



the almshouses Gazette

issue 267 summer 2022 price: £2.50

Landmark 550th anniversary at Heytesbury

There was much anticipation when Almshouse Association Royal Vice Patron, HRH The Duke of Gloucester, visited The Hospital of St John, Heytesbury, Wiltshire in May to celebrate its 550th anniversary. Preparations were underway for six months and included the creation of a commemorative anniversary plaque. This is displayed on a newly built circular bench surrounding an ancient lime tree in the back garden where residents can meet and relax over a cup of tea. On the day The Duke of Gloucester visited, the sun shone brightly and the gardens looked beautiful.



Duke of Gloucester was part of this very special occasion. The Almshouse Association is always pleased to support members wishing to include our Royal Patrons in their special events. The day was uplifting and a boost for the almshouse movement."

Special thanks to Paul Budd OBE, Mike and Helen and The Lord-Lieutenant's Office, for helping to organise such a wonderful event. For more photos see our website: www.almshouses.org/news/a-550th-anniversary-celebration

Twins Muriel and Maureen at the 550th anniversary celebrations of The Hospital of St John, Heytesbury, Wiltshire in May, when residents, trustees and guests welcomed Almshouse Association Royal Vice Patron, HRH The Duke of Gloucester and CEO Nick Phillips.



A special chapel service started the celebrations before the Royal party arrived and the chapel was filled with the aroma of freshly cut lilies. On arrival, The Duke of Gloucester was saluted by two Lord-Lieutenant Cadets at the main entrance gate and then welcomed by an array of local dignitaries, presented by the Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Troughton. Residents enjoyed meeting His Royal Highness during a private tea party where conversations were lively and lots of reminiscing took place. Twins Muriel and Maureen took centre stage along with Rodney and oldest resident, Elizabeth. Nick Phillips, CEO of The Almshouse Association said: "We were delighted that our Royal Vice Patron, HRH The

Members Day returns: enthusiasm, fun and focus - and a message of ambition



Wednesday 15 June saw the return of Members Day with an atmosphere that was warm and expectant as members were able to meet up again (which for many was the first time) post-pandemic.

Setting the scene for the day was the magnificent Grand Station in central Wolverhampton. Originally opened in

1854, this Grade II listed building was formerly known as the Low Level Train Station.

A warm welcome by Nick Phillips, CEO of The Almshouse Association and Chair, Elizabeth Fathi was followed by a presentation of the exciting key elements of The Almshouse

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S COMMENT

A threat to the charity status of almshouses or progress?

Every so often new guidance or policy comes along from the Government and we look at it as a good step forward! We say: "well overdue" and throw our weight and enthusiasm behind it.



However, it can be the unintended consequences of policy changes that have long-lasting negative effects. Sometimes the headlines of a Bill can be persuasive and obviously progressive but what lies behind the headlines can be where the challenges are. Almshouses have rubbed along with governments of all persuasions over the centuries. Since the post-war period, government, both local and national, has championed social and affordable housing. Almshouses (if they have been considered at all) have stood alongside these other forms of housing, being seen as part of the social and affordable housing mix. Policies including Right to Buy, Selective Licensing and other unintended threats have come our way and we have found great support in Westminster for the protection and exemption of the almshouse model as well as a commonly shared respect for their charity

status. There have, however, been times when legislation applies a broad brush, a sledgehammer to crack a nut and these Acts inadvertently sweep almshouses into the wider net of affordable housing.

I see part of my role as looking for opportunities and threats to the almshouse movement and, with our formidable team, doing something about it.

I feel that we are facing a number of policy changes today that could wrap up almshouses into greater bureaucracy which would impact our trustees. Reforms to planning and social housing regulation could inadvertently affect the running of almshouses.

The proposed social housing regulations have the potential to increase regulation on the charity model. The headlines of these reforms all seem good though - higher standards of accommodation, greater rights for tenants, more tenant engagement.

We would support all the above within the almshouse model of governance and regulation; how could anyone disagree? The devil, however, is always in the detail.

The devil in this case may rest in Clause 25 which enables the regulator to exercise enforcement powers against charities who have not received government funding.

Most of the measures within the regulations are targeted at Registered Providers of Social Housing but there is the potential for greater control from the regulator affecting trusts and charities.

So, what are the consequences for almshouse charities?

The Association has held discussions with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities where we have been reassured that the charitable status of our members is not under threat.

We have also made clear at this stage that we are concerned about the potential for future governments to expand this section. Almshouses are charities first and the Association will look to safeguard this as the legislation progresses. With the support of our board, our APPG and our ambassadors, we will work to protect the integrity of each charity and uphold the governing documents set by your founders. Furthermore, we will seek to safeguard the role of trustees as leaders of the charities and the Charity Commission as regulator, whilst continuing to help you provide the best in all aspects of high-quality, friendly, safe homes. Above all, we feel we must protect the legacy that you and your predecessors have looked after for centuries.

It could be argued that we are being overprotective of the charity status of almshouses but it is, we believe, the charitable status that has protected the integrity of every almshouse charity over the centuries. Those governing documents and delivery of the founders' wishes, that have been swept away in almshouses across Europe, stand as the firm base for almshouse charities in the UK today and we need to make sure they are just as robust tomorrow.

Nick Phillips, Chief Executive

Members meet for workshops, discussion and inspiration

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Association strategy, taking the Association to 2030. The strategy is based on members' feedback to our 2021 member satisfaction survey and consideration of opportunities and external threats by The Almshouse Association board.

Members then joined various workshops which included sessions on governing documents, hosted by Tim Rutherford of Stone King LLP; reducing your carbon footprint with Tim



Delegates were welcomed by CEO Nick Phillips (right) and by the Almshouse Members Day team (below).

Later they joined in a lively and educational Question and Answer session with our panel of experts (left).



Richardson of Quinquennial Inspections Ltd.; attracting and motivating new trustees run by Diane Rutter, charity consultant; and mediation with Lisa Watson-Cook, Lester Aldridge LLP.

The Chair of our Awards Committee, Simon Pott, delighted the audience in recounting his almshouse award committee visits, outlining the experiences (and cream teas!) the panel have had whilst appraising the applications, before presenting the Awards for 2019 and 2020 (details of recipients can be found on pages 10 & 11).

Richard Morrice of Historic England followed with a very informative presentation on the spirit of almshouses in architecture and the newly developed Guide on Almshouses (which is expected to be published this autumn, following consultation).

Exhibitors and guest speakers chatted with members during breaks and members also enjoyed participating in a lively and educational Q & A session

"I found the day inspiring. One of the takeaways for me was how you reminded us that almshouse buildings are "the shop window" to the work we do within them. This was a really powerful way to remind staff and trustees of the importance of these unique buildings - I'll be quoting this often."

