

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING REPORT 2024

SIR ROBERT HITCHAM'S ALMSHOUSE CHARITY AT LEVINGTON

Almshouses are a charitable form of self-sufficient, low cost community housing that is held in trust for local people in housing need. They are the oldest form of social housing with a history of over one thousand years. The oldest almshouse foundation still in existence dates from circa 990. Almshouses are managed and run by almshouse charities made up of local volunteers.

The almshouses in Levington are grade II listed buildings; there are four almshouses built around a small communal courtyard. Each house has an upstairs bedroom (there is a steep staircase) and a downstairs sitting room, kitchen and bathroom. There is gas central heating and each house has a small garden.

As there is no warden on site or on call the residents need to be able to live independently.

There is currently a vacancy at one of the almshouses and the trustees are inviting applications from persons interested in living in an Almshouse. In accordance with the charity, the provision of almshouses are for those in need, who are resident in the County of Suffolk at the time of appointment, with a preference for women and or those with a connection to the area of the ancient parishes of Levington and Nacton, Suffolk.

On 7th August 2023 the Charity Commission issued the updated Scheme which is the Governing Instrument for the charity. A special thanks to Dorrie Giles who, having been co-opted as a trustee, worked tirelessly to progress this matter to completion.

The almshouses are generally in a good state of repair and the trustees are committed to ensuring that they remain so for the benefit of current and future residents. The Trustees arrange for the Almshouses to be professionally inspected every five years. The latest inspection report is presently being prepared.

Last year the outbuilding received some remedial work to strengthen the roof, re-pointing to the walls, resetting of roof tiles and a refresh of paint to the door.

The Board of Trustees has experienced some change in the last year. Ian Angus and Sarah Gregory resigned from the Trustee role; Ros Eaton relinquished the clerk role and Sue Parrish was appointed as a Trustee and took on the clerk role.

Our thanks go to both Ian and Sarah for their contributions and commitment in ensuring that the almshouses have been preserved and the charity strengthened.

There are currently five volunteer Trustees, all living in the Parishes of Levington or Nacton. Our annual return compiled by our Treasurer, Chris Mayhew, can be viewed on the Charity Commission website.

There is one vacancy on our board of trustees and we welcome expressions of interest from residents in either Nacton or Levington who would like to join us.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on 18th September 2024 at Levington Village Hall.

Sue Parrish Clerk and Trustee April 2024