



# the almshouses Gazette

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## Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 1926 - 2022

The Almshouse Association board of trustees, staff and members are deeply saddened by the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to the Royal Family who have been such a consistent inspiration through their uplifting patronage of The Almshouse Association and the wider almshouse movement. The Queen's devotion and selfless commitment to public service will continue to be an example to us all.

## Association secures access for all almshouse charities to the national £800m decarbonisation fund

Following extensive discussions, The Almshouse Association is delighted to be able to announce that the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will now be open to all almshouse charities.

The fund is due to reopen this Autumn 2022 with £800m in funding to help raise as many properties as possible to EPC Band C. In total, the fund will provide £3.8 billion over a ten-year period.

### Heat pump studies - we need your help!

The Almshouse Association is looking to expand its understanding of heat pumps and what our members think of them.

We are keen to hear about those already installed and how effective they are as an alternative to gas boilers.

We would appreciate evidence of:

- How well they work within your charity
- Ongoing running costs
- Necessity of additional heating sources
- Benefits
- Overall lessons learnt

Please send case studies to Jack Baldan: [jackbaldan@almshouses.org](mailto:jackbaldan@almshouses.org)

Previously, the fund was restricted to Registered Providers of Social Housing, however, after continued engagement with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Association was able to achieve changes to the next round of funding to allow registered charities that own social housing to bid directly for funding.

### Major funding opportunities

This marks the most significant funding currently available for retrofit projects that is available to almshouse charities.

To bid for funding the project must meet the funds eligibility criteria which includes:

- a minimum of 100 eligible properties at EPC band D-G (Note: If you have less than 100 dwellings you will need to join a consortium with other charities, your local authority, or a housing association).
- properties must reach EPC band C (or D if reaching band C is not possible on properties that are currently band F/G).
- bidders must be able to co-fund 50% of total eligible costs.

### The Social Housing Retrofit

Accelerator is backed by the Government and has been established to help guide applicants through the bidding process.



### Creating a successful bid

If you are interested in bidding, the Accelerator will be able to offer the best advice on how to create a successful bid. More details at:

[www.socialhousingretrofit.org.uk/](http://www.socialhousingretrofit.org.uk/)

The fund is due to open this Autumn 2022 and whilst the announcement may have come too late for many members to create a suitable bid, there will, however, be further opportunity to bid as the fund is due to reopen subsequently.

Full guidance on the fund at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-housing-decarbonisation-fund-wave-2#full-publication-update-history](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-housing-decarbonisation-fund-wave-2#full-publication-update-history)

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S COMMENT

I would like to use my 'Comment' this quarter to highlight three linked areas that are raising concerns for our members: the level of weekly maintenance



contributions (WMCs) in light of the cost of living challenges, investments and policies. The cost of living is on everyone's minds. Utility bills and building maintenance, as well as everyday items, are running ahead of everyone's budgets. Our residents will be suffering as much as anyone, if not more, and with this in mind trustees have been asking us for more guidance on how to go about tackling WMC increases in 2023.

In the case of those charities that are Registered Housing Providers (RHPs), guidance is available from the Regulator based on the Rent Formula and we have encouraged members to contribute to a government consultation on a proposed rent cap and we will contribute directly from a national perspective.

By the time this autumn issue goes to print you may well already be aware of the government cap on rents for RHPs. For non-regulated charities, the matter is not so simple.

As always, The Almshouse Association is available to provide guidance and support but it would be worth reflecting on the principles and challenges you will be considering. Determining the WMC, however, will always be the responsibility of the trustees. Trustees have an obligation to ensure the long-term viability of the charity as

well as the short-term good for the residents. It is important that the contributions are increased with small increments on a regular basis, bearing in mind that it can prove difficult to catch up without creating hardship for a resident. As many residents receive benefits or rely on pensions, the uplift in these areas may well determine the "hardship" impact on the resident. With the Government indicating it will announce a guide on rents, it is likely this will be reflected in the uplift of benefits. If it is helpful (possibly not encouraging), the latest figures from The National Housing Federation show 14% increases in maintenance costs. It is something of a balancing act to achieve a level of WMC that is fair and reasonable while ensuring the future viability of the almshouse charity but there is no guarantee inflation will be significantly less next year.

## Investments

Further responsibilities for trustees (as if more were needed!) in this uncertain economic climate is the management of charity investments. With so much volatility in the markets this year it may be tempting to let the investment companies do what they traditionally do well and let trustees focus on other areas and, if the returns represent a rollercoaster, perhaps this could be considered a reflection on the economy as a whole. However, that rollercoaster could be having more 'downs' than 'ups' so we cannot take it for granted that our money is in the best place today just because it was right five or more years ago.

The Charity Commission guidance is to 'review investments from time to time' which is a legal requirement.

The Almshouse Association and its members are deeply saddened by the death of HM The Queen and we wish to express our heartfelt condolences to HM The King and The Royal Family for their loss. We all continue to be immensely proud of the strong association the almshouse movement has with The Royal Family. The institutions of The Monarchy and The Church are inextricably embedded both in the history and present-day spirit of the almshouse movement. The values that HM The Queen upheld of integrity, compassion, wisdom and unwavering duty will continue to set a compass bearing for our trustees, staff and residents. This note has been added as this autumn issue of the Gazette goes to press, so references to members of The Royal Family in the following pages will have been applicable at the time of writing. Our website and literature will be updated accordingly in due course.

The income from investments is likely to be as critical to the running of the charity today as ever before. Perhaps when calculating the WMC, trustees may also take time to review the performance of their investments and make decisions accordingly. It is a good idea for charities' investment review periods to be part of their financial policy.

## Policies

And that takes me to my next link - policies aren't just for fun! I often comment that being the trustee of an almshouse is no easy ride; sometimes it is very challenging and this last quarter we have been dealing with areas that have really caused a degree of added pressure for trustees. The team here have been unpicking some tricky issues



with members, including 'independent living' and 'conflict of interest'. What has been apparent in many of these cases is that a number of these really sticky issues can be best overcome with the adoption of good policies; policies that the board adopts well in advance of the concern arising. Conflict of interest tends to raise its head with charities on a fairly frequent basis. Commonly, the issue relates to a trustee having some interest in a board decision that may benefit them, a friend or family member, or be seen to do so. If the board has a sound policy of transparency that applies to all concerned without exception, it is a great help.

Independent living is consistent throughout the almshouse movement and when a resident presents a potential danger to themselves or others and can no longer live on their own, it can often be a great worry for the trustees, the residents and their families to know how best to proceed.

A planned policy that is agreed and already in the trustees' 'tool kit' to refer to at any time reduces the stress considerably. The Association has produced guidance and a template policy on this important subject which can be found on our website at [www.almshouses.org/model-policies-and-templates](http://www.almshouses.org/model-policies-and-templates)

Policies, possibly the least exciting aspect of being a trustee, can be a valuable tool in reducing stress at the time of critical decisions. It is always better to draft them today than wait for the issue to arise tomorrow and wish you had.