Ros Moreton, Office & Compliance Manager Taunton Heritage Trust



Below, from left: Speakers included Richard Morrice, Roland Karthaus, Tim Rutherford and Diane Rutter.



Annual General Meeting 2022

The seventy-first Almshouse Association AGM 2022 was held at the same venue.

The 2021 annual accounts and previous minutes were presented and adopted and the following trustees re-elected: Andrew Barnes, Rob Douglas, Quentin Elston, David Healey, Jim Kennedy, Richard Knipe and Margaret Stewart. Buzzacott LLP were re-appointed as auditors.

with our panel of experts - Lisa Watson-Cook, Tim Richardson, Liz Fathi (Chair), Adrian Nisbet and Sean Stafford.

Roland Karthaus from Matter Architecture finished the day with a fabulous presentation on what the future almshouse could look like. Roland drew on

research about wellbeing and modern almshouse architecture.

Nick Phillips, CEO, The Almshouse Association, said: "The day was a great success with everyone bustling with enthusiasm and pleased to see each other again. The day started with the magic of almshouses and opportunities for the future. It seems all presentations in their own area touched on different aspects of that theme. Our experts were truly inspiring and it was indeed a boost for the almshouse movement. An event full of renewed friendships and plans for the future."

View more photographs from the day at www.almshouses.org/news/members-day-2022.

Many thanks to all our sponsors, speakers, exhibitors, panel of experts and member charities who made the day possible.



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Whoever thought almshouses were only for older people?

We know of at least six of the Association's member charities that accommodate families with children: The Elizabeth Jane Jones Charity in London, Harefield Parochial Charities in Uxbridge, Dartmouth United Charities, The Hallaton and



Isabella Stenning Trust in Leicestershire, The Mills Charity in Suffolk and Salisbury City Almshouses in Wiltshire (through the Buchanan Trust). Together they provide homes for around 132 residents under 18 years old.

This is again a very positive message for the almshouse movement and indicates the varying ways in which almshouses extend to all sectors of society, including younger people. We think it likely that more of our member charities are accommodating the younger age group and would be delighted to hear from you.

Left: The opening of The Hallaton and Isabella Stenning Trust's new almshouse in Leicestershire which became home to a young couple and their two little girls in 2021.

Dr Meryl Aldridge

It is with deep sadness that we announce the loss of one of The Almshouse Association's board members and a much loved, committed, member of the wider almshouse



family. Dr Meryl Aldridge died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage at the end of April. Meryl was a very well-respected, retired Nottingham University Senior Lecturer in Sociology and

Social Policy, as well as an extremely dedicated trustee of both her local almshouse charity, The United Charities of Abel Collin and The Almshouse Association.

Meryl's enthusiasm for and knowledge about almshouses, coupled with her experience in research and her attention to detail made her a highly valued member of the board. We shall all remember, with affection, her ability to distil an issue to the core essentials and to provide solutions. She was perceptive, non-judgemental and, above all, her own person.

It is an example of how reliable and dedicated Meryl was that we were only alerted to her being taken ill when she failed to turn up for an almshouse meeting at her local charity. Such was Meryl's commitment, the team realised there and then that something was badly wrong.

For over a decade, Meryl offered her time and experience to the Billingbear team supporting aspects of research into the almshouse model. She had a wonderful eye for detail that we all relied upon.

Our heartfelt condolences to all Meryl's family, friends and colleagues.



Update from member services

We were delighted to finally be able to hold two seminars in person, the first for new trustees at the Charity of Elizabeth Jane Jones in Bedfont, Middlesex on March 23 and the second at Salisbury City Almshouses on May 4, the theme of which was 'Looking After Your Residents'. Both were well attended and the Association has received excellent feedback concerning the presentations that were given.

Future seminars, for which spaces are still available, are to be hosted by the United Charities of Abel Collin in Nottingham on October 5 ('Looking after your buildings') and at the charity of King Edward VI and Revd Joseph Prime in Saffron Walden, Essex on November 2. The latter will include subjects such as how to appoint new trustees and the interview process.

Full details on the Association's website at www.almshouses.org/training-seminars/

The cancellation of in-person seminars in 20/21 focused the attention of the Association on the provision of more webinars which, after the initial tentative steps into the online world of 'zooming', drew increasingly sizeable and confident audi-

ences, covering subjects such as dealing with antisocial behaviour, setting aside an appointment and trustees roles & responsibilities. This year we have already hosted webinar presentations on mergers and takeovers, permanent endowments, residents: common problems facing trustees and obligations when employing staff. Video recordings and PowerPoint presentations of all previous webinars are available on the website at

www.almshouses.org/webinars/

Please keep an eye on the website for details of future webinars to be arranged and if you are not yet signed up to receive e-bulletin alerts for new training sessions, you can also do this via our website at

www.members.almshouses.org/Consent-Preferences

Online training organised by the Association continues to be popular and is included in the benefits which members receive. Our website includes a library of online training courses where at the end of each course attendees receive a certificate of attendance valid for two years.

Current topics include GDPR, safeguarding, mental health, legionella, health & safety, risk assessment and infection prevention and control. We will be looking to add new courses in the coming months.

please see the Association's website for a full list of services and information resources available to members - new pages are being added all the time

The church and almshouses - a one thousand year partnership

You could say that The Church of England has been exploring its role in affordable housing provision since the release of the *Coming Home* report last year.

You may more accurately say that the Church of England has been exploring its role in affordable housing provision since the early medieval period through its consistent and unwavering support of the almshouse movement. I have been struck by the connection and commitment from clergy to their local almshouse. This is usually borne from the legacy of the almshouse foundation, the local commitment of the clergy or an age-old link between the philanthropic gift and the spirit of the Church shaping the founders wishes.



The Church of England is currently exploring different housing models when considering how they can best help those in housing need. We hope that a one thousand year history of protected legacy stands the almshouse model in good stead against newer copies such as housing associations, although housing associations have their valuable place. Council housing was largely transferred to the housing association model (some retain a

charity status) and offers the vast majority of social housing in the UK, roughly about five million homes. However, analysis by the ONS in 2018 showed that over 20,000 are sold every year, the majority through the Right to Buy. Moreover, government has significant influence over the running of housing associations through the Regulator of Social Housing. Although there are a number of

The oldest almshouse foundation still in existence is thought to be the Hospital of St Oswald in Worcester (right) founded circa 990. It is

believed that the then Bishop of Worcester (St Oswald) created this sanctuary where the brothers could "minister to the sick, bury the dead, relieve the poor and give shelter to travellers who arrived after the city gates had closed at night".



