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Almshouses: a model of community housing for an ageing population





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List of acronyms

ACL	Almshouse Consortium Ltd
ANBI	Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling (Institution for Public Benefit)
APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Groups
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
CIO	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
CLH	Community-Led Housing
CLT	Community Land Trust
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CASSH	Care and Support Specialised Housing
GLA	Greater London Authority
HAPPI	Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HE	Homes England
JCT	Joint Contracts Tribunal
JEH	John Eastwood Homes
LA	Local Authority
LHB	Landelijk Hofjesberaad
LIN	Learning and Improvement Network
NALC	National Association of Local Councils
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
WMC	Weekly Maintenance Contribution

1.0 Executive summary

Figure 1

New almshouses, The Mills Charity, Suffolk, UK



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1.1 Background

Almshouses have existed in England for over a thousand years, and new almshouses are still being built. Almshouse charities provide social housing for over 36,000 people in around 30,000 dwellings. Most almshouse residents are older people (aged 50/60+ years), yet built environment and housing professionals, politicians and others concerned with the provision of housing for older people are more familiar with other social housing providers than with almshouse charities.

Research on almshouses tends to focus on their architectural and social history, detailing historic buildings, the past role of philanthropy, and the lives of residents, rather than their current or future role in housing provision. Recent reports addressing housing issues, and more specifically addressing rented housing for older people, have tended to concentrate on housing with care as solutions for future provision.

This research starts to fill the gap by taking a future-focused approach, looking at recent almshouse developments to inform housing provision in the 21st century. We explore their distinct and valuable contribution to housing older people to inform built environment and housing professionals, including architects and surveyors, funders, local authority housing and planning officers, prospective partner organisations, Homes England and the UK government.

1.2 Approach

This study concentrates on England and on almshouses for older people, although some findings could apply to almshouses for younger people, families and mixed age development. International comparison was provided by a visit to the Netherlands, where there is significant literature concerning not only the history but also the current and future role and influence of the Dutch hofjes (almshouses) dating from the 14th to the 21st century.

Our question is: what can be learnt from the enduring almshouse model of housing for an ageing population in England and the Netherlands to inform future housing provision in perpetuity for those in need? The key issues we consider are:

- why and how different almshouse organisations decided to build new almshouses;
- the approaches they took, the opportunities and barriers they have faced;
- the extent to which barriers have been overcome; and
- future lessons for almshouse charities, their advisers and other stakeholders.

A case study approach was adopted, with cases being purposively selected to achieve diversity across a range of issues: concept, land acquisition, funding, design, planning, size of charity, size of housing development, location, housing type and development stage (on-site/ or completed).

Figure 2

Hofje courtyard, Delft, Netherlands



Image source: Authors

There are five English and two Dutch almshouse case studies, with developments being planned and realised over a number of years:

- **Bristol Charities**, Bristol 2000–2019
- **St Clement Danes and Holborn Estates Charity**, London 2000–2017
- **Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity**, Colchester, Essex 2012–2019
- **Thorngate Churcher Trust**, Gosport, Hampshire 2013–2019
- **John Eastwood Homes**, Todmorden and Calder Valley Community Land Trust, West Yorkshire; 2000–2019
- **Johannes Enschedé Hof**, Haarlem 1997–2007
- **Gravinnehof**, Haarlem 1992–2001

The English case studies were selected to achieve as much diversity as possible within the time and resources available. We draw on additional examples in England to give a good indication of the range of new-build almshouse developments, but further research would be needed to reflect a fuller range of views and experiences. Two Dutch case studies provide an indication of development within the Dutch almshouse movement; our primary purpose is to provide a UK audience with ideas for the future, drawing on learning from both Dutch and English case studies.

1.3 Findings

Many almshouse charities are providing new almshouses, as well as remodelling and upgrading older almshouses and taking advantage of various funding opportunities. At least 2,500 almshouse units have been provided over the past ten years, including over 1,600 new buildings and around 900 units from remodelling outdated bedsits and other unsuitable dwellings. Almshouse charities need to work closely with local authorities responsible for housing, planning (and sometimes adult social care). Although almshouse charities have received over £50m of public grant for new-build and remodelling in grant programmes between 2008 and 2021, many charities are creative in providing housing with little or no public funding. Over 40% of new-build almshouse units have been funded without public grant.

There is significant interest within the almshouse movement about how best to adapt the model for the 21st century, and our case studies and examples show how almshouse charities can draw on several funding streams for new developments. There are a number of ways in which almshouse charities have realised development opportunities:

- they may own additional land, and/or contribute charitable resources to make limited public funding go further
- some almshouse charities have successfully redeveloped existing sites to provide modern housing (including extra care housing)
- others have sold off valuable but unsuitable or poorly located buildings, and built new almshouses elsewhere
- some almshouse charities have merged to make better use of resources (land, buildings and governance arrangements).

Figure 3

The Thrale Almshouse and Relief in Need Charity, Streatham, UK



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1.4 Recommendations

The case studies show that collaboration and constructive relationships are needed between:

- clients and their support organisations
- professional advisers including surveyors, architects, engineers, other built environment professionals and legal advisers
- local authority planning and housing
- funders (Homes England, local authorities, banks, charitable trusts)
- building contractors
- residents and the local community.

Almshouses will only ever be part of the solution for housing an ageing population. Strategies and considerations for the future include:

For professional advisers

- think about your local almshouse charities; for example, when looking at sites including rural exception sites¹, small infill sites or parts of larger sites
- include almshouses in the 'mix' of future planning (rural or urban) for older people
- remember almshouses have a role for the future and can often provide excellent local connections.

For local authorities

- almshouses can be part of your provision and can be a good option across a range of housing types and from small to larger developments
- older people help build a local community. Enabling people to maintain their local connections can mean they are able to remain independent for longer
- when developing local plans in consultation almshouse charities can access community-led housing (CLH) funding.

For the community

- access funding to help explore your options and carry out initial feasibility
- when developing a local needs survey involve your local almshouse charities remembering many are interested in intergenerational projects
- partnering across CLH models is worth exploring as it can be a good fit (particularly with CLTs).

For almshouse charities and the Almshouse Association

- develop awareness of the opportunities that almshouse charities present with other stakeholders
- there is good practice and experience within the almshouse community which needs to be more widely disseminated
- reinterpret the past and reimagine for the future.

¹ These are small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection: https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory_record/489/rural_exception_site

Figure 4

Long Alley almshouses [15th century], Abingdon, UK



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2.0 Introduction

2.1 Why almshouses?

Almshouses² have existed in England for over a thousand years: new almshouses are still being built. Almshouse charities house over 36,000 people in around 30,000 dwellings.

Most almshouse residents are older people (aged 50/60+ years) with limited financial means and a local connection. Yet they are rarely on the radar for professionals, politicians and others concerned with the provision of housing for older people. Conferences and reports that address current and future issues concerning housing design, development, planning and management rarely mention almshouses. Academic research and publications on almshouses have almost always focused on their architectural and social history, not on their relevance today and for the future. This study starts to fill this gap in research on the role of almshouses in the 21st century, and provides examples of the contribution that they can make in providing 'affordable'³ housing⁴, support and care for older people. There is now significant interest within the almshouse movement about how best to adapt the model for the 21st century. The UK Almshouse Association and its 1600 member charities are developing their networks, within the movement and externally.

Figure 5

Cloisters almshouses [15th century], Ewelme, UK



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² The English name 'almshouse' dates back to the 14th century when it began to replace earlier medieval names for buildings that provided board and lodging [e.g. bedehouse, lazer-house, hospice, hospital]; the word 'alms' derives from Old English, late Latin and earlier Greek words meaning 'compassion'. 'Alms' usually consisted of food, clothing, medicine, occasionally money, and sometimes accommodation [Haldane, 2018].

³ The term 'affordable' is contested. Social rent has always been cheaper than market rent, but since 2010, grant funding has been targeted towards homes for 'affordable rent' [up to 80% of market rents] and home ownership options; in some years, little or no grant-funded social housing was built [CIH 2018, Shelter 2019]. Analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation [2018] found that 'affordable rents' for typical two-bed properties are 30% more expensive than social rents [average: £1,400 p.a.] and more expensive still in South East England (£2,000 p.a.) and over £5,000 p.a. in ten London boroughs. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/affordable-rents-compared-traditional-social-rents>

⁴ The UK government's definition of affordable housing can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework Annex 2 [MHCLG, 2019]

2.2. Rationale for Netherlands focus

Several reports on housing (discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 10) refer to innovative examples of new Dutch housing developments, from the 2009 report from the Housing our Ageing Population Innovation Panel (HAPPI⁵) to 2019, *Learning from international examples of affordable housing* (Falk and Rudlin, 2018) and Shelter's commission on the future of social housing (Shelter, 2019). The Netherlands has the highest levels of social housing in Europe: 40% of total housing stock, compared with only 18% in England. Housing associations are the main social housing providers in both countries; 75% of Dutch tenants rent from housing associations (Falk and Rudlin, 2018).

The UK and the Netherlands have a similar age profile and pension coverage, including predicted rises in percentage of population over 60 in 2050 (30.7% UK, 33.2% Netherlands); anticipated life expectancy (beyond 60), good health predictions, pension provision and policy approaches (Global Age Watch Index 2015). However, for state pensions, the Netherlands was ranked top (out of 34 countries); the UK was 15th (MMGPI, 2018). Relevant to our study (because almshouse charities house people on low incomes), only 3.1% of Dutch pensioners (aged 66+) were in relative income poverty, compared to 14.2% of UK pensioners (13th out of 36 countries) (McInnes, 2019).

Figure 6

De Hof van Wouw (17th century), Den Haag, Netherlands



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Figure 7

Courtyard, De Hof van Wouw (17th century), Den Haag, Netherlands



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⁵ HAPPI [Housing our Ageing Population Innovation Panel] is the name of the expert panel for the first report commissioned by the Homes and Communities Agency [predecessor of Homes England] on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health. The Panel's work built on Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: a national strategy for housing in an ageing society [2008]. <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/>

2.3 Why Dutch almshouses?

'The double agenda of providing housing for poor people of old age and solidifying the memory of a rich founder of the hofje (collectivism and monument) lays the groundwork for the architectural development of the building type.' (Wilms Floet, 2016a, p.255).

Dutch hofjes (almshouses) date from the 14th to the 21st century. Hofje⁶ means 'little courtyard' (Wilms Floet, 2011a). We use 'almshouse' to refer to both English and Dutch almshouses throughout the report, as not all Dutch almshouses are called hofjes or built in the courtyard typology. Foundations (known as Stichting) are 'legal persons' (Hoolwerf et al., 2015), and are equivalent to UK almshouse charities. Regents fulfil a similar role to English trustees; we use 'trustee' throughout the report. Stichting Landelijk Hofjesberaad (LHB) is the Dutch almshouse foundation/association. Table 4 compares English and Dutch almshouse associations (see chapter 10).

In the Netherlands, a notable contrast to the UK is the significant literature (mainly in Dutch) concerning not only the history but also the current and future role and influence of the almshouse courtyard typology, extending to private and social housing and care provision.

Although there are a few almshouse buildings elsewhere in north-west Europe, only the Netherlands and the UK have national associations of charitable almshouse providers (personal communication, LHB). As with the UK Almshouse Association, the Dutch LHB is a membership organisation. Chapters 4 and 10 contain further information on English and Dutch almshouses.

Both associations fulfil a similar role, supporting their members with guidance and meetings, promoting the role of almshouse charities/foundations, and representing their interests with government and other statutory agencies. Recent links have been established between the Dutch and UK associations; this collaboration is expected to strengthen with further discussion and exchange of ideas on shared issues.

Figure 8

Bakenesserkamer Hofje (14th century), Haarlem, Netherlands



Image source: Authors

⁶ The Dutch word 'hof' has many meanings, including garden [as in the garden of Eden]; Court [government, law and justice]; a farm; courtyard spaces [as in castles or cloisters]; and courtyard housing in the Dutch tradition. Note that we use the term 'almshouse' to apply to the Dutch 'hofjes van liefdadigheid' which means little charity courtyards. They should not be confused with other historical and contemporary hofjes using the courtyard form. These include Flemish historical Beguinage courtyards; speculative commercial 19th century hofjes for the working classes [including unhealthy back to back housing, mostly demolished]; mass-housing hofjes [1900-1990] provided by housing associations; and private developments, discussed in Chapter 10. For a full discussion, see Wilms Floet 2011[a, b].

2.4 Aim and research questions

This study aims:

- to examine successes and barriers to new almshouse developments, and
- to consider issues, including concept, land use, planning, funding, and design;

so that

- almshouse charities can make a greater contribution to meeting the needs of their local communities for locally-based housing, and
- other stakeholders (including local authorities and CLTs) are aware of their potential.

We explore alternative methods and innovative models, mainly in England but also in the Netherlands. The devolved UK nations (i.e. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) have a different social history (hence very few almshouses or members of the Almshouse Association). These nations also have differences in housing and planning policy (and law in Scotland). Although this study concentrates on England and on almshouses for older people, some findings could apply to the devolved nations and to new almshouses for younger people, families and mixed-age developments.

Key question: what can be learnt from the enduring almshouse model of housing for an ageing population in England and the Netherlands to inform future housing provision for those in need?

2.5 Research methods

This study follows the conclusions from earlier research on the future role of almshouses (Pannell, 1999; 2013). It builds on previous reviews of literature as part of Anglia Ruskin University's programme of almshouse research, developed from a relationship with Proctor and Matthews Architects and Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) from 2016 onwards. An unpublished scoping review by Anglia Ruskin University for the Almshouse Association (Pannell et al., 2019) confirmed our hypothesis that the potential of almshouses in the UK has been largely unknown outside those involved in the almshouse movement.

A case study approach (Stake, 2005) was chosen to explore:

- why and how different almshouse organisations decided to build new almshouses
- the approaches they took, the opportunities and barriers they have faced
- the extent to which barriers have been overcome, and
- future lessons for almshouse charities, their advisers and other stakeholders.

As this is a qualitative study, English almshouse charities were purposively selected to achieve diversity across a range of issues (see Chapter 4 for more details).

There are five English and two Dutch almshouse case studies, with developments planned and realised between the dates below:

- Bristol Charities, Bristol: projects undertaken 2000–2015 and 2013–2019
- St Clement Danes Holborn Estates Charity, London: 2000–2017
- Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity, Colchester, Essex: 2012–2019
- Thorngate Churcher Trust, Gosport, Hampshire: 2013–2019
- John Eastwood Homes, Todmorden and Calder Valley Community Land Trust, West Yorkshire: from 2000s, with the project commencing on site in 2019
- Johannes Enschedé Hof, Haarlem: 1980s–1997–2007
- Gravinnehof, Haarlem: 1992–2001.

Telephone and e-mail contact with almshouse charities and the LHB provided initial information. The authors visited all the case study locations between February and July 2019. Interviews and focus groups with a topic guide (Appendix 1) took place with key informants. Case study charities and organisations also provided photographs, plans, reports and other details of the development process.

The two Dutch almshouse case studies in Haarlem are the only new-build developments for older people since 2000, and were provided by LHB member foundations. A few Dutch housing associations are also LHB members because they manage (and sometimes own) almshouses. Chapter 10 includes our fieldwork visit to new social housing in Veenendaal (near Utrecht) built by a Dutch housing association and LHB member.

This study underwent a full review by Anglia Ruskin University's Research Ethics Committee. Interviews were recorded, transcript summaries were checked by participants, and sensitive material was anonymised.

2.6 Limitations

English case studies were selected to achieve as much diversity as possible within the time and resources available (see Chapter 4). We believe that the sample and additional examples give a good indication of the range of new-build almshouse developments, but further research would be needed to reflect a fuller range of views and experiences.

Two Dutch case studies provide an indication of development within the Dutch almshouse movement; similarities and divergence are discussed in Chapters 10 and 11. This is not a full comparative study because the primary purpose of our research is to provide a UK audience with ideas for the future, drawing on learning from both Dutch and English case studies.

Figure 9

Hofje entrance, Delft, Netherlands



Image source: Authors

Figure 10

Window detail at De Hof van Wouw, Den Haag, Netherlands



Image source: Authors

Figure 11

View of the courtyard at De Hof van Wouw, Den Haag, Netherlands



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3.0 Older people, housing, and planning

This chapter outlines the English context for this study, focusing on current and predicted housing needs of an ageing population to link with issues raised in our case studies, analysis and conclusions:

- defining the ageing population
- the housing policy context, especially for older people's housing
- community-led housing and Community Land Trusts
- public funding for new-build almshouses
- the planning context.

The Dutch context is summarised in chapter 2 and revisited in chapter 10.

3.1 Who is an 'older person'?

In considering housing for an ageing population, we define older people as 55+ years. Many almshouse charities and retirement housing providers have a minimum age of between 50 and 60 years. We use the term 'older people', not 'elderly'. In 2007, a British Medical Journal article called for the demise of the use of 'elderly', citing it as '... a term that in any other context is invariably pejorative' (Falconer and O'Neill, 2007). Older people find the link between the term 'elderly' and a judgement of frailty unrepresentative of their cohort (Bingham, 2015). Defining older age is a moving target; pension schemes have mostly used age 60/65 years for eligibility (Roebuck, 1979 cited in WHO, 2019); in the UK eligibility age for state retirement pension is increasing, reaching 67 years by 2026.

Figure 12

Alternative older people crossing sign



Reproduced by permission of Bingham, 2015

3.2 Housing policy

3.2.1 The wider housing context in England

Almshouse charities provide social housing, defined as 'a home provided by a council, housing association or other organisation on a not-for-profit basis at a below-market rent' (Rees, 2018, p.5). Our case studies show that almshouse charities need to work closely with local authorities responsible for housing, planning and perhaps adult social care. Almshouse charities and prospective residents are affected by availability and affordability of other local social housing offers, which may affect demand. Only around 5% of older people live in specialist housing for older people (APPG, 2019); we start by considering the wider housing context.

