

Sir John Jacob's Almshouses
(Registered Charity 201934)

Report for the Year 2020

1. Trustees

Councillor S Kindersley	(Chairman).
Mrs. J Hough	(Hon Secretary)
P. M. Gorton	(Hon Treasurer)
Mrs I Gray	

2. Addresses

Correspondence

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Finances

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The Emplins
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3. Authority

The Charity Commission Scheme dated 11th July 1958 and as amended by the Commissioners Scheme of 9th August 1974, 26th January 1984 and 16th September 1996.

4. Objective.

To provide accommodation in accordance with the founder's wishes. These may be summarised as:-

"To provide accommodation for 10 poor widows of good character resident in the Parish of Gamlingay". The Charity Commission amended the scheme to give the trustees considerable latitude over appointments provided that the wishes of the founder were given proper consideration.

5. Constraints.

The Almshouses in this trust have very steep staircases which are structurally unsuited for elderly or frail persons. With only a single bedroom it is also the trustees' view that the houses are not suitable for other than single occupation.

It should be noted that the founder made no distinction on the grounds of age. The trustees are however faced with a real dilemma. According to the Almshouse Association an appointment once made should extend for the lifetime of the beneficiary. This difficulty is sharpened by the stance taken by the Housing Officer of the Local District Council who regards the Almshouses as cheap housing stock with "tenants" with protected tenancies. Thus, the trustees seek elderly or retired beneficiaries.

6. Status of the Trust.

Capital.

Virtually all the wealth and assets of the trust are vested in buildings. The Almshouses and the associated Chapel are Grade 2* Listed buildings. A professional valuation carried out in 2012 indicated a capital value in the region of £1,100,000 if the properties were sold with vacant possession. It has been decided that to show a true and fair view, the accounts this year have been updated to show the estimated current market value of the land and buildings owned by the charity. This has been estimated to be £3M. The trustees will monitor this on an ongoing basis and will revalue the property every 5 years or sooner if it is considered that a material change in the value has taken place.

7. Building Stock

Over the last 40 years the trustees have undertaken a programme of repair and refurbishment. The trustees do not consider it appropriate to seek charitable donations from the general public. In their view the sums received in Weekly Maintenance Contributions (WMCs) should be set at a level sufficient for all purposes. This has of necessity imposed a long time span upon the refurbishment programme. The time span has lengthened in recent years because of the withdrawal of public funding from virtually all building projects, and more recently by the imposition of VAT at 20% even upon Listed Building alterations.

Things changed in 2017 with a grant from the Almshouse Consortium (para 11.1 below)

8. Security

In 2010 the trustees reported a series of incidents when written verbal and physical abuse was suffered by one of the beneficiaries. The installation of CCTV to both the front and the rear of the Almshouses appear to have been entirely effective in preventing further abuse. A review in October 2018 showed that the CCTV system was faulty. An updated CCTV has now been installed.

Fire alarms. In 2017 it was discovered that there were faults in the installed system. In spite of repeated requests for the faults to be rectified, the firm charged with the maintenance of the system failed to act. The trustees commissioned an independent firm to report on what was required. The report disclosed multiple failures and it was decided to cancel the existing contract (at no cost) and install a completely new system. The trustees decided to follow the Almshouse Association's recommendations and supply each house with fire blankets and fire extinguishers. Each occupier was given instruction on the use of this equipment and it was stressed that the occupants should not put themselves at risk.

Fire barriers. The fire risk assessment checked on the fire barriers between each almshouse. The main roof barriers were in good order however there was a risk disclosed in the lean-to kitchen area. It will be necessary to extend the dividing wall to the apex of the roof. This work is being undertaken and due to be completed by Easter 2020.

9. Building Works

Following the 2012 – 2013 refurbishment programme the single exception to the general refurbishment is still outstanding. This exception was at the personal request of one beneficiary.

External Painting During the year the external paintwork and its associated woodwork was subjected to the usual 5 year rotation. This is next due in July 2023.

Electrical testing. Qualified electricians tested the properties' electrical wiring. This was found to be sound. At the same time the electricians were asked to test the beneficiaries' appliances. Beneficiaries were offered this testing, this work has been undertaken for those who requested it. This testing is next due in November 2023.

