



the almshouses Gazette

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Caribbean flavour for Richmond garden party

The Richmond Charities were blessed with a beautiful day of summer sun when they held a tropical themed party in August for over 120 residents.

They all dressed up to join in a Caribbean barbecue with steel band, coconut shy and a chocolate fountain.

Enjoying the sunshine, they danced the day away and took part in a conga around the charity's largest estate at Hickey's Almshouses!

Juliet Ames-Lewis,
Chief Executive,
The Richmond Charities.



Heritage and the environment: preserving almshouse buildings while meeting the challenge of decarbonisation

Competition or collaboration?

Nick Phillips, CEO of The Almshouse Association is on a mission to help save historic almshouses and asks "Can we - should we - save our national heritage almshouse buildings in a drive towards decarbonisation?"

On a recent visit to a Grade I listed almshouse, his discussion with the CEO turned to long-term strategy and decarbonisation. "Their building is beautiful but old and leaks energy like a sieve and I thought I knew where the topic was heading but they

surprised me, their argument was clear, the building holds the carbon cost already and to build new would just increase the carbon footprint they are responsible for. This line of discussion led me to think about today's consideration for building new

almshouses may need to be balanced against the big picture of carbon capture and the wider environment." But almshouses are more than just a significant part of our heritage; they are places where our residents, sometimes frail, need to live in warmth. So, just how valuable is a historic and beautiful home to them if it is also draughty?

Living in an ancient character house would make most of us feel pretty good. It gives us a sense of place, history and a feeling of being connected and, in many cases, pride. But is that sense of wellbeing measurable when compared to a bright modern building with sealed windows and doors and a steady temperature?

No such research has been carried out yet, however, there is a growing body

of evidence that being part of a heritage building, or even just an old building, has value. The Monastery Manchester article reported: "Research shows that combining heritage and wellbeing can positively affect an individual's mental and

"Whittling the ecological impact of buildings down to their electric bill makes a strong environmental case for new construction, which tends to have tighter-fitting windows, central air conditioning, and other state-of-the-art systems. Once you consider the impact of construction itself, however, the argument for preservation gets stronger, in spite of your draughty windows and oil-burning furnace. The greenest building is one that already exists."

Will Hurst, editor, The Architects' Journal.

physical health by providing a sense of community, increasing confidence and reducing social anxiety". The article goes on to say: "There are many more benefits, both tangible (physical things you can see or touch) and intangible (things you can't see but can feel and know are there, like emotions and opinions)".

The Historic England report on

continued on page 3

Almshouse Census

A nationwide census covering all almshouses is about to begin. It is being organised by The Almshouse Association and is believed to be the first time such a survey has been carried out.

The census aims to help build a better understanding of almshouse operations and how to safeguard them for the future.

Members should shortly be receiving details of how to complete the survey. Please help us to help you! Further details on page 6.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S COMMENT

By the time this Gazette goes to press we may know if we have been able to amend the terms of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill - National Planning Policy Framework Section 106 affordable housing definition.

I am told by ministers that despite overwhelming support from MPs and Peers we need to be patient and manage our expectations. However, like me, I imagine you are neither patient nor



CEO Nick Phillips with fellow Board members and The Rt Hon. Theresa May MP.

prepared to accept something that is clearly wrong, in our view, and most MPs seem to agree. We will either win a change here or battle on at the next stage.

The definite impact of raising this issue is that about 100 MPs have written to the Secretary of State and are now very aware of the value and impact of almshouses.

Given the challenges above, the implications of the *Social Housing Bill*, the new proposed *Consumer Standards*, and the *Levelling up and Regeneration Bill*, the almshouse model continues to be steered towards regulation.

I strongly feel that the charity status and the independence of almshouses needs to be protected, even under Regulated Housing where trustees have decided to register their charities.

I was recently challenged on Section 106 by a senior MP: "So you want the money but not the regulation?" A tough but fair question. However, I reflected that, as charities, the only beneficiary of the money is the residents and where they are found to have a better life in almshouses than other forms of social housing, that has got to be good for society. On this basis then yes, our members do want the opportunity to

provide more almshouses to enable more residents to live well in small and vibrant almshouse communities.

And as for Regulation, no-one could argue with the fact that the mission of the Regulator is good and we would support it. But proportionality and the impact of unintended consequences of charities becoming homogenised are areas over which we need to be ever watchful.

If members have no choice but to become regulated in order to be recognised by their local council as affordable housing or by Homes England, we must start discussions with government about the type and proportionality of current regulation in the hope that we may achieve an officially agreed lighter touch for members.

Thanks to all of you for your combined approach and such great engagement with MPs and Peers that benefits all almshouse charities.

Added support for charities struggling

For some time now the Association has been actively seeking to raise funds to help those charities with the most challenging circumstances and we continue to offer grants and loans where needed. As the 'almshouse brand' becomes more widely recognised for its

value to the residents, it becomes even more important that we help those charities in the almshouse family to be able to offer a good standard of homes to their residents.

We are here to help all members and hope to intensively support those charities that are struggling or unable to maintain their buildings to a standard we all expect. We are currently fundraising for an additional team member to actively work with those charities most at risk. This role will also help recruit new trustees where they are most needed.

What is the value of the almshouse brand?

The brand is starting to be recognised outside the almshouse world and recently we have been made aware of a developer using the almshouse brand to sell his development on the basis that it is built in an 'almshouse style'. Should one be annoyed that the brand we've all worked hard to raise the profile of is being manipulated, or proud that it's being used as a positive example and seen as being of such added value?

I think, on balance, this is a reflection of the great work that you, our members, are doing raising the quality of the almshouse model.

Training courses

I am delighted to let you know that our training courses have started again so please do make sure you book onto one soon. The feedback has been excellent so far. Regional Meetings and Seminars resumed this autumn after the summer break and it has been great to meet up with members again.

I hope this autumn is an enjoyable time for you and your residents - who knows, maybe the summer weather is just running a few months behind!

Nick Phillips, Chief Executive

CONTENTS

2/3 Chief Executive's comment; Preserving almshouse heritage while meeting the challenge of decarbonisation; The 2023 Almshouse Association Awards

4/5 'Friends of' Club launches; Association grant helps solar panel project; Looking after homes in cold weather; The Almshouse Way - book now

6/7 First ever almshouse census; Preparing an annual return for The Charity Commission; New eLearning course; Association Chairman celebrates anniversaries

8/9 Almshouses in the Community - Tiverton green fingers; Traditional bread giving; New homes at Retford; Barnet architecture festival; Modernised in Trowbridge

10/11 Trustees role in making investments; Listed Building and Conservation Area planning rules; Advice on de-registration; EPCs for almshouses

12/13 National news insight; Archiving almshouse records - past, present and future; Roller coaster interest rates make cash funds attractive

14/15 D-Day veteran recalls wartime landings; Apply now for Christmas Fund; Dinosaur joins celebration; Founders Day barbecue; Retirement presentations

16 Mission to save historic glass at Browne's Hospital chapel; Trustees' partnership secures future of almshouse charities; Help for hoarders

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Heritage vs Carbon Footprint - competition or collaboration?

continued from front page

'Wellbeing and the Historic Environment' shows a clear link between the heritage building and the added wellbeing from gaining a 'sense of place'. We are here at the tip of the iceberg in terms of research and we know that retrofitting listed buildings is a challenge but we are seeing change.