I realise this is all more operational than my usual comment but sometimes the big issues are made less challenging by having time to pre-empt and plan.

Nick Phillips, Chief Executive

# Lady Benson: former Chair of the Association

The entire board and staff of The Almshouse Association were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Lady Benson, a former Chair of the Association. Lady Benson's impact on the almshouse movement reached far and wide and she is remembered as a lady of great warmth, commitment and vitality as well as for her professionalism. Above all, Lady Benson was someone of great kindness and compassion who reached out to others through her unstinting commitment to a number of charitable causes. We were very fortunate that she agreed to be Chair of The Almshouse Association, a post she held from 1987 to 2001, during which time she instigated many initiatives and developed strong relationships with our Royal Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, as well as many supporters throughout the almshouse movement. All those who met Lady Benson held her in very high regard and friendship. Her love of almshouses was particularly

apparent with her dedication to the Salisbury City Almshouse and Welfare Charities, where she worked tirelessly in support of the charity. One board member, Richard Knipe, recalled: "I first met Lady Benson in 1994 when she came to Spalding to open our Lucille van Geest Homes chauffeured by David Scott, the then CEO, in his famous Jaguar. I remember that she spent a lot of time talking to our residents and they all thought she was wonderful. She was still Chair when I joined what was then the Executive Committee, to which she made me very welcome, chairing the meetings with firmness and good humour." After her retirement, Lady Benson remained a great friend and supporter of the movement. Everyone at The Almshouse Association conveys their greatest sympathies to Sir Christopher Benson and the family and friends of Lady Benson whose passing represents the loss of a great light and spirit in the almshouse movement.

HRH The Prince of Wales, presents a Patron's Award to Lady Benson, Chair of Salisbury City Almshouse and Welfare Charities, during a reception at St James's Palace, London. photo: Fiona Hanson, PA Images.

# Legacies make homes for people in need

Following the Spanish Armada in 1588, a generous benefactor together with subsequent wills of various other local benefactors, gifted almshouses to Spalding in Lincolnshire. In June, Nick Phillips, CEO of The Almshouse Association, joined local MP Sir John Hayes and residents and trustees of The Spalding Town Husbands to celebrate their new almshouses. The charity has doubled its almshouse numbers in the last 20 years, showing how legacies can go on for centuries to provide local, high quality homes and micro-communities for people in housing need.



above: Nick Phillips, CEO of The Almshouse Association and Sir John Hayes, MP for South Holland and The Deepings (far left) joined resident Molly and the Chair of Spalding Town Husbands charity, Robin Hancox outside a new almshouse.

right: Maxine and Molly are friends and neighbours at the new almshouses. Maxine said: "We've only known each other for 40 years! It is lovely that we are neighbours in these new homes."



# CONTENTS

2/3 Chief Executive's comment - highlighting the cost of living, investments and policies; Legacies and wills give homes for people in need; Lady Benson remembered

4/5 New almshouse awards; Government responds to Right to Buy question; Establishing outside links for your charity; Energy efficient homes in Great Shelford

6/7 Financing the cost of repairs and refurbishment; Association plans first ever census of almshouses; Grants and loans assist Old Windsor and Tibberton almshouses

8/9 Almshouses in the community - donating to Ukraine, grants for amateur boxing club, sustainable new homes building, fundraising for foodbank, chapel blessing

10/11 Jubilee celebrations at almshouse charities Andrew Windsor, Exeter Church, Sherburn House, Mary Wandesford, John Baker, Pontefract and Ackworth, Dunk's

12/13 Amending a governing document; trustees' role in managing investments; National news insight - safety alarms, digital switchover, private rents, energy funds

14/15 Restoring Bakewell almshouses; Remembering Merial Dunn; Chairman at Webster Almshouses for 40 years; Hornby competition winners

16 New courses added to Association's online training library - cyber security and social media; Full list of member services and website resources

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.



# Introducing the new Almshouse Association awards

## The Almshouse Association Inspirational Homes Award

This award is for members who can demonstrate elements of:



- innovation in design
- exceptional planning
- quality of build
- value for money.

## The Almshouse Association Innovation for Living Award

For members who can demonstrate in their redevelopments or new builds:



- inter-generational living
- environmental considerations
- accessibility
- connection with community.

## The Almshouse Association Gardens and People Award

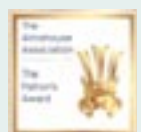
For charities that can demonstrate a project has added significant value to a resident's life, such as:



- a gardening model or 'landscaping' that encompasses a community feel
- garden projects that include residents' participation
- external projects that support residents' mental wellbeing and physical health.

## The Patron's Award

Our most esteemed award, instituted by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2000, to encourage and celebrate excellence in architectural and living standards that reflect the historic imprint of a building. The award recipient is personally chosen by our Royal Patron for:



- restoration, improvement or modernisation of existing almshouses that preserve the look and feel of the original building
- acquisition and conversion of buildings to almshouses that are appropriate for the immediate landscape
- new developments aligned with the landscape.



We know how important it is to recognise the vital role almshouses and almshouse trustees play in today's society. With the upgrading

and improvement of the environmental aspect of all buildings now taking centre stage, redeveloping almshouses or building new almshouses in a way that retains the integrity of the historic buildings in line with these new demands can be particularly challenging, requiring great skill to navigate.

## Environmental considerations

Our members are doing an incredible job to ensure their almshouses are well maintained and kept warm and welcoming whilst also adhering to environmental criteria. With this in mind, over the past months The Almshouse Association Awards Committee and CEO, Nick Phillips have been reviewing The Almshouse Association Awards.

It is important we recognise and reflect the ever-growing environmental aspects that our members are taking on board when redeveloping existing almshouses or building new sites but we must also ensure that the awards remain a true recognition for real innovation and inspiration - pinnacles of achievement. We would also like the process of achieving an award to be engaging and

exciting for all who take part. We are now pleased to be able to announce the new awards. They will encapsulate and honour the tremendous hard work of our member charities, highlighting the many innovations that are taking place as well as the ecological challenges that are becoming an essential part of the redevelopment and updating of existing homes.

We are continuing to build on the quality and high standards that our previous winners have achieved, setting goals and establishing, in many cases, best practices for others within the almshouse movement.

We hope you enjoy being a part of these new awards and over the coming months, we will be engaging with you to support you with your submissions. You will see from the submission forms that the format for applying is simpler and, as we know so many of you have such incredible sites, we will be encouraging you to share these with your peers by taking part in the awards. We look forward to supporting your continued development of outstanding almshouses that will ensure the legacy of the almshouse movement for generations to come.

For guidance and submission forms for all awards, please visit [www.almshouses.org/almshouse-association-awards/](http://www.almshouses.org/almshouse-association-awards/)

## Energy efficient homes near completion



This aerial photograph shows the Parochial Charities almshouse development taking shape at the end of More's Meadow in Great Shelford, South Cambridgeshire.

