



**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ALMSHOUSES
(THE ALMSHOUSE ASSOCIATION)**

Registered Charity Number 245668 Company Number 04678214
**Minutes of the Seventieth Annual General Meeting held via Zoom
Conferencing Platform on Wednesday 29th September 2021**

Due to the Covid pandemic this meeting was held online in accordance with the Charity Commission's guidelines

1. Chairman Update: Elizabeth Fathi

Elizabeth Fathi reflected on the past year. The following is an extract of her comments (the full text can be found here) [The Almshouse Association 2021 AGM | \(almshouses.org\)](https://almshouses.org/2021/09/29/almshouse-association-2021-agm/)

The pandemic has made 2020 an extremely challenging year but a busy and successful one.

We have been pleased to welcome four new Ambassadors: The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dame Joan Bakewell, Dan Cruikshank, and Kevin Crossley-Holland.

At our 75th anniversary garden party this year, Nick Phillips reminded everyone of the origins of The Almshouse Association. He took us back to the minutes of a 1946 meeting between a small group of people who could see the light fading over almshouses, as the government lead a vigorous post-war house building programme. Those visionary views set the pace for the rest of us and, I hope they would say we have responded. Here we are some 75 years later with 1600 members looking after 35,000 almshouses.

Despite being held in a pandemic, our 75th garden party celebrations were a way of joining those members holding celebratory garden parties up and down the country. We were delighted to be able to present the 2019 and 2020 award winners. The Patron's Award is still with HRH, but we received a welcome and warm-hearted message from The Prince of Wales, delivered by a video to the garden party. The message will be in the next Gazette and is on the website now.

As we move into the next year, we are aiming to further improve our core services whilst also focusing on increasing support for those almshouse charities that are in greatest need of help. That is not at the expense of working with those almshouse trustees who are at the forefront of innovative work, extending existing charities, assisting neighbouring charities in need, or even new benefactors thinking of setting up a new charity. Our strategy is an inclusive one and we are here for all our members.

I am very much looking forward to reporting on the new strategy next year.

2. Introduction: Chair of the Board – Elizabeth Fathi.

The Chair welcomed all members and outlined the procedures:

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held via the Zoom conferencing platform on Tuesday, 1st September 2020, were voted upon and agreed to be correct.

Proposed: Claire Scott-Booth – Sheppard Trust

Seconded: Chris Wilson - Southwark Charities

Carried and adopted

3. Election of Board Members

The change of Articles made in 2019 restricts re-appointments to three terms of three years. The nominations are within that context and overseen by the Nominations Committee.

This year there are five members of the Board nominated for re-election and one new member for election.

Meryl Aldridge

Paul Mullis

Tricia Scouller

Adam Sedgewick

Richard Waite

Clive Cook - new Board member.

Each member for re-election received over 78% of votes in favour. The re-election was taken *en bloc*.

Proposed: Karen Percival – Okehampton Charities

Seconded: Juliet Ames-Lewis – Richmond Charities

The Chair thanked and congratulated the re-appointees/appointee.

4. Presentation and Adoption of the 2020 Annual Report and Accounts

Mr S J Ling – Honorary Treasurer

Simon Ling summarised the income and expenditure for the year, which is divided between Unrestricted funds used for the general purposes of The Association and Restricted funds, which are for specific purposes, normally for the direct benefit of our members. Endowment funds are held for investment with the income applied as directed by the donor.

The total income in the year ending December 2020 was £768,000, marginally less than it was the previous year, due to a reduction in dividends on the investments, primarily because of the pandemic. In addition, there has been a loss on other income because of cancelled seminar and conference fees. The reduction in these sources of income was partially offset by an increase in member subscriptions and in gifts and donations.

Expenditure for 2020 was £1.129m, £167,000 higher than the previous year. It was notable that there was an increase in grants provided to members of £338,000 in 2020 compared to £143,000 in 2019. The year was in many cases a difficult one for members. In response, the trustees decided to make additional funds available for grants. Otherwise, the expenditure in 2020 was similar to 2019.

The Association has £612,000 in cash at the end of 2020, a reduction of £254,000 on the previous year resultant of the reduction of income and the additional grants.

The Association continues to be financially strong, and well-positioned to continue to provide support to our members.

There were no questions, and the motion to adopt was proposed.

Proposed: Chris Jones – Wygggestons Charity

Seconded: Chris Wilson – Southwark charities

The votes were 27 in favour and none against and one abstention

Carried and adopted.

5. Re-appointment of Auditors recommended: Buzzacott LLP

Buzzacott LLP have signed off The Associations financial statement with a clean report.

Proposed: Chris Jones - Wygggestons

Seconded: David Healey – Sir Josiah Mason Trust

The votes were 25 in favour, two against and one abstention

Carried and adopted.

6. CEO Update: Nick Phillips

The following is an extract of Nick's comments (the full text can be found here) [The Almshouse Association 2021 AGM | \(almshouses.org\)](https://almshouses.org/TheAlmshouseAssociation2021AGM)

Whilst 2020 has been a very tough year for all we have not stood still. Nick would like to thank the board and Chairman for such sound guidance and support throughout the year.

The team has remained focused in their approach to supporting our members and continues to do so. Nick stated that he felt so proud of a group of people who really gave their utmost and stretched every sinew to achieve this.

A significant amount of time throughout the pandemic was spent working with local MPs and government to try to assist our members with a myriad of member enquiries.

Never have we felt the need to raise the profile of Almshouses more as when engaging with local government so thanks to the team and particularly Jack Baldan, who engaged with every single MP in the country during that period to raise the profile of Almshouses.

We were delighted with the level of interest from many MPs, who were positive towards the movement; some are already engaged with almshouses. Most MPs have almshouses in their constituency, so it was a very good opportunity to focus their attentions on the value of almshouses.

Our Patrons, HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH The Duke of Gloucester have helped us significantly, and in particular at the end of the year, helping to raise the profile of almshouses.

The Ambassadors have also raised the profile of Almshouses in the House of Lords and have encouraged a good deal of debate in the House of Lords. This has been hugely valuable in spreading the word.

There was a significant review including presentations by our members at the All-Party Parliamentary Group, on how Almshouses managed throughout 2020 at the height of the pandemic.

We recognise that some charities struggle and there are times when funds are limited. Our Board have enabled us to provide over £1m in 2020 for both loans and grants to members.

The Board Awayday in November 2021 will look at the strategy development. I am looking forward to updating upon this going forward.

7. Any Other Business

In forthcoming Annual General Meetings, it would be useful to have a summary of slides for the financial update.

Elizabeth Fathi gave thanks to the Ambassadors and Regional Champions who all work on a voluntary basis: the Advisory Board; the Awards Panel who travel up and down the country; (chaired by Simon Pott, the former Almshouse Association Chairman); and our sponsors and donors. We could not provide the level of services for loans and grants without their support.

Elizabeth gave a personal thank you to her fellow Board members and to Ed Christian for their support, hard work and their independence of thought.

Q&A

Alan Martin asked whether there was a plan to return to balancing income and expenditure in the future.

EF thanked Alan for his thoughts. The aim is that the income received from subscriptions will eventually cover the expense of the Association's day-to-day support role. The accounts also include items of strategic expenditure paid for by the unrestricted fund set aside for this purpose. as a result, the accounts report that expenditure is greater than our income.