Historic England has recently launched their second ever Guide Note, choosing to focus on historic almshouses. This shows the level of recognition of their heritage value to the country with a focus on working almshouses and the opportunities to retrofit, maintain the embedded carbon and improve lives for residents.

www.housing.org.uk/resources/decarbonisation-guide-for-housing-associations/

Historic England has issued additional retrofit guides and despite the 'sword of Damocles' issue of EPC ratings, it seems that the spirit of working with, and improving existing heritage buildings, is gaining support.

There are so many fantastic examples of retrofitting and refurbishment within old and listed almshouses. We will be sharing these examples on our website in the future, including details of 21 homes at the Grade II listed Sir Francis

Crossley Almshouses in Halifax (photo above), which are now fully occupied



after two years of work, retaining their character while incorporating thermal efficiency improvements. The Charity received funds from The

Almshouse Association, the council and other funders. Another success is the Tibberton Almshouse Charity, which took the opportunity to refurbish their stock as the cottages became vacant, with a full decarbonisation plan including wall insulation, high-performance double-glazed windows, deep roof insulation and high efficiency boilers. This has led to a drop in the running costs of their Victorian almshouses by 60%.

It is not always possible to do but if you are maintaining and holding your old heritage almshouse, the entire almshouse movement thanks you for doing so.

We are actively raising funds to help our members maintain and retrofit their historic almshouse buildings. The heritage value of maintaining an almshouse in a form that it was originally intended may well, in future, be one of the most valued parts of our history.



The 2023 Almshouse Association Awards

We are now accepting submissions for The 2023 Almshouse Association Awards. Our Awards have been designed to allow for a more wide-ranging opportunity to showcase your almshouse charity, to be inclusive for all members, and recognise all your hard work and dedication to the almshouse movement.

Your contribution to the almshouse world is a fundamental aspect of its longevity and we want to ensure we celebrate your accomplishments and triumphs while sharing valuable insight that can help support fellow members on similar journeys of 'refurbishment and redevelopment'.

Simon Pott, Chair of the Awards Panel, said: "Even small changes can make a significant improvement to the lives of residents and are much encouraged. We have wonderful examples of new windows improving the warmth and comfort of residents' homes and window boxes inspiring them to create their own cottage gardens, supporting community spirit."

Whether you have refurbished your single-storey almshouse or are building a completely new development, please join us in celebrating your almshouses by sending in your submissions. We look forward to hearing from you!



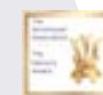
The Inspirational Homes Award highlights innovation in design, exceptional planning, quality in build, and value for money.




The Innovation for Living Award is for charities that can demonstrate elements of intergenerational living, environmental considerations, accessibility, and connection with community.



The Gardens and People Award showcases projects enhancing the lives of residents and the local community, including garden modelling or 'landscaping', projects supported by residents and external schemes supporting residents' mental well-being and physical health.



The Patron's Award is for outstanding refurbishments or new build projects that have achieved architectural merit in a traditional almshouse format, judged by our Royal Patron.

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Go to www.almshouses.org/almshouse-association-awards/ to find out more and to read all about our past winners.

Deadline for submissions for works completed in 2023 is 31 January 2024.

Further reading:

- <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/enthusiasm-for-heritage-surges/>
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2020/heritage-and-the-economy-2020/>
- <https://www.themonastery.co.uk/heritage-and-well-being-guest-post/>
- https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Heritage-Alliance-AnnualReport_2020_Online.pdf
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/wellbeing-and-the-historic-environment/wellbeing-and-historic-environment/>



Official launch for Friends of The Almshouse Association

Ensuring the enduring legacy of the almshouse movement by safeguarding its historical significance and securing its future


We are delighted to announce the launch of our new **Friends of The Almshouse Association club**.

This is a welcoming club in which members, their friends and family can get involved; a club where you can feel a close connection with like-minded people who share your passion for almshouses and the almshouse movement. *Friends of The Almshouse Association* offers a wide range of activities and projects to engage you, including invitations to special events and almshouse tours, whilst simultaneously lending your support to the almshouse movement to ensure its long-term sustainability.

This new club takes the place of our *Associate Membership* and *Lifetime Membership*. If you are signed up as a *Lifetime* or *Associate Member* of the Association, you will already have received a letter with further details about the new *Friends of club* and we look forward to sharing the many benefits with you over the coming months.

To find out more, please go to www.almshouses.org/friends-of-the-almshouse-association or email: FriendsOfClub@almshouses.org

We look forward to you joining us!



**NOW TAKING
NEW BOOKINGS!**

The Almshouse Way

CPD accredited 1-day course for new trustees, clerks and CEOs, as well as members wishing to consolidate their knowledge.

During the course we cover

- Almshouse history, what makes almshouses unique
- The Almshouse Association and how we can support you
- Charity structures, the charity regulators
- Roles of trustees and clerks/CEOs, personal liability, your residents

And throughout the day we will be discussing almshouse scenarios and case studies.

Additional material

- We cover a lot of information during the day and appreciate that there is only so much anyone can retain, so every delegate will receive their own comprehensive pack on the day. This covers all details in the course and delegates can also add their own notes throughout the day.
- Plus a post-course email which will help you to have the key topics to hand to reference easily when you get back to your charities.

Book your place

We are running this course around the country and there is no maximum number of delegates that can attend from any one charity.

Places fill on a first come first served basis.

The cost is currently £95 per delegate, which includes refreshments and a light lunch.

To view the venue locations and download a booking form, visit: www.almshouses.org/the-almshouse-way-1-day-course

Almshouse Association loan for solar panels cuts cost of energy and reduces carbon footprint

The Almshouse Association was pleased to be able to respond to a loan request from Lord Petre & Puckle Charities to support the installation of solar panels at their almshouses in Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex. The charity was also looking to replace night storage heaters with a new heating system which would be compatible with their drive to solar energy.

David Clark, Chair of Trustees, has kindly shared his case study with members via the *Almshouses Gazette* and the Association's website.

This article covers the background and installation of the solar panels and the new heating system.

Next year we can look forward to a further update which will hopefully reflect the benefits to the charity and residents of their new solar energy system after the best that a UK winter can throw at them.



"The almshouses in Little Burstead, Essex are financed and managed by Lord Petre & Puckle Charities.

The terrace of three bungalows was built in 1972 as replacements for the original cottages dating back to the 1920s and are located within the village conservation area. The pitched roof of the properties faces north/south, and south is the preferred orientation for maximum solar panel efficiency.

Spiralling energy costs

Spring 2022 saw the start of the energy crisis and costs skyrocketed. We needed to look at ways to significantly reduce this area of our overheads as the charity pays for all heating, hot water and communal lighting for the residents.

We looked at the previous year's usage, which was 22,000kW, or 1,500kW per month and projecting that forward at the new energy rates meant we would be using 52% of our total annual income - a big problem. In addition to this, we were already contemplating replacing the 50-year-old night storage heaters which were very inefficient.

It was decided that we should get quotes for solar panels/batteries and replace the old heating system. We looked at several companies and chose The Skill Group to work with the charity on this project. Initially, the cost looked to be problematic, especially as we explored the possibility of grants but were turned down. But The Almshouse Association came to our rescue and granted our charity a £40,000 interest-free loan, for which we are extremely grateful.