10 The Future.

The trustees must consider works which, though desirable, are not essential. These include:-

1. Removal of cement tiles from the South roof slope and replace with clay pin tiles.
2. Installation of photo voltaic cells to south facing North roof plus associated wiring.
3. Conversion of The Chapel to residential use.

11 Funding.

11.1 Almshouse Consortium.

An application for substantial funds was made to the Almshouse Consortium. This resulted in a grant of £58,540. The final tranche was received in October 2019.

11.2 Almshouse Association

In 2012 the trustees accepted a loan offered by the Almshouse Association in the sum of £50,000 at nil interest repayable over a 10 year period. This proved to be a real "life saver" and permitted the trustees to bring forward the whole programme of works.

A further £35,000 loan was agreed in December 2014, also at zero interest, and drawn down in stages, the final drawdown being in May 2016.

11.3 The Charity Bank

Following detailed discussions with the Charity Bank, and much hard work from the trust, the trustees took up a mortgage in the sum of £245,000. The interest required is 6.5%.

Unfortunately, they are not able to offer any fixed term deal.

12 Income and Expenditure

Detail of the trust's income and expenditure for the year 2020 is attached at Appendix 1. This appendix also gives details of the outstanding loans from the Almshouse Association and the mortgage with the Charity Bank.

13. WMCs

Keeping the level of WMCs up to date is vital for the financial stability of the trust. In the past the trustees have reviewed the position every two years. The new legislation concerning Housing Benefit and the delays imposed on the alteration of WMC levels make it necessary for the trustees to carry out the review on a yearly basis. The current WMC for each improved property is £114.28 per week. This is subject to review in May 2021.

14. Long Term Financial Objective

After many years of spending all the trust's resources to bring the houses up to standard the trustees can at last look forward to a time of financial stability mainly due to the grant from the Almshouse Consortium. As previously reported the trustees seek to maintain a balance in the Current Account in the region of £10,000. This sum has been suggested by the Charity Bank. The Almshouse Association advise that the trustees should form both a Cyclical Repair Fund and an Emergency Repair Fund. The trustees propose to use surplus money to reduce the mortgage with the Charity Bank.

15. The Elizabeth Lane Charity.

In the 17th century Elizabeth Lane gave £ 2,000 in South Seas Stock to the Almshouse Trustees to provide a fund for the benefit of the eight most senior of the poor widows resident in the Almshouses. If £2,000 was converted into present day values this would be a very substantial sum. At the moment, capital of only some £ 500 is left. The trustees are entitled to the interest.

Should funds become available after the mortgage and the loan have been paid off it is at least arguable that the Charity Commission should be asked to modernise this Charity to serve a useful purpose. Whatever happens, however, this strategy must be regarded as a very long term target.

16. Residents

In 2020 there were two vacancies, one of which was filled and the other currently being refurbished for occupation in March 2021. We do not seek to keep a waiting list but rather collect names and addresses of interested parties. Every vacancy is advertised for two months in the local press. There seems to be a steady demand of people wishing to be considered. By and large these applicants fit most of the selection criteria but frequently they fail on one. The trustees need to ensure the income from Weekly Maintenance Contributions and do not keep Almshouses unoccupied for long periods.

17. The Gardens

These are maintained by the beneficiaries with some help from the trustees. The Trustees arranged a contract with a local gardener to cut the lawns on a regular basis.

18. The Chapel

The Chapel is vacant at the present time. At the end of 2020 the Trustees were approached by the local churches with regard to using the Chapel for a foodbank, discussions are on going. The trustees have been advised that the income from this building could be significantly greater if a change of use was sought and the building converted into a residential unit. The trustees have instructed their architects to report on the alterations needed to convert the Chapel into a residential unit with a preference for use as an Almshouse. The trustees have received a report from the architects and are discussing the way forward. The anticipated cost of this is in the region of £80,000.

19. Summary

The trustees need to keep the very long term objectives in mind. The almshouses have been fulfilling a need within the village and the trustees do not see that need ceasing. Criticism has been levelled that the trustees have only 4 members. Whilst it is appreciated that this could cause difficulties, the ease of administration that is associated with low numbers has much to commend it. At the end of 2018, the trustees appointed a Clerk which has greatly eased the burden on the trustees, whilst improving the service to the beneficiaries. Two years on, this appointment has been proven to be very worthwhile.

