

The Lady Anne Windsor Charity, Annual Report 2020

Prepared for the Annual Parish Meeting

This report includes developments up to the Covid-19 lockdown at the end of March 2020.

Personnel: Peter Orrock resigned as Chairman. Trustees thanked him for his 14 years of service in that role, and are pleased he has agreed to continue as a Trustee. I was honoured to be elected to succeed him as Chairman.

Debbie Langstaff resigned as Clerk. Trustees thanked her for her eight years of service in that role. She has been succeeded by a job-share between Anne and Colin Walton.

Janet Bosman, Nicki Bray and Martin Owen continue as Trustees, in addition to Peter Orrock, and Martin Owen as Treasurer, and their diverse contributions are much valued.

I am pleased to report that the Downs almshouses and Number 3 Rowley Cottages were fully occupied throughout the last twelve months. The occupancy details, with the year of commencement, are:

- No 1 The Downs, Mr Nicholas Beavan (2016)
- No 2 The Downs, Mrs Maureen Frost (2002)
- No 3 The Downs, Mr Karl Cansdale (2003)
- No 4 The Downs, Miss Cheryl Smith (2006)
- No 3 Rowley Cottages, Mrs Yvette Long (2016)

Our two farm tenants Mr Stewart Pulford and E T Smith & Son remain unchanged from last year.

Governance: As reported last year, the Charity Commission agreed to update the geographical qualification for Lady Anne Windsor Charity almshouses, to provide that “residents shall be . . . inhabitants of the area of the civil parishes of Leavenheath, Nayland-with-Wissington and Stoke by Nayland . . .” The Commission has now confirmed that Trustees are at liberty to give preference to inhabitants of the parish in which the almshouse with the vacancy is located. This is significant in the context of the Charity’s ambitions to develop new almshouses across the whole geographical scope of its Governing Document.

We continued to give thought to the legal structure of the Charity, in the context of the liabilities to which we might be exposed if the Charity’s development plans proceed.

Stewardship: The Quinquennial inspection of the Charity’s buildings by a conservation architect took place early in 2019. The architect concluded that “*The almshouses are in good condition considering their age. The property appeared to be without noticeable damp problems although no testing was undertaken. There is a condensation problem internally, especially in the bathrooms and noticeably more so since the chimneys were rebuilt and capped in 2014 despite the flues being ventilated. The pitched roof is extensively covered with moss and vegetation growth which restricts detailed inspection, particularly of the north slope. The roof is likely to require retiling during the quinquennium. . . . The cottage is generally in excellent condition.*”

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All the report's urgent recommendations have been implemented, and most of the rest. A firewall has been installed in the roof space of the Downs almshouses. The moss and vegetation on the roof has been removed, and some repairs made. We have been advised that the roof should now be sound for many years to come. Following this work and a variety of minor repairs and redecoration, the almshouses are looking as good as they ever have.

We continued to press for the footpath over The Downs to the centre of the village to be brought back to a safe condition, and helped clarify the relevant land ownership issues.

With regard to our financial affairs, the Trustees continue to be of the opinion that the assets of The Charity are appropriate to cover our immediate and budgeted requirements. The Trustees reviewed and revised their policy on the investment of their reserve funds.

Development: We have been working for many years to increase almshouse provision within our area. We acquired 3 Rowley Cottages from Babergh District Council in 2016, but projects to build new almshouses have yet to come to fruition.

We continued to work with Suffolk County Council and Hastoe Housing Ltd towards development of part of the site of the former Stoke by Nayland Middle School. The Covid-19 restrictions have delayed matters but we hope that an application for planning permission will be made during 2020.

We continued to pursue discussions concerning land owned by the Charity at Leavenheath. This presents a unique opportunity to develop new accommodation to meet local needs by working in close conjunction with Leavenheath Parish Council and Babergh District Council.

During 2019 the Trustees became aware of the opportunity of government grants to remodel the historic almshouses on The Downs. We have appointed an architect and a project manager, and plan to take this forward in 2020.

Adam Sedgwick
Chairman