Over the past few weeks much of the scaffolding has been taken down and work on the interiors is now underway. Subject to weather and availability of materials, the contractor aims to complete the development by the end of the year. The 21 new homes provide

1, 2 and 3 bedroom accommodation and are grouped in three terraces set around a central landscaped green. The properties feature high standards of energy efficiency and are designed to keep running costs low.

Once complete, this will bring the number of almshouse properties owned and maintained by Great Shelford Parochial Charities to 53. Further information can be found at [www.gspc.org.uk/our-plans/](http://www.gspc.org.uk/our-plans/)

## APPG receives response to Right to Buy exemption question

The Right to Buy legislation, introduced by the Government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, allowed council house tenants to buy their homes at a discounted rate. Almshouses currently enjoy exemption from the policy which means genuinely affordable housing cannot be lost.

The Conservative government continues to discuss expanding the Right to Buy to housing association tenants and concern has been raised that if new legislation were to be introduced, the exemption currently given to almshouses in the existing legislation could be inadvertently missed in the updated policy. Siobhain McDonagh MP, chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Almshouses sub-



photo: Press Association - Margaret Thatcher in 1980.

mitted a question on behalf of the group regarding government plans to expand the Right to Buy to housing association tenants, to which she has received the following response:

The question asked: "To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether almshouse charities will continue to be exempt from the Right to Buy as part of the review on extending that policy to housing association tenants."

In response, former Housing Minister Marcus Jones MP said: "This Government is committed to the Right to Buy, which has helped nearly two million social housing tenants to realise their dream of home ownership. The Prime Minister announced on 9 June 2022 the

intention to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants. We will be working closely with the housing association sector as we develop the new scheme, including on the homes which will be eligible for sale. Under the 2015 voluntary agreement with housing associations, certain types of homes including almshouses and housing cooperatives were excluded from the Voluntary Right to Buy scheme and consideration will be given to this and other possible exemptions under a forthcoming scheme. More details will be announced in due course."

The Almshouse Association is glad to hear that due consideration will be given to continuing the exemption, albeit disappointed that the response did not provide a clear commitment to maintain the exemption. We will continue to push the issue within Parliament with the new Prime Minister.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to Ms McDonagh for gaining the response.

## Establishing community links for your charity

Building partnerships in the local community can be the key to solving a number of challenges trustees may encounter in the day-to-day running of their almshouse charity. A number of charities already benefit from having local councillors, lawyers, mayors or clergy on their board, making governance and navigating legislation a whole lot easier. We do, however, come across members that are closed off behind the protective wall of their charity. Whether you are struggling with planning permission or a resident is having trouble accessing support, having the right partners or seeking the help of trustworthy support services can make a world of difference.

### Building relationships

But how do you go about building these relationships? There is no one way, but persistence is vital. The first thing to do is to work out who are the 'key players' in your area who may be able to assist you when you face a challenge. In addition to those already mentioned, don't forget to consider other charities such as AgeUK and Citizens Advice, as well as various local council departments such as housing and social services.



Once you have established a list of individuals, it would be worth considering what your unique selling point is. Almshouse charities already benefit from having a strong case as they are local charities, run by local trustees in support of local people. This on its own is likely to be enough to rouse the interest of a councillor or MP.

When you are ready, invite them for a visit to your charity so that they can see in person the fantastic work you carry out. (The Almshouse Association has a template letter for writing to your MP and this can easily be tailored for other dignitaries.)

You may want to consider tying in your invitation to visit with an event you are already holding, perhaps a garden party or anniversary celebra-

Davenport Homes invited local MP Saqib Bhatti to celebrate the refurbishment and opening of their communal lounge after lockdown.

Useful links when introducing new people to almshouses:

- [www.almshouses.org/what-is-an-almshouse/](http://www.almshouses.org/what-is-an-almshouse/)
- [www.almshouses.org/almshouses-today/](http://www.almshouses.org/almshouses-today/)
- [www.almshouses.org/almshouse-research-and-publications/](http://www.almshouses.org/almshouse-research-and-publications/)
- [www.almshouses.org/housing-and-almshouses-the-stats-and-facts/](http://www.almshouses.org/housing-and-almshouses-the-stats-and-facts/)
- [www.almshouses.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/The-Almshouse-Association-Government-Information-Pack-2022.pdf](http://www.almshouses.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/The-Almshouse-Association-Government-Information-Pack-2022.pdf)

tion, a new almshouse opening or a 100th birthday. Once contact has been established, the key is to keep that relationship alive. Keep in touch, provide updates and continue to invite them to your events. Almshouse charities can be a vital pillar in the community, some will be amongst the oldest institutions in the area and potentially the only form of affordable housing in the locality – you offer a great service, it's time to let everyone know about the good work you do to support your community!



# Financing the cost of repairs or refurbishment

At The Almshouse Association we are proud to provide support and advice to member charities needing to raise funds for projects they wish to undertake, whether this is to assist with the cost of repairs to almshouses, building new almshouses, or refurbishment projects designed to improve the living standards of residents.

When other sources of funding have been fully explored, support from The Almshouse Association can come in a very practical form by way of a loan or grant.

Trustees facing unexpected costs or needing to undertake projects for their charities have peace of mind knowing they may apply to The Almshouse Association for an interest free loan. Loans of between

£25,001 and £100,000 are available. The loan will be repayable over a ten-year period and is offered on an interest free basis. Apart from a one-off administration fee calculated at 5% of the amount loaned, there are no other costs attached and the loans, which can also be considered on a matched funding basis, are unsecured.

## Better homes for the future

The Almshouse Association also offers grants up to £25,000 for those charities that would be unable to afford loan repayments.

We receive a range of applications for grants, from roof repairs and replacement windows, to the installation of wet rooms, with each project aiming to create better homes for the future. We are committed to keeping the

application process for both loans and grants as straightforward as possible. There are just two forms to complete, which need to be sent to The Almshouse Association together with some supporting documentation.

Loan and grant applications are considered on a quarterly basis with the next application deadline being 30 November 2022. Applicants are then notified of the outcome within 15 working days. Alternative support is available to members whose applications are unsuccessful. For further information on loans and grants, visit the members area of The Almshouse Association website at:

[www.almshouses.org/loans-grants-funding/](http://www.almshouses.org/loans-grants-funding/) or email Fenella Hall, Loans and Grants Administrator at:

[FenellaHall@almshouses.org](mailto:FenellaHall@almshouses.org)

During 2021 our team encouraged and processed 26 funding applications, approved £699,000 in new loans and £102,220 of grants. Some of the grants were made for emergency purposes to respond to issues such as failed boilers or roofs where the member charity had insufficient funds.

