



The Almshouse Association Case for Support

Compassion, Community, Companionship

1. What are Almshouses?

Almshouses were the first form of community housing for people in housing need established in the medieval period.

For over 1000 years almshouse charities have been providing a unique form of warm, safe, secure, homes for local people in need.

Today, there are some 1,700 independent almshouse charities in the UK providing homes for approximately 36,000 residents.

Almshouses are much more than buildings, although many almshouses are some of the most beautiful historic buildings in our towns and villages.



The spirit of almshouses can be found in the traditional values of kindness, compassion and companionship in the provision of homes that encompass neighbourliness and social interaction without impacting on individual privacy. These are special communities that often alleviate isolation while offering independent living. These micro- communities, led by a charitable spirit, bring profound health and well-being benefits as evidenced from a 2018 almshouse study by CASS (now Bayes) Business School which recorded that *“on average residents live up to five years longer than they’d be expected to elsewhere.”*

The UK is facing an affordable housing crisis with harsher times ahead for both young families and older tenants. Currently, 8.4 million people in the UK live in unaffordable, insecure and unsuitable housing. The Local Government Association (LGA), representing more than 370 councils in England and Wales, has warned that the scale of elderly homelessness in the UK is set to double.

For people who are in true housing need, almshouses can provide a life changing opportunity.

This ancient model of community housing forms a small but vital part of the solution to the UK’s affordable housing problem.

2. The Association's Purpose

Established by its member almshouse charities in 1946, The Almshouse Association, as a registered charity, is the only organisation in this country providing a vital communication link for almshouse charities and is an anchoring component of the almshouse movement committed to:

- Promoting good practice and high standards
- Supporting member charities in providing good quality housing for those in need
- Promoting the welfare and independence of residents and
- Preserving the historic tradition of almshouses for the enjoyment of future generations.

The majority of almshouses have less than twenty dwellings and only a modest income derived solely from weekly maintenance contributions from the residents.

Some of these smaller charities are struggling, as Trustees are unable to fund the cost of essential repairs and improvements. Our challenge is to ensure that they are given much needed financial assistance to upgrade their accommodations and continue as their benefactors intended.

The Association supports its almshouse charity members through:

- a range of information, advisory and support services.
- a Rolling Fund that has been carefully developed over the years from regular donations, major gifts and legacies.



3. The Association's Advocacy Services

Almshouses are frequently run by lay trustees and often supported by part-time staff. There are around 12,000 Trustees of almshouses, many of whom rely heavily on the Association for advice on a wide range of issues in an increasingly complex legislative and regulatory framework.



New edition of Standards of Almshouse Management

We are pleased to announce that The Almshouse Association 2023 (7th edition) Standards of Almshouse Management is now live on our website!

STANDARDS OF ALMSHOUSE MANAGEMENT

A guidance manual for almshouse charities

www.almshouses.org

well, offering context, flowcharts and templates. This being said, as you all know, almshouses are as much about residents as they are buildings and SAM will not be able to address every situation which is why we have a dedicated team at The Almshouse Association on hand to help.

We are just a telephone call or email away to help with the more individual queries that trustees and clerks may face. We hope this latest edition makes your life as a trustee, clerk or warden easier and leaves you more freedom to enjoy the best parts of running an almshouse, such as spending time with residents and colleagues. Thank you again for everyone who has given up their time to help shape this really valuable guide. www.almshouses.org/standards-of-almshouse-management-2023

With the support of the team at The Almshouse Association, Stone King LLP, The Charity Commission, National Housing Federation, member feedback and review workshops, this edition of the fondly named 'SAM' is designed in an easy to access format that explains the steps needed to run an almshouse

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If there is anything you think is missing or incorrect in the new SAM, please do let us know by emailing admin@almshouses.org

A message from The Charity Commission

Almshouses are some of our oldest charities, with a long and proud history of providing housing to their beneficiaries. But this important and enduring place in society doesn't happen without the time, skill, and energy of the trustees of these charities. It is the trustees whose commitment and hard work helps ensure that almshouses continue to provide the support envisioned by their original founders and in a way that reflects modern standards, requirements and expectations around governance and management. The Charity Commission has long supported The Almshouse Association's Standards of Almshouse Management and we encourage trustees to use this updated edition as an essential guide to their role.

Dr Helen Stephenson CBE, Chief Executive, Charity Commission for England and Wales

Experts gather for Members Day event

We are all looking forward to The Almshouse Association Members Day 2023 taking place on Thursday 15 June at One Great George Street, Westminster, London. We are honoured to be able to welcome Terry Waite CBE as our key guest speaker, together with leading figures in the charity world - see inside on page 3 for further details. These events are always a valuable source of information and guidance. There are still a few places available and we hope to see you there.

Community support services launched

Two community support services have been developed by St John's Winchester which aim to broaden the outreach of the charity and help older people who live in the community outside of the almshouses.

The new services are St John's Dementia Support, in partnership with Dementia UK, and St John's Homeshare, which matches older householders with a younger lodger. The launch was celebrated at Winchester Cathedral and attended by Winchester MP, Steve Brine who said the new services "fit the times perfectly". St John's Chief Executive, Clive Cook said: "It's a great step forward". For more details, turn to page 7.