The Charity of Ann Edwards (left) was established by a bequest of Ann Edwards, for building almshouses to house clergy widows and female dependants of deceased clergymen who had served in the Diocese of Gloucester.

almshouse charities that are also registered with the regulator, in general,

almshouse charities benefit from the independence granted to them by their charitable status. I believe that this independence is one of the most important factors in their resilience over the centuries.

Although housing associations are very much the newer and in many ways the "big boys" in the social housing sector, you will not be surprised to hear that I strongly support the Church of England looking again at its oldest housing

partner. Exempt from Right to Buy and holding a unique legal charity status that not only provide community and companionship and are part of a national network, almshouses are a

sound, tried and tested housing model. The Church is committed to the provision of genuinely affordable housing and I think we can all champion that the almshouse model can be made stronger by local church support. We hope nationally and locally we can work with the Church to explore options for almshouses on church land to fulfil the obligations of past and new almshouse founders often closely linked to the spirit of the Church. In the season of village fetes and church cream teas, anything you can do to rekindle these age-old partnerships is good for both ancient organisations and the best way to support those in need today and tomorrow.



AGM for Almshouses Parliamentary Group

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Almshouses held its AGM on 28 April 2022.

In its first year, with The Almshouse Association acting as Secretariat, the group has explored how almshouses coped during the coronavirus pandemic as well as considering research on the financial benefits of almshouses. We hope that in the year ahead the group will be able to be a forum for discussion on not only the benefits of almshouses but also the potential challenges on the road ahead.

Our incumbent Chair, Siobhain McDonagh and Vice Chair, Sally-Ann Hart MP, will remain in their posts for the next

year. We would like to welcome Sir John Hayes MP and Tom Randall MP, both of whom will act as Vice Chairs. We look forward to working with all of the group's members effectively to ensure that the voice of the almshouse movement is heard clearly in Westminster.

If you want to help our discussions within Parliament, please do get in touch with your local MP and invite them to visit your charity and see all the good work you carry out in your community.

The Almshouse Association has resources on our website which can help you get in touch with your local MP. Alternatively, you can get in touch with Jack Baldan via jackbaldan@almshouses.org

Advice on recruiting new trustees

Being a trustee of an almshouse charity is unique in relation to the accommodation of around 36,000 people in need in this country; those who live independently yet are within a community where they feel safe and can call upon help when needed. This is one of the significant ways in which trustees of almshouse charities fulfil a vital role while serving to maintain and protect the almshouse buildings both for today and future generations. The recruitment of new trustees is important for succession planning and to refresh the trustee board. It is an excellent means of attracting new ideas and contacts, reaching beneficiaries and keeping pace with new developments. Sourcing new trustees can, however, be challenging.

Welcoming young people

Becoming a trustee should be promoted as a powerful way to contribute to the local community or to a cause people care about. Trustees play an integral part in the good governance of a charity, ensuring it remains viable and sustainable and that it adheres to its mission in the best interests of its beneficiaries.

Trustees of charities are often retired older people and almshouse charities are no exception. Trusteeship is, however, also valuable to young people, enabling them to learn new skills, enhance their cv and professional development and build confidence.

Skills and experience

Consideration should be given as to what skills and experience the charity needs in order to fulfil its function effectively. Collectively, these enable different points of view to be brought to discussion, give insight into the beneficiaries' needs, create contacts within the community and allow for a new way of doing things. Where trustee boards have a good background mix, they tend to function well. The Charity Commission has information on its website and sharing expertise with other almshouse charities is also useful.

The Almshouse Association organises Induction Seminars for new trustees and gives guidance through its manual, Standards of Almshouse Management, its website and by dealing with individual enquiries. Another source of information covering the role of trustees is the National Council for Voluntary Organisations at www.ncvo.org.uk

Whilst finding new trustees with the experience and skills the charity needs can prove challenging, potential recruits within the local community may not be aware of the existence of the almshouse charity. Holding open days or coffee mornings to which possible candidates may be invited can be beneficial.

Word of mouth is also effective in attracting new trustees, as is social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.) and placing an advertisement in the local parish or town council magazines. Approaches to local firms of solicitors, accountants, chartered surveyors and banks are also a way of finding professional people, perhaps those who have recently retired. Taking on volunteers and later approaching them to become trustees can be effective as well as recruiting trustees through the Local Lions and Rotary Clubs. Firstly ensure that the prospective trustee is eligible. Some people are disqualified from being charity trustees, such as those with an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception,

Useful websites are nextdoor.co.uk u3a.org.uk probusclub.net and www.gettingonboard.org - the latter provides a booklet entitled 'How to recruit trustees for your charity' which is a practical guide.

declared bankrupt, or those with an individual voluntary agreement (IVA) with creditors. Disqualified company directors are also ineligible, as are individuals who have been removed as a trustee by the Charity Commission or the High Court due to misconduct or mismanagement. It is an offence to act as a trustee while disqualified unless the Charity Commission has given a waiver. Potential trustees may be asked to sign a declaration form www.gov.uk/government/publications/confirmation-of-charity-trustee-eligibility to confirm that all necessary checks have been made and they can legally accept the appointment. The nature of the trustee's role should be explained clearly at the outset, covering responsibilities and liabilities and the time commitment involved. When recruiting, trustees should refer to the governing document which may state the length of trustee appointments and whether trustees can be reappointed after their terms end.

Defibrillator for use in the community

Trustees of the Corton Almshouse Charity in Suffolk recently decided to buy a defibrillator, not just for use at the almshouses but also for the benefit of the wider community. East Suffolk Councillor Paul Ashdown, who is also a trustee of the charity, agreed to cover the cost of the defibrillator from his locality budget.



Photo: Almshouse residents Brenda Chapman and Tanya Bunn with trustee Cllr Paul Ashdown.

Peter Armstrong, Chairman of the Corton Almshouse Charity, said: "Using a defibrillator on someone in cardiac arrest can increase their chances of survival by 60% and given the kind offer by Cllr Ashdown to fund the unit, the decision to install the defibrillator was an easy one for the trustees. Sincere thanks also go to Jayne Biggs and Heart 2 Heart Norfolk for their invaluable advice and for supplying the unit." The defibrillator is installed on the wall of 54 Fowlers Crescent in Corton and is available for anyone to use in an emergency. It is kept in a locked cabinet with the code available from the emergency services.

TV licence training:

TV Licensing recently provided training for almshouse trustees on accessing the Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) TV Licence. This came after a number of members had experienced difficulties in accessing the licence for their residents. Following the successful training session we were provided with resources which should help members with this process. The slides give an overview of eligibility as well as details on how to apply/renew. They are specifically tailored to almshouses and should

Reviving a tradition of bread-giving for residents

The traditional 'Richard Smith for Bread' donation to almspeople was revived at a ceremony held in May outside the Guild Cottages of the Municipal Charities of Stratford-upon-Avon. The ceremony was last held in the 1950s.