## Can we help you in the coming months with your project?

See more projects benefitting from an Almshouse Association loan or grant:

- [www.almshouses.org/news/progress-report-from-buchanan-trust/](http://www.almshouses.org/news/progress-report-from-buchanan-trust/)
- [www.almshouses.org/news/partnership-sures-completion-of-calderdale-almshouse-refurb](http://www.almshouses.org/news/partnership-sures-completion-of-calderdale-almshouse-refurb)

## Adam Cottam's Almshouses



With the assistance of funding from The Almshouse Association, the trustees of Adam Cottam's Almshouses, Whalley, Lancashire have been working hard on their almshouse project over the past four years.

Their 2015 quinquennial inspection report showed that all three homes were in dire need of complete refurbishment to make them damp-free, safe and energy efficient. After an initial meeting with a local architect, followed by meetings with trustees and the contractor, work started on the first almshouse in 2017.

This entailed completely stripping out the properties and refitting with new kitchens, bathrooms, windows,

flooring, blinds, boilers and central heating, as well as replacing roof tiles.

The total cost to refurbish all three properties and temporarily rehouse residents was £100,000.

The charity was able to cover some of the costs by drawing down from their trust funds and investments, however, the remainder was covered by a loan and a grant from The Almshouse Association and a £20,000 grant from Whalley Parish Council.

For details on the three completed almshouses, visit:

[www.almshouses.org/news/case-study-adam-cottam-almshouses-lancashire/](http://www.almshouses.org/news/case-study-adam-cottam-almshouses-lancashire/)

## Association plans

The Almshouse Association is developing plans to carry out an 'Almshouse Census' to gather definitive information on almshouses across the UK.

Despite their one thousand year history, as far as the Association is aware, this will be the first ever census of almshouses in the UK. There are so many variations of almshouses today and we want to capture this.

We will be working with a volunteer from the Society of Statisticians and, amongst other things, we are hoping that the results will allow us to gain a better understanding of: ● average weekly maintenance contributions ● trustee boards ● types and numbers of dwellings ● eligibility criteria ● staffing resources.

As we better understand our members,

## the first census of UK almshouses

we will have a stronger base for our conversations with government and other stakeholders. We will also be in a better position to tailor the support we offer to members.

We believe this is an exciting opportunity for us all. To be involved in the first ever almshouse census is not only history-making, members will also be helping to build a greater understanding of almshouses which will benefit the movement now and for many years.

We are in the initial stages of the census project but we plan to be in a position to send out questionnaires to all main contacts in 2023. We need as



many members as possible to take part to ensure our findings are truly representative of the almshouse movement in the UK as a whole. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas regarding the census, please email [jackbaldan@almshouses.org](mailto:jackbaldan@almshouses.org)

## Old Windsor almshouses

Sometimes a small grant can make a big difference. Trustees at the Old Windsor United Charities (Penny Royal Almshouses) in Berkshire were worried about the rising cost of energy and the impact it would have on their almshouse residents, so looked into ways to help.



With money very tight for the charity, they sought the help of The Almshouse Association and were awarded a grant of £2,835 to install foam loft installation in the roof of the almshouse buildings. The trustees write: "The residents were incredibly happy that we were able to get their homes' insulation improved. They are all very worried about the increased cost of living and particularly the terrifying increase in the cost of energy. We know that they will really feel the difference once the weather gets colder."

[www.almshouses.org/news/small-grant-makes-a-big-difference/](http://www.almshouses.org/news/small-grant-makes-a-big-difference/)



Before and after - living room at Tibberton Almshouses.

## Tibberton almshouses

The almshouses in Gloucestershire were built in 1868, endowed in trust by William Philip Price MP, landowner and owner of Tibberton Court.

Fast forward 150 years and all four almshouses were in need of a complete renovation.

As work was completed on the third property, the trustees sent the Association an update together with some additional photos that can be found at:

[www.almshouses.org/news/renovation-case-study-tibberton-almshouses/](http://www.almshouses.org/news/renovation-case-study-tibberton-almshouses/)

Philip Bevan, Clerk/Treasurer to the trustees, said: "Once again, the residents (beneficiaries) and trustees of Tibberton Almshouses wish to gratefully thank the Association for their generous support to the trust with a grant of £25,000 to assist with the latest refurbishment of another house. This is the third renovation



"Phew! Here we are, a happy band of trustees/cleaners, ready to hand the fit-for-purpose almshouse over to our new resident."

in four years (with another on the way) and we could not have done it without the support and help of the Association. It's true to say that the trust has had severe difficulties in getting this far.

We would also thank all our friends at 'The Lodge' for their helpfulness and assistance."

## Accessing external funding and support opportunities

The Almshouse Association can offer support to access external funding by signposting members to the appropriate grant-making bodies and also offer guidance on filling out the application forms.

We also have a page on our website where we list funding opportunities the Association has been made aware of that may be suitable for some members to apply for directly:

[www.almshouses.org/funding-opportunities](http://www.almshouses.org/funding-opportunities)



## Delivering donated equipment to Ukraine

The work of the St John's Winchester Charity was recently celebrated when their efforts to collect and distribute essential equipment to Ukraine was featured in the Hampshire Chronicle.

Residents and staff at St John's Winchester are determined to do what they can to support Ukrainian people suffering as a result of the invasion of their country. The charity has donated equipment such as beds, hoists, furniture and medical supplies from its former Moorside Care Home to a Polish charity, Pomagamy Foundation, which transports equipment and supplies to support refugees and local populations in Ukraine, including the Ternopil Region, East of Lviv. So far, 17 trips with donated equipment have been made.

Clive Cook, St John's Chief Executive, said: "We can only imagine the pain and suffering of those living with the consequences of the war in Ukraine. I want to thank our Ukrainian colleague, Ina Matthias and our staff and residents for inspiring us to take the small actions we can to help victims of this terrible conflict."

The trips have been organised by Ina, who is from Ukraine and works at St John's and lives in Southampton.

As well as the donations, St John's has opened staff recruitment to suitably qualified Ukrainian refugees. Its almshouses are also available for



**Volunteers supporting the transport of equipment outside St John's Winchester former care home at Moorside, with Ina Matthias (holding the Ukrainian flag) and Clive Cook (right), St John's CEO and Almshouse Association Trustee.**

photo: Hampshire Chronicle.

occupation by evacuees coming to the country under the 'Ukraine Family' and 'Homes for Ukraine' schemes - subject to age and other qualifications. The residents of St John's almshouses pitched in and raised £731.79 for the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal through donations and a fundraising coffee morning.

Residents and staff have also filled two cars with donations of clothing and supplies, which has been delivered to the Polish Social Club in Southampton for onward travel to Ukraine.