In February 2017, the government published its White Paper *Fixing our broken housing market* (DCLG, 2017) which finally accepted that not enough housing has been built for decades, resulting in a crisis of supply and affordability. This followed increasing public and political concern about housing after an emphasis on home-ownership since 1980, the loss of nearly 2m social-rented homes through the Right to Buy scheme, decades of under-investment in housing for social rent, welfare benefit cuts, deregulation of the private rented sector and increasing homelessness (Shelter, 2019).

Stephens et al. (2018) point out that the Grenfell Tower fire (June 2017) raised wider questions about social housing, reflected in the Chartered Institute of Housing's report *Rethinking Social Housing* (Rees, 2018), the government green paper *A New Deal for Social Housing* (MHCLG, 2018), and *A Vision for Social Housing* (Shelter, 2019). Shelter's cross-party year-long commission traces the failure of 40 years of government housing policy and calls for 3.1m social homes to be built over the next 20 years for all those failed by the housing market. With the number of privately-rented older households (aged 55+ years) having almost doubled to nearly 780,000 (between 2013 and 2017), this should include social housing for all older people trapped in private rent (see also Blease, 2019; APPG, 2019; DCLG, 2016).

3.2.2 Specialist housing for older people

More attention has been paid to specialist models over past decades, specifically government funding for extra care housing (with 24/7 staffing and on-site care). Extensive research has found quality of life improvements for residents and savings for health and social care (Croucher et al., 2007; Netten et al., 2011; Holland et al., 2019; SSCR, 2019). Almshouse charities rarely provide extra care housing, but we have provided one case study (Chapter 5).

Growing interest in private/mixed tenure retirement villages and private retirement housing, provided by housing associations (for rent, shared ownership and sale) and private developers (mainly for sale), has been extensively researched (e.g. Evans et al., 2007; Croucher et al., 2010). Most is less relevant because the emphasis has been mainly on owner-occupied retirement housing, often linked to the downsizing/rightsizing debate⁷ (Hammond et al., 2019).

Sheltered housing (i.e. social housing grouped dwellings with varying, often limited staff support) has received less attention, although concern about hard-to-let bedsits dates back over 20 years (Tinker et al., 1995; Riseborough, 2001). Later research and resident consultation have included concern about loss of staff support at sheltered housing (King et al., 2008; AgeUK, 2012; Pannell et al., 2012a). Berrington (2017) acknowledges the challenge to landlords and impact on residents of poor-quality stock; much has been de-commissioned and let to people of all ages. The APPG on Ageing and Older People reports:

'there is still a challenge to refurbish and improve existing sheltered housing built during the '60s, '70s and '80s ... [and] significant numbers of sheltered schemes offering bedsits or one-bedroom accommodation with poor accessibility' (Age UK, 2019, p.14).

Many larger almshouse charities provide sheltered housing (frequently with on-site warden/scheme manager); two of our case studies tackle outdated bedsits. Wood (2017) reports an estimated overall saving of £486m from sheltered housing (reductions in costs of in-patient stays, immediate care costs from falls, health and care costs of hip fractures, and health service use from loneliness).

Inquiries by All Party Parliamentary Groups⁸ (APPG) have promoted specialist housing models for older people, especially HAPPI reports 1-5 (2009-2019)⁹. HAPPI 1 (2009) includes case studies with design features from visits (including the Netherlands). Ten HAPPI key design criteria reflect good design generally, but with special relevance for older people's housing. HAPPI 2 (2012) and HAPPI 3 (2016) focused more on retirement housing for sale; HAPPI 5 (2019) considers the increasing number of older

people in private rented housing, as did the report *A Vision for Social Housing* (Shelter 2019) from their cross-party commission (in paragraph 3.2.1 above). HAPPI 4 (2018) considers the ageing rural population, recommending that every local plan should contain specific sites for new older people's housing, including housing solutions developed by rural landowners, local councils, housing associations, and also CLTs and almshouses (the first HAPPI report reference to almshouses). Case studies include Lady Lumley Almshouses, Thornton-le-Dale, North Yorkshire (16th century, Grade II listed). Good practice in housing design for older people has been explored through many reports, most recently by Park and Porteus (2018) and Stern et al. (2019).

3.2.3 Community-led housing

The focal point of CLH is that local people are enabled to play a leading and lasting role in the provision of homes within their community (Homes England, 2018; Stevens, 2013). The government made available a CLH fund worth £163m in England in early 2018 (funding ended March 2020), to enable mobilisation of local groups to implement different types of community development. CLH is open to a variety of community organisations, including registered charities (Homes England, 2018). The CLH fund was available to be used for feasibility studies and new housing. As well as the case study almshouse/CLT partnership in Chapter 9, St Hilda's Almshouses, Hinderwell, North Yorkshire also received CLH funding. This was Scarborough Borough Council's first use of their £1.86m CLH grant from DCLG in December 2016. It included £7,000 for the feasibility study/pre-contract works, and £60,000 (50% of the cost) for converting the office space into two new flats (one 1-bed flat, one 2-bed flat) (Pannell et al., 2019).

The importance of community involvement in local provision is a potential area of growth led by the local community rather than central or regional policy (Heywood, 2016); this is particularly important where older people (and others) are unable to afford market rates to rent or buy appropriate accommodation locally (Edwards and Porteus, 2019).

Interest in developing co-housing projects has gained ground in the past five years. Key issues for these communities are lifelong neighbourhoods, control, design input and intentionality. A key difference with CLTs is the level and degree of engagement and control, both during the development process, and post-occupation management. Examples of co-housing communities for older people can be found in both the Netherlands and the UK; although this is not the focus of this report, as with CLTs there is a synergy between provision, explored in chapters 9, 10 and 11.

⁷ 'Rightsizing' is terminology used in preference to 'downsizing' to better reflect the process of moving from an under occupied larger home into a home that better meets their housing needs. Source: <http://ageactionalliance.org/downsizing-vs-rightsizing-older-peoples-housing-needs/>

⁸ All-Party Parliamentary Groups [APPGs] are informal cross-party groups that have no official status within Parliament; run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords, though many choose to involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities. <https://www.parliament.uk/about/mps-and-lords/members/appg/>

⁹ HAPPI [Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation] is the name of the expert panel for the first report, commissioned by the Homes and Communities Agency [predecessor of Homes England] on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health. The Panel's work built on *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: a national strategy for housing in an ageing society* [2008]. <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/>

CLTs are a model of CLH, set up and run to develop and manage homes as well as other assets within a defined community (National CLT Network, 2018). CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people earn locally, and for every future occupier. CLTs often, but not exclusively, develop housing in partnership with a housing association. The role almshouse charities can play is covered in our case study (Chapter 9). Moore (2015) identified the important role of CLT volunteers who took the lead in developing low-cost housing in West Country villages. There are similarities here with the role of almshouse charity trustees when developing new almshouses: 'Volunteers contributed a huge amount of time, energy and expertise to the initial housing scheme – all without any personal financial reward' (Moore, 2015, p.5).

CLTs are more similar to almshouse charities than other community-led housing in that they are required to be managed by non-beneficiaries (Heywood, 2016). CLTs are defined by statute within the *Housing and Regeneration Act 2008*; as member-led organisations, they combine ambitions to develop sustainable, genuinely affordable, community development with guiding principles that offer a replicable model (Davies et al., 2017; National CLT Network, 2018; RUSS, 2019). There is an interesting synthesis between these principles, the principles guiding almshouse charities, and the ambitions of co-housing

communities. The key issues (sustainability, environmental, financial and social) are critical here and speak to the need for more robust community-focused housing provision in perpetuity (Heywood, 2016), which almshouse charities have extensive experience of providing.

The three and four-sided almshouse courtyard model resonates with current interest in England and the Netherlands in CLH, CLTs (UK), co-housing, inter-generational living and concern about loneliness and isolation. The typology challenges the social exclusion seen in housing development in the UK in recent years. 'Tenure blind' approaches to housing often mark out the difference, through access to common spaces (play areas/community gardens) or access to the buildings ('poor doors') between social and privately-owned housing within the same development (Grant, 2019). The courtyard typology can mediate the relationship between the collective and the private, the townscape and the semi-private, safety and control. They additionally provide green spaces in town and city centres open to the public (for many Dutch almshouses) or visible to the public (for many English almshouse gardens). These traditional designs continue to influence the architecture of new housing (and some social care) developments by private providers and housing associations, for sale and for rent in both countries (Leibrock, 2019), and are further explored through our case studies in chapters 5–10.

Figure 13

Hopton's Grade II* listed almshouses (18th century), London, UK



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Figure 14

Tomkins' Grade II* listed almshouses (18th century), Abingdon, UK



Reproduced by permission of Proctor and Matthew architects

3.3 Funding

The reduction in social housing funding in the UK has had a detrimental impact on its availability. The decline in owner occupation and lack of affordable social housing¹⁰ has forced more people into the private rented sector (PRS), with insecure tenancies and often poor-quality housing. The PRS has seen a doubling of numbers since 2000: as this new 'Generation Rent' gets older and the chances of buying a home diminish, the number of retired people in the PRS seems set to change dramatically' (APPG, 2019, p.3).

Webb (2012) evidenced how the move towards individual funding through Housing Benefit and Universal Credit has thwarted subsidies for the building of new homes. The Housing Benefit bill has increased due to the dependency on the PRS and increasing market rents, and remains disproportionate to funding new social housing:

'in Great Britain 1979-80, public housing investment was five times larger than spending on housing benefits ... since 2011-12 benefits spending has been at least three and a half times the size of public housing investment' (Chaloner et al., 2019, p.3).

This trend may be reversing through government funding for social housing development (£1.7 billion), lifting the cap on local authority borrowing, and a commitment to

CLH through providing initial funding for projects (such as the example in section 3.2.3). Homes England grant funding for social/affordable housing development is open to all registered providers: local authorities, housing associations, the for-profit sector, and other providers (including almshouse charities and CLTs). Our case studies and examples show how almshouse charities can draw on several funding streams for new developments.

3.4 Planning

Providing appropriate, adaptive and accessible accommodation, as per the principles of Lifetime Homes (Habinteg, 2019) requires a supportive and enabling planning framework, particularly for older people's housing. Section 5 of the revised NPPF (MHCLG, 2019) specifically focuses on 'delivering a sufficient supply of homes':

'... the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes' (MHCLG, 2019, p.17).

¹⁰ As in chapter 2 the term 'affordable' is contested. Grant funding has been targeted towards homes for 'affordable rent' (up to 80% of market rents) and in some years, little or no grant-funded social housing was built (CIH 2018, Shelter 2019). Analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation [2018] found that 'affordable rents' for typical two-bed properties are 30% more expensive than social rents and more expensive still in South East England and London. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/affordable-rents-compared-traditional-social-rents>

As the HAPPI 5 report states:

'... there will be very significant demand for affordable rented homes for older people over the next 30 years: we estimate a need of an average of 38,000 homes a year for rent, of which at least 12,000 should be Extra Care or sheltered. This totals over 1.1 million homes by the late 2040s' (APPG, 2019, p.5)

The NPPF suggests an emphasis on affordable housing aimed directly at the local community, encouraging for those wishing to develop truly low-cost affordable housing in England. However, as the Commission on the Future of Localism suggests, the shift in power promised by the *Localism Act* of 2011 has still to be achieved (Locality, 2018). The revised NPPF could deliver the radical shift that locality calls for, particularly in terms of delivery of divergent housing typologies for our divergent communities. Councillor Sue Baxter, chair of National Association of Local Councils, said the ambitions of the revised NPPF are critical and must be realised for power to truly sit within the community, to ensure that '... planning authorities and developers don't continue to over-ride Neighbourhood Plans' (NALC, 2018, paragraph 5).

Planning can be less of a barrier to developing new housing than funding, as explored through our case studies. Recently, planning processes for delivering housing have been simplified, even over-simplified, such as permitted development of offices into homes. These developments have been criticised as allowing poor quality general housing to permeate a desperate market, having a detrimental impact on local employment, serving a narrow band of need, and not contributing to the community infrastructure levy (Clifford et al., 2018).

Conversion or replacement of inadequate housing such as older sheltered housing is welcomed. There is a good argument for demolishing poor quality homes, representing cost saving to residents, the NHS and renovation costs for the charity (Garrett and Burris, 2015). Our case studies examine approaches taken by almshouse charities in tackling issues around legacy housing that does not meet the standards required now and in the future.

Figure 15

New almshouses at Winnocks and Kendalls, Colchester, UK



Image source: Authors

Figure 16

St Clements Heights, The St Clement Danes Holborn Estate Charity, UK



Reproduced by permission of Philip Durrant

4.0 Almshouse provision in the UK

Chapter 3 introduced the context within which almshouse charities operate; we now introduce almshouses before the case study chapters. The scope and scale of the almshouse movement is not widely known, although it provides housing for 36,000 people in nearly 30,000 dwellings (more than two of the largest individual specialist older people’s housing associations). There are almshouse charities in most areas of England, but very few in the devolved nations. Built environment and housing professionals are more familiar with other social housing providers than with almshouse charities (see Table 1 comparing almshouse charities with housing associations). Some key differences arise from the charitable origins of almshouses. The Almshouse Association has produced a form of words that will provide the basis of a legal definition of an almshouse¹¹.

11 What is an almshouse?

Almshouse Association definition of an Almshouse

“An almshouse is a unit of residential accommodation (usually a house or flat) which belongs to a charity and is provided exclusively to meet the charity’s purpose such as but not limited to the relief of financial need or infirmity and is occupied or is available for occupation under a licence by a qualified beneficiary who may be required to contribute a weekly sum towards its maintenance.

An almshouse charity is a charity which is established to provide one or more almshouses.” [Source: <https://www.almshouses.org/what-is-an-almshouse>]

We have also created a General Description to work alongside this definition:

1. An almshouse charity is a charity for the relief of financial hardship by the provision of housing and associated services or benefits which:
 - (a) is subject to the jurisdiction of the Charity Commission; and
 - (b) must (or is authorised to) provide its primary benefit by the grant of a licence to occupy the accommodation that it owns to its beneficiaries
2. In addition, an almshouse charity is likely to have one or more of the following features:
 - (a) the origin of the charity is a private gift for the relief of poverty;
 - (b) the beneficiaries are required to pay a weekly maintenance contribution that must not be set at a level that would cause hardship;
 - (c) the nature of the accommodation is such that beneficiaries must show particular consideration for the needs of other residents;
 - (d) a significant proportion of the accommodation is permanent endowment;
 - (e) the beneficial class or the geographical area from which it can be drawn is restricted.

Figure 17

Row of almshouses, Essex, UK



Reproduced by permission of Richard Ingram

Figure 18

Detail of entrance to Winnocks Charity almshouse, Colchester, UK



Image source: Authors

Figure 19

View of Colman’s cottages, Suffolk, UK



Image source: Authors

Figure 20

Grade I listed almshouse in Worcester, UK



Reproduced by permission of Worcester Municipal Charities

Figure 21

Grade I listed almshouses in Coventry, UK



Reproduced by permission of Almshouse Association

4.1 What can UK almshouse charities offer their local communities?

Almshouse charities fit well with the growing interest in local, community-led housing solutions discussed in Chapter 3. Yet, there is rarely a mention of what could be considered the oldest form of community-led housing: the almshouse, which often has links to local organisations and locally-based trustees.

In a few localities, large almshouse charities are significant providers of housing for older people. In the north of England, Durham Aged Mineworkers Homes (DAMHA) is the largest almshouse charity with over 1,700 homes across the North East. Their 2017-2022 development programme is one of the biggest in their 120-year history, with over 100 new-build 2-bed bungalows. It is notable that 18% of the HCA/HE grant for their previous development programmes (2010-2018) was recycled grant from earlier housing that was redeveloped (see also Chapter 5 on recycling grant).

Pickering and Ferens Homes is another large almshouse charity with over 1,350 homes in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire. They have been building 122 new bungalows with local authority support, gifted land, self-funding, and a grant from Homes England (2015-2018) as part of a 10% growth in stock over three years, and Newbridge

Figure 22

New almshouses, Pickering and Ferens Homes, UK



Reproduced by permission of Pickering and Ferens Homes

Figure 23

New almshouses, Pickering and Ferens Homes, UK



Reproduced by permission of Pickering and Ferens Homes

Figure 24

Grade II listed almshouse in Suffolk, UK



Image source: Authors

Village: 82 bungalows adjacent to an integrated care centre, providing support to patients with long-term health conditions/illnesses associated with older age. Elsewhere, what almshouses offer is not so much the number of dwellings (compared with other social housing) but their convenient location. Examples include almshouses in expensive areas, in town centres, and in villages with little or no affordable housing to rent. Almshouses can provide an additional and affordable housing option, enabling local people to maintain links with neighbourhood, family and friends.

Almshouses make an important contribution to the attractiveness of their locations; they vary greatly in age, size, location and architectural form. The image may be of a medieval building; around one-third of groups of almshouses are listed buildings; others are in conservation areas or locally listed. However, many are Victorian or early 20th century pastiche (neo-Gothic, Tudor, Georgian). Almshouses were built throughout the 20th century; many post-war almshouses replaced those destroyed during or after the war, and they are often indistinguishable from other 1950s/1960s social housing. (Pannell, 1999). Many almshouses are modern, purpose-built developments rather than the typical image of a historic courtyard, or a row of pretty cottages. Some new almshouses have been built in striking contemporary styles.