Each year the Richard Smith for Bread Charity receives £30 from the Governors of King Edward VI Grammar School for distribution of bread to residents. Richard Smith left money in his will of 14 June 1695 for the distribution of bread to 18 poor people and this subsequently become a donation of £30 a year.

At the ceremony, the Mayor of Stratford, Kevin Taylor said: "Municipal Charities do a fantastic job of providing accommodation for 47 residents in their almshouses and it's great to revive this ancient tradition of giving out bread from the Richard Smith charity for Bread". The charity's Chief Officer, William Clemmey said: "We are grateful to Hathaways Tea Rooms and Bakery for providing the bread for the revival of this tradition. As well as housing, we offer our residents grants at Christmas and Easter, together with a range of outings throughout the year."



Charity bank accounts available from the Co-op bank

The Association is aware that a number of members have been advised by their banks that they are no longer providing accounts for charities. We have therefore made enquiries as to what provision is now available to charities and are pleased to report that the Co-operative Bank is offering charity accounts.

The bank is able to provide what is known as a 'Community Directplus' bank account which is available to registered charities with an annual income up to £1million.

This provides free day-to-day banking and full details on the features, including how to apply, are available on the following web page:

www.co-operativebank.co.uk/business/products/current-accounts/community-directplus

The account will include access to

Business Online Banking, which is a free service allowing charity customers to check balances, view statements, make payments and transfer money between accounts.

This is set up as 'two to sign' for registered charities. If non-signatory uses are required, such as third-party accountants etc., then the entity would need to pay for 'FD Online'.

The Co-operative Bank also has instant access 35 and 95-day deposit accounts which can be created as part of the account opening process if required. We also understand that the bank offers business debit cards.

The Co-op has a relationship with the Post Office in order to make banking easier in an area where there is not a Co-operative Bank Branch. Post Office counters may be used in the same way as a bank branch counter using

custom Post Office paying in stationery. Further details on how to bank can be accessed at:

www.co-operativebank.co.uk/business/help-and-support/managing-your-account

As far as the account opening process is concerned, the bank can usually identify electronically trustees of charities and their signatories. This removes the requirement for them to present physical copies of identification documents in a branch and makes the whole process as straightforward as possible.

We have been informed that there is currently a delay of up to 12 weeks in getting new business/charity accounts set up as the bank is receiving a significantly higher volume of applications than usual. However, we have been assured that the bank is working as quickly as possible and if an account is required more quickly this will be prioritised.

All Community Directplus account holders can apply for up to £1,000 from the Customer Donation Fund to support special projects and fundraising activities. The closing dates for applications are March and September and they will then be assessed in April and October. Applicants are notified of the outcome of their application.

For further information including case studies and how to apply:

www.co-operativebank.co.uk/business/community/customer-donation-fund

Solar farm opportunities

The Almshouse Association has recently held discussions with Centrica, the parent company of British Gas, to explore the possibility of almshouse charities using their surplus land for solar farms or other green energy developments. Centrica are currently looking to help members in this area which could provide an alternative funding stream for the charity, with the potential to use their land for solar farms and battery storage.

The charity would need to have access to either 75 acres or more for solar farms and 2-5 acres for battery storage. For either development, the land would need to be near a good grid connection.

If you are interested, you will need to provide the following information so that Centrica can check the suitability of the land: ● the amount of land you would be looking to lease out ● any existing energy solutions on the site (solar windmills etc) ● a company name that you trade under (likely just your charity name) ● who would be involved in the decision-making for leasing out the site ● a postcode for the land or some indicator of the land should it not be where the charity is based ● whether there is a grid connection that you know of nearby, or on the land, and its capacity, if you know this ● whether you have been in



touch with other companies previously for a similar interest in the land. The Almshouse Association continues to look for opportunities for members to make their charities more sustainable both environmentally and financially. We are working with a number of partners, including The National Trust and Historic England, to provide suitable guidance in this area. The Association is not endorsing Centrica as a preferred partner and so members should also consider whether other energy providers may be looking to make similar investments. Members will also need to consider their own governing documents, local views and planning issues connected with these types of developments. Interested members can provide the above information to Jack Baldan via jackbaldan@almshouses.org or alternatively can get in touch with Simon Jobson at Centrica via simon.jobson@centrica.com

Helping residents with energy costs

At a meeting of Grantham Almshouse Charity trustees in February, concerns about the cost of residents' energy bills at the trust's 38 properties were raised by trustee Mr Andrew Cook. Trustees were worried that the impending rise in energy costs would lead almshouse residents to think twice about switching their heating on once prices rise, leaving them in the cold. They unanimously voted to grant each householder £100 towards their bills from 1st March 2022. This will be reviewed again in October. Ray Wooten, Chairman of the charities trustees, said: "The almshouse charity was set up to assist with accommodation for those who found themselves in difficulties. I am sure that this money will go a long way to help them."

NB: Any charity wishing to do the same will need to check that their governing documents allow them to do so.

Raising the Association's profile at the Tate gallery

The Almshouse Association held a special event in London on 12 May 2022 to further raise the profile of the almshouse movement.

A senior and influential group of individuals from the worlds of politics, housing and business were invited to meet at the Tate Modern. The aim of the event was to discuss the history of almshouses and the contribution they make to society today as well as looking to the future provision of this valuable housing model. BBC presenter and historian, Dan Cruickshank spoke passionately about the history of almshouses and their unique status.

Further speakers included the Association's Chief Executive, Nick Phillips and Chair, Liz Fathi. We also heard from United St Saviour's Chief Executive, Martyn Craddock on the work of the charity and future development plans.

There was a very special contribution from almshouse resident, Nigel, who stole the show with his impactful story of how his home had helped him stay sober and rebuild his life.

Guests were treated to a tour of Hopton's Almshouses, with the gardens in full splendour against the backdrop of high-rise buildings. These small and perfectly formed homes never cease to captivate the audience!

We were pleased to see a full house in attendance, showing the genuine intrigue and desire to learn more about this enduring form of community housing. The event forms part of the Association's key objective to protect and promote almshouses so that they may be better understood by those outside the movement.

In turn we hope this will lead to the creation of new almshouse charities and greater support for those already established. Our members will be aware that, as a movement, we face a number of challenges in the years ahead, including net zero obligations and trustee recruitment. Events such as these will help spread the almshouse message beyond our comfort zone and bring new ideas and experiences into the movement. This will help ensure that the almshouse model can endure and flourish for another one thousand years.



Members Survey 2021

Towards the end of last year, The Almshouse Association invited members

to complete a survey on our services. We asked members what they believed to be their greatest concerns and opportunities and what they would like to see from the Association moving forward. Although reduced numbers responded compared to the 2018 and 2020 surveys, we were pleased to receive 339 responses from almshouse charities in counties all over the UK with numbers of dwellings ranging in size from one to over 1,000.