## Homes for people fleeing Ukraine war

*The William Hatcliffe Estate Charity, founded by the keeper of King James I's horses in 1622, is offering two houses to families who have escaped from Ukraine following the Russian invasion.*

*Its Chair, Andrew Blundy said: "Our trustees were keen to offer practical help to refugees, who are victims of the worst conflict in Europe since 1945. We have made our offer to both Greenwich Council and to our member of parliament, Matthew Pennycook. We hope that they will identify Ukrainian families who will benefit from this accommodation, which will be for an initial period of six months." He added: "We hope that the refugees will be welcomed and supported by the local community in east Greenwich and throughout the borough. Our trustees see a huge desire to welcome refugees and feel that we ought to use our resources to help them."*

*The charity owns 130 homes in east Greenwich and uses income from property left by William Hatcliffe to provide almshouses and grants for local people in need. The benefactor's legacy is recognised on a board at St Alfeges Church in Greenwich.*

*There are four Hatcliffe trusts, operating in both Greenwich and Lewisham and they plan to double almshouse accommodation in the next five years.*

## Sustainability is top of the agenda for Girton Town

Girton Town Charity, Cambridge is delighted that Barnes Construction, the contractor for its almshouse development at Dovehouse Court, is donating timber offcuts and pallets



**Working together on sustainability are (left to right): Ann Bonnett, Chair Girton Town Charity; Keith Colley, Founder Wood Monkey Workshop; Paul Darrington, Site Manager Dovehouse Court, Barnes Construction.**

from the building work to the Wood Monkey Workshop in Bury St Edmunds. The Workshop, which supports young people out of education and teaches them woodworking skills, is using the donated timber to create birdboxes, signs, hedgehog homes and other items which are sold on the charity's website to fund maintenance and the purchase of tools. Any untreated timber not suitable for crafting is

chopped up for the wood-burning stove which heats the premises. Ann Bonnett, Chair of Girton Town Charity, said: "With sustainability top of the agenda in terms of constructing Dovehouse Court, it is also very rewarding to hear that timber offcuts are being used in this way so nothing is being wasted". She added: "Not only are young people benefitting from learning new woodworking skills but the items they create are being used to enhance our natural habitats too." The Dovehouse Court development will comprise 15 new almshouses and an office for the charity. It is being built to energy-efficient Passivhaus standards which centre around high levels of insulation, resulting in low energy costs and improved indoor air quality.

## Relief charity gives foodbank grant at garden party

This year's Municipal Charities of Stratford-upon-Avon Garden party, held at Guild Cottages at the end of June, was attended by the town's Mayor, Gill Cleeve and the High Sheriff of Warwickshire David Kelham.



During the event a cheque for £4,750 from the Relief in Need charity was presented by Gill Cleeve to John Dodge, treasurer of Stratford Foodbank. On behalf of the foodbank John Dodge said: "We are delighted to receive this gift of £4,750 from the Relief in Need Charity. We will use £1,000 towards the purchase of food and £3,750

towards employing a Financial Inclusion Project worker to support Foodbank users to improve their financial situation. Due to increasing demand in these inflationary times the Stratford Foodbank is currently in urgent need of food or monetary donations, which we can then use to purchase the specific items that we're short of." The Relief in Need Charity is part of the Municipal Charities of Stratford-upon-Avon and has given over £50,000

in grants in the last year to help those with financial difficulties in the town. These grants have supported families by providing items including washing machines, cookers, fridges, school uniforms for refugees, food vouchers at Christmas and carpeting.



## Chapel blessing is 'first' for 296 years

*The Almshouse Charity of Arthur Winsley and Others, known as Winsley's in Colchester marked a milestone in its 296-year history when two residents held their wedding blessing in its ancient chapel. The ceremony is believed to have been the first to be conducted at Winsley's (founded in 1726), as the tiny chapel isn't licensed for marriages and is usually used for a service just once a year. Ann Amey and Derek Moule, both 70, asked Father Richard Tillbrook of St Barnabas Church, Colchester to conduct their wedding blessing. The couple, who met on a blind date more than*

*seven years ago, invited fellow residents and the charity's trustees to join them for the service. photos: Winsley's charity.*



## Grant aid for amateur boxing club

Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust awards grants to local groups and charities to alleviate hardship and also supports other needs in the community. It has recently provided several grants to the amateur boxing club, Rectory Amateur Boxing Club (ABC). The grants, which in total reach almost £100,000 since the first in 2013, have helped to make extensive improvements, including creating a second room. The grants have also made it possible for the facilities to be updated to provide a safe and functional environment for local boxers to train.

David Cole, Grants Manager at Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, said: "We are delighted to have been able to provide consistent support to Rectory ABC over the last nine years. Seeing the changes that have taken place captured on film as part of their Boxer Beats project is fantastic." He added: "We are always looking for new and exciting groups and charities within Sutton Coldfield to award grants and the Rectory ABC project is a perfect example of our funds being put to fantastic use for the benefit of the community."



With autumn upon us and Christmas just around the corner, our glorious summer may seem almost a distant memory. However, the fabulous photos and stories from almshouse events held during the year will continue to brighten up the cloudiest day and the new Jubilee trees planted to honour The Queen's 70 year reign will grow and spread their branches, doing their bit to keep alive those wonderful moments in time.

## Andrew Windsor Almshouses, Farnham, Surrey

Residents at Andrew Windsor Almshouses enjoyed an afternoon garden party to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It also marked the 400th anniversary of the origins of the almshouses and the successful completion of a £500,000 roof replacement and renovation project to the original 17th century buildings, the oldest almshouses in Farnham. Andrew Windsor Almshouses has 10 almshouses in total, four of which were built in 1619 with a further six added in the 1970s. The grade II\* almshouses are a well-known landmark and have provided accommodation for elderly people in need for over 400 years. A survey revealed that the historic building required extensive repairs to the roof, requiring its removal and replacement. This major project was completed within budget and the work will help to ensure that the almshouses can continue to provide housing for those in need for many years.

*contributed by Jessica Durrant, clerk to the trustees*



## Celebrations at Exeter Church Charities



photo: Alderman John Landers planting a mulberry tree, assisted by some of his great grandchildren.

The chairman and trustees of Exeter Church Charities held a celebration at Lethbridge Almshouses in July to commemorate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and honour and celebrate 25 years' service by Alderman John Landers as a trustee. A warm and happy day was attended by 100 people, including residents, representatives from other almshouse charities, Alderman Landers' family and many friends and honoured guests including The Right Worshipful The Lord Mayor of Exeter. A wonderful tribute to the day was written by Andrew Crossley, surveyor and clerk to the trustees which can be found in full on our website at <https://www.almshouses.org/member-stories-news-and-events> together with many other stories from our members.



## Mary Wandesford Charity, Yorks

The 12 ladies who live in the listed almshouses building with stunning gardens, designed and maintained by a resident, organised a Jubilee celebration with a high tea and tree planting and invited the trustees. They had lost a resident just a few weeks before so the occasion was very poignant for them.



## Sherburn House Charity, Durham

Sherburn House Charity chose a Himalayan Birch tree to blend in with the stunning surroundings. It was planted on the lawn, central to all accommodation on site for everyone to enjoy; residents gathered to share the moment and be involved in the planting.

Afterwards, some of the residents sat in the sunshine and Mr & Mrs Thomson spoke about meeting The Queen when she honoured their son, Andrew with an OBE at Windsor Castle.