Figure 25

Grade II listed almshouse in Essex, UK



Image source: Authors

Figure 26

Shared spaces of the extra-care housing by the Lench’s Trust



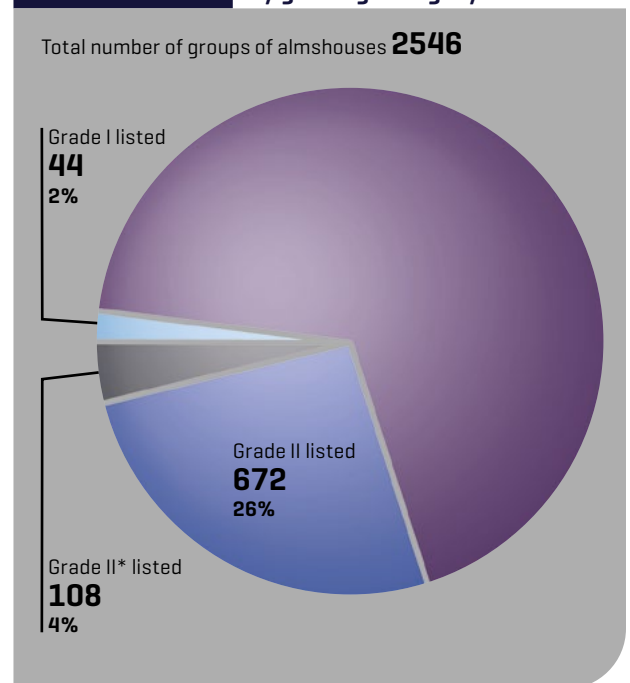
Reproduced by permission of Lench’s Trust

Almshouse charities can provide development opportunities to complement local authority housing and older people strategies:

- They may own additional land, and/or contribute charitable resources to make limited public funding go further.
- Some almshouse charities have successfully redeveloped existing sites to provide modern housing (including extra care housing), and shared ownership options, such as Lench’s Trust in Birmingham¹², whose extra care scheme replaced an outdated 1930s sheltered housing scheme on a large site; nearly one third of the 63 flats are for shared ownership (Pannell, 2013).
- Others have sold off valuable but unsuitable or poorly located buildings, and built new almshouses elsewhere.
- Some almshouse charities have merged to make better use of resources (land, buildings and governance arrangements).
- Many existing almshouses have been modernised and upgraded to meet modern standards.
- Where historic buildings have been retained but no longer meet the needs of older people, some almshouse charities have changed their target group (such as letting to people under pension age) (Pannell, 1999; 2013).

Figure 27

Percentage of listed almshouses by grading category



Source: Almshouse Association Annual Report 2019

¹² William Lench Court (named after the 16th century founder of the Trust) is a new-build extra-care scheme in Quinton, completed in 2011 and developed with Waterloo Housing Association as Preferred Partner. Funding came from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), a capital appeal, the charity’s reserves and the proceeds of shared ownership sales. This is one of very few almshouse developments offering shared ownership to meet the needs of owner-occupiers with modest houses who cannot afford outright ownership of housing association or private extra-care housing. The almshouse charity interpreted ‘need’ in the 21st century as including health, social or housing needs as well as the financial need of the applicants (Pannell, 2013:11-12)

4.2 Types of housing provided

Almshouse charities provide different types of housing for older people (case studies provided for each type):

- **Extra-care housing:** there is much less almshouse extra-care housing, although there are a few recent examples (Bristol Charities, Chapter 5).
- **Sheltered housing:** some new-build developments are sheltered housing with a warden/scheme manager (St Clement's Heights, Sydenham; Thorngate Churcher Trust, Gosport; Chapters 6, 8).
- **Housing for independent living:** most smaller groups of almshouses (under 20 units) and many larger almshouse charities provide 'housing for independent living' (John Eastwood Homes/Calder Valley Community Land Trust; Winnocks and Kendalls Charity; Chapters 7, 9).

Some almshouses have always housed younger people and families; others have no lower age limit. A few new-build and remodelled almshouse developments are specifically designed for younger people, families and people who need wheelchair housing, or as inter-generational housing including both younger and older people (see section 5.7.3 and Chapter 11).

4.3 New almshouse developments

Many almshouse charities are providing new almshouses, remodelling and upgrading older almshouses and making the most of different funding opportunities. At least 2,500 almshouse units have been provided over the past ten years, including over 1,600 new buildings and around 900 units from remodelling outdated bedsits and other unsuitable dwellings (Pannell et al., 2019). Both new-build and remodelling projects can be eligible for a Homes England grant; remodelling covers major building works (but not just repairs or upgrading), such as converting bedsits into one-bedroom flats (see Chapter 8 case study).

New-build almshouses can replace outdated housing stock on new sites (e.g. Haberfield House, Bristol) or on the same site (e.g. St Clement's Heights, London). For this reason, there has been no overall increase in the number of almshouse dwellings between 1995 and 2018, but there have been significant improvements in the quality of housing stock.

Although almshouse charities have received over £50m of public grant for new-build and remodelling in grant programmes between 2008 and 2021, many charities are creative in providing housing with little or no public funding. Over 40% of new-build almshouse units have been funded without public grant (see Table 2, adapted from Pannell et al., 2019). Even with partial grant funding, they will also need to access significant funding from other sources. Almshouse charities and their professional advisers have identified a wide range of alternative funding methods for new-build developments and remodelling, including:

- self-funding from reserves (may include sale of investments/land/properties)
- cross-subsidy by selling part of a site and/or developing housing for sale, with a private developer or housing association
- Almshouse Association small grants and interest-free loans
- bridging finance and/or mortgage from commercial bank, or banks (e.g. Charity Bank, Triodos) that specialise in lending to charities and social enterprises
- grants from large charitable trusts and smaller local charities
- local fundraising from individuals and other means (e.g. parish councils)
- grants from local housing authorities.

Table 1

UK Almshouse charities and housing associations: key differences

Aspect	Almshouse charities	Housing associations
Organisation	The Almshouse Association	The National Housing Federation
Members	1,602 member charities (in UK) 1,569 member charities in England 2,546 groups of almshouses: all are owned by almshouse charities	Over 900 housing associations (England) that own over 90% of all housing association stock; members include a few almshouse charities
Housing stock and scale	29,674 dwellings for around 36,000 people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-thirds of almshouse groups have 10 or fewer dwellings • 16% have 11-20 dwellings • 14% have 21-50 dwellings • Only 6% have over 50 dwellings 	2.5 million dwellings for 5 million people Most for rent, some for sale (shared ownership or outright) Scale: from under 10 to over 50,000 dwellings National specialist housing associations with dwellings for rent or sale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing 21: 20,000 dwellings • Hanover: 19,500 dwellings • Anchor: 34,500 dwellings (now Anchor Hanover since merger, December 2018)
Historic buildings	824 groups (32%) have listed buildings	Not known
Staff	Many (especially smaller) almshouse charities have no paid staff (their housing may be managed by another organisation) All have a Clerk to the Trustees (larger charities have paid staff and a Chief Executive) Over 400 almshouse charities employ wardens/scheme managers	All but the smallest housing associations have paid administrative and support staff; Many housing associations no longer employ scheme-based staff at their sheltered housing
Governance	Trustees Voluntary unpaid role	Board members Larger housing associations pay their board members
Registration with the Regulator of Social Housing	294 registered providers, eligible for Homes England grant funding	Nearly all are registered providers, and eligible for Homes England grant funding
Regulation	All regulated by the Charity Commission ¹³ Registered providers (294) via Regulator of Social Housing Housing Ombudsman Service for charities that are (or have been) registered providers Care Quality Commission (CQC) if domiciliary/personal/nursing care provision	Nearly all (via Regulator of Social Housing) Housing Ombudsman Service for Registered Providers Other regulation varies according to how the association is constituted; this includes CQC regulation for care providers Some very small housing associations have de-registered, but may be regulated by the Charity Commission
Residents: tenure	Licensees: beneficiaries of a charity (not tenants)	(For most tenants) assured tenancy
Residents: rents/charges	Almshouse charities charge 'Weekly Maintenance Contribution' (WMC): amount may be lower than, or similar to, rents for comparable council and housing association sheltered housing; may also include extras (e.g. heating, hot water); if publicly funded, may be subject to rent target	In accordance with government rent target

Source: The Almshouse Association Annual Report 2019; Pannell [1999; 2013]; websites for National Housing Federation, Anchor, Hanover, Housing 21 accessed 15 June 2019

¹³ The Charity Commission has a policy agreement in place with the Almshouse Association to work in partnership and to share information regarding almshouse charities. They produce guidance in the form of three factsheets covering; trusteeship, property, and financial difficulties: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/almshouse-factsheets>

Table 2

Examples of funding methods for new-build almshouse projects

Size of charity Location	Units	Grant: HCA/ HE/GLA?	Type of project Funding methods & sources
Medium 21-50 units London	35 almshouse units	Yes CASSH 1 ¹⁴	Demolition of existing outdated 1960s sheltered housing. New almshouse units funded by large 92-unit mixed-tenure, mixed-age development on same site, developed by large housing association. Site also includes all-age houses for sale. 'Later living' block (minimum age 57): almshouse units pepper-potted amongst apartments for sale with shared courtyard garden.
Small 11-20 units South East	4 flats	No	Four new almshouse flats, in cooperation with local council. Merger of two small local almshouse charities provided sufficient reserves to provide additional almshouses. Local authority offered the almshouse charity a small affordable housing development opportunity: a public house proprietor/ developer with planning permission for conversion into housing, subject to provision of affordable housing on the site.
Medium 21-50 units Yorkshire	2 bungalows	No	New wheelchair bungalows on site purchased from local authority. Funded by proceeds from compulsory purchase of property in Whitechapel, London for road widening in 1965, distributed in 2004. Funds came from 16th century bequest to almshouses in Yorkshire.
Small 6-10 units London	8 flats	Yes	New flats to replace outdated bedsit almshouses sold in 2008. Purchase of new site in 2014. Funded by Greater London Authority grant and proceeds from sale.
Small 6-10 units South East	3 bungalows	No	New bungalows on land adjacent to four existing almshouses. Funded by mortgage from Charity Bank; grants and donations from charitable trusts, individuals and Parish Council.
Medium 20-50 units East Midlands	9 flats	No	New block of flats adjacent to charity's existing sheltered housing. Funded by proceeds following merger with another local almshouse charity, whose almshouse (in an isolated location) was sold in 2008.
Medium 21-50 units Wales	24 flats	No	Demolition of 19 outdated units in 2012. 24 new almshouse flats on same site built by developer, funded by transfer of part of site to developer to build 10 houses for sale.

¹⁴ CASSH 1: support from the Department of Health & Social Care's Care and Support Specialised Housing (CASSH) Fund, 2013. Since 2013, Homes England has allocated over £150 million capital funding to specialist housing providers, on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care, to bring forward proposals. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/care-and-support-specialised-housing-fund>

4.4 Selection of case studies

To select case studies, information was needed on recent new almshouse developments, but no comprehensive data source is available. Almost all almshouse charities are members of the Almshouse Association so our key primary source was a hand-search of the Almshouse Association's quarterly publication *The Almshouses Gazette* (2010–2018), which identified more than 50 new almshouse developments. Further examples came from contacts within the almshouse movement, and published material including the *Architects' Journal* and specialist website on housing for older people, the *Housing Learning and Improvement Network* (Housing LIN).

Potential English case studies were selected to reflect issues including concept, land acquisition, funding, design, planning, size (charity/housing development), location, housing type and stage (on-site/completed). Almshouse charities were contacted to seek agreement: not all case studies were included as full case studies (if at an early stage or access could not be arranged). Table 3 summarises the five case studies featured in chapters 5–9. Analysis of the case studies can be found in Chapter 11.

4.5 Further examples of new almshouse developments

The following almshouse developments are not included as full case studies; none has received Homes England grant funding:

- United St Saviour's Charity, Southwark, London;
- St John's Hospital, Lichfield;
- The Mills Charity, Framlingham, Suffolk.

Learning points from these examples also feed into chapter 11.

4.5.1 United St Saviour's Charity

United St Saviour's Charity is building a large new almshouse with 57 one-bed and two-bed flats and communal facilities. Another almshouse (St Saviour's Court, Purley, Croydon) is the result of moves since the charity's 16th century origins from Southwark to two suburban locations in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Figure 28

New almshouses for The Mills Charity, Suffolk, UK



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Table 3 English almshouse case studies

Name of almshouse charity	Bristol Charities	St Clement Danes Holborn Estates Charity	Winnocks & Kendalls Charity	Thorngate Churcher Trust	John Eastwood Homes
Report chapter	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9
Founded (earliest)	14th-15th century	16th-17th century	17th century	19th century	20th century
Location	Bristol	Lewisham, London	Colchester	Gosport	Walsden, Todmorden
City/town/village ¹⁵	Core city Bristol: 459,300 Urban area: 655,677	Core city London: 10,482,465 LB Lewisham: 303,500	Large town 133,813	Large town 82,875	Walsden: village Todmorden: small town, 15,000
Total units 2019	133	50	41	124	12 + 2
Other activities	Grants, community development	Grants, education	None	Residential care home	None
Number of new units (case study)	60 [additional]	50 [replacing previous almshouse]	9 [replacing 7 bedsits]	14 [additional] 10 in Lucas Court	2 additional [option to buy 4 CLT units in future]
Practical completion	April 2019	October 2016	September 2019	February 2018	November 2019
Housing type	Extra care scheme, 1- and 2-bed flats, on-site care team	Sheltered housing with resident scheme manager 1- and 2-bed flats	7 flats (4 ground, 3 first floor) and 2 bungalows; with community alarm	Enhanced sheltered housing with non-resident wardens. 1-bed flats	2-bed bungalows for independent living with community alarm
Key features	Merger with small almshouse charity Funded by sale of their almshouse Relocation to new site purchased from Bristol City Council	Demolition of 1960s almshouse Self-funded by sale of part of site for private housing for sale, deal with Crest Nicholson	Demolition of 1934 bedsits on existing site Adjacent to Grade I listed 17th century almshouses on difficult town centre site	Remodelling of bedsit units to provide 1-bed flats Additional units on existing site	Partnership with Calder Valley Community Land Trust (CLT), site gifted by Calderdale Council 4 units remain with CLT, all 6 managed by JEH
Social housing grant	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
From	Homes England		Borough Council	Homes England	Homes England
Development agent	Almshouse Consortium Ltd ¹⁶		Charity/Architects	Almshouse Consortium Ltd	Calder Valley CLT
Local authority 1	Bristol City Council	London Borough of Lewisham	Colchester Borough Council	Gosport Borough Council	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Local authority 2		Greater London Authority	Essex County Council	Hampshire County Council	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
County	Bristol	London	Essex	Hampshire	West Yorkshire
Region	South West	London	East	South East	Yorkshire, Humberside

¹⁵ Definitions from Centre for Towns [Stern et al., 2019:13]: village: under 5,000; small town: 10,000-30,000; large town: over 75,000; core city: see <https://www.corecities.com/> Populations: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/statistics-census-information/the-population-of-bristol/>; <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/cities/ua/>; <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/london/admin/>; <https://www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/planning-section/planning/sustainability-profile/>; <https://www.todmorden-tc.gov.uk/>

¹⁶ The Almshouse Consortium Ltd. is one route for almshouse charities to access Homes England funding.

Figure 29

New almshouses St John's Hospital, Lichfield, UK



Reproduced by permission of KKE architects [Arnold, 2019:5]

Figure 30

New almshouses St John's Hospital, Lichfield, UK



Reproduced by permission of KKE architects [Arnold, 2019:4]

The new almshouse in Bermondsey, Southwark started on site in late 2019 for completion autumn 2021; there is no public grant funding. It features as Case Study 11 in RIBA's *Age-friendly housing: future design for older people* (Park and Porteus, 2018). Key learning points concern:

- The importance of relationships with the London Borough of Southwark (between CEOs, trustees, executive directors and senior staff) and local community groups and third sector organisations, linked to the charity's £1m (2018/19) community investment and grants programme.
- Accessing a local authority-owned site for the new almshouse as the Section 106¹⁷ affordable housing contribution for a large development of housing for sale in Bankside (near the river Thames).
- The choice of architects and their vision for a community within a community (e.g. the public spaces), and designing in social interaction through use of landscaping and building shape.
- Using the charity's reserves for over £700,000 preliminary costs.
- Significant delays because of protracted negotiations with different developers (partly because of the impact of Brexit uncertainty on the prime London housing market) and the time taken for all the necessary legal agreements.
- The importance of finding a developer whose vision for high quality construction is aligned with the charity's vision.

4.5.2 St John's Hospital

St John's Hospital almshouse charity dates from 1129, with a new prize-winning Passivhaus-certified almshouse in the grounds of their Grade I listed 1495 almshouse. Completed in 2017, 18 new flats surround a new landscaped courtyard¹⁸.

Featured as Case Study No. 150 (Housing LIN website), there is a full description, photos, and discussion of community impact and engagement. The key learning points from this project included; the importance of using high-quality natural materials, taking a fabric first approach in terms of energy efficiency to address fuel poverty, the use of specialist sub-contractors to ensure the air tightness required for Passivhaus certification, the use of external circulation to enable informal socialising, and establishing a sense of community through the use of green spaces/gardening/covered external spaces (Arnold, 2019).

4.5.3 The Mills Charity

After local benefactor Thomas Mills died in 1703, The Mills Charity was established with a Grade II* listed almshouse, later properties, 'relief in need' and educational grants and a school (now the Thomas Mills High School). The charity's new development provides four flats and ten houses for families and younger and older people. Completed in 2018, the development received local support in the face of planning difficulties, widely reported in the local press (Hirst, 2015; Cornwell, 2016); and acknowledged through the Almshouse Association Patron's award¹⁹. Learning points include:

- Trustees' decision to build family housing as well as flats (a small but growing trend among some almshouse charities).
- Support from local press, Framlingham Residents' Association and local people because this is a well-reputed local charity, in contrast to objections to larger new developments in the town.
- The charity's high profile through other involvement in the town, including educational grants and the school.

¹⁷ Section 106 [of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990] refers to a planning obligation; which is an agreement entered into to mitigate the impacts of a development by a person with an interest in the land and the local planning authority; or via a unilateral undertaking entered into by a person with an interest in the land without the local planning authority [Source: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-obligations>]

¹⁸ This won the 2018 Architects' Journal Housing Project of the Year [up to £10 million] for KKE Architects

¹⁹ HRH The Prince of Wales, Patron of The Almshouse Association, introduced this award scheme in 2000 to recognise and encourage outstanding almshouse development. SOURCE: <https://www.almshouses.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Patrons-Award-Design-Brief-A5-v3.pdf>

5.0 Bristol Charities: Haberfield House, Stockwood, South Bristol

5.1 Bristol Charities

Bristol Charities (previously Bristol Municipal Charities) is one of many municipal charities created after the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act. Charities were previously under the control of the Corporation of Bristol, including almshouses and 'relief in need' grant-giving charities founded from the 14th century to the 20th and 21st centuries.

