



City  
of  
Wells  
Almshouses

Annual  
Report  
2015/16

# Contents

## Foreword

Simon Bruce,  
Chairman of Trustees 

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 3

**A Year of Change** 4

Chief Executive's Review

**Board of Trustees & Staff** 5

**The Finances** 6 & 7

**Farewell to Wilf Beer** 8

The City of Wells Almshouses (CWA) is an unincorporated trust administered by the City of Wells Almshouses Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Both are registered charities numbers: 1040554 and 1159162 respectively. The CIO is the corporate trustee of CWA and the CIO is governed by a Board of Trustees—see page 5 for details.

CWA is a registered housing provider, regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency.

Our aim is to provide good quality, affordable social housing for older people who have a housing need and who have a connection with the City of Wells.

# Foreword

## By Simon Bruce, Chairman of Trustees

Following the retirement of the Very Reverend John Clarke, Dean of Wells, in December 2015 I was delighted to be elected as Chairman of the Trustees, and to be supported in this role by my Vice Chairman Nick Wilson.

It has been a busy year for CWA as we have continued with the planned programme of improvements to our properties to meet our objective of ensuring they are as warm, safe and comfortable for our residents as possible. Of particular note in this direction was the granting of our planning application to double glaze the windows at the rear of Llewellyn's.

We recognise the challenging issue of rising energy costs for our residents and this year we have continued with our programme of installing secondary double glazing together with storage heater and boiler replacements. We have also had a number of void properties this year which has provided us with the opportunity to continue with our programme of upgrading and improving the properties. However, all our properties are now occupied and we are delighted to report that we have a waiting list of potential residents who meet our criteria for occupation.

Although we are continuing with our major capital programme, as Trustees, we are aware of the ongoing substantial costs of maintaining listed buildings. We are therefore planning to enhance neighbourhood awareness of the Almshouses and the work we do, by undertaking some dedicated marketing activities and events which are focused on generating interest among those who could support us financially.

Also, this year, our Chief Executive Officer, Kate Knight, decided to retire. I would like to record my thanks for her considerable work over the past three years enabling us to improve our building stock, the organisational structure, and our ability to meet our obligations as a Charity.

We undertook a recruitment process to replace Kate in the summer of 2016, and I am delighted to say that Althea Howarth, a housing and development professional, joined us on 1 September. I am certain that under Althea's management we shall continue to build on the excellent foundations that Kate laid.

Finally, I would also like to thank my fellow trustees, staff, residents and volunteers for the support and encouragement they have offered me during my first year as Chairman.

*Simon Bruce*

### Accountants :

**Monahans**  
Fortescue House  
Court Street  
Trowbridge

### Bankers:

**NatWest**  
7 High Street  
Wells

### The Charity Bank

182 High Street  
Tonbridge  
Kent

### Solicitors:

**Tozers**  
Broadwalk House  
Southernhay  
West  
Exeter

### Land Agents:

**Carter Jonas**  
32 Chamberlain  
Street  
Wells

## A year of change...

Since the publication of our last Annual Report we have experienced considerable change in our Board of Trustees and we would like to thank retiring members for the time they have given to the work of the Almshouses. However, we do hope that these former Trustees will continue to join us at our events that we hold during the year.

**Kate Knight**, CWA's Chief Executive also decided to retire at the end of August this year. During her employment at CWA she contributed greatly to the modernisation of the Charity's systems and spearheaded the renovation of our properties. She will be a hard act to follow and I wish her a happy and busy retirement.

### Welcome to

**The Very Reverend , Dr John Davies**. We are looking forward to him joining the Board following his appointment as the Dean of Wells.