Challenges and opportunities

The results highlighted that the greatest challenges for member charities remains the condition of almshouses, increased regulation, attracting and retaining trustees and the frailty of residents. The greatest opportunities proved to be refurbishing almshouses and building closer relationships in the community. Members' responses played a key part in our long-term strategy and helped us identify where resources need to be focused over coming years.

Members also voted on their top five services offered by the Association from a list of eleven services. Model

Polices and Templates came out on top, followed closely by our Standards of Almshouse Management guidance manual, telephone and email support, website information and training seminars/webinars. We also asked members which services they had used in the past 18 months (see bar chart below).

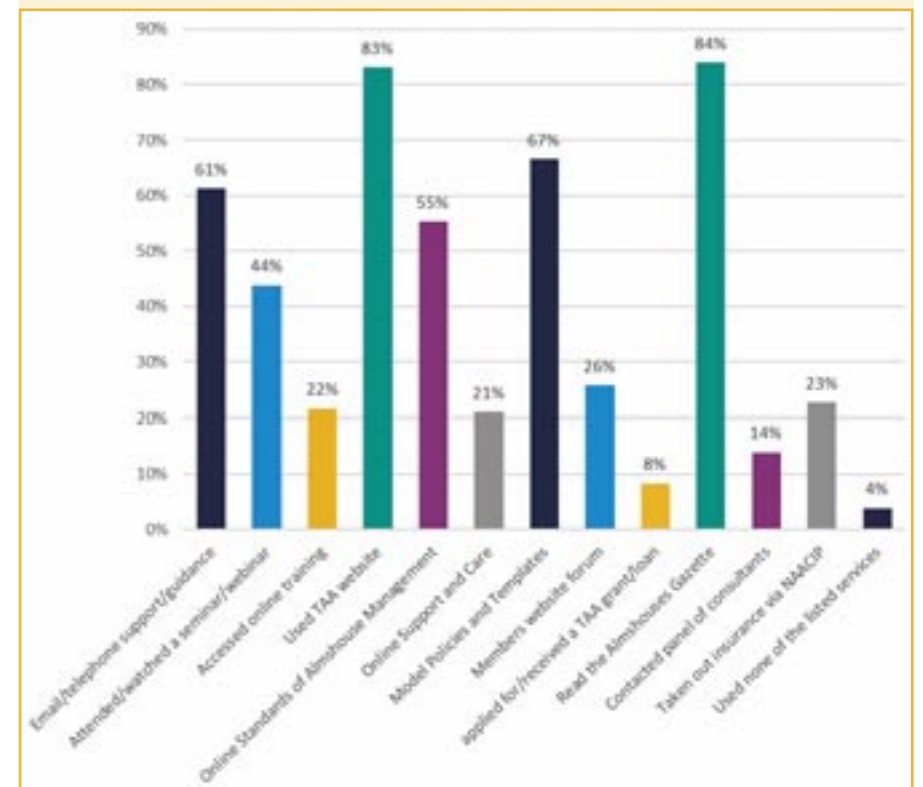
Satisfaction with our services show that 50% of responders were very satisfied, with 40% satisfied and 8% somewhat satisfied. This was generally on a par with surveys undertaken in 2020 and 2018 and whilst reflecting a good result overall, it demonstrates there is room for improvement.

We had some excellent feedback on our training services and members also gave their ideas for topics we could include in the future.

We thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Your opinion is important to us, helping us to shape our services and build our strategy and budget for the coming years. We will keep you informed with regards to new services or changes we make to existing services based on your recommendations.

To read the report in full, please visit our website at

www.almshouses.org/news/member-survey-report/



A Each year the Association invites members to showcase their almshouse projects and achievements by applying for one of our awards. With the outbreak of coronavirus at the beginning of 2020, we had to put the 2019 Patron's Award and the Award for Excellence and Inspiration on hold but when restrictions were beginning to ease, we were delighted to be able to visit the shortlisted almshouses. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that we can announce the 2019/20 award recipients.



The Almshouse Association Award for Excellence and Inspiration 2019/20
This award is for charities who can demonstrate unique innovations within a project that has added significant value to a resident's life.



William and Julia E Chafyn-Grove Charity, Zeals Almshouses, Wiltshire



A restoration and building programme on three out of the charity's four almshouses and the building of a fifth almshouse.

The upgrade is as environmentally friendly as possible, creating comfortable and appealing homes.

Hugh Sexey's Hospital, Bruton, Somerset

The Blackford Room replaces a historic reception and a community room with a new light and airy space. It has been designed to meet the social and support needs of older people. The contemporary design uses traditional materials. Its styling ensures that the historic buildings remain the dominant feature.



Hurst Consolidated Charity, Wokingham, Berkshire



In 2017, the charity decided that three apartments could be comfortably fitted in the space available at Lodge Close. The almshouses are built to the latest standards and complement the existing almshouses.

Coventry Church (Municipal) Charities, Bond's Lodge, Coventry, West Midlands

A newly built three storey development offering 45 self-contained apartments, together with a communal lounge, mobility scooter storage, laundry, guest room and courtyard garden.



W.C. Lee's Resthouses, Windlesham, Surrey

The project entailed the development of single storey side extensions to provide separate bedrooms for two of the almshouses, following the demolition of two outbuildings.



The Charity of Elizabeth Wadsworth, Calderdale, West Yorkshire

This project was to refurbish the Grade II listed railings and reopen the original right-of-way. Initially, part of the stone wall at the footpath entrance had to be demolished and a gap created for the new gate. The finished railings and gate complement the almshouses beautifully.



The Patron's Award

Instituted by HRH The Prince of Wales and introduced in 2000 to encourage and celebrate excellence in architectural and living standards and to recognise outstanding projects and developments. Sponsored by



Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity, Colchester, Essex

The trustees of Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity made the decision to demolish nine bungalows endowed by George Rose in 1934 as the properties were no longer fit for purpose and had been empty for several years. The buildings were poorly laid out internally, had an inefficient heating system and had suffered damage through subsidence. In 2015 the charity received planning permission to replace the old bungalows with nine new, modern almshouses. The new almshouses are in keeping but not identical to the early twentieth-century almshouses adjacent and opposite, and so maintain the integrity, authenticity and pre-eminence of the listed terrace. Each apartment is light and airy with an open plan kitchen and living room. The kitchens are fully fitted and there is level access throughout the property. Wet rooms have been installed and allow for the use of a hoist should these become necessary for the residents and a new call system, which is not reliant on a landline. Internal detailing throughout is ideal for almshouse accommodation.