Bristol Charities established an interesting structure to enable new build developments by setting up Orchard Homes in 1977, with Bristol Charities remaining as corporate trustees. Orchard Homes is both a registered provider and a registered charity. In 2015 Orchard Homes Design and Build Limited was established as a wholly owned subsidiary for the Stockwood project, because this is more efficient for issues concerning VAT. The Stockwood project is further discussed in section 5.7.

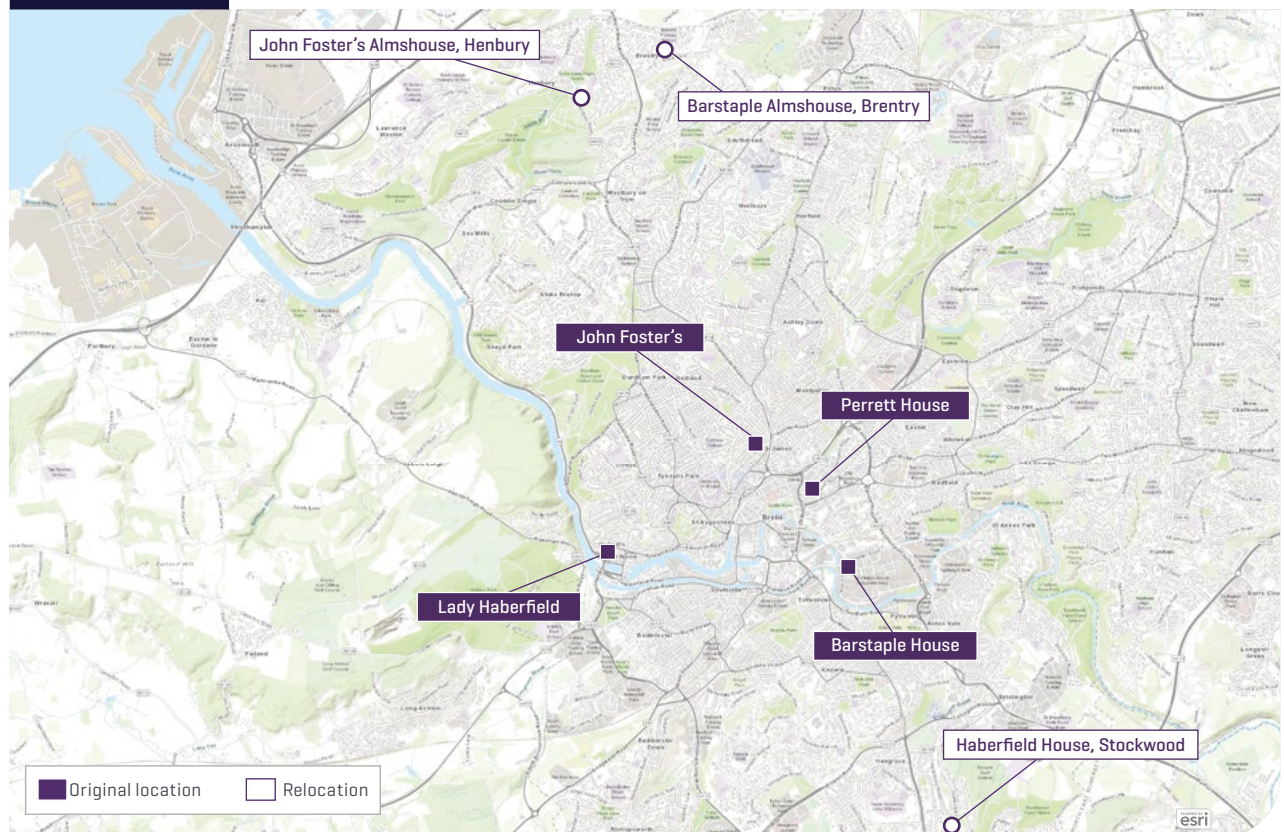
5.2 Moves and mergers

Bristol Charities has been evaluating and replacing unsuitable inner-city almshouses with modern new-build housing suitable for older people and now has 133 almshouse dwellings on three new developments and a fourth in progress:

- John Foster's Almshouse, Henbury: retirement sheltered housing: 18 flats
- Barstaple Almshouse, Brentry: retirement sheltered housing: 34 flats
- Haberfield House, Stockwood: extra care housing: 60 flats
- Replacement for Perrett House and Redcross Mews, in progress.

Figure 31

Locations and moves made by Bristol charities



Reproduced by permission of Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA

Figure 32

John Foster's Almshouse



Reproduced by permission of Alec French Architects

Figure 33

Barstaple Almshouse



Reproduced by permission of Bristol Charities

The John Foster's, Barstaple and Haberfield almshouses are new-build developments designed by Alec French Architects to meet the needs of older people in the 21st century. They replace three Victorian inner-city almshouses, which were no longer suitable for older people because of their design, facilities and difficult access, and a 1980s sheltered housing scheme in a less

desirable location. The Charity Commission agreed to the sales to fund new almshouses, funded by recycled grants (but no new grant for John Foster's and Barstaple) and sales proceeds. Bristol City Council were not involved in the funding or resident allocations for the new John Foster's and Barstaple almshouses.

Figure 34

Foster's almshouse, central Bristol: 19th century, difficult access to upper floor flats, sold by Bristol Charities and replaced by new flats



Reproduced with permission of Christian Mueller / Shutterstock.com

5.3 John Foster's Almshouse, Henbury

Completed 2010 16 one-bedroom flats, 2 two-bedroom flats and communal facilities

John Foster, a Bristol merchant, founded John Foster's Almshouse in 1483 and its adjacent Grade II* listed Chapel of the Three Kings of Cologne. The medieval chapel remains, the almshouse was demolished and rebuilt several times. The current Grade II* listed Victorian building was sold and renovated for owner-occupation and private rent. The Henbury site was purchased from the then NHS Primary Care Trust and there is a health clinic on the ground floor.

5.4 Barstaple Almshouse, Brentry

Completed 2015; 21 two-bedroom flats, 10 one-bedroom flats, 3 additional flats (2019) and communal facilities

Founded in 1395 and 1411, the original almshouses (Trinity Hospital South and North) were later renamed after the founder. John Barstaple was a Bristol merchant and Mayor between 1395 and 1405. Situated in inner-city Old Market, the almshouse was demolished and rebuilt several times: in the 21st century, the mid-Victorian Grade II* listed building next to a busy road junction was unsuitable for older people so it was sold for owner-occupation and private rent.

5.5 Merger with Lady Haberfield Almshouse Charity

The Lady Haberfield Almshouse Charity sold their neo-Georgian late 19th century almshouse near the city centre in 2013. This late Victorian Grade II listed building is next to the busy A4 dual carriageway flyover: it provided sheltered housing before closure and sale. Sale proceeds and recycled grant have been invested in the new Haberfield House featured below.

5.6 Perrett House and Redcross Mews

This 20th century foundation moved three times in less than a hundred years. Mr C. R. Perrett founded a housing charity in 1916 with properties he owned. After his death, management passed to Bristol Charities but the income was insufficient to maintain the properties. Replacement almshouses were sold twice, in the 1930s and the 1960s. Housing Corporation funding through Orchard Homes and sales proceeds were used to build new sheltered housing (Perrett House/Redcross Mews) in the 1980s near Old Market, providing 38 one-bedroom almshouse flats. Residents moved to other housing and the properties were sold for over £6m in 2018; proceeds and recycled grant will part-fund the charity's next development.

5.7 Haberfield House

Bristol Charities' new extra care scheme is built on the site of a former Bristol City Council care home, in the heart of the community, adjacent to shops, bus routes, community, and faith buildings. It shares a boundary with Housing 21's Bluebell Gardens extra care scheme, built in 2012 with 61 shared ownership and social rented flats. There is joint access to facilities at both schemes: Bristol Charities' almshouse residents can use the Bluebell Gardens café-restaurant and hairdresser, with care from Housing 21's care team.

Haberfield House is a three-storey building providing 42 one-bedroom flats and 18 two-bedroom flats; four flats on each floor are fully wheelchair accessible. Almost all the flats have a private patio or balcony. The building also provides a range of communal spaces and support facilities for staff and residents, including a communal lounge, a hobby room, offices for housing and care staff and an en-suite guestroom for residents' family members. Outside there is private parking, a shaded seating area and a large courtyard garden. The project was constructed under a standard design and build Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) contract, with the architects, Alec French Architects, novated to the contractor.²⁰

Residents need to be over 65 years of age, needing (and willing to accept) at least 5 hours a week of care; people with disabilities aged 55-65 are also eligible.

As almshouse residents, they pay a Weekly Maintenance Contribution (not rent) (see Table 1): to be eligible, they must have limited income and savings, and be unable to afford extra-care housing for sale. Applications come via Bristol City Council's 'Care Direct' adult social care 'first stop' service, not direct to Bristol Charities, and are then considered by a joint panel; there has been a long waiting list.

Why an extra-care scheme?

Since the 1990s Bristol City Council have had a programme of extra-care provision with a consortium of their preferred charitable and housing association providers. This is Bristol Charities' first extra care scheme: the charity felt that because of Bristol's ageing population, people will need extra support to help them maintain active, safe and independent lives as they get older. The architect, Nigel Dyke, commented that as levels of care and expectations change, extra-care was the most appropriate response for this site, and that the driver for Haberfield House was to provide generous flats, the ability to have communal space and levels of care located next to an existing facility. Stockwood is a post-war estate of local authority and private housing; south Bristol has a higher than average population of older people. The site provided a great opportunity to enhance local facilities and provide better housing for people as they get older or their health circumstances change.

Figure 35

Haberfield House



Reproduced by permission of Alec French Architects

²⁰ Novation is a process by which contractual rights and obligations are transferred from one party to another. Commonly used on design and build projects, the design team (or part of it), contracted by the client initially to develop the proposal, are 'novated' to the contractor once they are appointed to complete the construct work.

Why an almshouse charity for the new development?

CEO Anne Anketell joined the charity in 2014/15 from a large housing association working in London and the South East, East and Midlands regions, where she managed all their care and support (for older people and other client groups including mental health and learning difficulties); she was already experienced in working constructively with local authorities. Soon after arriving, she contacted Bristol City Council and found that they were willing to engage with her. With the threat of extending the Right to Buy to housing associations, almshouse charities can be an attractive partner because they are protected from future changes to legislation or practice.

Initially the structure of charity created an issue because it was unusual (compared with the council's other partners) and confusing: Orchard Homes was set up as a separate charity, and the council had not been involved in the development of the Brentry and Henbury almshouses. Bristol City Council were used to working with housing association development partners, whereas Bristol Charities were developing directly themselves. Another issue was the idea of Bristol Charities as a 'charity that provides housing', rather than a housing charity. It took time to explain this to the council, including the reasons for almshouse residents being beneficiaries of a charity and having licences, not tenancies. The lack of legal security of tenure for Section 106 was a barrier ('nearly a

deal-breaker') but this is now accepted because of other advantages of working with Bristol Charities.

Another factor that helped the growing positive relationship concerned its grants programme. Bristol Charities is well-known through its grant-giving role as a relief-in-need charity. Over 90% of grants go to young people and families, especially for carpets and furniture for people being rehoused after homelessness; they have well over a hundred referral agencies across the city, and they are the only grant-giving charity with no age criteria.

When looking for a development partner for the Stockwood site, Bristol City Council went out to open market tender with several national and local providers. Bristol Charities won the competitive tender and paid market value for the site, because they are not in the Homes West Partnership (the delivery agent for new affordable homes across the west of England).

Other large providers of retirement and extra care housing often provide a tenure mix (housing for social rent alongside housing for sale and/or shared ownership); criteria may include accepting home-owners for social rent. Anne has been able to work very closely with Bristol City Council and their vision, and she said that the council 'appreciate that'. This also applies to the care arrangements: the council's preferred care providers included Housing 21, and Bristol Charities chose them because of Bluebell Gardens next door. There are two care managers (one on each site) and two CQC registrations, but staff can work across both sites.

Figure 36

Haberfield House community room



Reproduced by permission of Alec French Architects

Anne explained that Bristol Charities were a 'prolific grant giver', no longer giving grants to organisations, but providing around 30 grants a week to individuals 'even though that is much harder work'.

Anne Anketell, CEO

5.8 Funding

Funding was described as 'a patchwork':

- Homes England new grant funding (via Orchard Homes, Bristol Charities' Registered Provider) through the Almshouse Consortium Ltd 2016-21 programme
- Homes England recycled grant (also via Orchard Homes) from previous grant to Lady Haberfield Almshouses
- proceeds from the sale of Lady Haberfield Almshouses, acquired through merger
- mortgage secured against Barstaple Almshouse.

A learning point for other almshouse charities that have previously received public grant is to keep careful records, needed if a future opportunity comes up to recycle a previous grant: Anne said this had been 'a challenge'.

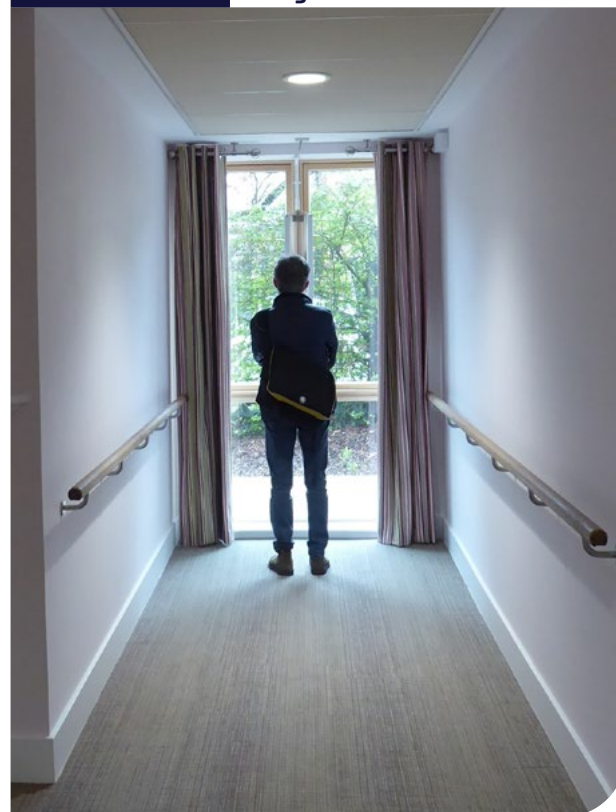
5.9 Learning points and future plans

Building a relationship with the architects has proved useful in terms of learning lessons from previous projects, particularly relating to what works in terms of number of units, size of community and success of communal spaces (including gardens). The architect also commented that charities must now look for smaller sites because they cannot compete commercially for larger ones.

Anne is looking at working again with Bristol City Council for the charity's next development, using proceeds from Perrett House/Redcross Mews and recycled grant alongside other funding sources. The charity hopes to find a site that can be multi-use, outward facing and with the potential for intergenerational living.

Figure 37

Haberfield House view along corridor



Source: Author

6.0 The St Clement Danes Holborn Estate Charity

6.1 The St Clement Danes Holborn Estate Charity

The charity dates from 1551 when the churchwardens of St Clement Danes church bought what was then farmland in Holborn, central London: the aim was to provide income to distribute alms amongst twelve poor persons in the parish. Over the centuries the charity acquired more land to add to the Holborn Estate, using the funds to develop almshouses and to support educational provision and charities. Today there is no link with the church, except for the name. Income from the charity's extensive investment portfolio and from charges to residents (Weekly Maintenance Contributions) supports the new almshouses at Sydenham Hill in south London (London Borough of Lewisham); income from investments also supports a mixed comprehensive state school (St Clement Danes School, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire) and grants via a 'relief in need' charity to individuals and organisations in the London Borough of Westminster.

6.1.1 Three almshouse moves in three centuries: 1650s, 1849, 1960s

The first almshouse for 'twelve poor widows' was built adjacent to St Clement Danes churchyards in the mid-17th century. The almshouse moved to Tooting, South London (within the six-mile boundary of London at the time).

This was a new Tudor-style building (a fashionable style for almshouses in the 19th century), completed in 1849. It provided 40 one-bedroom cottages with shared bath-houses for 20 male and 20 female 'inmates'. A hundred years later, the trustees decided after much discussion that the almshouse could not be modernised at reasonable cost, so the almshouse was moved again to a new site: St Clement's Heights, Sydenham Hill. This was a typical sheltered housing scheme of low-rise blocks in the style of the time, completed in 1969 with 48 (mostly bedsit) flats.

6.2 The new almshouse: St Clement's Heights

The new almshouse building on the same site now provides 50 spacious almshouse flats, designed to HAPPI and London Design Guide standards. There are 48 one-bedroom flats and one two-bedroom flat (all to mobility standard, five to wheelchair standard) and a three-bedroom flat for the scheme manager. Almost all the upper floor flats have private balconies; ground floor flats have direct access to the gardens. There are magnificent views to the City of London and the Kent countryside. Communal facilities include a spacious entrance area serving as a communal lounge, kitchen, offices and lift. The almshouse has its own private courtyard and gardens with a pond, woodland and views, and a separate entrance from the road with private parking for residents, staff and visitors.

Figure 38

Site Plan of new development at St Clement's Heights



Reproduced by permission of St Clement Danes/Pellings

6.3 To modernise or demolish and replace: 2000-2008

After the previous moves, by the early 2000s the trustees were again considering whether to modernise or replace their now outdated 1960s almshouse buildings. Of the 48 flats for residents, 38 were very small bedsits, with only 8 one-bedroom flats for almshouse residents and two flats for the resident managers.

