

John Clear Almshouses (Mrs M Howard)

FRANCIS JOHN CLEAR ALMSHOUSES : Annual Report to Melbourn Parish Council 2020

This is my FORTY FOURTH Annual Report from the Trustees of the Almshouses to the Parish Council and certainly typed under the most unusual circumstances due to the Covid 19 lockdown.

Our constitution requires that we have at least two Trustees meetings a year but we mostly have anything between four and ten meetings depending upon the business to be discussed. In the year since I delivered my last report we only had four meetings. Everything has been running smoothly and these days a number of small decisions can be made by means of a round robin email. Our last meeting was in January of this year when we re-elected our chairman Brenda Meliniotis and noted sadly the long term illness of Eric Johnston, a long serving Trustee and ex chairman. Fortunately he is making a good recovery and has resumed the rather thankless task of perusing the information and instructions which come from the National Association of Almshouses and deciding which pieces apply to us. We are, of course, very small beer compared with many Almshouse complexes.

Since the start of the pandemic, Brenda has been in touch with all four of our Licencees (as they are officially called) and they are all coping well and appear to have the support they need. The boilers were serviced shortly before lockdown so we know that those are all in good order. We had a shower seat fitted for one lady who had had a bad fall and could not get in her bath. There remains only one bathroom which has not been modernized and that is purely because the lady in no. 61 does not want the inevitable upheaval.

We finished paying off our first loan from the NAA on 1st December 2019 and the second loan repayments will end in March next year. These interest free loans were taken out for the refurbishment of Nos 55 & 57 – the NAA preferred to lend us the money rather than us selling some of our shares. All the recommendations made in the Quinquennial report have been carried out except for the dry lining of the porches in 55, 59 and 61 and this will be done when normal life is resumed. Our financial situation is very comfortable.

As I have said, Brenda Meliniotis continues to be our Chairman and the Board of Trustees remains the same - Arthur Alderton, Val Barrett, Peter Chilvers, Hilary Docwra, Eric Johnston and myself,

Our licensees had a small rent increase last year to satisfy NAA recommendations and they continue to be very happy in their accommodation and look after their properties and gardens very well.

We are pleased that the Parish Council continue to store our archives and trust that they will remain in safe keeping.

Every year I feel I should point out that all the Almshouse Trustees are extremely conscientious and we take our responsibilities seriously. One or two of us have held the post for many, many years, to my knowledge no Trustee has ever taken a penny in expenses for telephones, printing, petrol etc. They are all doing an excellent job on behalf of the village and I think this should be acknowledged.

I am sure that you will agree that the Almshouses are as ever a credit to the village. This is my report in the 95th year since the Almshouses were built.

Mavis Howard,

June, 2020

FRANCIS JOHN CLEAR ALMSHOUSES : Annual Report to Melbourn Parish Council 2021

This is my FORTY FIFTH Annual Report from the Trustees of the Almshouses to the Parish Council and there is very little to say !

At the risk of repeating myself, despite the fact that our constitution requires that we have at least two Trustees meetings a year, due to the Covid Pandemic we have had to rely on telephone conferences and emails in order to continue our management of the property, although we did manage to have a meeting in Hilary Docwra's garden in September, suitably distanced!

Brenda has continued to keep in touch with all four of our Licensees (as they are officially called) and they have all coped well except for one of our residents who can sadly no longer live on her own and has moved to a care home. This means that we have a vacancy which has been duly advertised in all the proscribed ways and we have already had several people show an interest in the unit. It will, of course, have to be deep cleaned before a new occupant moves in but as it is one of the two recently refurbished units it is in excellent condition.

The boilers were serviced during one of the breaks in Lockdown and our dedicated team of tradesmen have continued to respond swiftly to any callouts regarding electricity, heating etc. We are very fortunate in having such good support from them. We have continued to do routine jobs such as clearing the gutters and carrying out safety checks.

We have now finished paying off both loans from the NAA. These interest free loans were taken out for the refurbishment of Nos 55 & 57 – the NAA preferred to lend us the money rather than us selling some of our shares. All the recommendations made in the Quinquennial report have been carried out except for the dry lining of the porches in 55, 59 and 61 and this will be done when normal life is resumed. Our financial situation is very comfortable but even so our licensees will have a small rent increase in June to satisfy NAA recommendations and they continue to be very happy in their accommodation and look after their properties and gardens very well.

As I have said, Brenda Meliniotis continues to be our Chairman and the Board of Trustees remains the same - Arthur Alderton, Val Barrett, Peter Chilvers, Hilary Docwra, myself, and Eric Johnston continues to do the rather thankless task of perusing the information and instructions which come from the National Association of Almshouses and deciding which pieces apply to us. With only four units we are, of course, very small beer compared with many Almshouse complexes.

We are pleased that the Parish Council continue to store our archives and trust that they will remain in safe keeping.

Every year I feel I should point out that all the Almshouse Trustees are extremely conscientious and take our responsibilities seriously. One or two of us have held the post for many, many years, to my knowledge no Trustee has ever taken a penny in expenses for telephones, printing, petrol etc. They are all doing an excellent job on behalf of the village and I think this should be acknowledged.

I am sure that you will agree that the Almshouses are as ever a credit to the village. This is my report in the 96th year since the Almshouses were built – maybe we should be thinking now of some way in which to celebrate their centenary!

Mavis Howard,

April, 2021