On 6 March 2023 the scaffolding went up and next day the Skill team arrived

and installed all 72 solar panels, including bird guards - essential to stop the possibility of birds nesting under the panels. The scaffolding was removed the following day, all without any inconvenience to our residents. The first part of the project was complete. It was decided that the next stage, installing the batteries in the roof voids and the electrical work connecting everything up, would be left until the weather was warmer so that we could limit the disturbance to our residents.

This part of the project commenced in late April, together with the removal of the old storage heaters and installing the new heating system, compatible with the solar panels. It took just over a week and was completed most efficiently, with only minor hiccups and minimal inconvenience to residents.

Efficient and effective project

The solar panels went live in May and we have since generated 7,713kW of energy which is supplying most of our electricity needs. Additionally, we have sold 6,356kW of energy back to the grid through our electricity supplier, Octopus Energy, at a price of 15 pence per kW. This will be credited to our account and used against what we will need to buy during the winter months when the solar panels will not produce as much electricity. Our total energy usage has gone down from 1,500kW per month to 100kW. The charity would highly recommend The Skill Group to other almshouses who might be contemplating this type of project. They were extremely personable, understanding, efficient and quick to react to any concerns or issues we had. The charity would also

like to reiterate its thanks to The Almshouse Association for granting us the loan which has allowed us to complete this project."

Are your almshouses in need of renovation and improvement but struggling to raise the finances? Please do not hesitate to contact The Almshouse Association via fenellahall@almshouses.org or call us on 01344 452922.

Looking after homes during cold weather

We all need to consider how to look after our homes during the winter months but when a property is empty it is something that can be easily overlooked.

As we head into winter, it is essential to act now to avoid major damage to empty almshouse properties, particularly to ensure water pipes are warm enough to avoid them freezing.

There are three options to consider to guard against the cold.

1. Keep the heating on at a very low setting, around 12°C, night and day.
2. Set the heating to come on daily, early in the morning and again late evening to help keep the temperature above freezing. The thermostat can be set lower than you would be comfortable living in but warm enough to get warm air circulating at around 14°C.
3. If you do not want to put the heating on while the property is unoccupied, the plumbing and heating systems can be drained down. Without water in the pipes to freeze, the chances of burst pipes are greatly reduced and if severe cold does affect pipes there would not be any water damage caused if the ice defrosts.

First ever (to the best of our knowledge) UK almshouse census

The Great Survey is on its way to all our members!

You may recall from history lessons, the Great Survey of 1086 (strangely known as the Domesday Book). Our aim is to do something similar for the almshouse movement. If all goes to plan, we could be forever recorded in the almshouse annals of history as the first generation to record all the statistics about the almshouses of today!

Why are we doing it? Although boasting a millennium-long heritage, our detailed knowledge of almshouse member charities remains incomplete because of the diverse array of operating methods they employ. We are now 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 (WMC)
- trustee boards
- types and numbers of dwellings, bedrooms
- eligibility criteria, charitable aims
- staff provisions

The benefit of gathering this information will enable us to have a stronger base for our conversations with government and other stakeholders. We will be better placed to champion the great value of the almshouse model and also tailor the support services we offer.

We believe this is an exciting opportunity; with the growing interest in almshouses this first ever almshouse census will be history-making, giving us all a really robust understanding of our unique form of charity for many years to come. We will be sending out emails to all the main contacts for each member charity with a link to complete the survey online. If you don't have an email or internet access, let us know and we will send you a paper copy. We know you are busy but the census should not take long and the value of the data will be significant. Thank you in advance.

To request a paper copy, please call 01344 452922

Preparing an annual return for the Charity Commission



Charities registered in England or Wales must send an annual return to the Charity Commission or report their income and spending every year. This should be completed within ten months of the end of your financial year end.

How to begin:

- In order to start to submit your annual return, you are required to set up a 'My Charity Commission Account' with the Charity Commission. This account should be set up by your **main** Charity Commission contact.
- Further guidance notes for accessing online Charity Commission services are available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/online-services-for-charities
- Before you start your annual return, you should check and update your charity's details if appropriate.
- The information that is required to be submitted in your annual return is dependent on the size of your charity and also on whether it is unincorporated or incorporated. In summary:

Unincorporated charities

- **Income under £10,000** - You only need to report the charity's income and expenditure
- **Income between £10,000 and £25,000** - In addition to reporting the

income and expenditure, you will also be asked to answer certain questions about your charity. These questions can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-a-charity-annual-return#ar-questions

- **Income between £25,000 and £1,000,000** - The trustees are required to appoint an independent examiner to check the charity's accounts. You are required to submit the independent examiner's report together with a trustee annual report and accounts in pdf format.
- **Income over £1,000,000 or gross assets over £3,260,000 and income over £250,000** - The trustees are required to appoint an independent auditor and the accounts will need to be subject to a full audit before being submitted.

In addition, it should be noted that if an unincorporated charity's gross income is less than £250,000 then there is an option to prepare its accounts on a 'receipts and payments' basis. Larger charities must prepare their accounts on an 'accruals' basis.

Incorporated charities

All incorporated charities are required to submit a trustee annual return and accounts. In addition, if your charity meets the following criteria:

- **Income between £25,000 and £1,000,000** - The trustees are required to appoint an independent examiner to check the charity's accounts. You are required to submit the independent examiner's report together with a trustee annual report and accounts in pdf format.
- **Income over £1,000,000 or gross assets over £3,260,000 and income over £250,000** - The trustees are required to appoint an independent auditor and the accounts will need to be subject to a full audit before being submitted.

There is an additional filing requirement for incorporated charities. Incorporated charities are required to file their accounts at Companies House within nine months of the end of the charity's financial year end. It should be noted there are different rules if your charity is registered in Scotland or Northern Ireland. For details of annual return requirements go to www.oscr.org.uk or www.charitycommissionni.org.uk

Further guidance on preparing annual returns in England and Wales can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-a-charity-annual-return

Association Chairman celebrates almshouse anniversaries

The Almshouse Association's recently appointed Chairman, Willie Hartley Russell, has been out and about visiting member almshouse charities and joining in with their celebrations.



Westminster Almshouses Foundation (above, from left): Lord Mayor Cllr. Patricia McAllister, Sue Ford, Cllr Selena Short (also a trustee), The Rev'd Graham Buckle, Willie Hartley Russell.

Durham Aged Mineworkers' Association (below, front row): Paul Mullis with Rev'd Danie Lindley and the Rev'd John Mayes. (back row): Willie Hartley Russell with guests at the service.



He was invited by Westminster Almshouses Foundation to celebrate their Founders Day in London in July and also joined Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association in Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne as they celebrated their 125th anniversary and paid tribute to their founder.

The London event was also attended by the City of Westminster Lord Mayor, Cllr Patricia McAllister, together with charity trustees and residents.

The present building opened on St James' Day (July 25th) in 1882 although the original almshouse, founded by James Palmer in 1656, was located a few minutes away in Palmers Passage, just off Victoria Street. Over the years, the site has expanded and now provides accommodation for 41 residents.