The Gardens and People Award 2020

This award is for charities that can show how they have enhanced the lives of their residents by providing gardening and/or outdoor activities.



Jesus Hospital, Ravenscroft Lodge, The London Borough of Barnet



The project included seven single storey almshouses at an existing almshouse development with extensive external works and landscaping. Each property has an area of flower beds for the residents to maintain and enjoy.

The Eleanor Hirst Trust, Wilshaw, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire

During 2018/2019 substantial refurbishment of the almshouses was undertaken, with considerable care taken to ensure the character of the listed buildings was retained. The gardens and views are spectacular and allow a community spirit to thrive.



Coventry Church (Municipal) Charities, Bond's Lodge, Coventry, West Midlands

The trustees are fully aware of the benefits a garden can bring to residents and visitors. The city centre site provides a place of tranquility and beauty. A living wall was installed which creates a green 'lung' within the courtyard area and is much admired.



Wivenhoe Housing Trust, Jonathan Feedham Court, Wivenhoe, Essex

Trustees turned an existing drab courtyard into a beautiful communal space. Ambitious plans were agreed to make the courtyard a better space for residents to relax and socialise, as well as promote physical health through exercise and mental wellbeing through gardening.



Community-led housing fund achieves success

In the autumn of 2021, a grant programme focusing on giving communities more opportunities to build homes in their neighbourhood was launched. It had a very limited timescale and budget which restricted who could apply. Despite these constraints several almshouse charities were able to successfully submit applications for a grant to be able to progress the development of their housing schemes

Help to develop new homes

The grant funding was called the Community Housing Fund and it set out to help community groups to meet a range of costs incurred in trying to develop new homes. Eligible costs could include paying for design work, planning applications, searches, administration costs or legal advice. To be successful the almshouse charities had to demonstrate that they were a community-led organisation and their scheme was in the

latter stages of pre-development. Any scheme that was already on site was not permitted to apply for the grant. With the limited time frame available it was definitely a case of being in the right place to be eligible! The Almshouse Consortium was already in discussion with several almshouse charities who had approached them about securing grants through Homes England with the launch of the 2021-26 grant funding programme.

Open for regional projects

The community-led grant funding was for community groups working outside of London. The Greater London Authority had their own equivalent funding in operation for some time. Almshouse Association

Right: Work in progress at Buchanan Trust's North Farm cottages in Herefordshire to create two new almshouses following the renovation of an old dairy and stables.

panel consultant, Saffer Cooper was able to identify almshouse charities from outside of London that could qualify for the grant funding and contacted them as soon as the community housing fund was announced.



Bid applications were compiled between September and October in order to meet the deadline of the end of November. By the beginning of December, the Housing Community Fund bid assessors had allocated all

Left: Conversion of a bungalow and garage in the centre of Lenham, Kent into three new almshouses.

of the £4million grant that had been awarded by the Government. Fortunately, all the almshouse bids were made in time and granted. In total, almshouse charities secured £334,744 in grants with items included in the bids ranging from architects' fees, survey work, project management fees, valuation reports and loan arrangement fees. The grant awarded met 90% of the approved pre-development costs.

The grant funding enabled:

- 5 almshouse charities to submit bids for capital grant funding from Homes England.
- 3 almshouse charities to enter into contracts for their developments.
- 2 almshouse schemes which are now already on site and construction work has started.

GLA Housing fund

The GLA Community Housing fund is open and available and The Almshouse Association, along with ACL, are supporting almshouses based in London who wish to apply. The Fund opened in January 2019 for continuous bidding and will receive new applications until either funding is fully committed or March 2023 (whichever comes first). There is no initial deadline for submitting an application and bids will be assessed on a regular basis. Currently the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has no plans to make any further CHF grant available. The Almshouse Association, ACL and Community-led groups are continuing to publicise the benefits of the Community Housing fund in the hope that new grant funding is made available this year. If this happens we will be inviting almshouse charities to apply in order to continue to raise the profile of almshouses as affordable housing providers in communities across the country.

NATIONAL NEWS INSIGHT

A The Almshouse Association regularly publishes Policy and Governance updates on its website. Blue below denotes a web link specific to the document or report.
www.almshouses.org/latest-news/

Government

- **Regulator of Social Housing releases latest version of 'Regulating the Standards'** - Members who are Registered Providers of Social Housing may wish to review the latest version of 'Regulating the Standards'. The document, published by the Regulator of Social Housing, outlines how they approach their work with the scope of the regulator expanding in recent times.
Visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulating-the-standards/regulating-the-standards-march-2022
- **Voluntary and Community Frontline Sector (VCFS) Support Grant** - Members may be interested in applying for the VCFS Support Grant which looks to help tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. There are a number of objectives which the scheme looks to achieve and should prove useful for almshouses who help to prevent homelessness while also working with partners across the communities they serve.
Visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/voluntary-and-community-frontline-sector-support-grant-prospectus/voluntary-and-community-frontline-sector-vcfs-support-grant-prospectus
- **Department of Work and Pensions to restart transition to Universal Credit** - DWP has restarted its programme to move all households onto Universal Credit from legacy benefits and tax credits. This could impact the income of almshouse residents. Some recipients will 'naturally' move to Universal Credit as a result of a change in their circumstances while others will move through 'managed' and 'voluntary' migration. The DWP will also gradually increase invitations for legacy claimants to make the move onto Universal Credit. Claimants who make the move via the managed migration track will be provided with

transitional protections. This means their income will be topped up if moving to Universal Credit leaves them with less money than they received previously. Those who opt to move voluntarily, however, will not receive these protections. It is advised that anyone thinking of switching should consult an independent benefits calculator to check they will not be worse off by switching.
Visit: www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/tax-credits-customers.

- **Queen's Speech** - The Queen's Speech took place on May 10 with Almshouse Association Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, reading the speech in place of HM The Queen. In total, 38 Bills were included in the speech, these included:
 - **Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill**
 - o Creating a duty on the Government to produce an annual report tracking progress of the levelling up missions
 - o Laying the foundations for greater English devolution
 - o Improvements to the planning system, prioritising environmental assessments
 - o A locally set non-negotiable infrastructure levy
 - o Simplification and standardisation of local plans process
 - **Renters' Reform Bill**
 - o Abolishment of section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 the so-called 'no-fault' evictions
 - o Application of the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector
 - o New private landlords' ombudsman and a property portal for landlords
 - **Social Housing Regulation Bill**
 - o Strengthening the role and powers of the Regulator for Social Housing
 - o Introducing greater transparency for tenants on landlord performance
 - o Strengthening of the economic regulation of the social housing sector to increase protection and investment
 - o Creation of new Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- **Wider Housing Reform**
 - o Commitment to improve home ownership
 - o Commitment to creating a fair and just housing system, on top of the announced social housing reform Bill
 - o Promise to publish guidance for enforcement officers and consumers for the implementation of the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act, which was passed last session
 - o Cooperation with the Competition and Markets Authority in their ongoing investigation into mis-selling and unfair terms in the leasehold sector
 - o Commitments to further reform the leasehold and commonhold sector
- **Data Reform Bill - replacing UK GDPR**
 - o Creating a data protection framework that is focused on privacy outcomes
 - o Greater action against organisations who breach data rights
 - o Simplify the rules around research
 - o It is also believed that the legislation could remove the requirement for cookie consent banners

The Almshouse Association will continue to monitor legislation as it develops to ensure that there are no unintended consequences which negatively affect members.