Keith Rea was already working for the charity; he became CEO in 2008. He explained that by then the charity realised that the built form and the design were no longer fit for purpose. The building had asbestos; roof pitches were poorly designed so that tiles lifted in stormy weather. Individual dwellings were small, in contrast to the generous common parts to be heated and cleaned, with lots of glass. The extensive central area included a doctor's room, a large boardroom and a communal lounge which was under-used by residents. Despite the small flats and bedsits, the old building was quite popular with existing residents because of the location and the views. However, potential new residents no longer wanted small bedsits and the charity was beginning to experience problems filling vacant units. The final straw was in early 2008, when retained surveyors produced a preventative maintenance plan 'that would have cost millions.'

The charity looked at several options. A feasibility study for combining two bedsits into one-bedroom flats showed that the costs were prohibitive: this would halve the number of units and income, and the charity would still be left with all the other problems. The next option was moving to another site. In July 2008 the charity held a beauty parade of four firms of surveyors, and commissioned Gerald Eve LLP to search for a site: they looked at about 15 sites in the area, but none was suitable: they were too small, too far away from public

transport for older people, or hemmed in by industry or railways. The advice was to re-develop on the same site. Gerald Eve LLP then carried out an extensive site survey: the sloping areas lower down the hill were unstable (due to WWII bomb site rubble) so the buildable area was across the top of the site. Keith commented: 'Gerald Eve have been really good – they are still on board with us.'

6.4 What about existing residents?

There was extensive consultation with residents throughout the process: they had been distraught when they were told that the charity was going to move elsewhere, so they were delighted at the news of staying.

As units were vacated, residents moved from the south-west wing of the old building into the main part, which was sealed off to make it weather tight. Having only two-thirds of units occupied also resulted in an increasing loss of income until the new almshouse was fully occupied.

6.5 A new almshouse at no cost to the charity: 2008-2018

Gerald Eve went out to the market for expressions of interest; 11 firms responded and four were shortlisted. The terms of the deal were to build the new almshouse first at the developer's expense, for the charity to recover a good portion of the £800,000 preliminary costs (that they had already funded), and for the charity to achieve occupation before the developer could start on their housing for sale. Existing residents could then move into the new almshouse, and the old building could be demolished. It was also attractive because the developer would obtain the land without the need for an upfront payment.

Figure 39+40 St Clements Heights almshouses and gardens



Reproduced by permission of Philip Durrant

Crest Nicholson made the best offer: on completion of the almshouse, there would also be a substantial additional payment and then the rest of the site would be passed over (freehold or leasehold): Crest Nicholson chose freehold.

6.6 Planning and design

The charity commissioned Pellings as architects to produce a design for the whole site, working with Crest Nicholson. The design placed the almshouse at the head of the site with 20 town houses and 26 apartments for sale round three sides forming a square. Outline planning consent was granted in 2013 and detailed planning consent in 2015. The charity engaged a public relations consultancy, and there was extensive consultation including public meetings and observations from neighbours and the influential Sydenham Society²¹.

The design of the building went through three or four iterations and went to the Lewisham Design Review Panel. The review panel wanted it to be a unified development: one panel meeting said that the almshouse building should be the ‘mother ship’ and everything should flow from there; the local authority was also insistent that it should not be a gated community. There was a good deal of negotiation with the London Borough of Lewisham over whether the almshouse counted as the affordable housing element, or whether each development (almshouse and private) had to provide 25-30% affordable housing. Because it was not a separate gated community, the almshouse was accepted as the affordable housing contribution: if not, the development would not have been viable. Keith explained that the charity never envisaged private owners and the public entering the almshouse private gardens and courtyard. However, they did want opportunities for almshouse residents to watch the comings and goings on the rest of the site, and this was confirmed by resident comments during our fieldwork visit.

6.7 Final thoughts

The charity is delighted with their new almshouse, but like other case studies, the process took longer than expected, from initial concept (2008) through planning to Practical Completion of the almshouse (November 2016). By the time they could move in, there were only around twenty of the original residents left in the old building; others had died or moved elsewhere (for care) in the meantime.

Once all the residents had moved, the old building was demolished, ready for the new housing for sale. Our research fieldwork visit took place in February 2019: much of the rest of the development was still a building site.

Figure 41

External balcony overlooking courtyard



Reproduced by permission of Philip Durrant

‘We had to tell the residents that they would be living on a building site for several years. They said “We don’t care, we just want to stay here.”’

Keith Rea, CEO St Clement Danes Holborn Estate Charity

‘It should be good for the next sixty to a hundred years. People coming in think they have come to heaven, the residents love us and they’re very happy here.’

Keith Rea, CEO St Clement Danes Holborn Estate Charity

²¹ Sydenham Society is a civic society with an interest in conservation and planning, transport and the environment.

7.0 Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity

7.1 Founders

John Winnock founded Winnocks almshouses in 1678. These Grade I listed, 17th century almshouses are highly significant among other almshouses in that part of Colchester.

In 1791 John Kendall and his wife Anne provided a house for eight 'poor' women aged 60 or over; priority was given to widows of Winsley's almsmen²²; in 1803 accommodation was built for another eight women. Kendalls almshouses are Grade II listed.

Gifts and legacies augmented the charities and in 1976 both charities were brought together under a new Scheme as the Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse Charity. In the early 20th century, George Rose (a local printer) built bedsit bungalows nearby on Military Road²³, and on both sites: 7 bungalows at Winnocks and 14 bungalows at Kendalls (1933/1934/1935–1936). The Kendalls bedsit bungalows were converted and renovated in the 1950s and 1960s, funded by ministry and local authority grants and reducing the number of homes at Kendalls. There are currently 24 homes at Kendalls and 17 at Winnocks, increasing to 19 following completion of the current development.

Figure 42

Kendalls almshouse



Source: Author

Figure 43

Winnocks Almshouses, built 1678



Source: Author

Figure 44

Winnocks and Kendalls site map, at entrance to Kendalls



Source: Author

²² Winsley's charity was founded in 1726 following the death of Arthur Winsley, who left much of his property to the charity in his will. The property was converted into twelve almshouses and a chapel for Colchester men over 60 years old 'that had lived well and fallen into decay'. If widowed, women were not able to remain in the almshouses, which are less than a mile away from Kendalls.

²³ These were sold by the charity in 2005 to fund much needed extensions at Kendalls.

Figure 45

Almshouses funded by George Rose and built in 1930s



Source: Author

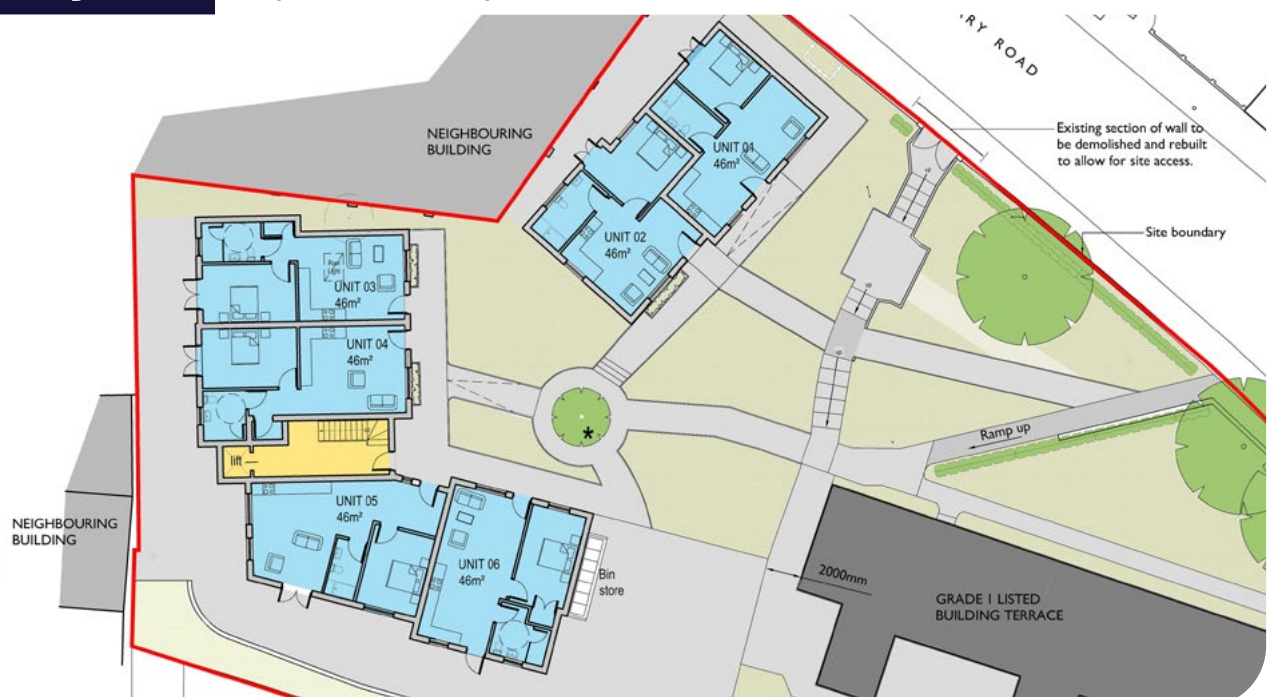
7.2 The proposal

The current development replaces the original seven bedsit bungalows built in 1934 on the Winnocks site. The construction process also affects Kendall residents because of contractors' parking. There are seven one-bedroom flats in a two-storey block (four ground-floor, three first-floor), and two semi-detached one-bedroom bungalows.

The trustees and the charity had been considering redevelopment because bedsits were increasingly hard to let. The project dates to 2012, when architects Purcell were first involved and decanting (moving) residents began. The charity had previously decanted residents on an adjacent site in 2005, and chose to decant the Winnocks bedsits before starting the redevelopment process; all decanted residents were rehoused on the same site.

Figure 46

Site plan of new development at Winnocks



Reproduced by permission of Purcell architects

Figure 47

New almshouses at Winnocks under construction



Source: Author

7.3 Planning process

Planning permission was first granted in April 2015 for ten properties (eight flats and two bungalows), following consultation with English Heritage²⁴. Prior to work commencing, a Victorian sewer was discovered which the contractors were not permitted to bridge. This 'no build zone' required reconfiguration of the two-storey block and the loss of one unit; a revised application was submitted for seven flats and two bungalows in 2018. Although disappointing at the time, and representing a delay of a year, the architect reflected that the reconfiguration of the two-storey block meant that all flats on the first floor have lift access; in the original application one first floor flat had stair access only.

The trustees and architects had always anticipated that any new building would need to be sympathetic (if not identical) to the existing almshouses. The 1934 properties were locally listed; they retained most of their original footprint and external features, but extensions had been added in 1962. Demolition of locally listed buildings is unusual (in Colchester); however, given the space standards and general condition of the bedsit bungalows, demolition was approved, with the caveat that there should be retention of some details to tie-in the new buildings to the nearby almshouses. Planning stipulated the re-use of at least one of the inscription stones from the 1930s bedsits, a new inscription stone for the new buildings provided, and the cross detail on the chimneys replicated.

Figure 48

Chimney details of new almshouses required to match existing



Source: Author

²⁴ The charity had to wait for English Heritage to respond before planning was granted. They took a year to respond, which delayed the process for a whole year. English Heritage did not object to the proposals.

Figure 49

Original commemoration stone at Kendalls on almshouses built by George Rose



Source: Author

Figure 50

Access is a challenge at Winnocks



Source: Author

'... there is only one bite at the cherry of government funding.'

Clare Heyes, assistant Clerk to the Trustees

'it's going to be five to ten years, to develop anything look to five – ten years because there are so many things to take into account. If you're replacing properties you've got the added issue of where are you going to put the residents'.

Clare Heyes, assistant Clerk to the Trustees

The original planning application (in 2015) for 10 units meant the development was required to provide 20% affordable housing. In their supporting statement to the planners, the charity said 'all the properties are occupied at a "rent" which can be paid through Housing Benefit for those who qualify'. Curiously the report to the planning committee²⁵ states, 'Whilst the proposal does not provide true affordable housing, the scheme will provide housing that addresses a particular housing need within Colchester and, as such, this weighs in favour of the application' (Colchester Borough Council, 2015, p.14).

7.4 Design and performance

The development was procured and administered through a traditional contract. The architect stated this was more appropriate as they are responsible for the production of the full set of information and retain control on site; a traditional contract was critical as the 'little details and little quirks would have come off or got lost' in a design and build contract. The new homes are designed and built to a high specification and for a 100+ year life; the charity and Trustees wanted homes that could be used for many years, and in keeping with almshouses on site. This is reflected in the high-quality brickwork (Flemish bond) and brick chimney details (replicating the existing).

The architect followed a fabric-first principle (the new homes are highly insulated) and used Lifetime homes as guidance, commenting that these principles were 'common sense' rather than key design moves because the client clearly wanted robust homes, able to adapt to residents' needs over time. The new properties are not fully wheelchair accessible but are adaptable with:

- wall to wall tiled floors in kitchen to accommodate removal of under-counter cupboards in the future
- extra wide corridors
- low window sills
- level access throughout.

Winnocks is on a difficult sloping site: level access has been maintained for the new properties by utilising the existing route to the Grade I terrace. A new route has been created to the two new bungalows: because of the sloping/stepped access it is not ideal for wheelchair users.

²⁵ All planning documents are available on the Borough Council website. The original 2015 application: <https://d0cs.colchester.gov.uk/Publisher/mvc/listDocuments?identifier=DC&ref=150234> and the revised 2018 application: <https://d0cs.colchester.gov.uk/Publisher/mvc/listDocuments?identifier=DC&ref=180308>

Figure 51+52 Cutting the first sod on site with Trustees and residents



L-R: Chair of trustees John Enfield, architect Adam Edwards of Purcell, Colchester MP Will Quince MP, Stuart Boardley, director of Brooks & Wood Ltd cut the first sod.



Chair of trustees John Enfield, Colchester MP Will Quince MP (foreground) with Trustees and residents

Reproduced by permission of EADT

7.5 Funding

Funding for the development came from three different sources; the charity's own reserves, a loan from the Charity Bank, and grant funding from Colchester Borough Council (CBC). CBC will nominate residents for the nine new homes; their allocations policy will provide a short list in the first instance, and then Winnocks & Kendalls' policy will be used to select residents. To date only one existing resident has asked to move to the new properties; the charity can make direct allocations to up to three units.

The charity will lose income from the tenth unit that was in the original planning application strategy, but not built. This will need to be absorbed by the charity, because a development of only nine units would not service the required mortgage.

7.6 The people

A construction project is a large undertaking, especially for people who are voluntary trustees; the architect observed that the people involved, particularly the Trustees, are critical to seeing the project through. Winnocks & Kendalls have an experienced team in clerk Michael Siggs and assistant clerk Clare Heyes. Michael has undertaken many projects and has a long history in housing. His focus is on building 21st century almshouses to help residents live independently for longer, and hopes the Winnocks scheme will pave the way for other, similar local sites to be redeveloped.

'... having trustees with experience of construction who are able to calm people's nerves within the trustee group, and also having a group of people who are determined to see a project through'

Adam Edwards, Purcell architects

Local press coverage was supportive and the site continued to run smoothly. Clare Heyes said that very exceptionally she has yet to receive a single complaint from existing residents and that the construction process provided residents with something 'to look at, and someone to chat to ... it's been nice for the residents'. The contractors, Brooks and Wood, have been considerate, carrying shopping and generally helping residents, as well as solving complex issues presented by the difficult site conditions.

7.7 Final thoughts

The process took longer than expected, from first thoughts (early 2000) to initial concept (2012) to completion in September 2019. The adaptive nature, Lifetimes homes principles, lift access and being very close to town centre facilities and embedded in an existing community should make it a very secure place to live.

8.0 The Thorngate Churcher Trust

8.1 Background

The Thorngate Churcher Trust has provided homes for older people since the 1860s, when predecessor charities built their first almshouses for ‘poor women of good character’. The Trust is now a charitable registered social landlord providing housing for people of limited means, over 50, normally with a connection to the Gosport neighbourhood. The Trust has no historic buildings or commercial property; it also provides a large residential care home. In 2017 the Trust became a charitable company limited by guarantee to reflect its size and complexity. There are three sites and following a major redevelopment (1971-1984) all properties date from this period, except new projects since 2011. The Trust now has 124 modern one-bedroom flats for independent assisted living.

8.2 Establishing priorities, gaining experience

The current CEO Anne Taylor was appointed in 2011: since then there have been eight building projects including remodelling 13 bedsits to create 12 one-bedroom flats (2013-2016) and three new-build projects (2016-2019).

‘I believed that bedsits are not what we should be offering residents in the 21st century ... you should improve the housing you have [first] ... [and then] take that learning forward to do a bigger project ... you then understand not just planning, construction contracts, Homes England grants, the Almshouse Consortium Ltd and all its requirements, but also bringing it all together ... you’ve built a relationship with the bankers, and demonstrated that you can deliver.’

Anne Taylor, CEO Thorngate Churcher Trust

8.3 The case study: Lucas Court, Garden View and Bradbury House

The 14 new-build one-bedroom flats (2016-2019) are on infill pockets of land on the same site as existing housing, office and care home. All have a pull-cord emergency system, optional personal pendant; secure outer door entry system, and 24-hour emergency cover from wardens and the community alarm system. The architect for the project was Bloomfield Parker Architects Ltd. Funding came from the charity’s reserves; Lloyds bank mortgage (funded by residents’ Weekly Maintenance Contributions); Homes England (HE) grant via the Almshouse Consortium Ltd (ACL) and charitable trusts, especially the Bradbury Trust.

Lucas Court

Completed in February 2018, providing 10 additional flats on the site of a demolished temporary building, includes a communal lounge and garden.

Garden View

Completed in November 2018, providing two flats in a two-storey new-build addition at the end of an existing two-storey sheltered housing block with pitched roof, in the same style (traditional brick construction) with shared entrance lobby to one ground-floor flat and one first floor flat accessed by stairs/stairlift.

Bradbury House

Completed in March 2019, providing two new-build flats in the place of two converted flats (which were not purpose-built and not up to modern standards) in a small house that was demolished. A two-storey building of traditional construction provides a one-bedroom ground floor flat and a one-bedroom first floor flat accessed by stairs or stairlift. Each flat has a separate external independent front door; there are no communal areas.