To read more about the charity and see photos from the event, visit www.almshouses.org/news/westminster-almshouses-foundation-celebrate-founders-day/

Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association (DAMHA) held a fitting tribute to miner and lay preacher, Joseph Hopper, whose vision led to the establishment of the organisation. The church service was led by Rev'd Danie Lindley who said: "The success of DAMHA isn't just the legacy of Joseph Hopper, or the hard work of all who have taken part in its history, but in the people who live in their almshouses, the people who support those who live in the almshouses and the people who continue to look outwards for more opportunities to provide affordable solutions to housing that provide community and support. DAMHA has given people shelter, hope, support and strength and our prayer is that this will continue for many more years."

To read more about the day, visit www.almshouses.org/news/damha-celebrates-125-years

New online eLearning course now available on our website

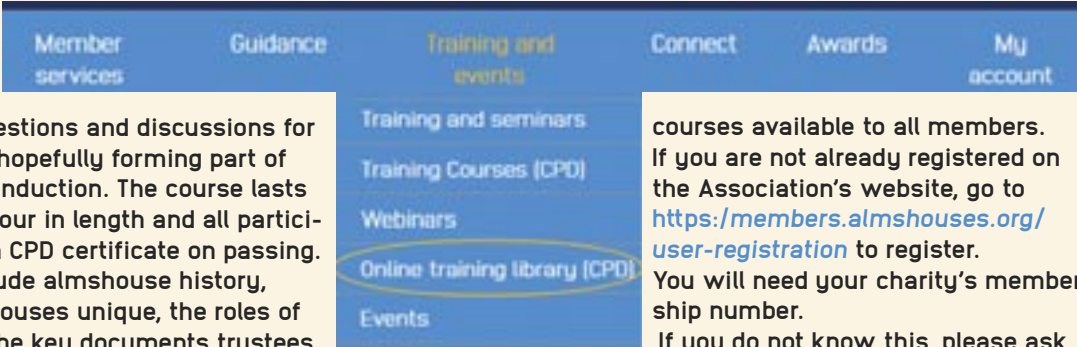
The Almshouse Association is pleased to offer a new online eLearning training course - 'An Introduction to Almshouses'. The course is included in your membership fee and available to as many members from each charity who want to take it.

Aimed at 'new to the role' clerks and trustees as well as existing staff and trustees wishing to brush up on their knowledge, it acts as a scene setter covering key knowledge areas with helpful sign-posting and will generate useful questions and discussions for your new starters, hopefully forming part of your new recruit's induction. The course lasts approximately an hour in length and all participants will receive a CPD certificate on passing. Topics covered include almshouse history, what makes almshouses unique, the roles of trustee and clerk, the key documents trustees and clerks need to be familiar with, the role of the Charity Commission, the main duties of trustees and clerks and where to go for support.

CPD accredited

For those of you who already make use of the online training courses on our website, this new course can be found in the same place. If you have not accessed this area of our website before, you will find it under the 'Training and Events' menu (you need to be logged into the members area of our website). Once logged in, simply select 'Online training library (CPD)' where you will see the list of 11 online training

courses available to all members. If you are not already registered on the Association's website, go to <https://members.almshouses.org/user-registration> to register. You will need your charity's membership number. If you do not know this, please ask either one of your trustees or the clerk, or contact us at admin@almshouses.org Alternatively, please call us on 01344 452922.



ALMSHOUSES IN THE COMMUNITY

The best things happen in threes!

One of Retford's oldest institutions took the limelight on 25 May 2023 to celebrate the opening of five new almshouses. In 2017 the trustees of Sloswicke's Almshouse Charity seized the opportunity to acquire the former joiner's workshop adjacent to their existing properties on Union Street in Retford.



The new construction in 2023 is very timely as the original almshouses were built in 1823 and refurbished in 1983. Sloswicke's Almshouse Charity, established in 1658, is a Registered Provider with Homes England and has 46 properties at four sites in the town. The Union Street Almshouses came to the charity on the merger of charities in 1982.



The new development not only allowed the charity to increase its homes by a further five properties but includes two bungalows which is a welcome addition to the type of homes they offer. It also presented the charity with the opportunity to work with conservation architects, Soul Architects, to redesign the area to the rear of the combined Union Street properties to incorporate communal gardens, seating areas and a scooter store to benefit all the residents. This will allow the new residents to immediately feel part of an established community. For the full article, please visit: www.almshouses.org/news/sloswicke-almshouse-charity-expansion-news/

Top prize for green fingers in Tiverton



Residents at Greenway Gardens won first place

and were presented with a silver trophy by the then Mayor of Tiverton, Cllr Sue Griggs at a ceremony at the Town Hall. Residents at John Greenway Close were equally pleased to receive a certificate for second prize.

Doreen Woodward, CEO said: "The fragrant and colourful flowers, vegetables and fruit produce have been blooming on both our almshouse sites this year, as well as the

insects and birds they attract, because of the hard work, time and dedication by our residents and staff in maintaining such wonderful and uplifting gardens. We would also like to thank Homebase for their support."

Ceremonial bread tradition continues

The recently revived traditional 'Richard Smith for Bread' donation to almshouse residents took place in May outside Guild Cottages Almshouses, Church Street Stratford-upon-Avon. The Mayor of Stratford, Gill Cleeve undertook the tradition of the giving out of the bread.

She said: "Municipal Charities do a marvellous job of providing accommodation for 47 residents in their almshouses and it's great to be able to continue this

ancient tradition of giving out bread from the Richard Smith charity for Bread". The Mayor is pictured distributing bread to two almshouse residents, accompanied by trustees and staff from Municipal Charities.

For the full article see: www.almshouses.org/news/ceremonial-bread-presentation-tradition-continues/



Almshouses join Architecture Festival

The London Borough of Barnet was involved in the 2023 London Festival of Architecture, and Day's & Atkinson's Almshouses played a part in the celebrations by organising a guided walk and talk, with refreshments along the way. Mike Seaman, Clerk to the Trustees, said: "We met at the tomb of Charles Day (the 'Day' in Day's and Atkinson's) in the graveyard at St Margaret's Church, Edgware. We then moved on to Day's Almshouses in Stonegrove, then to Atkinson's Almshouses and finally to the housing and community project that is 'One Stonegrove' where we held a Q&A and enjoyed a buffet lunch." The

event attracted around 30 participants and was attended by councillors, the clergy, Historic England, and members of the public. Rev'd Simon Rea, Chair and Peter Murphy, trustee each gave talks and took participants on a journey through the architecture of the buildings and history of the charity. The weather was perfect and residents welcomed visitors into their homes, giving very positive testimonies as to the benefits of living in an almshouse. Full article: www.almshouses.org/news/days-atkinsons-join-the-2023-london-festival-of-architecture/



Patron's plaque is on top of the 'tower'

Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity in Colchester was presented with a Patron's Award at the Association's Members Day in 2022, recognising the quality of nine new flats completed in 2019. They have now had a plinth built to display the award.



The bricks were hand made for a Chelsea Flower Show exhibit designed by Lady Xa Tollemache but some were surplus to requirements when the garden was re-erected at Helmingham Hall and were bought for the charity's 'round tower'.

Work experience at The Almshouse Association

meet Harry ...

"I joined the Association as a work experience student with two main objectives: to archive the small library and carry out desktop research into European almshouses. Reviewing and cataloguing The Almshouse Association's collection of historic books has been fascinating with some dating back centuries. I've found records of the early ambitions of The Almshouse Association right from its founding which have given a great insight into its early years and how far the almshouse world has come. Most books have been donated by members and the Association is happy to share and hold them for future research. Any donations of historic books relating to the history of almshouses would be greatly appreciated."



