

Nottingham Community  
Almshouse Charity

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Residents' Handbook

This handbook provides you with information about occupying your almshouse, and about the Nottingham Community Almshouse Charity, its general administration and management. It supplements the rules and regulations set out in the Letter of Appointment, a copy of which you signed when you accepted appointment. The Trustee hopes that the information this book provides will help you to be happy here.

**Trustee:** Nottingham Community  
Housing Association  
Intermediate Housing Team  
12/14 Pelham Road  
Sherwood Rise  
Nottingham NG5 1AP

**Clerk to the  
Trustee:** David Simmons

**Telephone No:** 0845 650 1203

### About almshouses

Almshouses are the earliest form of affordable housing recorded in history, the first being set up in York during the 10th century. The demand for almshouses has continued to grow, especially in rural areas. These early almshouses were called hospitals and they were founded by the various religious orders to care for the sick and the poor, especially the elderly. After the dissolution of the monasteries many did not survive but luckily wealthy landowners, merchants and later industrialists carried on the tradition. These were usually designated for retired or widowed people who had been connected with certain trades or occupations. These almshouses were a very acceptable alternative to the workhouse, the city slums or the streets. Today, with the advent of the welfare state, living standards have generally improved but the demand for almshouses has continued and many have been restored, extended, renovated or even new ones built.

In rural areas, former farm labourers' cottages are being sold for astronomical figures and the local population cannot afford to buy them. In such areas almshouses are a preferred choice to moving many miles into council property, perhaps on a housing estate. There are now in the region of 1,750 almshouse charities in Britain providing around 30,000 homes nationwide. Many of which are listed buildings due to their historical or architectural interest and they are run as charitable trusts.

In 1946 an organisation known as The Almshouse Association was formed to support these almshouse charities. It was initially charged with the task of restoring those properties damaged by the blitz but has continued to provide advice and support to the trustees of almshouses throughout the country today.

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# Chapter 1

## History and governance of the Charity

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### History

The Nottingham Community Almshouse Charity runs almshouses in 14 locations in Nottinghamshire. Brief details of the almshouses and their history are set out in the schedule at the end of this handbook.

The almshouses were originally provided by 12 different benefactors who made the money available for their construction. Many of these were built in the early 20th century and charity trustees were appointed to manage them. They continued to be managed by individual voluntary trustees until recent years, but it became apparent that due to the complexities and expense of running properties such as these it would be better if a professional body experienced in running social housing was appointed as trustee. As Nottingham Community Housing Association had many years experience running social housing in this area they were asked, and agreed, to take over the trusteeship of these almshouse charities and it is possible that others could be added in the future. In 2009 these charities were merged into one under the name of the Nottingham Community Almshouse Charity.

### Constitution

The charity is run in accordance with its governing instrument. This is a Charity Commission Scheme dated 31 March 2009 which consolidated and modernised all the previous documents dating back to when the charities were founded. The charity is a non profit-making organisation which relies upon the contributions received from the residents and whatever interest it receives from its investments for the running of the homes.

### Trustee body

The charity is run by the Trustee, Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA), who also carries out the day-to-day management of the almshouses with the assistance of a part-time administrator and an Almshouse Visitor.

### Almshouses

The almshouses are unfurnished dwellings intended to provide convenient accommodation for people in need, hardship or distress in a setting which allows them to be independent and to come and go as they please.

## Chapter 2

### Services provided

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#### Almshouse Visitor

The Almshouse Visitor visits the residents at some of the Homes once a month just to keep in touch and to deal with any questions the residents may have and also any concerns about the property. It is not your Visitor's role to provide care or support to the residents as they are expected to be able to live independently.

The Almshouse Visitor also visits new applicants and assists in the completion of their application forms which are submitted to the Trustee for consideration and decision.

The Trustee also visits the residents once a year by arrangement.

#### Repairs and decorations

The Trustee is responsible for both external and internal repairs and for the upkeep of the communal parts. Residents are responsible for their own internal decorating and also for making arrangements for window cleaning inside and outside. Do not attempt cleaning windows yourself if you cannot do it safely. In cases of difficulty speak to your Almshouse Visitor.

If at any time you should wish to contact anyone concerning any item of maintenance or repair you should telephone Nottingham Community Housing Association Maintenance department on freephone 0800 317 861. You will need to tell them your name, address and telephone number, details of the problem and access arrangements.

#### Central heating

All the almshouses have gas-fired central heating with the benefit of a free gas safety check every year.

#### Insurance

The Charity insures the buildings but **residents must make their own arrangements for the insurance relating to their contents and belongings.**

Please do not keep more cash in your home than you need for your day-to-day expenses. Please put the rest in a bank or building society. Do not ask the Almshouse Visitor to take care of money for you as they are not allowed to do so.