Another resident, Mrs Chiverton was also in the company of The Queen at a Buckingham Palace garden party. Our thoughts on planting the tree was the least we could do to celebrate her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee as she had devoted her life to the people of the commonwealth and the whole of the United Kingdom.

*contributed by Natalie Hogg, Governance & Communications Co-Ordinator*



## Pontefract and Ackworth Almshouse Charity

Andrea Rockett, charity co-ordinator and secretary, sent in a photo of residents having a great time at their Platinum Jubilee party. She said: "It was a rainy day but this didn't stop the residents enjoying themselves as we were in a marquee. The singer 'The Yorkshire Belle' was exceptional and sang songs which were fitting for the occasion. We had individual afternoon tea boxes which were delicious and handmade by a local baker. The photograph of the gentleman in his Union Jack bowler hat is our oldest resident at 102 years old!"



## Dunk's Almshouse Platinum Jubilee barbecue celebration

Lisa Panting, clerk to the trustees, Dunk's Almshouse Charity in Hawkhurst, Kent sent us photos of a very

enjoyable and super sunny barbecue held in June in the almshouse front garden, with residents and trustees seated around tables and a cake baked by Sam Cornish.



## John Baker Charity almshouses in Aynho

There was a special bicentennial afternoon tea held in the gardens of the almshouses in Aynho, West Northants in June. Trustees, residents and their families, friends and previous parish councillors, celebrated the amazing generosity of John Baker more than 200 years ago who wanted to help men and women equally in Aynho - first by clothing them, then by



helping them financially. After his death, his trustees built the almshouses using the funds from his Trust in 1822.

We thought about all the beneficiaries over those 200 years; all the residents who have lived alongside each other in these houses. Some for a short period and some for many years. There have been a lot of changes and the houses have been improved and upgraded with modern facilities as time has passed.

We tried to find some family links back to John Baker and his family through genealogical research to invite them to



celebrate with us but sadly to no avail, despite a great effort from our local History Society. However, we can remember the great Baker family, one-time glaziers in Oxford, with their personal links to Aynho, who are buried in magnificent tombs on the south side of St Michael's Church. We raised our cups of tea in thanks for endowing our village with houses where the residents and many generations before them have been so pleased to live, independently and in a house they can call home - and no longer expected to attend church four times on a Sunday!

*contributed by trustees Kathy White and Andrew Bellamy*



# Amending a charity's governing document

Trustees may have clear reasons for wishing to amend their charity's governing document but of course changes should only be made if it is in the charity's best interest. A legitimate reason might be that the charity's purposes are no longer practical or appropriate in meeting the purpose for which the charity was originally established, or they are having trouble filling resident vacancies and need to expand their criteria.

## Fully minuted discussion and debate

Trustees are able to make some changes to the governing document themselves. However, other changes will need Charity Commission permission. In each case, as always, it is important that the desired amendments are debated and discussed at a quorate meeting of the trustees and fully minuted. Matters that fall within the administrative, day-to-day running of the charity can generally be made by the charity internally, whereas matters affecting the charity's objects need Charity Commission approval.

The changes charities may make internally depend on:

- the charity's governing document specifying that trustees have 'the power' to make the change
- the law, ie. the Charities Act or the Companies Act, allowing trustees to make a particular kind of change.

The statutory 'power mentioned above allows administrative changes to be made, including changing a charity's

name, the management of trustee meetings, appointment of trustees and generally making changes that lead to greater efficiency in the charity's procedures. Trustees cannot, however, use their statutory power to alter their charity's purposes, or give themselves a power to change the purposes, to spend capital held as permanent endowment or to authorise payment to themselves or related parties. The power can also not be used to enable third parties to nominate trustees, although there are exceptions. Trustees must notify the Charity Commission of any amendments they have made which they can do using the Commission's online form.

See: [www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-make-changes-to-your-charitys-governing-document](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-make-changes-to-your-charitys-governing-document)

A common enquiry received by The Almshouse Association from its members is that the beneficiary criteria stipulated within the charity's objects is too confining and trustees

## Essential knowledge

Have you seen a copy of your governing document?

Do you fully understand the objects of the charity?

It is important all trustees and decision-making

staff know the contents of their charity's governing document and where to find a copy when needed.

## The six main duties of an almshouse trustee



are therefore finding it challenging to appoint new residents. An example might be that a charity is to provide almshouse accommodation to those in need with a minimum age of 55 currently residing in East London, however the charity finds that when advertising vacancies it is not receiving applications, for while there may be people in need of almshouse accommodation, they do not fulfil the charity's specific criteria from a geographical perspective. This is a clear example of the need to seek Charity Commission approval in order to amend the criteria in the governing document. The key factor to bear in mind is that the Commission, understandably, are disinclined to agree to changes which would be contrary to the wishes of the original benefactor. They will also wish to be provided with evidence of the advertisements the charity has placed to no avail

and a business case needs to be presented to them to broaden the criteria. Supported by such evidence, the charity might wish to broaden the geographical area to, say, inner London as a whole while proposing that applicants living in East London be given priority.

Finally, where the wording of a governing document is archaic and needs modernising, this can be achieved by way of a separate management document which sits alongside the main governing document, sometimes referred to as a 'Deed of Variation', for which The Almshouse Association will be happy to provide appropriate guidance.

## The trustees' role in investments

When did you last review your charity's investments?

We have all experienced a period of great uncertainty over the past year and some charities have come under significant financial pressure and scrutiny. Trustees will probably be aware that the value of investments held by their charity may have been through a period of volatility.

As a consequence, some charities may be reviewing their investment policies. It is worth remembering that a charity's trustees



have overall responsibility for investment decisions and that trustees must take and consider advice from someone experienced in investment matters before making investments and when reviewing them, unless they have good reasons for not doing so. The guidance is clear that trustees MUST review investments from time to time and MUST take advice unless they have a good reason not to.

For example, they may decide not to take advice if they conclude that it is unnecessary, or inappropriate in the circumstances. They may decide not to take external advice if they have sufficient experience within the charity.

Trustees may wish to read the Charity Commission investment guidance notes 'Charities and investment matters: a guide for trustees (CC14)' which include notes on:

- the trustees' role when making financial investment decisions?
- risks a charity should consider when making investments?
- deciding what a charity can invest in.
- who can manage and make decisions about investments?
- what advice must trustees take?
- monitoring investments and performance.
- what should trustees consider when investing in savings and cash deposits?

So, what to do? Arrange a review of your investments. How are they performing? Who is managing them? What management alternatives have you considered? How does your investment manager expect the fund/investments to perform in the future?

Useful links to investment tools:

A Charity Commission publication (2016) Charities and Investment Matters - A guide for Trustees.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees)

A free website that provides independent financial information and performance data for Charity Funds in the UK. It is a free service but charities/individuals have to register.