Older and colder cottages modernised in Trowbridge

Over the last few years The Trowbridge Almshouses Trust have been updating their properties and when one of their cottages became empty, the trustees spared no time getting to work in readiness for its next resident. The bathroom was particularly cold, so internal insulation was installed with an internal wooden framed double glazed window. A new kitchen was fitted, the cottage was painted and new flooring fitted throughout. The heating had previously been upgraded to gas central heating. The cottage is now warm and modern, yet still in



above (from left): In the lounge with Chairman, Cllr Glyn Bridges; resident, Mrs Gillman; Trustee, Darcy Pace; and residents, Mrs Ede and Mrs Stower. left (from left): Trustees, Kenneth Williams and Darcy Pace; Mayor of Trowbridge, Graham Hill; Clerk to the Trustees, Zoe Pace; Trustee, Bethanie Afton; and Chairman, Cllr Glyn Bridges.

keeping with its heritage and preserving the wonderful historic features. Zoe Pace, Clerk to the Trustees, worked alongside Full Monty Property Maintenance to ensure the cottage was completed to a high standard ready for a new resident. It is now a welcoming one-bed cottage that overlooks the town park and makes a lovely home for our beneficiary. Glyn Bridges, Chairman of the Trust, was delighted with the completed cottage. To celebrate, the then Mayor of Trowbridge, Cllr Graham Hill, was invited to view the renovated home as an example of an almshouse property and see how it benefits the local community. Also invited were neighbouring residents and trustees who joined us for refreshments and reminisce about how the cottage used to look. The Trust is delighted that all 11 properties are now of a very good standard, providing comfortable and energy efficient housing for local people and sustaining the longevity of these historic properties.

The role of trustees in making investment decisions

The Charity Commission updated its guidance on charities and investments in August 2023. The guidance, known as CC14, has been brought up to date to provide trustees with greater clarity and confidence to make investment decisions on behalf of their charities. Trustees have a principal duty to further their charity's purposes and investment decisions should be made to support these purposes. When making decisions trustees should act in good faith, within their powers, manage conflicts of interest and ensure they are sufficiently informed.

The updated guidance sets out some specific duties when making investment decisions:

- Consider whether the investments are suitable for your charity and meet the charity's investment objectives.
- Consider the need to diversify investments and, if appropriate, spread risks.
- Take advice from someone experienced in investment matters, unless you have good reason not to do this.
- Regularly review your charity's investments.

The updated guidance provides some examples of issues that trustees might face in making investment decisions, including:

- Aiming for an acceptable financial return with an acceptable level of risk.
 - Avoiding investments that conflict with the charity's purpose or potentially harm the charity's reputation.
 - Consideration of environmental, social and governance factors (ESG). The guidance also includes previously separate guidance on social investment, for example: investments in affordable housing and the making of loans.
- Detailed guidance is available on the Charity Commission website at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for almshouses

FAQs EPCs have become an area of concern for many of our members with old and listed almshouses. There is a great deal of information and guidance available - perhaps too much because clarity is getting lost, not helped by some Energy Advisors that recommend a solar farm or wind turbine in order to improve the EPC rating of a 17th Century building! If this is your experience, it is best to contact an energy surveyor who is also a conservation surveyor. Please check our Panel of Consultants for professional help. To cut a long story short, almshouse charities are required to have EPCs.

- EPCs are a mandatory requirement for almshouses, irrespective of whether the charity is a Registered Provider of Social Housing, a listed building or not.
- Whilst legislation and regulations have not changed since 2008, secondary and tertiary guidance is that charities should provide an EPC to all new residents.
- The current minimum level efficiency rating for domestic properties is Band E but there has been government consultation regarding changing this to Band C in 2025, although currently there is no firm date for any changes to come into force.
- EPCs are valid for 10 years.
- Listed buildings: (a) An EPC is required for a listed building. (b) Listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas may obtain an exemption if: "In so far as compliance with certain minimum energy performance requirements would unacceptably alter their character or appearance". However, the difficulty with this is that the exemption can only be obtained if the survey for the EPC has already been carried out and the recommendations are known, have been considered and their impact on any significant historic fabric has been assessed.
- One solution could be to appoint an accredited energy assessor who is also an accredited conservationist to carry out the EPC survey but not lodge the EPC on the government database and instead just advise on the recommendations and their suitability. Such professionals are rare, however, and there may be no other option than to obtain an EPC and seek advice from the

local authority Conservation Officer that the recommendations are not appropriate.

- The prohibition on letting property below an EPC rating of E does not apply if the cost of making even the cheapest recommended improvement would exceed £3,500 (including VAT).
- If the 'high cost' exemption applies, the landlord must register this on the PRS Exemptions Register.

To support this exemption, the charity is required to upload copies of three quotations from different installers, each showing that the cost of purchasing and installing the cheapest recommended improvement exceeds £3,500 (including VAT).

- The exemption will be valid for five years and the situation must be registered on the PRS Exemptions Register before the property can be let on a new tenancy. See Chapter 16.8 in Standards of Almshouse Management. We are currently working with a group looking at decarbonisation, retrofitting in historic buildings and we will share information as it emerges. We are working with our expert advisors on providing a comprehensive flowchart about energy efficiency/EPCs (although, as you will have discovered, a better EPC rating does not always amount to the same thing as reducing energy costs).

A message from Energy Surveyor and Building Surveyor, Richard Bassnett ...

Insulate, Insulate, Insulate!
(reduce consumption and capital cost of renewables and improve comfort)

- Know your building - where is it losing heat?
- Develop a comprehensive strategy. Poor decisions now could restrict future options
- Start with low hanging fruit (low cost/high impact)
- Thoroughly research renewable offerings, suppliers and installers
- Do not despair as solutions are out there and are developing very rapidly.

Planning rules for listed buildings and conservation areas

A considerable number of almshouse charities occupy listed buildings which fall into the following categories:

- **Grade I** - buildings considered to be of exceptional interest.
- **Grade II*** - important buildings of more than special interest.
- **Grade II** - buildings of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them.

Approximately 370,000 buildings are currently protected by listing and of these, over 92% are Grade II. All three grades of buildings may be eligible for Historic England grants (formerly known as English Heritage) for urgent, major repair work and details may be found on the Historic England website at www.historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/grants/our-grant-schemes/

If a building is listed, any building work will require 'listed building consent' from the local authority under the Planning Act 1990. In some cases, even minor works such as simple repair work and painting may fall within the scope of the Act. For failing to comply with the terms of the Act the penalty can be a prison sentence of up to 12 months or a fine of an unlimited amount, or both. In addition, owners can then be expected to carry out, at their own

expense, any further work that may be necessary to remedy the unauthorised actions. Generally, permitted development rights are suspended from these buildings and, wherever advice is needed, this should be sought from the conservation officer at the local authority. It should be noted that in almost every case the entire building is listed, including everything inside and out, whether mentioned in the list description or not.