Energy

- **Issues with Communal Heating Costs** - The Almshouse Association is seeking information from members who have communal heating systems in their buildings and the impact of the current energy crisis on costs of running this system. Communal systems do not benefit from the price cap and are currently not scheduled to receive the £400 government grant, in contrast to those with their own supply.

It would be useful for the Association to understand the scale of this issue including the number of people affected and the amount your bills are projected to increase. Any details can be sent to jackbaldan@almshouses.org

The Charity Commission

- **New Coding to Specifically Highlight Almshouses** - The Charity Commission has been reviewing how it classifies charities' operations so that it can better understand and analyse the charity sector. Under the proposed changes, almshouses would be specifically noted alongside a member's operations. This does not materially change how the charity operates or interacts with the Commission, but marks improved recognition of the model as distinct tenure in housing.
Visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-classifications
- **Implementation Timetable for Charities Act 2022** - The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has announced when they will implement changes brought in as part of the Charities Act 2022. Changes will begin to be made from Autumn 2022 until Autumn 2023.
For schedule, visit: www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-act-2022-implementation-plan
For explanatory notes on the Act visit charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/25/charities-bill-the-next-steps/

- **Government announces £288m Green Heat Network Fund** - Public, private and third-sector applicants in England can bid for a share of the Green Heat Network Fund. Unlike gas boilers where heat is generated in individual homes, heat networks see heat generated at a single central source and then distributed to multiple buildings via pipes.

This fund may prove a useful opportunity for members who are looking to heat multiple homes in a more sustainable way. However, guidance suggests that this might be a more appropriate fund for those that have already made some progress towards creating a network or expanding an existing one. Further funds for this will be made available until at least December 2024.
Visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-heat-network-fund-ghnf

Two-bed conversion of impressive former warden's house

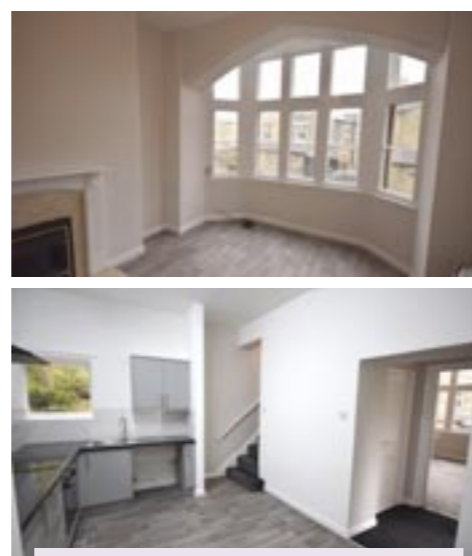
The impressive three-storey former warden's house at Sir Francis Crossley Almshouses, Halifax became vacant in 2017 and required significant



improvement and repair prior to offering comfortable residential accommodation. In 2018 the trustees agreed that with increasing housing need, the expanding plethora of legislation, health and safety requirements and best practice, they should appoint chartered surveyors and other appropriate specialists to manage the almshouses and cease the role of warden.

In planning the improvements to the house, the trustees were determined to incorporate thermal efficiency improvements whilst maintaining the original character. With financial support from The Almshouse Association and Calderdale Council, the work was completed in October 2021 to offer a comfortable two-bed-room home with open plan dining kitchen area, sitting room, bathroom, and office, with small enclosed garden. When the managing agents, Walker Singleton,

began marketing they immediately received considerable interest, offering viewings to four couples fulfilling the charity's criteria. After consulting the trustees, the successful couple completed the Letter of Acceptance and moved in on 19 November 2021. For information about the project, see www.almshouses.org/news/partnership-ensures-completion-of-calderdale-almshouse-refurb



Francis Crossley was born in Halifax in October 1817 and played a large part in applying mass production techniques to the family business of carpet manufacturing. He was a Member of Parliament and generous to his home town. He built 21 almshouses on Margaret Street for retired workers and provided the inhabitants with a pension. See www.halifaxpeople.com

Retirements and anniversary of charity trustees

Retiring after 36 years

Trustees, residents and staff of Coventry Church (Municipal) Charities marked the retirement of Victor Keene MBE as the charity's chairman with a reception at Bond's Hospital. During his tenure, Victor has overseen the opening of Bond's Court, an extension to Bond's Hospital, refurbishment of Ford's Hospital and the building of 45 new flats at Bond's Lodge. He is succeeded by Mrs Gina Rigby as chair who thanked Victor for his dedication and hard work which has seen the charity increase its provision of housing from 23 to 118 flats during his period of office. Gina was delighted to confirm that Victor will remain on the board of trustees for the foreseeable future as his knowledge of the charity is invaluable. The trustees presented Victor with a bronze statue created by the renowned local artist George Wagstaffe and residents and staff presented gifts of plants and garden vouchers.



25 years trusteeship

Peter Greenhalgh, Chairman of Coxedd and Pearce and Kimber's Almshouses



Photos (from left) Victor Keene MBE (Coventry), Peter Greenhaigh (Newbury) and Jon Boon and Carol Sangster (Norwich).

Charity in Newbury, has completed 25 years service as a trustee. To mark the occasion the trustees held a dinner in his honour at a local restaurant. Peter was presented with a sketch of himself and the charity's historic almshouses. The charity began from three separate bequests, the earliest of which was in 1690. Some of the charity's original buildings date from the 15th century and are situated alongside the Kennet and Avon Canal.

[John Huntley, clerk to the trustees](#)

Board member retires

Carol Sangster has retired as a board member of Norwich Housing Society and Stuart Court Memorial Charity (Almshouse) after 10 years. Staff and board members attended a special afternoon tea arranged as a thank you to Carol



for all of her hard work and she happily opened a number of gifts, including a silk scarf and a beautiful specially engraved vase. Newly appointed Chairman of the Board, Jon Boon, pictured with Carol, said: "We all thank Carol for her selfless commitment to the charity over the last 10 years and she definitely won't be a stranger in future as we hope she'll be dropping in to see us from time to time. Carol is a people person; care and support for our staff and residents has been at the heart of her tenure. Her name will be remembered with fondness and we wish her every good health in her retirement and in her future ventures and interests."