The trustees feel that the Almshouses are an asset to the village. Provided the increasing bureaucratic interference can be kept in check the trustees see no reason not to expect another 350 years of service to this community.

Councillor S Kindersley (Chairman)

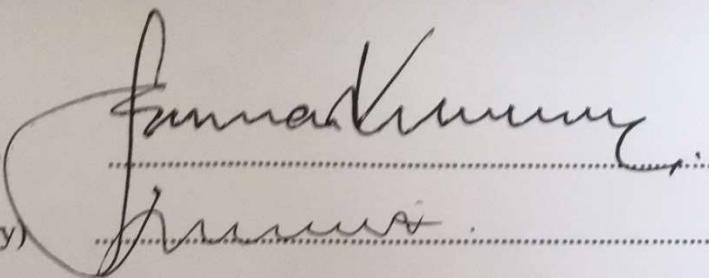
Mrs. J Hough (Hon Secretary)

P. M. Gorton (Hon Treasurer)

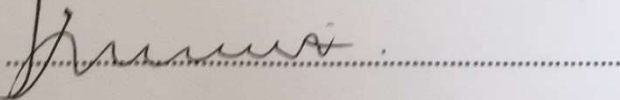
Mrs. I Gray

Trustees Sir John Jacob's Almshouses Gamlingay Dated 2021

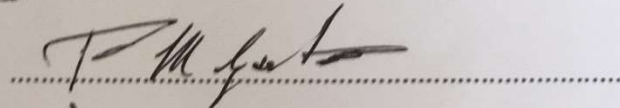
Councillor S Kindersley (Chairman)



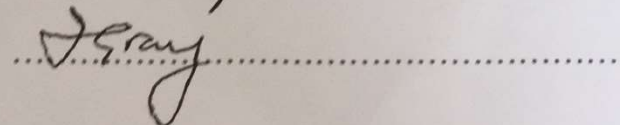
Mrs. J Hough (Hon Secretary)



P. M. Gorton (Hon Treasurer)



Mrs. I Gray



Trustees Sir John Jacob's Almshouses Gamlingay

Dated 2021

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
SIR JOHN JACOB'S ALMSHOUSES GAMLINGAY**

I report on the accounts of Sir John Jacob's Almshouses for the period ended 31st December 2020 which are set out on page 1

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act

Follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act

State whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiners report

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts present with those records. It also includes consideration of any usual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in any audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and

- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of section of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

(2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

Antoinette Gorst FCCA CTA MAAT
Anstee Gorst
Chartered Certified Accountants &
Chartered Tax Advisers
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Sir John Jacob's Almshouses

Registered Charity No 201934

Accounts for the month	1st January 2020		to	31 December 2020	
				Bank reconciliation	31/12/2020
Outgoings				Income	
	£	£			£
Minor Repairs		5,380.40			
Management				Maintenance Contributions	55,278.20
Insurance	1,166.56			Rent for Chapel	0.00
Garden	387.60			Grant from Consortium	0.00
Utilities (unoccupied properties)	488.94			TV Licence Contributions	22.50
Security	144.00				
Legal, accountancy & AHA membership	179.00				
Accountancy	576.00				
Consultancy	3,810.00				
Office	177.43				
Wages	600.00				
Miscellaneous	37.50				
Mortgage interest	12,099.13				
		19,666.16			
		<u>25,046.56</u>		Total income	<u>55,300.70</u>
Excess current income over expenditure		30,254.14		Total Expenditure	39,146.56
Major Repairs/refurbishment		14,100.00			
Excess income over expenditure		<u>16,154.14</u>			<u>16,154.14</u>

Capital Balances

As at	31 December 2020		Start of the Year	1st January 2020
Fixed Assets - Land and Buildings		3,000,000.00		
at Bank			at Bank	
Current Acc	27,427.56		Current Acc	30,144.97
less cheques in transit	<u>0.00</u>		less Cheques in transit	<u>0.00</u>
		27,427.56		30,144.97
Mortgage at Charity Bank	-179,213.93		Mortgage at Charity Bank	-189,160.48
Almshouse Association Loan	-26,250.00		Almshouse Association Loan	-35,175.00
			Add Excess income over expenditure	16,154.14
			Deemed cost of Land and Buildings	3,000,000.00
		<u>2,821,963.63</u>		<u>2,821,963.63</u>