Conservation areas

There is a very common misapprehension that only parts of the building, the outside or the façade are listed but this is generally not true. Areas considered to be of architectural or historical interest can be designated a conservation area by the local council which, in effect, means that additional restrictions are applied beyond the usual planning laws. Planning permission for such items as the following will be needed in the case of properties situated within a conservation area:

- Inserting dormers, altering the roof, installing a satellite dish on a wall or roof facing a highway or on any wall or chimney over 15m (50ft) tall.
- Extending a house by more than 50 cubic metres, including previous addi-

tions erected since 1948 or since the house was built, or ten per cent of the total volume of the house, subject to a maximum of 115 cubic metres.

- Cladding any part of the exterior of the house with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
- Altering or improving a building with a cubic content greater than 10 cubic metres within the curtilage of the dwelling.
- Demolishing or removing any wall, fence or other means of enclosure if it is greater than 1m (3.3ft) high where abutting a highway, or 2m (6.6ft) high in any other case.
- Totally or substantially demolishing a listed building that has a volume in excess of 115 cubic metres, including freestanding walls.

Almshouse charities in Scotland will be subject to different regulations and should, therefore, make enquiries of their respective local authorities. The building surveyors, architects and architectural technicians on The Almshouse Association's Panel of Consultants are available to give advice to those charities with listed buildings or where conservation requirements apply. A list of panel members is available at www.almshouses.org/panel-of-consultants and in the Association's Annual Report.

Considering de-registration as a Registered Provider?

FAQs Any private registered provider can apply to the Regulator for de-registration providing they have grounds to do so under the Act. There is no restriction on when a de-registered provider can re-apply for registration. Section 119 of the Act sets out the grounds on which an application can be made, which are that the private registered provider:

- no longer is or intends to be a provider of social housing in England
- is subject to regulation by another authority whose control is likely to be sufficient, or
- meets the criteria for de-registration set by the Regulator.

Visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-and-de-register-as-a-provider-of-social-housing

Following de-registration there is a laid down criterion of which affected charities should be aware. Under Section 119 of the Housing & Regeneration Act 2008:

- satisfactory arrangements need to be put in place to ensure the

continued protection of 'tenants' and

- satisfactory arrangements should also be in place to ensure there is no misuse of public funds.

In considering the arrangements to ensure the continued protection of 'tenants' the Regulator will:

- expect the private registered provider to demonstrate ongoing financial viability
- expect the private registered provider to be achieving a satisfactory level of performance against the regulatory standards
- take into account any regulatory or other controls that the private registered provider would continue to be subject to after de-registration (including membership of the Housing Ombudsman scheme)
- take into account representations made by 'tenants' and of any local authority in whose area the private registered provider is a landlord
- take into account the nature and scale of the social housing provision of the private registered provider. These factors may change over

time depending on the nature of the applications the Regulator receives and the decisions they take. In considering the arrangements for guarding against the misuse of public funds they would consider the amount of any capital public funding outstanding and any current or planned development for which the private registered provider would receive public funding. De-registered providers are also subject to any conditions attached to the public funding imposed by the funder, including the Homes and Communities Agency (now called Homes England and Regulator of Social Housing, previously called The Housing Corporation), the Greater London Authority, or any other body from which the provider had received public funding. Under 'Guidance' (Model Policies and Templates) in the members' pages of the Association's website, a de-registration toolkit is available as well as other template documents.

Community housing at heart of government statements

On 24 July 2023, both the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak and the Housing & Levelling Up Secretary, Michael Gove gave commitments to meet the Conservative Government’s target of building 1 million new homes over the course of the current Parliament. www.gov.uk/government/speeches/long-term-plan-for-housing-secretary-of-states-speech
For almshouses, there were a number of specific points to note within these announcements, especially the focus on a more locally and community driven approach to new housebuilding for which we are awaiting further details.
See TAA article on website: www.almshouses.org/news/stop-press-community-housing-at-heart-of-govt-housebuilding-announcement/

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2022-23

Affordable Housing and the Infrastructure Levy
The Bill is currently at the Report Stage in the House of Lords, prior to its third reading.
The Community Infrastructure Levy will be retained by Greater London and Wales but replaced in the rest of England by a new Infrastructure Levy system, which will be non-negotiable and will be set locally. It will also eventually replace s.106 contributions. Local Authorities must provide an exemption for charities using property for a charitable purpose.
The Levy itself can be used for a wider range of ‘infrastructure’ including ‘affordable housing’ which is defined as: (a) social housing within the meaning of Part 2 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, and (b) any other description of housing that Infrastructure Levy regulations may specify.
This is a very important clause, as it could allow almshouses as community housing to be considered as ‘affordable housing’ for the purposes of receiving funding from the Infrastructure Levy.
www.almshouses.org/news/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-2022-23-affordable-housing-and-the-infrastructure-levy/

Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

“An Act to make provision about the regulation of social housing; about the terms of approved schemes for the investigation of housing complaints; about the powers and duties of a housing ombudsman appointed under an approved scheme; about hazards affecting social housing; and for connected purposes”.
The Act passed into law late July 2023 and whilst it is of particular relevance to almshouse charities who are Registered Housing Providers it is also a timely reminder to all members on such issues as Health & Safety, Fire and Legionella risks.
Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/36/enacted
Almshouse Association article: www.almshouses.org/news/pg-update-22-08-23/

Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022: Fire doors in flats

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 are of particular relevance to buildings with a top storey above 11m in height but there is also one new duty which applies to all blocks of flats, regardless of height. Where there are common parts then flat entrance doors are included within the meaning of common parts for fire safety purposes.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-england-regulations-2022-fire-door-guidance/fire-safety-england-regulations-2022-fire-door-guidance
Almshouse Association article: www.almshouses.org/news/fire-doors-in-almshouses/

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

Almshouse census: help us to tell your story

The Almshouse Association will be carrying out a census of our member almshouse charities this autumn and the information you provide will be key to helping us to help you, by raising awareness of the good work you do for your local communities with Members of Parliament, local councils and councillors.
We have updated the template letter to MPs and put together a briefing note that can found on our website, so if you haven’t yet received a visit from your MP and you would like to arrange one, this may be helpful.
The more we can do to spread the word the better, as there will be local council and mayoral elections in May 2024 and a general election by January 2025 at the latest.
If you have an interesting story about your almshouses, your residents, your history and your future, then please let us know and we will help promote it.

Association responds to Consumer Standards consultation

On 25 July 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) set out a new proposed set of consumer standards www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-consumer-standards to enhance the experience and improve the wellbeing of occupiers of social housing. In January 2023, the RSH sought input for the draft plans from The Almshouse Association and although some of the areas we raised concerns about have been removed from this draft, there are many areas in the current proposal that we will, and must, challenge.
We remain concerned about elements of ‘tenant management’ proposed (given the personal responsibility held by trustees), aspects of the Mutual Exchange and particularly the indication that all forms of occupation may be swept up with this proposal. We will be responding robustly.
NOTE: At present this only affects almshouse charities that are Registered Housing Providers