Our important advocacy service to member almshouse charities is made available to them in a number of different ways:

- **Supporting Trustees in maintaining the highest standards of accommodation by advising them on a broad range of issues, such as administration and management, duty of care, governance and compliance.** The Association's guidance manuals are widely acclaimed throughout the sector. "Standards of Almshouse Management" provides step by step advice on a wide range of issues.
- Trustees, clerks, scheme managers, wardens and consultants are made aware of best practice throughout the almshouse movement by the **Association's quarterly publication "The Almshouses Gazette"**. This publication has a circulation of 3,000 copies reaching a readership of 30,000 people.
- **Holding training seminars throughout the country to promote best practice and compliance.**
- **Lobbying government on matters relevant to its members** and maintaining a close working relationship with the Charity Commission, Homes England and the Almshouse Parliamentary Group.
- **Enabling almshouse charities to bid for Social Housing Grants** for major new build and modernisation projects via a National Almshouse Partnership.
- **Provision of information and support by telephone, email and on the Association's website.**

4. The Association's Rolling Fund

The Almshouse Association is funded by member subscriptions, but these only accounts for 50% of expenditure.

However, a significant number of almshouses require re-modelling and modernisation, conversion of bedsitting rooms to flats and the installation of new bathrooms and kitchens so that the residents may enjoy safe and easy access.

In some cases, specialist modernisation is also necessary so that elderly and frail residents with disabilities can use wheelchairs throughout their homes, particularly for access to level entry showers.

The Rolling Fund was established as a means by which the Association could assist almshouse charities by way of interest free loans, as well as helping the Association to extend its overall services to members.

Current demand from almshouse charities means that the Rolling Fund is not sufficient to meet the ever-growing need, as many struggling charities, especially the smaller ones, are unable to fund the cost of ongoing essential repairs, such as roofing, guttering, re-pointing, replacement windows and modern boiler systems.

Over the last three years, interest-free loans made available from the Rolling Fund have more than doubled and currently stand at over £500,000 per annum.

A combination of the growing demands upon almshouses and the opportunities to extend our housing model means that we need to seek more funding from individuals, families, grant makers and other funders whose objectives match our own.



An example of work that one of our members completed with the support of The Almshouse Association.

5. The Association next phase of fundraising: £2.5 million over 5 years

We need another round of fundraising not only to address the growing demands of our almshouse members but also to meet the opportunities to play a greater role in the UK's housing crisis by further promoting and growing our housing model. We have identified a number of areas for additional funding to underpin our dual mission of conserving our heritage and growing the contemporary, social impact of the almshouse movement.

Proposed area of work	Detail	Funding need
Conservation of historic almshouses in the community.	Almshouses have been in existence for 1000 years. They have provided a vital support of affordable housing and the buildings, some centuries old and have now become a key feature of our villages and towns. Listed buildings are expensive to maintain and conserve. A fund is being established to help charities with limited resources protect these great places of heritage.	£1,000,000 (£200,000 per annum)
Decarbonisation of almshouses	There is a recognised value of older buildings giving a greater sense of “place” and security to many. The heritage buildings held and maintained by almshouse charities add both to the historic landscape of our towns and villages but also the wellbeing of the residents. They are expensive to heat and maintain and the decarbonisation and reduced energy costs are a strategic object of our organisation. The decarbonisation of older almshouses will make a great impact on the environment, on the charities but most importantly on the welfare of elderly residents. We are seeking to raise funds to decarbonise those charities most in need. £30,000 can reduce carbon emissions and reduce energy costs by up to 70% in a historic almshouse building. £10,000 can replace the windows in an older almshouse while £5,000 can pay for insulation.	£500,000 (£100,000 per annum)

The Almshouse Association fundraising case for support

Rolling Charity Support Fund	<p>More funding to boost the loans and grants awarded to member almshouse charities each year. The loans are for new build and refurbishment. The grants are not returned but are for those charities that are unable to repay a loan.</p> <p>Emergency grants of up to £3,000 can help a single charity in a crisis such as broken boiler or leak in the roof.</p>	<p>£500,000 loan fund (£100,000 per annum)</p> <p>£250,000 grant fund (£50,000 per annum)</p>
Accessibility for residents of almshouse charities	<p>Many residents love their homes but outdated bathrooms and kitchens impact their ability to live independently. £20,000 can refurbish a kitchen and create a wet room in an almshouse improving the life of the resident for many years.</p>	<p>£250,000 (£50,000 per annum)</p>
Future Foundations	<p>A feasibility and catalyst fund to encourage and enable benefactors to establish new almshouse charities in their name or for their area of support. The last new charity was established in 1986. A new almshouse charity would be a highly publicised event. An almshouse dwelling costs about £153,000 when built in a row. (not including the land). To carry out a feasibility study and planning work for a new foundation charity costs £10,000.</p>	<p>£250,000 (£50,000 per annum)</p>
Research and Impact	<p>For decades it has been widely understood that almshouses add value to the lives of residents. This unique model is now being recognised as an exemplar form of community housing. In order to better understand and replicate those elements that have the greatest impact on the lives of residents we wish to carry out research. A grant to our research fund can make a difference to the almshouse movement and raise its profile significantly in the sector and beyond. The impact of almshouses on the longevity of residents was carried out in 2021 by BAYES Business School and we hope to add to that ground breaking research. A grant of £45,000 would enable us to lift that study to the next level.</p>	<p>£45,000 (£9,000 per annum)</p>