#### Television licences

For residents over 75 years old the television licence is free. Those over 60 and below 75 years of age may, if they are retired, be entitled to a concessionary television licence for which the Charity pays. Residents with a disability may also be entitled to a concessionary TV licence.

#### Cleaning

The residents are responsible for keeping their almshouse clean. If this is difficult, please tell your Almshouse Visitor who will help you arrange for cleaning help.

#### Gardens

Parts of the gardens comprise communal lawns and shrubberies which are maintained by the charity's gardener. There may be small areas of garden which the residents might wish to tend themselves. If you would like more information about your individual situation please speak to your Almshouse Visitor.

## Chapter 3

### Terms of Occupancy

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#### Letter of Appointment

You will have a copy of the Letter of Appointment, which you signed when you were appointed as a resident and which sets out in detail the terms and conditions applying to your occupation. This handbook only includes some of the main terms and you must refer to the Letter of Appointment for all the details. As a beneficiary of an almshouse charity you are a licensee and not a tenant, but the Trustee will not ask you to leave unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as when you cease to be an eligible beneficiary of the charity or do not comply with the terms of your Letter of Appointment.

#### Relatives and visitors

Your Almshouse Visitor cannot take the place of your relatives or friends. We hope they will give you just the same support as they would if you were living elsewhere. With their help and co-operation, and if necessary support from social services, we hope you will be independent for as long as you wish.

#### Residents' concerns

If you have any concerns that you would like to discuss with the Trustee you should inform your Almshouse Visitor who will make arrangements for a meeting.

#### Maintenance contributions

The maintenance contribution is payable on the 26th day of each month in arrears by direct debit. The amount is reviewed by the Trustee annually.

The amount you pay covers part of the cost of running the almshouses and includes repairs and maintenance, buildings insurance, and the upkeep of the garden.

The maintenance contribution is the charity's only source of revenue; Nottingham Community Housing Association as trustee is not allowed to subsidise the cost of running the homes.

#### Housing benefit

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have little or no capital you will almost certainly be entitled to Housing Benefit to help you with your housing costs. To claim Housing Benefit you should ask for a form at your local Benefits Office (DWP) or Housing Department. If you have other income in addition to your basic retirement pension you may still be entitled to some help with housing costs. Again, forms to claim this are available as above.

Your Almshouse Visitor, Citizens Advice Bureau or Age UK will help if you are unsure of your entitlement or need help in completing the form.

#### Businesses

Residents must not carry out any business on or from the homes nor must the property be used for the storage of business stock or equipment.

#### Re-housing

Residents who wish to change their accommodation within the complex may apply to their Almshouse Visitor for the matter to be considered by the Trustee.

The Trustee may require you to move to other accommodation if major repair work has to be carried out. In this case you will be given as much warning as is possible depending upon the urgency of the situation.

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## Gifts and legacies

It is the Trustee's policy that no one involved in the running of the charity should accept any gift or legacy from a resident. If you wish to donate anything to the charity please contact the Trustee. All such matters will be dealt with confidentially.

## Council tax, electricity, gas, telephone and other services

Residents are responsible for their own council tax, electricity and gas bills and any other individual services or supplies such as a telephone (but not the water charges as these are paid by the charity), but would you please note:

- a) When you end your occupation of the property you must notify the service supply companies, and the council tax office, of the date you intend to vacate and arrange for meters to be read on your day of departure. It is your responsibility to pay all charges up to the time you move out.
- b) Please confirm to the Almshouse Visitor or Trustee that you have done this before you move out and give them a forwarding address.

## Chapter 4

### General information

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#### Improvements to your home

You must not carry out any improvements, alterations, or repairs to your home without first discussing your plans with your Almshouse Visitor or the Trustee. As the Trustee has responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the almshouses, it has to consider individual resident's requests for alterations alongside their own maintenance programme. If an alteration would be structurally unsound, would reduce the amenities for subsequent occupants, or would increase future maintenance costs clearly it would not be approved. If you live in a listed building, some alterations will need local authority approval and may be denied.

#### Disablement

You must not make any structural alterations to your home (e.g. fitting ramps or stair lifts) without the Trustee's permission, as this could contravene planning or listed building regulations or affect the structure of the building.

#### Parking of vehicles

The almshouses do not have garages or parking spaces, but in some places there are small communal parking areas which can be used by residents and visitors as and when available. No resident has a guaranteed parking space. Please do not park elsewhere within the almshouse grounds, or allow your visitors to do so, as they may block the way for ambulances or fire engines in an emergency.