Figure 53

Lucas Court entrance



Reproduced by permission of Thorngate Churcher Trust

Figure 54

View of internal corridor at Lucas Court



Reproduced by permission of Velux

8.4 Key issues for the new development

Trustees: information, agreement, changing organisational structure

This first significant new development since the 1970s was supported by the previous Chairman and the Board. Upfront costs were met from reserves. Trustees were in favour, because of the level of information provided to the Board, as Anne explained:

'We did a lot of scenario planning around the risks so that the Board understood the risks and the cash flow implications and all those details that any Board needs to make a decision ... the sensitivity analysis on the financing: What happens if your income is only 80% of what you've said, What if we don't fill them, What if the costs go up by x, What if the interest rate goes up by x ...'

The new build project (and higher level of borrowing) was also the impetus for undertaking the major task of changing the Trust's constitution and governance arrangements to become a company limited by guarantee, with extensive concurrent consultation with residents, staff, the Charity Commission, Homes England, Regulator of Social Housing, Care Quality Commission and other stakeholders.

Finding an architect, design of Lucas Court

The long, narrow and angled site adjoins rear gardens. After rejecting an original design for a cuboid 2 or 3 storey block, personal recommendations led to Bloomfield Parker Architects Ltd being selected. The architect had designed social housing on the south coast, where he had maintained a neighbourly feel; this fitted the Trust's ethos when he said 'I've got this idea for a street'.

Nine ground-floor flats are situated either side of the naturally-lit atrium, paved like a street. Front doors and kitchen windows face the atrium. A combination of daylight (using skylights) and ventilation have helped 'bring the outside in' for residents. Staggered indented areas outside front doors provide individual storage sheds and mobility scooter charging points. Each flat has French windows providing an additional fire exit and access to small semi-private garden spaces, landscaping and a path round the outside of the building.

Planning issues

There were some issues to overcome with Gosport Borough Council planning officers before it went to committee; full planning permission was granted in January 2016.

There were no significant neighbour issues. The problem areas were:

- over-development;
- car parking;
- drainage requirements;
- landscaping.

Homes England grant had been obtained for 12 flats in Lucas Court through ACL. Concern about over-development was resolved by moving two units from Lucas Court to Garden View; other problems were resolvable (although with extra costs and disruption). Some additional car parking spaces were already proposed; video footage of car parking on-site proved that there would be sufficient spaces without the need for more additional car parking.

Landscaping requirements had to be met to comply with planning permission. To the Trust, requirements appeared excessive: the site for Lucas Court had been a flat grassed area, with no real loss of amenity space because residents did not use it. This remains an issue, not least because residents do not like some of the landscaping.

Funding issues

The HE grant was essential, but only available to fund the flats. Communal facilities must be funded from other sources. The Bradbury Trust gave a grant for Lucas Court and Bradbury House.

The HE grant is only available when the local housing authority (in this case Gosport Borough Council) confirms the need for housing of the type proposed. The Trust's Impact Report (2018) noted that the 2012-16 Fareham and Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group Operating Plan predicted Gosport to have most population growth in the over 65s over the next 10 years; there was also an expected increase in older people (particularly over 85s) with long term health conditions. The Trust has also seen an increase in the number of homeless older people applying for housing.

'You agree with Homes England when you are going to deliver these homes, so you need to work back to when you need to start. It's a big part of the contractual requirements and Homes England are right to ensure that they have people delivering on time and I completely understand that. People [in the almshouse movement] get very hung up on all these requirements but they have them because it's taxpayers' money.'

Anne Taylor, CEO Thorngate Churcher Trust

Construction issues

The construction period for Lucas Court started in March 2017. There were issues concerning:

- relationships with housing residents
- parking
- site access
- cladding
- badgers
- the warranty provider.

Inconvenience to residents was a big problem because of the tight site. Constructors' cabins had to be positioned somewhere; wherever they were placed, they were an eyesore for someone. There was another issue, Anne explained: 'There was an over-cosy relationship that the site manager tried to cultivate with the residents, and they were told things that had no basis in fact. If the project is off-site, this is less likely to happen than if the site is adjacent to existing housing.'

Parking was a huge issue with the number of housing and care home residents, and care home staff and visitors. Anne recalls that:

'people accosted me constantly with the frustration of not being able to park and the contractor did not uphold what he had agreed to, in getting his subcontractors to park off site and that was a constant battle. Subcontractors would get here early and take a space. Staff were parking out on the road and we had abuse from local residents, because it was outside their houses and there's not a lot of parking.'

Site access problems influenced the architect's choice of timber frame construction, but the timber frame could not be assembled off-site because there was no access for delivery.

There were issues with cladding in 2017: the planning officer did not like some colour combinations, and had required a change to cladding on the 2-storey section, prior to Grenfell. Lucas Court cladding is nothing like Grenfell cladding, but the requirement to change to different cladding with lower fire resistance was reversed after Grenfell. Badger runs are an issue across the site and for neighbours: the main problem during construction was for Bradbury House: the site was very small and neighbours were concerned about Heras fencing allowing badgers access to their rear garden.

The Trust had a dispute with the warranty provider over delays which caused additional costs; the warranty is a requirement for any new-build with a mortgage, and also for HE. This also caused the main delay towards the end of the contract: it held up obtaining Practical Completion and moving in new residents and resulted in a small loss of Weekly Maintenance Contribution income (see Table 1, Chapter 4).

8.5 Final thoughts

The only change required is front doors at Lucas Court. Some frailer residents cannot manage their heavy fire-resistant front doors because of weakness in their arms or using walking frames. The Trust will need to provide electronic door entry systems for at least some residents (an additional cost for the charity).

Residents are delighted with their new flats. Linda had been living for over five years in a third-floor private rented flat, accessed by 45 steps which in her words were '40 too many'. Gradually over time Linda came to feel more and more isolated. In March 2018 Linda moved into a new almshouse. She says

'It has changed my life ... I love these people. We gel, we share things, we plan social events together. I don't have much family especially not locally, so now I feel these are like my older family relatives'

'We love it here. Our family ... can now visit us regularly. When we lived [20 miles away], we were too far for them to visit as often as they do now. We get on very well with our new neighbours and we have been part of the group that has set up a weekly coffee morning on the new lounge for residents of the Melrose Gardens site.'

Mr & Mrs Walters (Thorngate Churcher Trust, 2018a)

9.0 John Eastwood Homes, Todmorden and Calder Valley CLT

9.1 The partnership, finding the site

John Eastwood Homes (JEH)

The 1942 Will of local benefactor John Eastwood left a trust fund to the borough of Todmorden to 'to erect and maintain dwelling houses to be called The John Eastwood Homes for occupation by poor and infirm persons of the age of sixty five years and over either married or single who have resided in the said borough for at least 20 years'. The almshouse charity, established in 1972, now owns 12 bungalows (built 1962-2000) in the village of Walsden, all but one with two bedrooms. Six of the nine trustees live in Walsden.

Calder Valley CLT

Calder Valley CLT (incorporated in 2014) is a member-led community benefit society with charitable status with 140 members: decisions are taken on a one member-one vote basis. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is part of the fast-growing community-led housing network. The board of 10 trustees is responsible for managing the CLT, with monthly trustee meetings and a Walsden project task group.²⁶

CLT Secretary Andrew Bibby explained:

'The local plan was for several hundred houses in Todmorden ... there was a sense in the community that at least some should be provided by a bottom-up approach, by community endeavour. We became a Registered Provider and an Investment Partner which is quite unusual for a CLT ... we wanted to have as much control as possible and retain ownership of the housing ... We have had a very good relationship with Homes England, they've been extremely helpful.'

Both charities have volunteer trustees with a wide range of expertise, willing to work together and make things happen. Shared objectives and mutual trust made a good fit, with the almshouse charity's reserves and housing, Calderdale Council's site, and the CLT with access to Homes England grant. Housing provided by both charities is protected from the Right to Buy so remains available to local people in perpetuity.

Calder Valley CLT Chair Simon Brearley and John Eastwood Homes secretary (Clerk) David Storah knew each other well from their involvement with the Todmorden town team and local networks. David explained:

'Both Simon and I have been chairs and secretaries of Todmorden Pride (civic trust) and Todmorden Development Committee ... I've been secretary of John Eastwood Homes since about 1984 ... Simon is a chartered surveyor'

For some years, JEH trustees had looked for long-term development opportunities.

In 2016, the 0.2 hectare site was identified as available for disposal during 'site-sifting' discussions between Calderdale Council and the CLT: previously a school playing field, it is next to the Grade II listed Victorian school now converted into apartments and the Rochdale Canal. JEH own more bungalows nearby and a small

Figure 55

Cutting the first sod on site



L-R chair of JEH Neil Anderton, Calder Valley CLT chair Simon Brearley, with listed Victorian school building to the L.

Reproduced by permission of Calder Valley Community Land Trust

²⁶ Calder Valley Community Land Trust [CLCLT] Annual Report 2018, information updated 1 July 2019. Source: <http://www.caldervalleyclt.org.uk/docs/CVLT%20annual%20report%20A5%20for%20web.pdf>

Figure 56 Site section as proposed

Reproduced by permission of Storah architects

site for future development. A CLT housing needs survey proved local demand to Calderdale Council and Homes England; by July 2019 there were over 40 people on JEH's list for the new bungalows.

The officer report to Calderdale councillors stated that the CLT/almshouse development would 'assist the council in affordable housing delivery, growth aspirations and safeguarding local construction jobs'²⁷. Local Todmorden councillors have been supportive because of the opportunity to provide accessible bungalows suitable for older people with disabilities, whereas many older terraced houses have steep stairs and are difficult to convert.

9.2 The project

Start on site March 2019, completion in February 2020. Traditional contract with local architect, local builder and local sub-contractors, which also meets the sustainability pillars of the CLT (Calder Valley CLT Annual Report 2018, page 10); the contractors became Considerate Constructors²⁸ at the request of the CLT.

The bungalows will exceed requirements for energy efficiency, with low running costs, more daylight (good for health) and future-proof design, including provision for a hoist if needed in the bedroom; all are mobility standard and wheelchair-accessible. Heating will be easy to manage (gas central heating) with underfloor heating in the bathrooms (to reduce slipping risk) and level access shower trays. There will be external points for overnight buggy charging outside the front door of each bungalow.

Two bungalows will be purchased (leasehold) by John Eastwood Homes and let as almshouses (licences, Weekly Maintenance Contributions, see Chapter 5); four bungalows will be let by the CLT on assured or assured shorthold tenancies, but otherwise all six bungalows will be let on broadly similar terms and levels of rents/charges. The almshouse charity will manage all six bungalows as one development, with an option to purchase the CLT bungalows after five years (when they are empty); when all are transferred, JEH will also own the freehold.

²⁷ Todmorden News, April 2016; <http://caldervalleyclt.org.uk/walsden-development/> [accessed 9 July 2019].

²⁸ Considerate Constructors Scheme is a not-for-profit, independent organisation founded in 1997 by the construction industry to improve its image; <https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/>

Planning

There was significant pre-consultation and the project went straight to full planning consent. The only sensitivity was overlooking issues for apartments in the former school, resolved by placing landscaped areas and permeable parking near the apartments, and the bungalows at the far side. Building materials (natural stone walls, artificial slate roofs) needed to be sympathetic to nearby heritage assets (listed church, school, canal bridge, Rochdale Canal, lock; house of historical interest) with inevitable cost implications.

Planning policy requirements for parking and electrical vehicle charging points (for all new housing) assume two cars per dwelling (at least one likely to be electric). In the existing 12 almshouse bungalows, there are only three vehicles; after negotiation, the new development has eight parking spaces (one per bungalow, two for visitors). The original field dry stone walls (on two sides) can be an ideal habitat for bats to hunt and a likely spot for them to visit; to mitigate for habitat loss, bat boxes will be placed on gable ends next to a stone wall.

Funding

John Eastwood Homes funded preliminary costs from reserves, which helped the CLT's cash flow. The CLT has accessed:

- Homes England grant;
- the site, gifted to the CLT by Calderdale Council (Covenant to keep the land for affordable housing);
- grant funding from Calderdale Council²⁹;
- Quaker Housing Trust funding (made up of a grant and an interest-free loan);
- capital from John Eastwood Homes to purchase two bungalows;
- funds from Calder Valley CLT's Community Shares issue, as a community benefit society³⁰ John Eastwood Homes is a shareholder;
- a bank loan (to come in last).

Figure 57

Birks Court, February 2020, Community Open Day



Reproduced by permission of Calder Valley CLT

²⁹ Calderdale Council have a nomination arrangement for two of the CLT bungalows; applications will be made through 'KeyChoice', the local choice-based lettings system.

³⁰ The term 'community shares' refers to withdrawable share capital; a form of share capital unique to co-operative and community benefit society legislation. This type of share capital can only be issued by co-operative societies, community benefit societies and charitable community benefit societies. Source: <https://communityshares.org.uk/find-out-more/what-are-community-shares>. The Community Shares Standard Mark is awarded to offers that meet national standards of good practice. These standards ensure that:

- The offer document and application form are easy to understand
- You are provided with all the facts you need to make an informed decision
- The facts are supported by the annual accounts and/or business plan for the society
- Nothing in the documents is purposefully incorrect, confusing or misleading.

Societies are asked to sign a Code of Practice requiring them, among other things, to give the public a right of complaint to the Community Shares Unit.

Source: <https://communityshares.org.uk/standard-mark-0>

'The one thing we've both had some trouble with, because it's a new concept, is getting lawyers to think about how it's going to work ... Explaining to our solicitors has taken time – both trusts have agreed what they want but putting it in legal terms, that has been the hardest single thing.'

David Stora, JEH secretary/Clerk

Legal agreements between the two charities

There are four legal agreements between Calder Valley CLT and John Eastwood Homes; one sets out the agreement to develop and purchase, one is the formal leasehold sale contract, a third is the option to purchase and finally there is the management agreement. Heads of Terms were agreed early on, but the detailed legal agreements took much longer, although the CLT reported a good relationship with their solicitor. Both charities are happy to share their learning with other CLTs and almshouse charities

The building contract

The building contract is with the CLT, not a partnership. Andrew Bibby (CLT Secretary) explained:

'It has taken time – over three years – at one stage it was going to be a joint contract, and that was queried by the bank as they were lending us the money. Finally, about 18 months ago it was decided that the CLT would be the client because we are the Registered Provider and borrowing the money ...'

The tendering process was carried out jointly by the CLT and Mathew Benson (Project Architect). He commented that CLT trustees expect to have a closer involvement in their project than some clients: 'Contract meetings are a day out for the contractor, so we try to keep the site meetings brief, and anything not relevant to the contract is discussed separately so it's a more intensive job, keeping a good relationship with everyone ...'. Managing the expectations of the CLT and the contractors has been a learning curve; there are now site meetings approximately every three weeks.

Construction

The site is near the canal and slopes gently, getting steeper to the rear, with glacial deposits (moraine). There was a detailed examination of historical maps and four extensive site surveys: two for the structural engineer, one for planning (chemical analysis of the soil) and one for more detail for pile foundations. The geological survey put the slip plane further back, but now it appears that material was excavated when the canal was constructed 250 years ago. The pile foundations had to be adapted (with cost implications) because of buried sandstone/

gritstone boulders. There is a terrace of five bungalows: the sixth bungalow at the rear of the site is separate because extending the terrace would have been too costly for the pile foundations.

The biggest hurdle to overcome has been significant rainwater drainage issues, now overcome after discussions with the Canal and River Trust, the local authority and Yorkshire Water who are concerned that the CLT site does not impact on people further down, and complicated because the canal blocks the route for rainwater drainage which needs to go into the river at the bottom of the valley (underground below a road).

'We've found that you can do every check that you like ... usually here the boulders are the size of footballs, but what we've actually found is boulders as big as small cars! So we've had to adapt quickly to what we've found in the ground! ... You can't turn around without hitting another boulder yet somehow we've managed to miss all of those during our surveys ...'

Mathew Benson, Project Architect

9.3 Future plans

There have already been contacts between the CLT and another local almshouse charity, and potential for working with John Eastwood Homes again.

'Almshouses are clearly potentially within the community-led housing world ... but not very often in the literature ... With the community led housing fund there is a lot of opportunity for almshouses and it's an interesting way forward to CLTs. For our CLT there are certain key partnerships – with the council, with Homes England, and we have good relationships with two small local charities (JEH and a local community centre). We see that as our way forward, we're not trying to do everything ourselves from scratch, we want to work with other organisations.'

Andrew Bibby, Calder Valley CLT secretary

10.0 Case studies: Netherlands

Figure 58

De Hof van Wouw, Den Haag, Netherlands



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10.1 Introduction and context

Following Chapters 3-9 (English context and case studies), we move to the Netherlands with:

- the Dutch context
- features of Dutch housing associations relevant to this study
- Dutch almshouse case studies:
 - Johannes Enschedé Hof, Haarlem
 - Gravinnehof, Haarlem
- other Dutch housing for older people, influenced by courtyard typology and future ideas.

As explained, we use 'almshouse' (except in direct quotes) because not all Dutch almshouses are hofjes ('little courtyards') and some foundations have other names, including Godshuis (paragraph 10.3)

10.1.1 Dutch almshouses

We start by identifying key features and differences between the two countries, summarised in Table 4.

For this study, key differences are that:

- Dutch almshouse foundations have no access to public funding to provide new almshouses
- not all foundations provide social housing (some house students or professionals)
- there is no Charity Commission, so trustees can alter their rules³¹
- Dutch almshouses do not have to house people on low incomes': some have lost their original aims, charging higher than social rents, sometimes to fund maintenance of historic buildings.

Our two Dutch case studies are the only new-build developments for older people provided by LHB member charitable foundations. In paragraph 10.5.2 we also report on new social housing in Veenendaal (near Utrecht) built by Patrimonium (an LHB member), as well as models from other providers.

