



ST PETROCK & HEAVITREE
PARISH LANDS CHARITY



Trustee Recruitment

Information Pack 2024

Registered Charity Number 1070792



About the Charity

The St Petrock and Heavitree Lands Charity own seventy almshouses across the City of Exeter, providing accommodation for local people with limited income, typically of retirement age. One property is restricted to female residents. None of the accommodation is sheltered or warden controlled so residents need to be able to live independently. However, much of the accommodation is located at ground floor level or accessible by lift, making it suitable for older people. The Charity is responsible for the maintenance of the grounds, the properties internally and externally and insuring the buildings. In addition the charity owns commercial property in Exeter city centre which is managed by Haarer Goss. As a result of investment portfolio success, the charity has recently been able to complete a new build of twenty two new almshouses and would potentially hope to be able to repeat this again in future years, thus benefitting a greater number of older people in need of support with their housing needs.

Day-to-day management is carried out by the Clerk to the Trustees and his team .

History

St Petrock and Heavitree Parish Lands Charity is an amalgamation of several charities with almshouses possibly dating back to 1500's. One of the earliest records is that following the dissolution, the Mainwaring family acquired the medieval chapel of **St Anns** for almshouses. These were the homes for eight poor men & women, each having two small rooms and a garden. The Civil War caused damage to the chapel, which was then restored in 1907-1910, at which time the chaplain's house was demolished and two of the cottages were rebuilt in red brick and half-timbering. The two cottages at the rear of the site have original C16th walls, undergoing refurbishment in 1986.

The Charity Commission gave permission in 1873 to St Loyes Almshouses to build new almshouses replacing the existing properties in **Salter's Road**. A local Heavitree builder, James W Webber & company were given the contract; and a carved stone plaque commemorates the rebuilding 'AD1874'. However, by 1974 the properties had been extended & rebuilt as it was decided the original buildings had reached 'the end of their useful life'.

In 1877 the Parish Lands Charity completed negotiations with the Magdalen Charity and purchased a plot of land in **Magdalen Street**. The Charity Commission agreed, in 1879, for the funds from St Petrocks Charity to meet the costs of new almshouses being built on the land; comprising of two houses each with two residences. These were completed in 1879; followed by further upgrading in 1945. This site was refurbished in 2011.

Frances Gardens was originally called 'The Frances Homes' and were named after the wife of the Very Rev, Archibald Boyd, Dean of Exeter. Dr Boyd paid for the site and building of the almshouses in 1878 and together as trustees, the Dean and Chapter deemed the residents were to be female,



at least 60 years of age, be of the Church of England faith, lived in Exeter for at least five years, and have an income of no less than £12 per year.

A plaque records The Frances Homes as being severely damaged by enemy action on 3-4 May 1942 in World War Two, rendering them uninhabitable. They were rebuilt by the Dean and Chapter in 1949 receiving a generous contribution from the Mayor of Exeter's Air Raid Relief Fund towards the work.

Frances Gardens, as it later became known, underwent a major renovation in 2008 with the then Deputy Lord Mayor of Exeter, Councillor Kevin Mitchell, formally re-opening Frances Gardens on 29 July 2008. One of the 'newer' almshouse sites is **St Petrocks Close** and **Premier Place**. The land for these almshouses was purchased in June 1949 and in 1951 the plans were approved by Exeter City Council subject to certain conditions. One of the conditions was that the entrance from Wonford Road should be a cul-de-sac with only a footpath leading to Premier Place. The site consists of ten flats in St Petrocks Close and four in Premier Place.

Aware of the need for further almshouse accommodation the trustees decided to buy a plot of residential land in the Whipton Area to provide **Elizabeth Gardens** a new almshouse development of 22 flats. This development offers natural light, level access showers, convenient fixtures and fittings. Solar panels give consideration to the use and cost of energy.

Governance

The Charity is administered by up to 14 voluntary Trustees, 3 nominated and 11 co-opted. They each serve a four or five year term of office before standing for re-election for a further period if willing. The day to day management of the charity is administered by the Clerk to the Trustees. The Board describes themselves as collaborative and trust and autonomy exists between the committees (Allocations, Finance, Buildings) allowing for robust reporting and transfer of information. The Trustees work positively together even during challenging times. There is a proposal to form a 'Way Forward' subcommittee to agree on future use of funds.