#### Wills

You are strongly advised to make a will. If you wish to leave personal property to a relative or friend a will is essential. Please inform your Almshouse Visitor where the will is kept and who is the executor. A solicitor is the best

person to help you make a will, and if you require assistance in finding one, we suggest you contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau. Ask your Almshouse Visitor if you find this difficult.

#### Personal problems

If you have any personal problems over money or any other matter and you have no family or friend who you feel able to consult, the Trustee will be glad to give whatever help or advice it can. Let your Almshouse Visitor know if you wish to see the Trustee at any time.

#### Waste disposal and recycling

Waste bins are provided. Please make sure that the waste storage area is kept clean and tidy. All waste food should be wrapped before putting it in the bin.

If your local authority provides recycling bins or boxes, please sort your waste according to the way in which it will be taken away/recycled.

## Chapter 5

### Experiencing difficulties

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If you have a complaint about the charity or its staff, or a difficulty has arisen which cannot be readily solved by a discussion with your Almshouse Visitor, you should write to the Trustee, but small maintenance items should be referred to the Maintenance department when they arise. **NCHA Maintenance Department - Tel: 0800 317861.**

Many people are reluctant to complain. Your Trustee (NCHA) can only resolve difficulties and improve the service it offers if you let them know when issues arise.

#### You can complain by:

- writing to us at NCHA, 12/14 Pelham Road, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham NG5 1AP
- phoning us on 0845 650 1203
- emailing us at [feedback@ncha.org.uk](mailto:feedback@ncha.org.uk)
- speaking to a member of staff
- visiting our website: [www.ncha.org.uk](http://www.ncha.org.uk)

If you think that your complaint should be dealt with by a manager, you will be making a formal complaint. Our complaints procedure, which is available on request or at [www.ncha.org.uk](http://www.ncha.org.uk) explains what we will do to help solve your problem.

If you remain dissatisfied after following NCHA's formal complaints procedure, you have the right to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman whose address is:

81 Aldwych  
London  
WC2B 4HN.

Telephone: 020 7421 3800

Fax: 020 7404 7092

## The Schedule

### Nottingham Community Almshouse Charity homes and their history

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#### FOREST FIELDS

**Norris Homes, Berridge Road, Forest Fields, Nottingham.**



Eight one-bedroom houses for persons who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

#### History

Norris almshouses are a row of eight one bedroom houses built by Mary Smith Norris in 1893, and designed by renowned Nottingham architect Watson Fothergill, who designed a number of Victorian Gothic buildings in the city. He was born Fothergill Watson, but changed his name to Watson Fothergill in later life to continue his mother's family name.

NCHA became involved as sole corporate trustee of the charity in 1989. The number of trustees had fallen below the necessary level and they were unable to find the funds to renovate the almshouses, which by then had fallen into serious disrepair. The Association at the same time applied for Norris's registration with the Housing Corporation to enable the Charity to apply for Housing Association Grant to help fund the renovation works.

The renovation had to be done sensitively given the listed status of the building, including the manufacture of hundreds of hand-cut bricks, a terracotta dragon for the roof ridge, a weather cock and sundial.

The renovation of the almshouses was finished in April 1991 and achieved the Lord Mayor's award.

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#### CLIFTON

**Wells Almshouses, Clifton Green, Clifton Village, Nottingham**



Two one bedroom houses and one two-bedroom house for people who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

#### History

NCHA assumed sole corporate trusteeship of these almshouses in June 2007 after acting as managing agent for the charity for the previous 10 years. There are three Grade 2 listed cottages which were built in 1709 by George Wells to provide housing for poor, unmarried or widowed women in the Parish of Clifton-cum-Glaption in Nottingham. The almshouses also included a separate room which could be used as a school for girls. He provided in his will in 1712 for a weekly allowance of 2 shillings to each "inmate," together with help towards clothing and fuel. To this end, Wells left his entire estate to the lord of the manor, Sir Gervas Clifton as sole trustee of the almshouses.

The almshouses were improved in 2006 with the help of an interest free loan from the Almshouse Association.

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## SHERWOOD

**Pennhome Cottages, Haydn Road,  
Sherwood, Nottingham**



Six two-bedroom houses for persons who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

### History

Six two-bedroom cottages built in 1877 in Sherwood for poor widows or spinsters whose fathers were merchants, tradesmen or professional men. NCHA assumed trusteeship in 1995 and renovated the almshouses the following year.