**Michael Barnes**. CWA's first resident Trustee who was appointed to the Board in October 2015.

**Alison Gibson**. The Mayor of Wells who was appointed to the Board in 2016.

**Carol Cox**. A City of Wells Councillor who was nominated to the Board in 2016.

**Danny Unwin**. A City of Wells Councillor who was nominated to the Board in 2016.

**Shirley Watt**. A former member of staff appointed to the Board in October 2015.

### Recruitment of Trustees

We are commencing a recruitment process for a new Trustee for the Almshouses. Having undertaken a skills audit we are particularly looking for a Trustee with a background in marketing, law or the housing sector. If you would like more information about becoming a Trustee please contact me, Althea Howarth on 07455678088.

### Our ongoing Capital and Refurbishment Programmes

Major works during the year have included: Phase 1 of the secondary double glazing programme; a continuation of the boiler and storage heater replacements and; refurbishment of our properties as they become vacant. Further work during this financial year will include Phase 2 of the secondary double glazing programme and the installation of an up to date CCTV system on the Bubwith site.

### Resident Power

As some of you will be aware our original planning application for double glazed windows at the rear of the Llewellyn's properties was refused and on 20 July our residents and staff attended the Council meeting where a new application for the works was being considered. A minibus was hired and residents travelled to the meeting with their banner. The application received unanimous approval and the work has now been tendered. The work to install the replacement windows is scheduled to commence in early 2017.



### The Queen's 90th Birthday

The residents of Llewellyn's, headed by Margaret Milnes, organised a sumptuous feast accompanied by sparkling wine. The event was hosted on the patio at Llewellyn's and was attended by residents, staff and their families. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon and the event was thoroughly enjoyed by all who came.

# Board of Trustees – November 2016



## **Simon Bruce - Chairman**

Chartered Accountant and a member of the Board since 2006. A Chapter nominee.



## **Nick Wilson - Vice Chairman**

Retired Headmaster. Joined the Board in October 2012. A Chapter nominee.



## **Patsy Barrow**

First nominated by the Chapter of the Cathedral in 2009, Patsy is a retired Social Worker.



## **Michael Barnes**

Resident  
Appointed October 2015.



## **Cllr. Chris Briton**

Joined the Board on his election as Mayor in May 2014 and opted to remain after his term of office ended. Retired Probation Officer.



## **Brian Clarke**

Joined the Board in 2008. Is a co-opted Trustee. Retired Accountant and Lecturer.



## **Carol Cox**

City Council nomination 2016.



## **The Very Reverend, Dr John Davies**

The Dean of Wells since November 2016.



## **Alison Gibson, The Mayor of Wells**

City Council Nomination 2016.



## **Ann Swann**

An experienced housing manager. Appointed to the Board in July 2014.



## **Danny Unwin**

City Council nomination 2016.



## **Shirley Watt**

Retired Chartered Accountant. Appointed to the Board in 2015.

# Staff Team

## **Althea Howarth**

Chief Executive (part-time)

Joined CWA in September 2016. BA (Hons) housing & development, Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing. Has extensive experience as a social housing director and as a consultant.



## **Laura Baxter**

Finance Officer/Trust Secretary (part-time)

Chartered Accountant. Joined the Trust in June 2015, following Shirley Watt's retirement. Laura is a specialist in internal audit.



## **Caroline Tollworthy**

Scheme Manager (part-time)

Joined the Trust in January 2013. Had previously worked in residential lettings and local authority/voluntary sector housing posts.



## **Graham Perry**

Handyman (part-time)