Current trustees are:

- Mr M Henderson (Chairman)
- Mrs C Lambeth (Vice Chairman)
- Rev S Swarbrick
- Mrs A Wiseman
- Mr P Keeling
- Mrs A Foreman
- Ms J Russell

Board Meetings:

The Board meets quarterly, usually between 3pm and 5.30pm at Simpkins Edwards offices in Pynes Hill around the third Monday of January, April, July and October. Subcommittee meetings (Allocations, Finance, Buildings) are as required

Finances

The statement of financial activities shows that in the period to 30 June 2023 the charity received incoming resources of £737,309. The resources expended were £117,925 on the costs of raising funds, £446,597 on charitable activities and £18,530 on other costs.

Net current assets amounted to £192,398. The balance sheet shows the sound financial stewardship that the charity has shown to date. The restricted funds may only be used for the purposes specified by the Scheme. They are essential reserves which enable the charity to pay for expenditure which occurs at irregular or infrequent intervals. The year end balances on the restricted funds were:

- Property Extraordinary Repair Fund: £393,048
- Church of St Petrock ERIF: £73,818
- Cyclical Maintenance Fund: £421,178
- Reserve Fund: £97,948

The charity's policy is to maintain sufficient general funds to enable the trustees to maintain the charity's day to day activities, whilst being in a position to react to any unexpected non-repair expenditure. The trustees consider it appropriate to hold unrestricted funds equal to at least six months operations (£233,493 based on the 2023 financial statements). Over the last few years the charity has also been managing unrestricted funds to enable it to fund the acquisition of Dunsford Gardens.

At 30 June 2023, the free reserves of the charity totalled £382,129, as against a reserves policy requirement of £233,493. The charity is taking a prudent approach until it has substantially reduced the long-term loan that was taken out to fund the development of Elizabeth Gardens. Beyond that the trustees have expressed an aim of establishing a 'Way Forward' committee to consider utilisation of the surplus should it be maintained in the future.

This aspiration has been curtailed to some extent by the pandemic which has impacted mainly on the investment property rental income.

The annual report and accounts for the year ended June 2023 are attached.

Role Description and Person Specification

Charity Trustees are the people who serve on the governing body of a charity. They are equally responsible in law for the Board's actions and decisions and have equal status as Trustees. Charity Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for the charity's affairs. They use their personal skills and experience to ensure that the charity is solvent, well run, and efficient and delivering its charitable outcomes.

The Trustee role can be very rewarding and enjoyable offering an opportunity to serve the community whilst learning new skills. The Trustees role is to focus on the strategic direction of the charity and to ensure effectiveness and accountability. Day-to-day operational decisions are delegated to the Clerk under the control of the subcommittees.

Key Responsibilities

To actively contribute to the Board of Trustees, which:

- Sets and maintains the vision, mission and values
- Develops the strategic direction and longer-term strategies
- Establishes and monitors policy
- Ensures compliance with the Governing Document
- Ensures accountability, in that the charity applies its resources exclusively in furtherance of its objectives
- Ensures compliance with the law
- Maintains a proper fiscal oversight
- Maintain effective Board performance
- Promotes the charity
- Appoints, supports and monitors performance of the Clerk and her team

In addition to the above statutory duties, each Trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions.

Person Specification

- Integrity
- The ability to think strategically and see the bigger picture
- A commitment to the charity
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a Trustee
- Good independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team

The Board of Trustees welcome applications from people who can offer skills and experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Financial acumen
- Property and building pathology
- Social welfare

Additional Information

DBS & References

Trustees will need to provide two written references and complete a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Services check; costs for this will be met by the charity.

Out of pocket expenses

Volunteers can be reimbursed for reasonable and receipted out of pocket expenses. (Mileage, parking, public transport etc).

Recruitment Process

Applications to be made to our recruitment partner: -

Jackie Dawkins, Shine Charity Recruitment (jackie@shinecharityrecruitment.co.uk) 01884/841751

- Initial discussion with Jackie Dawkins
- Meeting with Clerk and two or three current Trustees
- Tour of our properties
- Invitation to attend first board meeting as an observer.
- References and DBS checks

Probation/Induction

The following activities will take place early in the period and a review will take place after 3 months:

- Be encouraged to become involved between Board Meetings in activities that particularly interest them;
- Be familiar with the strategy and financial plan;
- Introduction to policies;
- Introduction to quality assurance
- Biographies of other Trustees;
- Identify any additional skills/training they may wish to acquire.