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## BULWELL

**John Wright Charity, Springfields, Bulwell,  
Nottingham**



Nine two-bedroom bungalows for people who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

### History

Nine purpose-built bungalows constructed in 2002 as part of a mixed housing development on the site of a former hosiery works. John Wright was a Nottingham builder who made provision in his will in 1905 to build or convert almshouses to house poor local people. The almshouses were originally located at Beechwood on Mapperley Road, Nottingham, a building designed by Watson Fothergill. Beechwood was sold by NCHA after it became sole corporate trustee in 1997, and the proceeds of sale were invested in the new bungalows.

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## WOLLATON VALE

**Emma Birks Trust, Wollaton Vale,  
Nottingham**



Two two-bedroom semi-detached bungalows for people who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

### History

Two bungalows in Wollaton Vale, Nottingham, built in 1948 for persons born in, or currently living in the Parish of Lenton. NCHA became trustee in 2000 and carried out the refurbishment of the almshouses in 2001 with the help of a grant from Nottingham City Council.

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## BRAMCOTE

### Frances Longden Almshouses, Bramcote, Nottingham



Three one-bedroom properties for persons who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

#### History

Three cottages built in 1852 and endowed by Frances Jane Longden for poor members of the Church of England who live in the Ancient Parish of Bramcote. Each resident was to receive 2 shillings a week together with 2 tons of coal per year. NCHA assumed trusteeship in March 2007.

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## MAPPERLEY PARK

### Robert Wilkinson Smith Homes, Chestnut Grove, Mapperley Park, Nottingham



Ten two-bedroom houses for people who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

#### History

Robert Wilkinson Smith was a lace manufacturer with a factory in Stoney Street, Nottingham. He married Mrs. Arabelle Hawksley of Bunny Hall. In his will he expressed the wish to form an almshouse charity and after his death the land in Chestnut Grove was purchased and the almshouses were built in 1910.

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## GILTbrook

### Miss M. E. Hardstaff Homes, Nottingham Road, Giltbrook, Nottingham.



Sixteen one-bedroom flats.

#### History

Mary Elizabeth Hardstaff was born in 1843. Her father, Dodson Hardstaff, was one of the owners of the Digby Colliery and she inherited his estate. She left her money to the founding of almshouses in Giltbrook for the benefit of miners' families in the area. She died in 1899 (aged 56) and her trustees built a row of terraced houses which were later converted into the present almshouses.

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## MANSFIELD WOODHOUSE

**Miss M. E. Hardstaff Homes and J.G. Ryley Almshouses, Priory Road, Mansfield Woodhouse, Nottingham.**



Six one-bedroom flats, four two-bedroom bungalows and five two-bedroom houses.

### History

In 1919 Miss Hardstaff's trustees completed more almshouses at Mansfield Woodhouse, again originally built as a row of terraced houses. In 1975 four bungalows were also built on the same site. Two of those were Hardstaff Homes but the other two were built with money provided by the J. G. Ryley Trust.

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## GEDLING

**Miss M.E. Hardstaff Homes, Arnold Lane, Gedling, Nottingham**



Six two-bedroom bungalows; Two two-bedroom houses and two three-bedroom houses.

### History

In 1936 the Hardstaff trustees built ten more almshouses at Gedling, again for miners' families. These were designed by the well known architect T. Cecil Howitt.

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## LENTON

**Capt. Albert Ball VC Memorial Homes, Sherwin Road, Lenton, Nottingham**



Six one-bedroom houses and two two-bedroom houses for people who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

### History

Albert Ball was one of the great heroes of the First World War. He first joined the Sherwood Foresters on his 18th birthday and later transferred to the Royal Flying Corps to see more action. He was a fearless airman and received many awards including the Victoria Cross. He died in action in 1917. His father, Alderman Ball, built the almshouses as a memorial to his son and the first resident took up residence in 1922.

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## HUCKNALL

**Coupe Almshouses, Garden Road, Hucknall, Nottingham**



A pair of semi-detached two-bedroom bungalows for people who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

### History

Elizabeth Ann Coupe was the wife of a local butcher who had a shop on the Hucknall high street. They had no children and her husband died first. She formed a charity so that two almshouses could be built out of the money she left on her death. She died in 1929 aged 74. Her trustees purchased the land in Garden Road and the two bungalows were erected in her name .

## EDWALTON

**Hind Memorial Homes, Village Street, Edwalton, Nottingham.**



A pair of semi-detached two-bedroom bungalows for people who have lived in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

### History

The Hind family was a prominent family in Nottingham at the turn of the last century. Mr. Jesse Hind was a solicitor who lived at Edwalton Hall and he held many public offices in the City. He had three sons and two daughters. In 1930, after his death, his second son Oliver Watts Hind, built the almshouses in his memory.

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