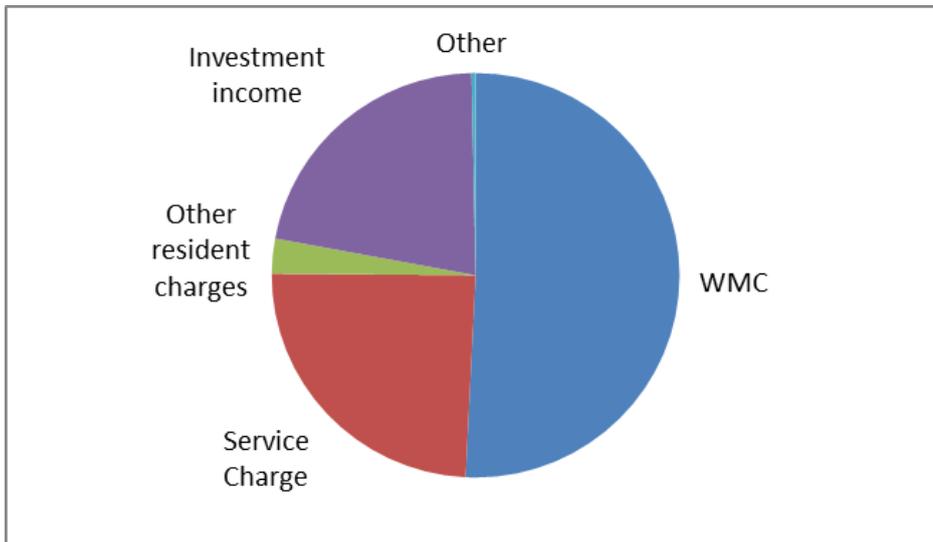
Previously worked for BT. Joined CWA in June 2010.



# THE FINANCES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

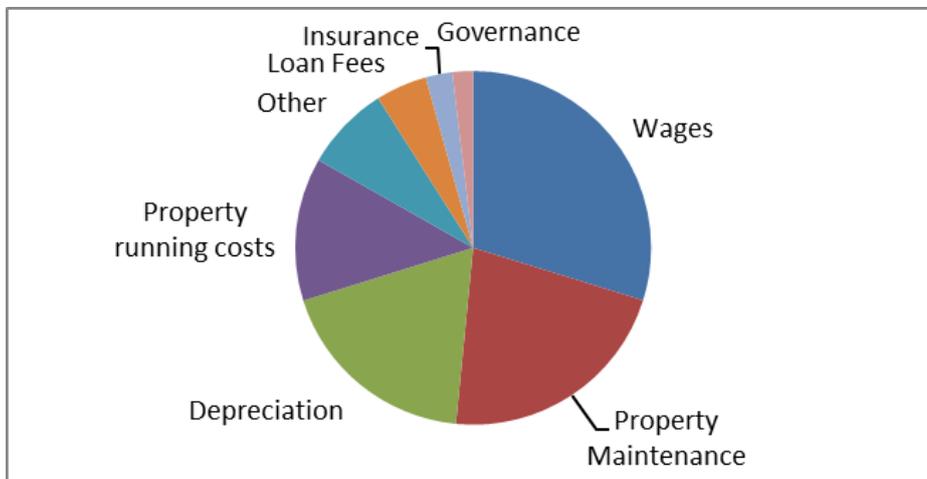
## INCOME

Our total income for the year was **£221,541**. The graph below shows our main sources of income:



## EXPENDITURE

Our total expenditure for the year was **£179,841**. As you might expect wages and property associated costs are our highest costs. The graph below shows our main sources of expenditure:



## OVERALL OUTCOME

Our income before investment gains and losses was a surplus of **£41,700** in the financial year ended 31<sup>ST</sup> March 2016. All of the surpluses made are retained and invested for the benefit of our residents.

Number of properties becoming vacant during the financial year:

**Seven**

Number of weeks on average to re-occupy a property (excluding 1 needing total refurbishment):