10.1.2 Dutch housing associations

Approximately 75% of 3m rental homes belong to 500 housing associations; as in the UK there have been many mergers to create much larger associations (see later paragraph 10.3.2). Social housing is defined as homes with monthly rent below the rent limit of €720.42³².

³¹ Trustees can alter their rules by a simple process (going to a notary). Source: personal communication, with LHB chair.

³² Equivalent to £655 at an exchange rate of 1.1 euro to 1 pound sterling

Table 4 UK and Dutch almshouse charities

Aspect	UK almshouse charities	Dutch almshouse charities
Organisations	The Almshouse Association	Stichting Landelijk Hofjesberaad (LHB)
Members	1,602 almshouse charities 2,546 groups of almshouses; all are owned by almshouse charities	Over 100 independent almshouse foundations; also housing associations whose housing has the characteristic features of a Dutch almshouse Around 140 almshouses
Housing stock and scale	29, 674 dwellings for around 36,000 people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-thirds of almshouse groups have 10 or fewer dwellings 16% have 11-20 dwellings 14% have 21-50 dwellings Only 6% have over 50 dwellings 	Around 3,000 dwellings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smallest foundations have 4-12 dwellings Medium foundations have 20-30 dwellings Largest foundations have 60-70 dwellings (LHB members)
Key features	Great variety in scale, size, rules and wealth: from those with little or no investments or income (other than residents' charges) to wealthy charities that may also support social or educational projects from their substantial assets	Variety in scale, size, rules and wealth: from those with little or no investments or income (other than rents) to a few wealthy foundations that support other almshouses and social projects from their substantial assets
Historic buildings	824 groups (32%) have listed buildings	85% of LHB members have some historic buildings
Staff	Many (especially smaller) almshouse charities have no paid staff; their housing may be managed by another organisation (including estate agents and solicitors) All have a Clerk to the Trustees: role may be voluntary or paid. Larger charities have paid staff and a Chief Executive Over 400 charities employ wardens/scheme managers	Many have no paid staff; some have a paid Secretary to the Board and perhaps other staff (e.g. maintenance) Housing may be managed by another organisation (including housing associations and estate agents) If there is a warden-equivalent, this role may be unpaid and provided by one of the residents and unpaid
Governance:	Board of Trustees: voluntary unpaid role	Board of Regents: voluntary unpaid role
Regulator of Social Housing	294 Registered Providers, eligible for Homes England grant funding for new-build and remodelling	No equivalent to Registered Provider Historic buildings may be able to access grants for repairs
Regulation	All: Charity Commission Registered Providers (294) via Regulator of Social Housing Housing Ombudsman Service for charities that are (or have been) Registered Providers Care Quality Commission (CQC) if domiciliary/personal/nursing care provision	No direct equivalent to the UK Charity Commission 30% of LHB members are entitled to ANBI status ³³ Rent Committee for tenants with a social rent; this can deal with complaints about maintenance and rent, and it has powers to reduce the rent
Residents: tenure	Licencees: beneficiaries of a charity (not tenants)	Tenants
Residents: rents/charges	Almshouse charities charge 'Weekly Maintenance Contribution' (WMC): amount may be lower than, or similar to, rents for comparable council and housing association sheltered housing. May also include extras (e.g. heating, hot water). If publicly funded, may be subject to rent target	Rent Limited by government regulation in some cases Courtyards for professional people or students let at full market rents and not classified as social housing

Source: UK: The Almshouse Association Annual Report 2019; Pannell (1999, 2013); The Netherlands: LHB website and personal communication; Wilms Floet 2011b

All Dutch social housing is controlled: rents are assessed by a points system (size of dwelling, urban setting, facilities); means-tested housing and income support benefits are available to people on low incomes. Dutch housing

associations have no access to government grants although they could access loans at well below commercial interest rates from a government-backed fund (Falk and Rudlin, 2018).³⁴

³³ ANBI: Foundations have no shareholders or members, their objectives are stated in their articles, and they are governed and represented by a board. If an almshouse foundation qualifies as an 'institution for public benefit' ('algemeen nut beogende instelling' or 'ANBI') it may apply for the ANBI regime. Public benefit is broadly defined and includes, among others, housing and healthcare. It excludes any personal or corporate benefit (Hoolwerf et al., 2015).

³⁴ Since 1995, when national policy switched to 'grossing and balancing' (which wrote off their debts and gave them autonomy) they now "function according to the revolving fund principle ... income gained from letting and selling homes is sufficient to cover their reinvestment in new affordable housing, housing refurbishment, and neighbourhood regeneration". (Falk and Rudlin, 2018:18).

Figure 59

Johannes Enschedé Hof courtyard, Haarlem, Netherlands



Source: Author

10.2 Johannes Enschedé Hof

10.2.1 Origins, the site

The Joh. Enschedé banknote printing works moved from central Haarlem (1980–1990), leaving a small part of the large site vacant. Adjoining Hofje de Bakenesserkamer (founded 1395, the oldest existing Dutch almshouse). Bakenesserkamer trustees were aware of this from the 1980s. The original idea for a new almshouse followed a question from the municipality about the impact of a change of the zoning plan:

'A new hofje ... will guarantee that there will be no high-rise buildings erected there ... One can also capitalise on new ideas ... for instance occupants who ... wish to live independently as long as possible ... even in the 21st century the concept 'sheltered living in a hofje' is viable. Moreover, it would be a suitable in-fill for a vulnerable inner-city area. ... We are extremely happy with the extraordinarily tasteful design for the new Toneelschuur next to our hofje ... The design has taken our building project into account ... it brings the realisation of our plan another step forward. The neighbourhood can thus become a real showpiece.' (Hamman, 1997:77-81)

Extensive redevelopment of the heavily polluted site included many public facilities, including the Toneelschuur (theatre and cinema). Johannes Enschedé Hof was built between Toneelschuur and Bakenesserkamer: the street façade is on Korte Begijnestraat; on the other side, it connects to the Bakenesserkamer.

10.2.2 Design (1999–2002), construction (2006–2007)

Clients were Woonmaatschappij Haarlem³⁵ and Bakenesserkamer Foundation (trustees Job Thöne, Ok de Lange). There was no public grant; the new almshouse was financed by Ymere. The first concept was developed by Haarlem strip cartoonist and graphic designer (Döll-lab, former partner Mecanoo architects)³⁶. Joost Swarte acted as a sounding board, enhanced the expressive qualities of the design and came up with ideas to enrich the façades. The façade along the Korte Begijnestraat is particularly expressive and epic, thanks to its diversity in materials, details, and coloured windows (Doll Architecten, n.d).

Figure 60

Stained glass window



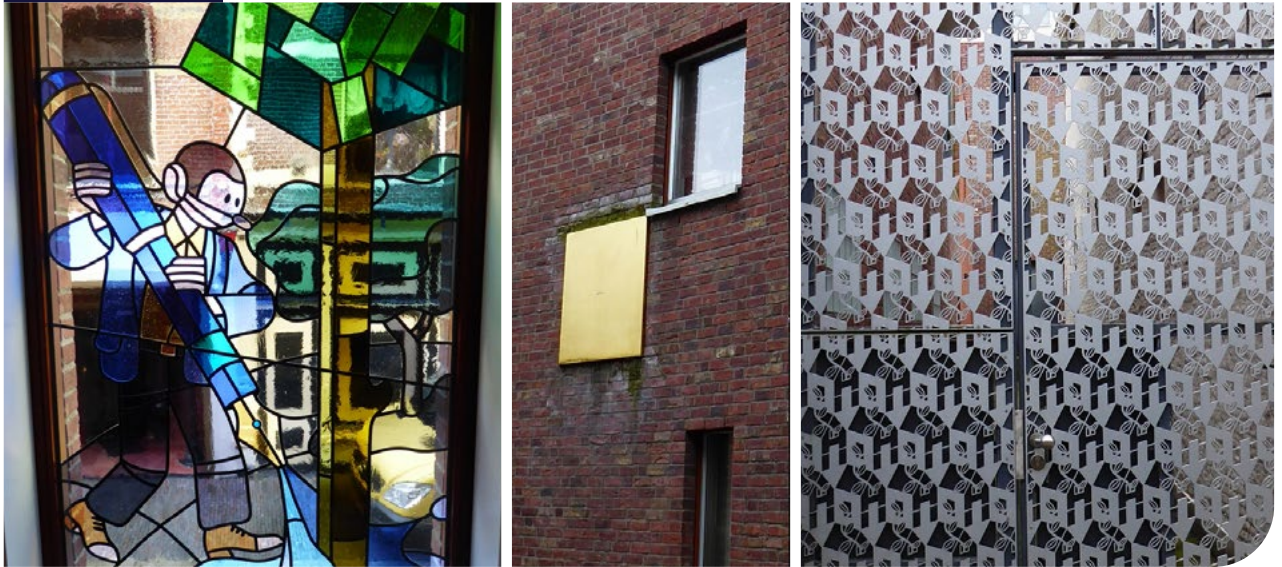
Source: Author

³⁵ Now housing association Ymere. Ymere is a large housing association working in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area (including Haarlem) with over 70,000 social rental properties. SOURCE: <https://www.ymere.nl/over-ymere-2.html>

³⁶ Joost Swarte and Henk Döll had worked together previously on the Toneelschuur, completed in 2003.

Figure 61

Images from site visit in March 2019 showing art interventions including screen, stained glass window and reflective panel



Source: Author

There are 5 two-storey houses (4 one-bedroom, 1 two-bedroom) and 5 one-bedroom flats (with lift) in a two/three-storey block (with communal laundry, bike storage and individual storerooms) round a paved courtyard; some properties have balconies or terraces. The blocks form three sides of a paved courtyard. There is no communal lounge or boardroom: occasional events are held jointly with Bakenesserkamer in their boardroom or larger garden.

The two foundations are separate but have the same trustees. Johannes Enschedé Hof is managed by Ymere, tenants pay rent to Ymere and new residents are selected through a process involving Ymere and then the trustees.

10.2.3 Reflections and issues

Discussing the process, Job Thöne (interviewed by van Hoogstraten) commented on the trustees' role working with Ymere, reflecting issues for smaller UK almshouse charities:

'For Ymere, who participated in the new development, it was a tiny project, but for the trustees it costs a lot of free time and energy.' (van Hoogstraten 2014:85).

There is a tradition to spend 1% of the build cost for new public institutions on art, as seen with Joost Swarte's designs.

Dutch almshouse courtyards can lack privacy for residents, especially those open for public access. Where the paved courtyard or path is against the front of the building, visitors (and other residents) can walk very close and peer into ground floor windows. Johannes Enschedé Hof and Bakenesserkamer are open to the public (11am-5pm weekdays). Wooden seats were designed to keep people away.

Figure 62

Seating in courtyard to prevent walking too close to windows



Source: Author

Figure 63

Entrance and external courtyard at Gravinnehof, Haarlem, Netherlands



Source: Author

10.3 Gravinnehof

10.3.1 Origins

In 1992, Haarlemse Hofjes Foundation and the municipality discussed a 'Hofje for the 21st century' and to celebrate 750 years of Haarlem city rights in 1995, they decided to hold a competition to design a new almshouse on the narrow site by the Spaarne river. (Sint Jacobs Godshuis, 2019; Haarlemse Hofjes, 2019). A foundation trustee was the main instigator: through contacts he would have known about potential sites. The competition attracted 198 submissions: the winner was Dolf Floors, a young architect with an innovative design.

Following further discussions, two Roman Catholic foundations agreed to create the Gravinnehof Foundation in 1995 as a joint venture to finance, build and manage the new almshouse, with trustees from each foundation. The Sint Jacobs Godshuis Foundation dates from the 15th century, and owns and manages several almshouses. The Hofje Codde en Van Beresteyn Foundation has one almshouse for 18 older women, built in 1968 (a merger of two almshouses that moved from the centre because of redevelopment). Both foundations support many other social projects, financed from substantial capital built up since their original foundations.

Regentesse (Trustee) Alison Besselink-McDonnell explained that the plan for Gravinnehof was revolutionary because it was for older women, men and couples, instead of single/ widowed women (like many Dutch almshouses). Prospective tenants must be over 55 with only a modest monthly income.

10.3.2 The design

A low-rise traditional courtyard was not feasible given the land cost and communal facilities needed. A three storey design provided 16 one-person and 10 two-person one-bedroom flats, with broad galleries (for access and covered outdoor space), a courtyard garden, a communal room, lift, guest room, laundry room and hobby room; bicycle storage was added later when additional land was acquired.

Architect Dolf Floors has commented on the 21st century qualities and the improved privacy; sheltered indoor connections and a much more informal lay-out than usually found in a traditional hofje. Traditional elements are not lost but complemented by renewed facilities:

'... the flats are small, for example for a resident's birthday [party] if s/he has a large family ... Before there used to be a boardroom in a hofje, so this was also in the architect's competition brief ... Here we have interpreted this differently: a room for the residents to get together.' (van Hoogstraten 2014, p.59)

Figure 64

View from flat at Gravinnehof



Source: Author

10.3.3 The courtyard typology: does it work at Gravinnehof?

Alison felt that there is a fundamental difference between Gravinnehof and a traditional courtyard, where residents have to walk through the courtyard to enter or exit:

'On the ground floor here, people walk past and notice who is in, say 'hello' ... but on the first and second floors it's the same as any block of flats, you don't need to have any contact ... people from the upper floors don't use the courtyard garden, they sit out on the wide galleries ... There is a coffee morning every Friday, around ten people come usually. Most of the hofjes I know have a meeting room ...'

Alison Besselink-McDonnell, Regentesse (Trustee)

Discussing how well Gravinnehof works as a community, Alison Besselink-McDonnell commented that although it worked in some ways, there are too many flats for it to work as one group. Residents were mostly single people, only two couples living there (March 2019) and not many single men.

10.3.4 Would you build another new almshouse?

Alison thought that they would not choose to do this again in the same way. Current trustees are aware of previous problems (now remedied) with the building and the maintenance costs. Alison is also a trustee at Hofje Codde en Van Beresteyn, where they are now considering options for the future of their Codde almshouse with small 1960s houses where they face similar issues to those in English case studies and discussion in Chapter 3.

10.4 The Dutch courtyard typology

Here we outline the influence of the courtyard typology and its influence on other Dutch social and private housing for older people in the 21st century. TU Delft Assistant Professor Willemijn Wilms Floet comments:

'... this architectural feature has been present in the Netherlands for over six centuries, proving the attractiveness of the little courtyard as a way of living ... in one way or another, the little courtyard is rooted in the collective memory of the Netherlands – many people 'know' these peculiarly quiet and green oases as a type of housing.' (Wilms Floet 2016b, p.25)

We have quoted van Hoogstraten (2014) above: both our Haarlem case studies are featured. The LHB commissioned this book which explores a wide range of 20th/21st century courtyard-influenced social and private developments, most built since the 1980s.

To celebrate their 400-year history in 2011, Hofje Codden van Beresteyn trustees invited nine contributors to explore ideas for the future. Instead of looking back at their

history, the board looked forward with a programme of engagement with young people, workshops, storytelling and photography. *The Handbook for Contemporary Hofjes* was published in 2013 (Daniels et al., 2013a).

Social housing for older people and a multi-generational example

Patrimonium Woonservice housing association, Veenendaal owns over 7,000 social housing properties. An LHB member, Patrimonium has a traditional almshouse (Prils Hofje) and new courtyard developments including Sans Souci (van Hoogstraten 2014, p.97, p.103–105); we visited with Daan van den Briel (from the LHB) and Esther Goudberg (area director at Patrimonium).

Sans Souci is part of a mixed-age development built in 2012-13, adjoining and above a gezondheidscentrum (health centre) in a new district centre³⁷ with shops and public transport. Surrounding a courtyard are 47 two-storey social housing starter homes (couples/families, ground/first floors); flats for people with autistic spectrum disorders (second floor); and Sans Souci: 18 spacious flats for older people (55+) with private balconies, on upper floors with a large shared private terrace.

Figure 65

Courtyard at Hofje van Pauw, Delft, Netherlands



Source: Author

Figure 66

Shared external community space at Sans Souci, Netherlands



Source: Author

³⁷ The Netherlands has some of the highest proportions of social housing in the EU. Their programme of urban extensions and new towns illustrates how the Dutch have managed to increase national housing stock by 7.6% in ten years in some 90 new settlements despite facing similar issues as the UK in terms of density of population. As an example, the VINEX Housing Programme (1995–2005), provided 450,000 homes, increasing the housing stock by 7.6% (Falk and Rudlin, 2018)

There was an elected board of the Sans Soucis Veenendaal Residents Association from the start:

'The first residents, the 'pioneers', are enthusiastic and are looking for the optimum way to organise common activities and at the same time keep a distance if people need privacy...'

Resident Bert Steensma explained in 2013:

'We want to be in control of who comes to live here' (van Hoogstraten 2014, p.105).

We met Bert Steensma in 2018 in his beautiful spacious flat. When there is a vacancy, the selection process includes residents and Bert was enthusiastic about how well residents get on together; he told us during our visit that it is successful 'because of the people'. One flat provides a communal meeting space (they were holding a darts match on the evening of our visit); residents eat together once a month; some residents also provide support to some residents with autism.

Figure 67 Individual balcony at Sans Souci



Source: Author

Figure 68 Community flat and meeting space at Sans Souci



Source: Author

10.5 Private housing: older people and multi-generational examples

We were also aware from our literature search of many Dutch private sector initiatives reflecting the courtyard typology in different ways, although we did not visit as these were not core to our study.

Private housing for sale

In her contribution to the European Almshouses Conference 2011, Wilms Floet discusses examples from 1990 onwards, resonating with retirement housing in the UK (see Chapter 3): 'Hofjes are a category to be associated with romanticism, shelter, collectivity and a majestic appearance.' Examples include:

- gated communities on the edge of new urbanised areas and in the countryside: examples include, Haverley Den Bosch in the middle of a golf resort, and the Grote Hof in Ypenburg, The Hague, promoted as a country estate: 'Dwelling courteously is living royally' is the message of the sales brochure;
- different treatments of the central area: Paddepoel, Groningen is built round a harbour; the Kromboog, The Hague has a large oval central garden. (Wilms Floet, 2011b).