[www.charityintelligence.co.uk/](http://www.charityintelligence.co.uk/)

## 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/](http://www.almshouses.org/latest-news/)

**Mandatory Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms** - Following consultations with the Government, The Almshouse Association can confirm that changes to the regulations of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms will affect almshouses. This means that from 1 October 2022, almshouse charities are required to:

- provide a smoke alarm on each storey of their properties where there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation
- provide carbon monoxide alarms in any room of their properties used wholly or partly as living accommodation where a fixed combustion appliance is present (excluding gas cookers)
- repair or replace alarms as soon as reasonably practicable.

Many almshouse charities are likely to already provide these alarms in their dwellings. If not, trustees should look to immediately address this so that they are compliant with the new requirements.

Guidance on the changes can be found at - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarms-explanatory-booklet-for-landlords](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarms-explanatory-booklet-for-landlords)

Your local fire service who should also be able to assist.

**Fairer Private Rented Sector White Paper Published** - The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has published its Fairer Private Rented Sector white paper. The white paper is seeking to reform the private rented sector (PRS) with plans to ban "no DSS/Benefits" lettings as well as overhauling so-called Section 21 'no-fault' evictions. It is also suggested that the Decent Homes Standard be extended to the PRS.

The Association will study the white paper for any potential threats to almshouses, however, as the paper deals with the private rented sector, there should not be any issues which concern the almshouse movement. The white paper does define 'Renters' as including licensees and so the Association will be seeking clarification on the government's intentions.

The white paper can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-fairer-private-rented-sector](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-fairer-private-rented-sector)

**Update on Digital Switchover** - In our most recent Almshouses Gazette we featured an article from Panel of Consultants member Careline365 (previously Lifeline24) regarding the need for members to take action ahead of the digital switchover in 2025.

Since that article was published there has been an update on the switchover which members should be aware of:

- BT has changed how they will approach the switchover but has not pushed the completion date back. It is still currently set for 2025
- the rollout will continue, the difference now is that people who are unsure on the switch will have the option to opt out if they feel uneasy, however, everyone will still need to switch over eventually
- almshouses are still advised to plan ahead and replace old analogue systems with up-to-date digital alarms, especially right now as the issues highlighted, that prompted the update, arise from old analogue technology being used on the new digital network.

Members with further queries can get in touch with Careline365 via: Mark Law, tel: 01603 964306, email: [keyaccounts@careline.co.uk](mailto:keyaccounts@careline.co.uk)

NOTE: other suppliers are also available.

## The Charity Commission

**Commission publishes guidance on changes to the Charities Act** - The Charity Commission has published new guidance on the forthcoming changes to the Charity Act in Autumn 2022.

This includes:

- paying trustees for providing goods to the charity
- making moral or 'ex gratia' payments from charity funds
- fundraising appeals that do not reach, or exceed, your target
- power to amend Royal Charters.

Full details can be found at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-act-2022-guidance-for-charities](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-act-2022-guidance-for-charities)

## Wales

**£4m fund announced to help with rising energy costs**

- Welsh Social Justice Minister Jane Hutt has launched a £4m fuel voucher scheme to help the most vulnerable households with the rising costs of energy bills. The scheme will target individuals on pre-payment meters and those not connected to the mains gas network. Vouchers ranging from £30 in summer months and £49 in winter will be provided up to three times over a six-month period.

In July, the Welsh government announced that the scheme would be extended to households on:

- child tax credits
- pension credits
- disability benefits
- carers allowance
- contributory benefits
- those receiving help from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

More information can be found at: [www.gov.wales/4m-help-people-soaring-fuel-costs](http://www.gov.wales/4m-help-people-soaring-fuel-costs)



## Restoring and securing the future of Bakewell almshouses

Mike Hillam has stepped down as clerk to the trustees of St. John's Hospital almshouses in Bakewell after 18 years, during which time he has helped secure a future for the historic building and the organisation's capacity to support residents.



Trustees, residents and friends gathered in the gardens of the almshouses on South Church Street to celebrate the occasion and to thank Mike for his exceptional service.

Chairman of trustees, Ian Sharpe said: "Mike's work and continued enthusiasm over the years has been key to a significant local building being saved and the charity being able to continue to provide housing for people in need, for which it was established in 1602." Mike took up the voluntary role of clerk in 2004 when the charity was facing some major challenges.

Mike is presented with an original painting of the almshouses by local artist Michael Groves.

At that time, the 18th century almshouses

were unoccupied and in such poor condition that the district council had prohibited their use. With no income or capital to address the situation, the charity was on the verge of being

shut down. Mike led the fundraising efforts, successfully securing the £325,000 required for the refurbishment of the Grade II listed building. He also worked tirelessly to overcome a range of issues associated with the building work, not least the moment when the main contractor went into liquidation.

His patience and perseverance paid off, with the renovated homes reopening in 2007 and welcoming a steady flow of residents ever since. These efforts were recognised with a number of accolades made to the charity, including The Patron's Award personally presented to Mike and the trustees by HRH The Prince of Wales.

Having completed the modernisation and restoration project and achieving financial stability for the foreseeable future, the charity is now exploring other opportunities to help local people by developing additional almshouses in the town.

## Meriel J Dunn: 1922-2022

Mrs Meriel J. Dunn (known as Jo) who lived in Molescroft, Beverley in the East Riding of Yorkshire, was an inspirational, driving force and an integral part of Beverley Consolidated Charity since 1951. Her association with the charity began when she became a councillor with Beverley Borough Corporation. As manufacturing diminished in the 1950s and 60s, some areas had become very poor and this provided the impetus to offer affordable accommodation for older people in the town.

She was the longest serving trustee of the charity for 60 years, serving for 40 years as vice-chair and 10 years as chair. Her strong leadership and determination to provide secure, high quality affordable housing, provided residents with a sense of community, knowing any concerns raised would be a primary focus of consideration by the charity.

In 1957 the charity managed 47 almshouses but an earlier bequest of 48.5 acres of land by Caroline Walker was used to build 12 new two-bedroomed homes and facilitate the refurbishment of the existing almshouses. These almshouses on New Walkergate in the town centre were officially opened by HRH Princess Anne in 1984.

In 2010, Jo Dunn received the Patron's Award on behalf of the charity for the development of four flats and five bungalows at Kitchen Lane in Beverley. From 47 homes in 1951, the charity had

grown to provide 129 homes in 2021. A further eight almshouses were completed recently and the charity also owns 24 investment properties, providing support and homes for those not eligible for almshouse residency. Beverley Consolidated Charity started with very little income and meetings were convened in one of the trustee's offices. Today, it is a financially secure almshouse provider for the people of Beverley, with a reputation for exceptional quality homes and service. Jo Dunn's charitable work also included raising funds for community projects in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Her recollections from being stationed at Bletchley Park in 1941-45 were always a popular event as she had been one of the first eight Wrens to work there.