Celebrating 50 years in Hillier House

Hillier House, Guildford recently celebrated 50 years in their current building. Val Richards, manager and clerk to the trustees, writes:

"We had a fantastic party with guests including our patron, Lord Onslow, accompanied by Lady Onslow and The Dowager, Lady Onslow. We also enjoyed the company of the mayor and her escort."

Hillier Charity began on 6 November 1798 when Elizabeth Hillier gave £2,500 to trustees but died before the purpose of her gift had been legally declared. Fortunately, her brother Nathaniel, an executor of her will, decided that Elizabeth had intended the trusts to be used for this purpose and Hillier Charity was created on 25 November 1800. More about the history of Hillier almshouses can be found at: www.almshouses.org/news/hillier-almshouses-celebrate-50-years



Development begins on new Gosport homes

Thorngate Churcher Trust has completed the purchase of development land in Gosport, Hampshire and work is due to start on the first of 39 new homes for the over 50s later this year. The Mayor of Gosport, Thorngate trustee Mark Hook, together with local councillor Diane Furlong, joined chief executive Anne Taylor on site to mark the occasion. Planning for the new homes was granted last year and site purchase is a key milestone in the development of the project on the corner of Sealark Road and Grove Road, Gosport.

The first phase of development will see 30 new homes created and ready for occupation in 2024. Anne Taylor said: "As with all our homes, these new properties will provide the opportunity for people to live independently but with the benefit of warden support, communal facilities and landscaped grounds." Mark Hook said the development will help alleviate the need for housing in Gosport with 700 people currently on the council's waiting list. Thorngate has been providing homes for those in need in Gosport since 1865.

Trustee for 54 years retires in Plymouth

The Municipal Charities of Plymouth has said goodbye to Richard Brown, who has been a trustee for 54 years, first as a Plymouth City Council appointee at the age of 21 and latterly as chair for the last four years. He has been an amazing, loyal and invaluable member of the board and was instrumental in the



charity recently being gifted the freehold of the Rawlin and John Gayer Homes in Plymouth for £1, which will secure its future in the years to come. His knowledge of the history and ethos of the charity is irreplaceable as is his pastoral care and concern for our 16 almsladies. Having hardly missed a meeting over five decades and now in his 70s, he felt it was time to step down in the confidence that we will move forward to whatever challenges the future will bring.

[Vanessa Steer, clerk/treasurer](#)

Photo above: Richard Brown (third from right) with the then Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Maddi Bridgeman as she handed over the freehold of the Rawlin and John Gayer Homes from the council. Also shown are (from left) are trustees Jon Hill and Nick McLoughlin, clerk/treasurer Vanessa Steer, and Mr Nick Parkman (trustee/vice chair).

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KG KT GCB

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HRH The Duke of Gloucester,
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Registered Charity No. 245668
Company No. 04678214

Ten acres of new woodland planted in Sutton Coldfield

Trustees from Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust have started the next phase of their progressive plans to replant English deciduous broadleaved trees at Manorial Woods. Keith Dudley, Tina Swani and Jane Mosson joined in planting more than 4,000 trees at the site, assisted by children from Little Sutton Primary School, following the recently harvested Corsican Pine.

Photo: Trustees of Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, whose origins can be traced back to Tudor times, were joined by pupils from Little Sutton Primary School to start work on the ambitious 4,500 tree-planting scheme.

The entire site is due to be restocked with 4,500 trees of both UK-grown hardwoods and an intimate mix of conifers to aid the establishment of

the crop. Tina Swani, Chief Executive of Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, said: "It's hugely rewarding to see our long-held plans come to fruition at



Manorial Woods, which will support a greater mix of woodland plants and wildlife. The previous Corsican Pine trees were in dire need of harvesting and replanting due to the stock reaching its potential, lack of undergrowth and an ongoing fire risk. We are

delighted that Little Sutton Primary School is involved. The woods are big part of the environment of Sutton and what a way to get the next generation involved in helping to improve the future of the town."

Rachel Davis, headteacher at Little Sutton Primary School, said: "At Little Sutton we feel it is really important to prepare our pupils to be good citizens, so we work hard to instil positive values and opportunities for them to make an impact in our community. Our pupils are passionate about playing their part in making the world a better place and this fantastic project will enable them to do this by looking after the local environment."

To find out more information about Manorial Woods or Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, please visit: www.suttoncoldfieldcharitabletrust.com/news/manorial-woods/17.htm

Planting a jubilee tree for HM The Queen's Green Canopy

Exeter Homes Trust celebrated HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee by taking part in the Green Canopy initiative and unveiling a commemorative plaque at one of their 149 almshouse properties. Exeter Homes Trust, formerly known as The Exeter Municipal Charity and founded over 900 years ago, paid homage to the monarch's historic milestone with the planting of the tree at Hurst Trumps almshouses. Devon Deputy Lieutenant Deborah Hallett and the Lord Mayor of Exeter, Cllr. Trish Oliver joined Exeter Homes Trust residents and trustees, including Chairman of the charity's board, Roger Panter, to unveil the commemorative plaque and the tree. Roger Panter said: "Exeter Homes Trust is proud to celebrate Her Majesty's remarkable Platinum Jubilee by participating in The

Queen's Green Canopy initiative and we are delighted to unveil our plaque and tree in her honour. The Queen has demonstrated exceptional service to this country over the last 70 years and we hope the tree will live on in her legacy for the next 70 years and beyond, to remind generations to come of her incredible achievement and dedication to the throne."



Photo: Tree planting at Exeter Homes Trust (GRW Photography).

He added: "We are committed to providing sustainable and comfortable accommodation of the very best contemporary standard and it's great to see some of the city's most historic buildings being given a new lease of life to become essential homes for people in need."

During the pandemic, Exeter Homes Trust also celebrated the completion of remodelling work at one of their developments, Atwill Palmer Almshouses in Exeter's New North Road. The site underwent a programme of sympathetic refurbishment work, part-funded by a Homes England grant, to provide the charity's 150 residents with updated and energy efficient apartments, more suited to modern day living requirements.



Photo: Staff at The Almshouse Association also planted a tree for the jubilee in the garden at

Billingbear Lodge. There are already five small apples growing so fingers are crossed that this year's crop might just stretch to a shared crumble with ice cream!

2022 CALENDAR

5 October	Trustees and Clerks Seminar	Nottingham
2 Nov	Trustees and Clerks Seminar	Saffron Walden

See the Association's website for a full list of webinars, services and information resources available - also 'Member Services' article on page 4 of this issue of the Gazette.