Two new initiatives reflect interest in the UK in Community Land Trusts and extra care housing models: Knarrenhof and Polderhofje.

Knarrenhof

Project developer Peter Prak's model works with associations of prospective residents to develop housing for older people. Daan van den Briel (2018) points out that unlike almshouse foundations and housing associations (with external trustees/board members), it is the residents who form the boards for Knarrenhof developments. The first mixed-tenure Knarrenhof development (the Zwolle Aahof³⁸) includes 48 lifetime homes (14 for social rent) round two courtyards: the association started in 2011 and the housing was completed in 2018. Other Knarrenhof initiatives are progressing at various stages, with more than ten thousand individual participants in 283 municipalities (Looijestein, 2018).

Polderhofje

Social entrepreneur Jennifer Hofmeijer has created a modern 'hofje' for older people with 20 lifetime homes³⁹ (two-storey dwellings with lift to upstairs bedroom) round a courtyard with an 'orangery' (communal room) and availability of on-site care. Completed in 2019, all have been sold: residents have bought the interiors of their individual dwellings with a service charge. (Looijestein, 2018).

Figure 69

Residents of Knarrenhof working on the shared garden



Reproduced by permission of Stichting Knarrenhof

38 See <https://www.aahof-zwolle.com/>

39 <https://www.polderhofje.nl/blog>

11.0 Conclusions and recommendations

This study aimed to examine successes and barriers to new almshouse developments and consider issues (including concept, land use, planning, funding, and design). Our purpose was to raise awareness of the potential of almshouses amongst professionals and other stakeholders and enable almshouse charities to make a greater contribution to meeting housing needs in their local communities. In this concluding chapter we:

- summarise successes and barriers from case studies and examples (mapped against the issues identified above)
- identify learning from the Netherlands
- consider the potential contribution of almshouse charities to meet the housing needs of older people in their local communities
- propose what more can be done to extend their role in the future.

11.1 Successes and barriers: key findings

Looking at our case studies and other examples, what has led to these successful new almshouses, ranging from six bungalows to large developments of 50+ extra care and sheltered flats, in villages, towns and cities? Table 5 provides overarching findings across case studies/examples. Table 6 summarises specific issues from individual case studies/examples, analysed according to concept, land use, planning, funding, and design.

In Table 5 we summarise the key issues across our five full case studies in England and two short examples of housing exclusively for older people. Some relied on developing their existing sites, but this option is not open to all charities. The role of the local authority is also critical, and three of our seven charities relied on land being released for development through their local authority.

Table 5
Key issues across the case studies and examples

Key issues	Bristol Charities	St Clement Danes	Winnocks and Kendalls	Thorngate Churcher Trust	JEH/Calder Valley CLT	United St Saviours	Lichfield
Procuring site	Purchased from Bristol CC [competitive tender, full price]	New development on existing site	New development on existing site	New development on existing site	Gifted from Calderdale Council	S106, site owned by London Borough of Southwark	New development on existing site
Known locally via	Almshouses Grants programme	Almshouses	Almshouses	Almshouses Care home	Almshouses CLT	Almshouses Grants programme	Almshouses
Local support via:		PR consultants	Local press		Local press	Local press	
Use of reserves:	Preliminary costs	Preliminary and full costs	Included in costs	Preliminary costs	Preliminary costs	Preliminary and full costs	Preliminary and full costs
Relationship with local authority	Planning Site Support for HE funding allocations	Planning Affordable housing	Planning Colchester Borough Council grant	Planning Support for HE funding	Planning Site Support for HE funding Allocations: CLT	Planning Site Future allocations	Planning
Design guidance	HAPPI, lifetime homes	HAPPI, lifetime homes	Lifetime homes	Lifetime homes	Lifetime homes	HAPPI, lifetimes homes	HAPPI, lifetime homes, Passivhaus
Site issues before construction	Demolition of existing building containing asbestos underground	Bomb site rubble [affected design before build]	Victorian sewer Deep foundations Historic rubbish dump	Drainage issues Badgers	Drainage issues Buried rocks & location of pile foundations Bats	Not yet on site for new building	Burial ground [48 14th-16th C skeletons]
Site issues during construction	No existing almshouse residents Good community engagement	Disruption for existing residents [though something to look at]	No disruption for residents [because builders were very considerate]	Disruption for residents [especially parking and builders' site huts]	Local JEH residents helpful; parking available on JEH-owned site opposite	Not yet on site No almshouse residents nearby	Existing residents positive about new development

Table 6 Individual key learning points: English and Dutch case studies

Key points	Concept	Land use	Planning	Funding	Management & governance	Design
Bristol Charities	Strategy: build relationships with local authority (LA)	Strategy: sell unsuitable city centre historic almshouses to build new in outer suburbs	Local authority owned site, designated for extra care housing as part of LA strategy	Merger with small almshouse charity (with unsuitable almshouse) helped to fund new extra care project	Complex structure with separate Orchard Homes as Registered Provider	Design and build contract
St Clement Danes and Holborn Estates Charity	Strategy: replace 1960s building: hard to let bedsits and future maintenance costs	New almshouse funded by cross-subsidy from sale of part of site Valuable very large site opened up more possibilities	Negotiation with LA over affordable housing on shared site (with private developer)	No grant Valuable site		Design and build contract (because of involvement of private developer to cross-subsidise new almshouse)
Winnocks and Kendall's Almshouse Charity	Demolition and replacement of existing poor quality bedsit bungalows		Historic England delay Keep historic links & design	LA grant less likely to be available in future	Chose CIO	Traditional contract
Thorngate Churcher Trust	Remodelling first, learning curve before new-build		Over development issue needed flexibility to resolve		Get charity structure sorted first: chose CIO	Traditional contract Imaginative design for narrow angled site
John Eastwood Homes	Collaboration with Calder Valley CLT	CLT involvement unlocked site	Heritage buildings nearby	Calder Valley CLT as HE investment partner	Almshouse charity is unincorporated	Traditional contract Calder Valley CLT commitment to local builders
Johannes Ent	Strategy from 1980s Future plans/ ideas for 21st C almshouses from 1990s	Trustees were well-networked about adjacent site potential	Planning: re-zoning	New almshouse funded by housing association		
Gravinnehof	Looking to future with ideas for 21st C almshouses from 1990s	Trustees were well-networked about available site		Both foundations are very wealthy so could fund new almshouse	Detailing, problems with water damage, maintenance costs	Design and courtyard issues

Other important factors were the relationships between key players, and being known in the community, sometimes through a track record of providing funding or services.

Almost all construction projects will encounter unforeseen issues that either impact on cost or the time scale of each stage of the project. Very often unforeseen issues will impact on both, potentially delaying each phase. Whilst developing on existing sites (already owned by the charity) may appear to be beneficial our case studies highlight that as these are often historic sites this can present additional challenges such as burial grounds and Victorian sewers. Developing on historic sites (adjacent to listed buildings) additionally has planning implications; and whilst planners are often supportive, the additional negotiations can have time and cost implications for the charity.

Wildlife, environmental, and archaeological constraints can represent additional costs and delays for almshouse charities (e.g. bats in Yorkshire, badgers in Gosport, and Victorian sewers in Essex). These are site specific yet critical considerations for charities during the planning process, requiring complex and sometimes lengthy involvement with both professional advisers and other

specialist agencies. Examples include: English Heritage involvement with Winnocks and Kendall's project in Colchester (Ch 7), and St Johns, Lichfield (Ch 4); the Canal and River Trust and Yorkshire Water over drainage issues for John Eastwood Homes and Calder Valley CLT (Ch 9).

Inevitably as with any building project, there have been delays and issues from concept through to completion. Overall, the developments have needed collaboration and constructive relationships between:

- clients and their support organisations
- professional advisers including surveyors, architects, engineers, other built environment professionals and legal advisers
- local authority planning and housing, and adult social care for the extra care project
- funders (Homes England, local authorities, banks, charitable trusts)
- building contractors
- residents and the local community.

A feature across our case studies and examples is evidence where participants have been committed to the process, including examples where they have gone above and beyond what is required by the usual demands of their roles to make things work. Examples include:

- Almshouse charities and the Community Land Trust (all: Chapters 4-10): time and commitment from voluntary trustees (often over many years, with advice and support from their support organisations).
- Professional advisers: longstanding relationships with the architect (Bristol Charities, learning from 2010 and 2015 new almshouses, Ch 5) and the surveyor (St Clement's Heights, 2008-2019, Ch 6); the role of the project architect in managing the expectations of both the contractor and the CLT (John Eastwood Homes/ Calder Valley CLT, Ch 9).
- Local authorities: examples include the developing relationship with Bristol Charities (Ch5); resolving planning and affordable housing issues (LB Lewisham, Ch 6); resolving parking requirements (Thorngate, Ch 8; Calder Valley CLT, Ch 9).
- Funders: Homes England help especially for Thorngate (Ch 8), Calder Valley CLT (Ch 9); Charity Bank (Winnocks & Kendalls, Ch 7); charitable trusts (Bradbury Trust, Thorngate, Ch 9).
- Building contractors: Proactive and committed to community engagement (Bristol Charities, Ch 5); even helping residents with their shopping (Winnocks & Kendalls, Ch 7).
- Almshouse residents: living on a building site for years 'we don't care, we want to stay here!' (St Clement's Heights, Ch 6); parking and outside water tap for start on site (JEH resident for Calder Valley CLT site, Ch 9).
- The local community/ local press: The Mills Charity (Ch 4); Winnocks & Kendalls (Ch 7).

11.2 Learning from the Netherlands

There are common issues facing Dutch case studies and English almshouse charities:

- demands of time and commitment from voluntary trustees
- no staff, only trustees for new building projects
- length of time from inception to completion of a new almshouse
- what to do about 20th century buildings no longer fit for purpose: modernise or replace?

Differences from the English experience include:

- the 'little courtyard' almshouse typology appears better known than in the UK (for the general public and most architects)
- no access to government grant (so many fewer new almshouses than in England)
- bold modern architecture (not pastiche) in Haarlem next to a historic 14th century almshouse courtyard and on a prime site facing the Spaarne river
- traditional Dutch 4-sided courtyards (very tight sites surrounded by buildings) provide few opportunities to extend/remodel.

11.3 Potential for almshouses to meet housing need in local communities

Almshouses will only ever be part of the solution to housing the ageing population alongside other providers. Like Community Led Housing initiatives, they are sometimes a niche rather than mainstream offer (for example for small sites/few units and villages). They have the advantage of being well-established in many localities with local trustees and connections, existing housing and sometimes assets (land, reserves).

History shows that disposal and development within the almshouse tradition is nothing new, whether on the same site or miles away: see examples across the centuries (Bristol, London: Chapters 5, 6). This is important for almshouse charity trustees, clerks, and senior staff to remember if they are reluctant to develop. Any development presents additional pressure on trustees (especially for charities with no staff) which can be mitigated by:

- careful choice of development partner
- enlisting new trustees with specific experience
- a merger with a larger (more) experienced charity.

All the case studies show the long timeframe from inception to completion and the process can see several changes in trustees. Further research is required to determine how CLH models can complement the provision of almshouses into the future, and what development practices can inform these processes.

11.4 Recommendations

For professional advisers

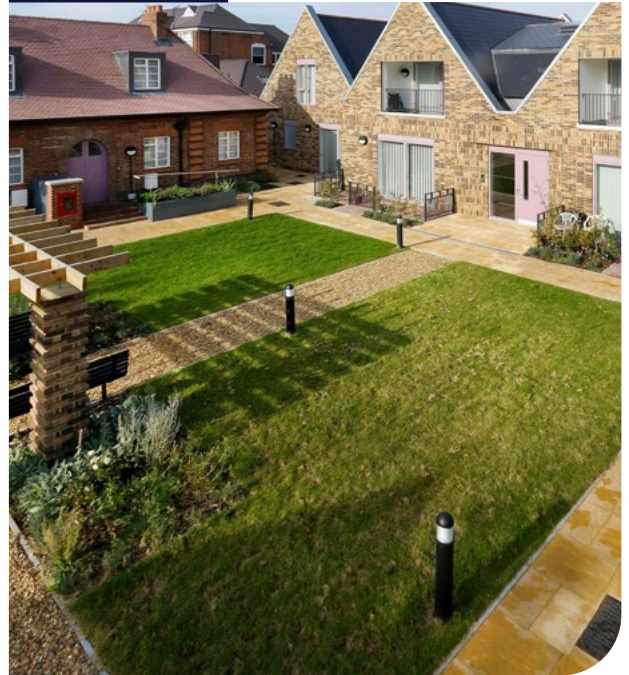
When approaching a new development, consider partnering with your local almshouse charities; for example, when looking at sites including rural exception, small infill sites or part of a larger site. This study and previous research (Pannell et al., 2019) has highlighted that many almshouse charities feel their responsibility to continue to provide housing in perpetuity very keenly, rather than the image that may exist of them as custodians of historic buildings. Almshouse charities have an existing structure, governance models, local connections and perhaps access to funding and/or land: this can be advantageous compared with other community housing models. As with Calder Valley CLT, almshouse charities can work in partnership with other forms of community-led housing.

Almshouse charities could more often be included in the 'mix' of tenures found on new developments. This is true for all future planning for older people, whether in an urban or a rural setting; it may well be more adaptive for rural communities where there is a demonstrable need. Almshouse charities often have very good and strong local connections. Many charities have a track record not only providing housing but other local services for older people and their wider communities (for example Bristol Charities, St Clement Danes, Thorngate case studies). Almshouse charities are not merely looking back or preserving what is, but have a key role in future housing provision, as our case studies and examples demonstrate.

- Think about your local almshouse charities when looking at sites
- Include them in the 'mix' of future planning for older people
- Remember almshouses have local connections and a role for the future

Figure 70

Courtyard of the Thrale almshouses, Streatham, UK



Reproduced by permission of BPTW

For local authorities

Almshouses can form part of your local provision and can be a good option across a range of housing types and across a range of sizes of development; from two or four homes to much larger developments. Older people help build a local community, volunteer, help to anchor families and contribute greatly to community life. Enabling older people to maintain their local connections can mean they are able to remain independent for longer. When developing local plans do so in consultation with your local almshouse charities, drawing on their experience and local connections. Remember that almshouse charities can work in partnership with other community-led housing providers (especially CLTs). Almshouse charities were also eligible to access CLH funding in their own right (see example in Chapter 3) where CLH funding enabled a small almshouse charity to provide additional units in a village.

- Almshouses can be a good option across housing types and developments
- Maintaining local connections can help older people to remain independent
- Involve almshouse charities when developing local plans
- Remember that almshouse charities can work in partnership with others and access funding

Figure 71

Later living accommodation inspired by historic almshouses, Steepleton, Tetbury, UK



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For communities

Despite the ceasing of CLH fund, there are still options to access grants for community led housing initiatives. Funding could be particularly useful for mobilising connections between more isolated rural communities or reaching out to isolated pockets in more urban settings. Using funding to explore options at an early stage could enable community groups to expand, be more inclusive and take advantage of local expertise through established almshouse charities and their trustees. When developing a local needs survey, involve your local almshouse charities, remembering many are interested in intergenerational projects as well as housing for older members of the community. Different models of community housing are worth exploring, and partnerships between almshouse charities and other models (especially CLTs) can be a good fit.

- Explore and access community led housing grant funding
- Involve your local almshouse charities in local needs surveys
- Remember that almshouse charities may be interested in intergenerational projects
- Explore partnerships across community led housing models, including almshouses

For almshouse charities and the Almshouse Association

The need for more social housing for all ages is increasingly acknowledged through research, professional practice, news coverage and government reporting. So developing awareness with other stakeholders of the opportunities that almshouse charities present is becoming more critical. As we have explored in this report, almshouses have played and continue to play a role in housing provision. This is not a stultified movement but one that continues to address a very clear need. The good practice and experience within the almshouse community needs to be more widely disseminated both internally and externally, and almshouse charities encouraged to embrace their role: not only preserving the past, but reinterpreting it in order to reimagine the future.

- Developing awareness of the opportunities that almshouse charities present with other stakeholders
- There is good practice and experience within the almshouse community which needs to be more widely disseminated
- Reinterpret the past and reimagine for the future

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13.0 Acknowledgements

Figure 72

Birks Court, Walsden, February 2020: Mayors of Calderdale and Todmorden planting a flowering cherry tree



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14.0 Appendix

Appendix 1: Almshouse research topic guide

1. Can you start by telling us how this new development started?

- When? (idea of timescale, reasons if serious delays before starting?)
- Why did you decide to build a new almshouse (e.g. new strategy/growing demand/ hard-to-let bedsits/ loss of income)?
- Why this form of provision (e.g. bungalows/mixed younger & older people/sheltered/extra-care)?
- Is this replacement provision, or an increase in housing stock?
- What were your options?
- Who was involved as 'drivers' (e.g. new trustee/s, new chair/ new CEO/Clerk)?

2. What were the main hurdles to overcome before the development started?

- Overall funding/ financing upfront costs?
- Agreement to proceed from trustees?
- Finding a site (if not in ownership)?
- Planning issues?
- Local opposition (residents, neighbours, other key players)?
- Local authority views (housing, planning, local councillors ...)?
- Conflicting agendas of stakeholders?

3. What were the main hurdles to overcome during the development?

- Delays?
- Problems or failure of contractor/s, suppliers, consultants?
- Managing the decanting for existing residents?
- Financing (e.g. loss of income during voids/decanting)?

4A. Before completion (for projects still on site) are there still issues to resolve?

- Build quality?
- Resident selection, creating a new community?
- Do you plan to build more almshouses?
- What are your key messages for other almshouse charities thinking about a new development?

4B. After completion and handover (for completed projects), were there still issues to resolve?

- Build quality, snagging?
- Resident selection, creating a new community?
- Do you plan to build more almshouses?
- What are your key messages for other almshouse charities thinking about a new development?



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