A Wren at Bletchley Park, teacher at the local college, councillor, trustee and fundraiser and an inspiration to those who knew her, her total commitment helped to ensure there will always be a provision of excellent accommodation for those local people who are retired and who are in need.

contributed by Sue Barley, trustee of Beverley Consolidated Charity



Congratulations

to our Hornby competition winner and runner-up! Over the past year, The Almshouse Association has been working with Hornby, who are a keen supporter of positive mental health and the almshouse movement. Between us we wanted to encourage hobbies amongst almshouse staff, trustees and residents - it seems it's good for us all ....

When we announced our Jump on Board! competition, we were overwhelmed by the influx of wonderful stories and insights into the vast array of hobbies members are enjoying or have enjoyed for many years - as well as those that were inspired during lockdown.

The common theme throughout is how hobbies help keep people healthy and engaged and provide a platform to create something really satisfying that can be shared with others.

Competition Judge, Montana Hoeren, Head of Brand at Hornby, said: "It has been a real pleasure to be involved in this project and even more of a pleasure to read such personal and touching stories covering various different interests. As we say at Hornby, it's more than just a hobby, it's a lifetime's journey - and it seems that's the same for many others."

Thank you all for entering and although we couldn't give prizes to everyone, we offer our congratulations to you all! Your stories were inspiring and truly uplifting!



## Serving nearly 40 years as chairman

Earlier in the year, The Webster Almshouses Committee in Essex said farewell to longstanding chairman, Tony Frost after an amazing 39 years in the role. During that time the almshouses have undergone a major renovation, led by Tony, who now passes the baton on with another project planned. His legacy will be residences that are 'fit for purpose' and 'eco-friendly' - a huge task given that the almshouses are over a 100 years old and Grade II listed.



To mark the occasion, Tony was presented with a linoprint of the almshouses, with their distinctive yellow doors, created by local artist Louise McCabe and specially commissioned by Rev Liz Paxton.

The Webster Almshouses are situated in Sible Hedingham, Essex. Originally built and dedicated in 1884 by Maria Webster, there were six properties "... for the residence and use of single women or widows ... of good character and moral worth ... either born in the parish of Sible Hedingham or resided there for not less than five years".

A trust fund was established through the Will of Maria's daughter, Elizabeth Amelia, in 1921 but the properties fell into disrepair during the 1970s. When Tony Frost joined the board, grants were obtained and a major renovation took place, reducing the six properties to four (two two-bedroom and two one-bedroom).

They have since been continually occupied, currently by three single men because single women and widows seem to be in short supply. With one house currently empty the trustees are now planning to upgrade the almshouses.

## Our Hornby competition winner and runner-up

The winner

Mr Reg Jordan, resident Penrose Almshouses, Barnstaple

Reg was born in Pottington, Barnstaple in 1934 and moved into Penrose Almshouses in 2004, becoming a much-loved resident. He loves old sailing vessels and, not one for being idle, has hand-built the most incredible collection

of models including full-riggers, three-masted Schooners, and Ketch. He has built one ship a year since moving to Penrose and these detailed models have to be seen to be believed! Every single piece has been carefully handcrafted, even down to the tiny canons made from Rawlplugs and wood dowling. There are no kits here! His magnificent boats include The Mayflower and HMS Weasel, which sank at Bagg Point, in North Devon.



The runner-up

Garth Holman, trustee The James Goodman Almshouse Charity, Cranfield, Beds

Garth and his daughter, Heather, have three shared interests. Firstly, they are both trustees of The James Goodman Almshouse Charity (Garth's father was also a trustee for many years). Being trustees of an almshouse charity enables them to give something

back to the community. They are also traction engine enthusiasts. Their latest restoration took eight years and they enjoyed the challenge of doing as much of the work as they could themselves.

Their third shared interest is campanology (bell ringing) at the village church, which Garth has been doing for over 50 years and Heather for about 10 years.

See our website for Reg and Garth's full stories and all other commended entries - [www.almshouses.org/news/hornby-competition-results-announced/](http://www.almshouses.org/news/hornby-competition-results-announced/)

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# Online training library - new courses added

## Cyber Security Awareness

We are all responsible for keeping information safe when using computers and similar devices, so this



new cyber security eLearning course has been designed for this purpose. It includes some straightforward practical steps that will help to protect computers, networks, programmes and data from unauthorised access, helping to safeguard the systems and information we use.



## Social Media Awareness

This short online social media awareness course explores how social media might be used at work, as well as when its use would not be appropriate. Additionally, it covers the importance of following an organisation's policies and procedures surrounding social media usage and why publicly sharing confidential or private information can be extremely damaging.

## Other courses available from our online training library

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

To access all the online training courses, you will need to register on our website where you will find the Online Training Library in the Training and Events section. Full details and access to each course offered by the Association can be found by clicking into the links or the online training course boxes. All of the courses are accredited and valid for two years.

## Membership Services - Are you missing out?



We want to make sure our members are making the most of their membership and are aware of all the resources available to them. Have you been on our website recently? Are you receiving our e-bulletins that help keep you up to date with all the latest government guidance and almshouse news?

### Our services

- Telephone and email helpdesk
- Support and guidance
- Website\* for members
- The Almshouses Gazette
- Training seminars/webinars
- Online training courses
- Mediation scheme
- Representation to Government
- Recognition through awards

- National Association of Almshouses Common Insurance Policies (NAACIP)
- Loans & general funding assistance
- Grants and assistance for struggling charities
- M&G Charity Multi Asset Fund
- Members forum
- Research
- Panel of consultants
- Health checks

### \*Website resources

- Guidance manuals
- Model policies and templates
- Useful links
- Panel of consultants
- Members forum
- Resident vacancy pages
- Job vacancy pages
- APPG on Almshouses
- About almshouses - factsheets, statistics and facts
- Research and reports on almshouses
- Event pack templates
- Awards guidance

- Case studies
- Policy and Governance updates
- Latest news
- Latest current issues
- Events news
- Meetings pages
- Training pages
- Webinar archives\*\*
- Member stories
- Tips and advice on recruitment, fundraising, PR
- Public information pages to help promote and raise the profile of almshouses

### \*\*Recordings and Powerpoint slides on previous webinars

Topics include the following:

- Obligations when employing staff
- Residents: common challenges facing trustees
- Permanent endowments
- Mergers and takeovers
- Dealing with antisocial behaviour
- Diversifying your charity board
- The Social Housing White Paper
- Setting aside appointments - an almshouse toolkit
- Working practices in almshouse charities
- Trustee roles and responsibilities
- Demystifying VfM: regulatory requirements and what you need to do
- Making changes to your governing document
- Incorporation: the benefits, challenges and key issues
- Trustee recruitment
- Cyber security

## 2022 CALENDAR

2 Nov	Trustees and Clerks Seminar	Saffron Walden
23 Nov	Registered Providers Network meeting	online

New pages are being added to our website all the time, so make sure you check in regularly.

If you would like help in accessing any of the above, please contact us by phone on 01344 452922 or email: [AlmshouseSupport@almshouses.org](mailto:AlmshouseSupport@almshouses.org) or via the form on our website: [www.almshouses.org](http://www.almshouses.org)