The Almshouse Association fundraising case for support

Christmas Fund	This fund was established by a philanthropist to make a Christmas gift of £15/£20 to every resident over the age of 90 years. This is a capital fund and the interest pays for the gifts. This fund has diminished over the last 20 years as the number of residents over 90 has doubled.	£35,000 (£7,000 per annum)
Total funding goal		£2,580,000 over 5 years

Specific funding proposals will be developed for each of the above areas of work and activity.

6. How our goal could be achieved

An example of how £2.5 million could be raised over 5 years in cash donations, 5-year commitments, grants and legacies.

Annual Gift to Pay to Charity £	Total Gift Over Pledge Period £	Number of Gifts Required	Total £
50,000	250,000	1	250,000
25,000	125,000	2	250,000
20,000	100,000	3	300,000
15,000	75,000	3	225,000
10,000	50,000	4	200,000
5,000	25,000	10	250,000
4,000	20,000	15	300,000
3,000	15,000	24	360,000
2,000	10,000	24	240,000
1,000	5,000	41	205,000
		127	2,580,000

127 commitments from individuals, families, grant making trusts and corporate partners.



The Association is a registered charity enabling cash donations, multi-year commitments, gifts of shares and other assets and gifts in Wills to be made in a tax effective way. The Association will, of course, be grateful for any donations received, but this model shows how major gifts, spread over a period of time, could help us to achieve our goal.

7. How you can support us

We need to assemble a powerful group of influential people who care about the almshouse movement and the way in which it can turn around people's lives to enable fundraising at this level. We would therefore like to ask for your help to reach out to such individuals.

There are several alternative ways in which you could help:

- **Introductions and personal approaches** to individuals and families who might be interested in supporting our work
- **Hosting a fundraising briefing** and cultivation event of your own for a select group of prospective supporters
- **Introductions to grant making trusts and foundations**
- **Creating opportunities with corporate partners** and sponsors
- Helping us to get our message out to a **wider audience** through media channels or community networks
- Any other ideas would be gratefully received



Thank you for taking the time to review our plans for the future and considering your support for this special project.

Appendix 1: Loans approved during the three year period 2020 to 2022

The Almshouse Association approved the loans opposite for new builds, repairs, refurbishments and other associated costs. In some cases the loans were not fully drawn down during the year. The Grants awarded are shown overleaf.



No. of Charities	County	Total (£)
1	Bedfordshire	25,000
2	Berkshire	75,000
1	Buckinghamshire	25,000
2	Cornwall	47,000
1	Cumbria	25,000
1	Devon	86,000
1	Dorset	35,000
2	Essex	90,000
3	Gloucestershire	115,000
2	Greater London	105,000
2	Herefordshire	135,000
2	Kent	120,000
3	Lancashire	100,000
1	Leicestershire	25,000
1	Lincolnshire	31,092
2	Norfolk	95,000
1	North Yorkshire	39,000
1	Northumberland	60,000
1	Nottinghamshire	80,000
1	Somerset	30,000
2	Staffordshire	120,000
2	Suffolk	80,000
2	Surrey	50,000
2	Warwickshire	80,000
2	West Yorkshire	110,000
1	Worcestershire	30,000
42		1,813,092

Appendix 2: Grants approved during the three-year period 2020 to 2022

No. of Charities	County	Total (£)
1	Bedfordshire	3,000
1	Berkshire	2,835
1	County Durham	20,000
1	Devon	15,000
1	Essex	20,000
2	Gloucestershire	45,000
1	Hertfordshire	25,000
3	Lancashire	45,000
1	Leicestershire	3,000
3	Lincolnshire	18,500
2	Norfolk	56,587
2	North Yorkshire	35,387
1	Nottinghamshire	9,965
2	Somerset	30,000
1	Staffordshire	6,085
1	Suffolk	15,720
2	Surrey	29,000
2	West Midlands	50,000
1	West Sussex	17,981
5	West Yorkshire	54,000
1	Wiltshire	10,000
35		512,060

Appendix 3: Case Studies from the support of the Rolling Fund.



Lord Petre and Puckle Charities approached The Almshouse Association seeking assistance in response to rising energy costs. They sought support in their efforts to achieve decarbonization and alleviate the burden of escalating energy expenses.

“The Almshouse Association came to our rescue and granted our Charity a £40,000 interest free loan”.



The Buchanan Trust a recent project to renovate their old dairy and stables that will provide further Almshouse accommodation.

This project comprises of two x 2 bedroom properties
And are available for this Nation’s veterans and their families.

“This project would not have been possible without the support from The Almshouse Association.”