and you can download a certificate on

completion. All member charities have been issued with six credits per charity (please do let us know if your need more). Each course uses one credit. Visit the Association’s website at [www.almshouses.org/training-seminars/online-training-sessions/](http://www.almshouses.org/training-seminars/online-training-sessions/) and click into the course links. You will be taken directly through to the course pages with login instructions.



### Course Library

- Risk Assessment - NEW
- Infection Prevention and Control - NEW
- Legionella Awareness - NEW
- Health and Safety Basics and Essentials - NEW
- Fire Awareness - NEW
- GDPR Essentials
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Mental Health Awareness

## Advising staff if your charity employs EU nationals

The UK formally left the European Union on 31 January 2020 and has now entered into a transition period whilst the details of a trade agreement are agreed. This transition period is due to end on 31 December 2020 and will have implications on the employment of EU nationals after this date.

EU, EEA (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and Swiss nationals who move to the UK before 31 December 2020 need to apply for settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme to continue their right to live and work in the UK after 30 June 2021. Irish nationals are not required to apply for either status and can continue to live, work and study in the UK after this date.

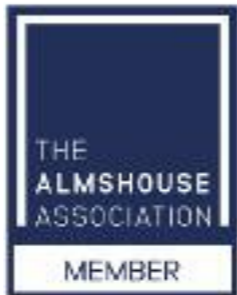
Applications for settled and pre-settled status can be made online via the government website. Those applying will need to prove their identity, prove that they live in the UK and disclose whether they have any serious criminal convictions. If their application is successful, those who have lived in the UK for five or more years will be given settled status and those who have been living in the UK for fewer than five years will be given pre-settled status. As an employer, you are not obliged to support your employees in applying for settled or pre-settled status but it is advised to do so as it is not yet known what the impact of not applying will be. The Association recommends that if you do employ any EU nationals at your

almshouse charity, you should check that they have applied and, if not, encourage them to do so. The deadline to apply for settled or pre-settled status is 30 June 2021. More detailed information can be found at [www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families](http://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families).

## New members

The Almshouse Association gives a warm welcome to new member:

Chobham Poor Allotment Charity, Surrey



If you would like to use our new Almshouse Association Members Logo on your stationery or website, please contact Almshouse Support [@almshouses.org](mailto:@almshouses.org)

for an electronic logo file. We also have a Panel Consultant logo available.

Help spread the message about the great community impact of the almshouses!

## 2020 CALENDAR

All training seminars and the Almshouse Association 2020 Members Day have been postponed until 2021.

Please note there are a number of online training courses available on our website for members (see adjacent article). When available, webinars will also be posted on our website at [www.almshouses.org](http://www.almshouses.org)

The 2020 AGM will take place virtually in the form of a webinar on 1st September 2020 - further information on the front page of this Gazette.