Charity Commission guidance on charities and investments

The Charity Commission has updated guidance on charities and investments.
Published on 1 August 2023, the guidance (known as CC14) has been redesigned for greater clarity and to give trustees confidence to make investment decisions that are right for their charity. The language used in the guidance is clearer and the structure has been updated so that it is shorter and easier to use, and trustees can find the information they need more quickly.
The guidance:
● includes examples of various issues which may be relevant for trustees to consider when making investment decisions
● lists steps trustees ‘must’ take to be compliant with the law and those that trustees ‘should’ do which are strongly recommended as best practice but not legally required
● explains that acting in ‘the best interests of a charity’ is about ensuring any decision furthers its purposes.
● incorporates previously separate guidance on social investment and no longer uses terminology that could get in the way of trustees’ understanding, such as ‘ethical investment’, ‘mixed motive investment’ and ‘programme related investment’.
Full details: www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14 (also see page 10 of this issue of the Gazette)

Archiving - past, present and future

“I was delighted to read Jennifer Millard’s advice in issue 269 (Gazette, winter 2022/23) on archiving almshouse records. I should like to respond from the perspective of a user of such records, both personally as a historian and from the experiences trustees have shared with me in attempting to track down what happened in the past, and why. The storage methods I have encountered include the following:
a) a grocery carton packed with minute books and assorted other items, covering c. 200 years up to present, in good condition and kept in the home of the current Clerk to the Trustees.
b) county archives/local history library deposits varying from single items to old photographs and newspaper cuttings and (occasionally) a substantial and listed batch of items. In one instance, accessing material from the Archive’s catalogue, I was brought an additional package in brown paper and string just as it was deposited half a century before.
c) ephemeral clues or memories of old documents, too often indicating subsequent loss. There is no point preserving material if no-one knows where it is.

Locations include storage in solicitors’ cellars, occasionally with the church (understandable in the past as an institution with continuity) or, less frequently, as business records with other bodies which have dealt with the almshouse such as builders and architects’ practices. But these, if still in existence, can only be found if you have the original name.
Two important questions to bear in mind when deciding on the initial storage retention policy are: “What do we need to hand currently and what might be relevant in the future?”. The latter is obviously hard to predict, although one approach is to consider what you wish someone had kept in the past. If a fairly consistent selection is archived this should aid later understanding of changes (for example, in the provision of facilities or space allocated to each resident) in the context of wider social attitudes and legislative requirements.
This also raises the issue as to what is a document. By way of example, in one case I was very happy to find the architects’ drawings for the proposed (and realised) mid-C19th alterations. These were accompanied by drawings



of the present buildings in order to explain to the client what was involved. That showed the change in what was considered appropriate from the early C18th to a post-New Poor Law world. Photographs can help in a similar way for more recent updates - and not just the attractive façade. For residents, it’s generally the interior of their home that matters most. So, when undertaking a refit (and without compromising residents’ privacy) take ‘before and after’ photos of the inside for your archive.
We all know how important almshouses have always been to those who live in them but your present day records might go further in contributing to wider contemporary and future housing debate and the particular value of the almshouse model.”
*Helen Caffrey
Author of Almshouses in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1600-1900.
Joint editor The British Almshouse.*

Roller coaster interest rates makes cash funds attractive

Since December 2021, when the UK’s official bank rate (OBR) stood at a historic low of 0.10%, the Bank of England has increased its policy rate fourteen times. The latest increase, of 0.25% on 3 August, took the OBR to 5.25%. The last time it was as high as this was in April 2008. Making the latest announcement, Andrew Bailey, governor of the Bank of England, suggested that while the rate might not need to move much higher from here, we should not expect to see it fall sharply back.
The higher interest rate policy is aimed at reducing inflation, which has surged since the world emerged from pandemic restrictions and has been made worse by the war in Ukraine. Policy makers assume that increased borrowing costs will curb the spending power of consumers and businesses, and that as this reduces demand for goods and services, prices will begin to increase more slowly.
The squeeze on households’ spending power can, of course, cause financial pain for many people and businesses. However, for individuals and organisations with cash savings, there should be at least some good news in the form of higher interest rates on these balances. Many banks and building societies, however, have not



been passing on the full benefit of the rate hikes to their depositors. With the official bank rate now at 5.25%, why might cash funds prove attractive to almshouses?
Given the rise in the official rate, cash savers, regulators and politicians have all been frustrated by the low interest rates offered by most easy-access bank accounts. As an alternative, deposit and money market funds are an efficient, low risk way to access interest rates that are much closer to the OBR.
The main objective of deposit and money market funds is to keep investors’ capital secure and maintain easy access for withdrawals - most will offer daily dealing. They typically target these objectives by investing in deposits and money market instruments across a widespread of carefully screened banks.
CCLA operates three such funds with combined investments of over £4billion; one of these is being used by more than 9,000 charities. To find out more, visit www.ccla.co.uk/ or email clientservices@ccla.co.uk
Other investment companies offer similar funds, and you should always satisfy yourself that your choice meets the needs of your charity.

article contributed by CCLA

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One of the few remaining D-Day veterans - resident Phil Sweet



There are only thought to be about half a dozen British veterans of the D-Day landings left alive. We are proud to say that one of them is Phil Sweet who is a resident at one of the Municipal Charities almshouses in Stratford-upon-Avon. Phil is now 98 years-of-age and recalls his experiences of D-Day. "I was sent to a place called Lochailort in the Highlands where I did six weeks of hefty nautical and ability training. Those six weeks were the toughest I have experienced in my life, both physically and mentally. At the end of each week you had exams and if you were not good enough you would be dropped. But I lasted and was appointed an officer and sent to Troon for officer training for another six weeks before being appointed to a tank landing craft ready for the D-Day landings. I was part of the initial wave that landed at the village of La Rivière as part of the Gold Beach landings. I was in a flotilla which were the first to go onto the beach, with two tanks on top of each other on the landing craft so that they could bombard the beach with shells as they were coming into land ...". Read more about Phil Sweet at: www.almshouses.org/news/almshouse-resident-1-of-half-a-dozen-d-day-veterans/ Municipal Charities are hoping that Phil will be able to join in the 80th anniversary celebrations in Normandy next year.

contributed by William Clemmey, Chief Officer, Municipal Charities

Centenary celebrations ... and a dinosaur came for dinner!

An Open Garden event and evening party took place on Midsummer Day, 24 June 2023 to celebrate the centenary of Woollam's Almshouses in Redbourn, Hertfordshire.

There was a history exhibition and tea and cakes were served to visitors who came to enjoy the gardens in the afternoon and donated generously towards outdoor projects. Residents, trustees and guests celebrated together at a barbecue in the evening, with musical entertainment from members of St. Mary's Church choir and a surprise visit from a dinosaur, hiding a fun-loving resident!

The almshouses were endowed in 1923 by Mary Woollam in memory of her late husband, Charles Woollam who owned silk mills in St. Albans and Redbourn. The Redbourn Silk Mill was built in 1857 and mainly employed women, some of whom later benefitted from almshouse accommodation.

Six bungalows and a warden's flat were added to the original four almshouses in the 1960s and the properties, bordering



Redbourn Common, are surrounded by a beautiful garden. Residents are supported by warden Sheila Seabrook, who works very hard to maintain the safe and contented community at Woollam's. Long may it continue!

contributed by Pauline Ridgwell, trustee

Founder's relative retires from traditional family role

The trustees and residents of The Hospital of St Anne's Almshouses, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria held a garden tea in honour of Lord Hothfield (right), the retiring Chairman of Trustees. Anthony has been Chair since 2002, taking on a traditional family role following his father and uncle who were also trustees in their time. Lady Anne Clifford, who built the almshouses in 1664, was Anthony's 8x great-grandmother. Her eldest daughter, Margaret married John Tufton, Earl of Thanet from whom he descends. The almshouses consist of 13 houses and a chapel built around a quadrangle and are about to undergo a full restoration project.

contributed by Sarah Harden, trustee



Fond farewell to clerk of 31 years

Residents and trustees of Nuckells Almshouse, Broadstairs, Kent will greatly miss their clerk, John Wood (left), and his wife Sally, who fully supported the works of the trust for 31 years.