**6 weeks**

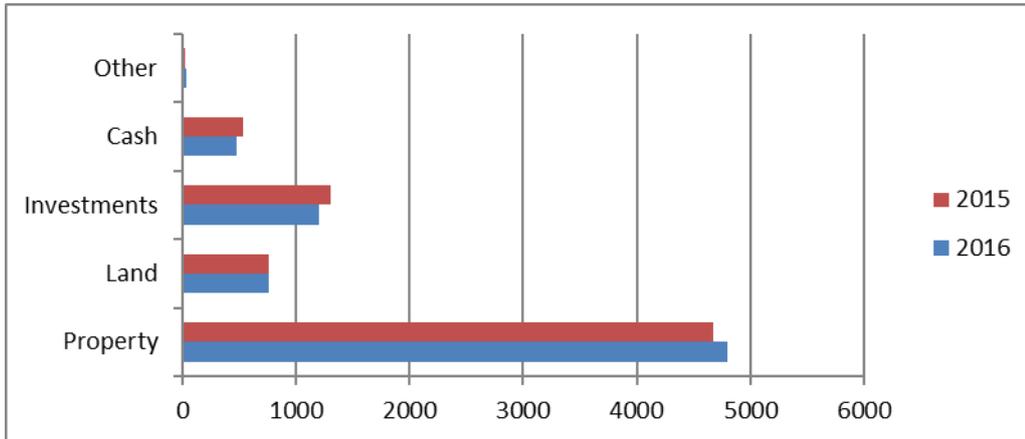
Lost income due to empty properties:

**£5,800**

## ASSETS

The graph below shows our assets in £000's. As shown the majority of our assets are held in property.

ASSETS AS AT 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2015 & 2016



## LIABILITIES

At 31 March 2016, 34% of our liabilities relate to a loan of **£194,683** arranged with the Charity Bank in the previous year in order to help with our programme of improvement. This is fully repayable by 2040. A further 64% of our liabilities relate to social housing grants which were received several years ago to help fund property improvements.

## OVERALL POSITION

Our total assets as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 are **£6,697,522**.

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME

We have agreed a programme of major improvements to our properties to ensure that residents have suitable accommodation and to keep our properties safe for the future. A total of **£143,000** was spent on our property in the year, as follows:

External work to Llewellyn's terraces	£74,000
Major property refurbishment x 4	£57,000
Secondary glazing	£7,000
Replacement heaters	£5,000

We also spent the following:

Property redecorations	£10,000
New boilers x 2	£6,000
Stairlift	£5,000
Repainting walls	£5,000

**T**his year we have also said farewell to **Wilf Beer** who has tended the gardens at Bubwith for over 25 years and handled the arrangements for the Christmas Carol service in the chapel. Wilf's dedication and hard work resulted in the Bubwith garden winning an outstanding Level 5 award from the RHS. Maintaining the high standard achieved



within the Bubwith and the other gardens will be a challenge for CWA and we wish to thank those helpers from Heads Up and also Christine, Jean, Judy, Mo, Peter and all the other residents for their continuing efforts. We were also delighted recently to welcome Annette and Carol to our team. Nevertheless, we really do need more volunteers and if you feel you can assist us for just an hour or two please call 01749 675813 and ask to speak with Caroline.

## About The City of Wells Almshouses

There are five almshouse buildings in the City of Wells Almshouses' complex, providing 32 individual flats and cottages.

The earliest was founded in the fifteenth century through a legacy provided from the estate of the former Bishop of Bath and Wells and Treasurer to King Henry IV, Nicholas Bubwith. Bubwith's Almshouse is located next to St Cuthbert's Churchyard and includes a chapel and guildroom.

In the early sixteenth century an alderman of the city, Henry Llewellyn, left a legacy to build a further series of almshouses, on a separate site in Priest Row, to the north of St Cuthbert's Church.

Yet more accommodation was provided through legacies from Bishop Still and Bishop Willes and in 1637 the Bubwith site was expanded again through a legacy from Walter Brick, a Burgess of the City.

Originally separate charities, they are all now

part of CWA. As well as the architecture, the almshouses also have beautiful gardens, which are tended by the residents and a small, but enthusiastic band of volunteers.



See our website for more about us, our organisation and our buildings:  
[www.wellsalmshouses.org.uk](http://www.wellsalmshouses.org.uk)

**City of Wells Almshouses (CWA)** A registered charity no: 1040554 and registered housing provider. CWA is administered by the **City of Wells Almshouses CIO**, charity no: 1159162.

16, Llewellyn's, off Priest Row  
Wells, Somerset, BA5 2PZ Tel: 01749 675813  
Email: [manager@wellsalmshouses.org.uk](mailto:manager@wellsalmshouses.org.uk)