The trust is a small charity in St. Peter's village, Broadstairs founded by Miss Ann Nuckell in 1835. She bought the vacant workhouse which previously had 48 'inmates' and provided homes for ten widows. In the 1980s the trust modernised the listed building and converted it into six self-contained flats.

contributed by Maggie Bennett-Goodman, trustee



Apply now for Christmas fund vouchers

The Almshouse Association is pleased to be able to offer Christmas fund vouchers again to almshouse residents over 90 years-of-age this year.



The Almshouse Association Christmas Fund derives its origin from a generous legacy left to the Association over 70 years ago by Major Allnatt, a successful businessman and philanthropist who worked closely with and supported our founding General Secretary, Leonard Hackett.

It was important to Major Allnatt that his gift remained a secret until his death, many years ago now, but his legacy lives on in the form of a gift to every almshouse resident over 90 every Christmas. You'll find a form to apply in this Gazette and on our website.

Please complete and return to The Almshouse Association by email or post before 22 November 2023.

One of last year's recipients of the Christmas Fund was Marion, at the Liversage Trust, Derby.

Founders Day celebrations at Eventide Homes

The Eventide Homes, Bournemouth celebrated its Founders Day on 21 July 2023 when residents, trustees, staff and guests enjoyed a barbecue in the almshouse



grounds, 87 years after the first homes were built on the estate. This was the first event held on this scale since the pandemic. After giving thanks to the Homes' founder, Alderman JR Edgecombe, and the founding trustees for the legacy they provided, Ken Mantock, Chairman gave special

thanks for all the support shown by the community during the pandemic.

He also personally thanked the local postmaster, the local chemist, and the

community champion from the local supermarket. All went above and beyond in helping residents of the charity during such a difficult time. The Mayor of Bournemouth, Cllr Anne Filer, who was a guest at the event and is an ex-officio trustee of the charity during her term as mayor, was amazed at the beautiful surroundings and thanked the trustees for their hard work to ensure that the charity is thriving today.

For more details, see the full article at: www.almshouses.org/news/founders-day-celebrations-at-eventide-homes/

Seminars in 2024

We are delighted to be planning a series of seminars in 2024, each including a panel of expert speakers covering key topics. Dates tbc.

- Trustees and Clerks seminar in Oxford (March)
- Wardens and Scheme Managers seminar in Leicester (May)
- Trustees and Clerks seminar in Shrewsbury (September)
- Trustees and Clerks seminar in Kent (October)
- Trustees and Clerks seminar in Yorkshire (month tbc).

Popular webinars continue

Our popular webinar programme will continue to run throughout 2024 and, as always, if you have any suggestions for topics, please send us your ideas to: admin@almshouses.org

Most of our webinars can be accessed on our website at any time:

www.almshouses.org/webinars/

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ALMSHOUSE
ASSOCIATION

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KG KT GC

VICE PATRON

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Julian Marczak

The Almshouses Gazette
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The Almshouse Association
Billingbear Lodge
Maidenhead Road
Wokingham
Berks RG40 5RU
Tel: 01344 452922

email: almshousesupport@almshouses.org

web: www.almshouses.org

Registered Charity No. 245668
Company No. 04678214

2023 CALENDAR

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|-----|----|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Nov | 8 | East Midlands Regional Meeting | Leicester |
| | 16 | Wessex Regional Meeting | Salisbury |
| Dec | 6 | Befordshire Regional Meeting | Bedford |
| | 13 | West Midlands Regional Meeting | Solihull |

Mission to save historic glass

Browne’s historic almshouses in Stamford, Cambridgeshire suffered terrible destruction during the Reformation and Civil Wars of the 1640s but the windows in the chapel were rescued from the rubble. Now they are back in place and protected for the future thanks to the dedication of the charity’s current trustees, who feared these nationally important works of art would be lost forever. The glass was removed, cleaned and the original arrangement, as far as possible, restored and replaced in 1967 with the aid of a grant from the Pilgrim Trust. In 2021, the Windows 21 appeal was launched to install guards to protect the glass with help provided by the Manifold Trust. Last year the project began to install clear glass in front of the windows to provide long-term protection.

The specialist company carrying out the work, Barley Studio, near York, previously installed similar external glass to protect the windows at St George’s Church in Stamford and experts from the firm returned to the town to create templates for Browne’s Hospital windows. The stained glass windows were removed and taken to York where they were cleaned and studied. The protective glazing was installed at the same time and the historic windows were gradually returned to the chapel and replaced inside the new protective glazing. The project was completed in June 2023 at a cost of £120,000, half of which has



Holy Trinity (left) and Virgin Mary.

been raised through grant applications. Browne’s Hospital provides 13 flats for residents and the chapel is used weekly for a communion service attended by residents. For the full story, visit: www.almshouses.org/news/saved-historic-glass-returned-to-former-glory

Partnership celebrates ten years work to secure future of almshouse charities

The formation of the Legacy East Almshouse Partnership (LEAP) in East Anglia in 2013 has helped to secure the future of 16 almshouse charities, with a 17th due to join the group in the autumn. LEAP was formed by a group of almshouse trustees to create a charity whose primary object was to acquire, manage, maintain and develop almshouses and other charitable trust property for the benefit of local people in need of housing.

tions, LEAP has managed to put aside maintenance funds for all the charities. Each charity is still managed in accordance with its original scheme and their funds are ring-fenced for that particular charity. LEAP charges a management fee and with this fund has been able to ‘lend’ money to charities in financial difficulty to allow necessary work to be completed and properties to be refurbished to a high standard.



Trustees and their families enjoyed a barbecue in the gardens of Chairman, Peter Hill, to celebrate ten years since the formation of Legacy East Almshouse Partnership (LEAP) in East Anglia in 2013.

Trustees have been able to rescue almshouse charities where the existing trustees were wishing to retire or had not been replaced over the years, leaving much depleted trustee bodies. Through effective management and increasing weekly maintenance contribu-

LEAP has been fortunate to recruit new trustees to help ensure the next ten years will be as successful as the last. Further information can be provided by Clare Heyes, Clerk to LEAP, on clerk@leapalmshouses.co.uk



Help for hoarders

Hoarding is now recognised as a mental illness; a complex interplay between social, psychological, and environmental factors.

People often do not have the energy to sort things out and the task becomes overwhelming. Feelings of guilt or shame may also prevent people from seeking help.

Research has shown that hoarding may be linked to a specific traumatic life event, or could be symptoms of another condition such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, acquired brain injury, dementia, depression, or autistic spectrum disorder.

The situation can be frustrating, worrying and difficult. Often, the individual does not want or feel they need help.

We can all help and support someone who hoards by challenging our own prejudices and assumptions and realising that everyone is different. It is not always possible to understand why an individual hoards. For more information and details of help available, please visit: www.almshouses.org/news/hoarding/