

William Carr Almshouses – consultation

Summary

The Trustees of the Williams Carr Almshouses Charity are proposing to modernise the objects of the charity and update parts of its constitution to reflect the changes in society and establishment of the welfare state since 1905 by:

- 1) updating the wording of the charity's objects so that it is clear that the beneficiaries are people over the age of 55 or who are people with disabilities who are retired or unable to work due to ill health (in both instances with limited financial means);
- 2) adding an additional object that where the charity has surplus financial resources not required to maintain the almshouses it can support other people of all ages on limited financial means;
- 3) adding an additional object that where the charity has surplus financial resources it can support older people (people over the age of 55) and/or people with disabilities more generally (including giving grants to All Saints Weston Church and other bodies to further this object); and
- 4) enabling the trustees to increase without the consent of the Charity Commission the maintenance charge occupants of the Almshouses pay provided that the trustees do not cause hardship to an occupant when setting a new amount.

Background

The 4 Almshouses are situated at 1-4 Memorial Cottages, Weston Lane near the Royal United Hospital, Weston, Bath. Please see annex 1 for the location of the Almshouses and photographs of them. They were constructed in circa 1905 by William Carr.

William Carr established a charitable trust by his will dated 25 August 1905 to hold and manage the Almshouses the intention being *"....to provide a home for aged or infirm persons who would otherwise be probably compelled to end their days in the Union Workhouse."* The will also states that it should be the aged and infirm in the Parishes of All Saints Weston or St. John's who benefit. An endowment was also created for the charitable trust, the income of which, is applied towards the repair, decoration and insurance of the almshouses. The managers and charity trustees of the Almshouses are the vicar (now a rector role) and church wardens of All Saints Weston church.

Workhouses were abolished by legislation in 1930 and site of the Union Workhouse in Bath became St Martin's Hospital in the late 1930s. The site is now used for flats.

Current position

All four Almshouses are currently occupied by older people. Recently, a condition survey identified various repairs and the managers will be putting in place a programme of work to address the various repairs needed.

The managers consider there is more than sufficient funds and investments to meet the day-to-day costs of looking after the almshouses and running the charity. There are also more than sufficient reserves to meet capital expenditure on significant repairs and improvements. This has been the position for some time.

As there have been surplus funds for some time; almost 10 years ago the managers decided to award an annual grant to All Saint Weston Church to enable it to employ a person to give pastoral support to older people and disabled people in Weston. The present person carrying out this role also assists with the running of the Almshouses and the pastoral support of the occupants.

Proposals

The managers consider that the constitution is outdated as it refers to the Bath Union Workhouse which was abolished decades ago. The managers are also conscious that there have been significant social changes since the will was made in 1905. The welfare state was introduced. State pensions, Council housing and housing benefit mean that older people do not end up in a Workhouse environment. The managers also consider they have excess funds and income. In summary the managers consider:

- 1) the objects contain outdated definitions and wording;
- 2) the reference to the Workhouse means the objects cannot be carried out in the way envisaged by the will;
- 3) the introduction of the welfare state means the objects are provided for at least in part by public funds; and
- 4) the objects do not provide a use for all of the charity's funds and income.

The managers propose to modernise the objects so that they become to provide homes for people over 55 years old or people with disabilities who are retired or unable to work due to ill health (in both instances with limited financial means and the determination of whether a person is of limited financial means to be at the managers' discretion).

If there are no suitable applicants who qualify for the above the managers may instead provide a home to people of all ages who are of limited financial means.

If there is sufficient surplus for the upkeep and maintenance of the almshouses, the managers may from time to time apply surplus funds and income for all or any of the following activities:

- a) purchase or lease other property to be used for the main objects;

b) supporting and caring for older people and/or people with disabilities in Weston more generally (including awarding grants to other organisations like All Saints Weston Church to further these purposes); and

c) supporting and caring for people of all ages in the Parishes of All Saints Weston or St. John's whom are of limited financial means.

To make these changes the managers will need to formally decide to make these changes and then apply to the Charity Commission for its approval for some of the proposed changes.

Consultation

The managers would be grateful for views the people have on these proposals for the managers to consider. Views and/or questions can be given by writing to:

The Managers of the William Carr Almshouses

All Saints Centre

High Street

Weston

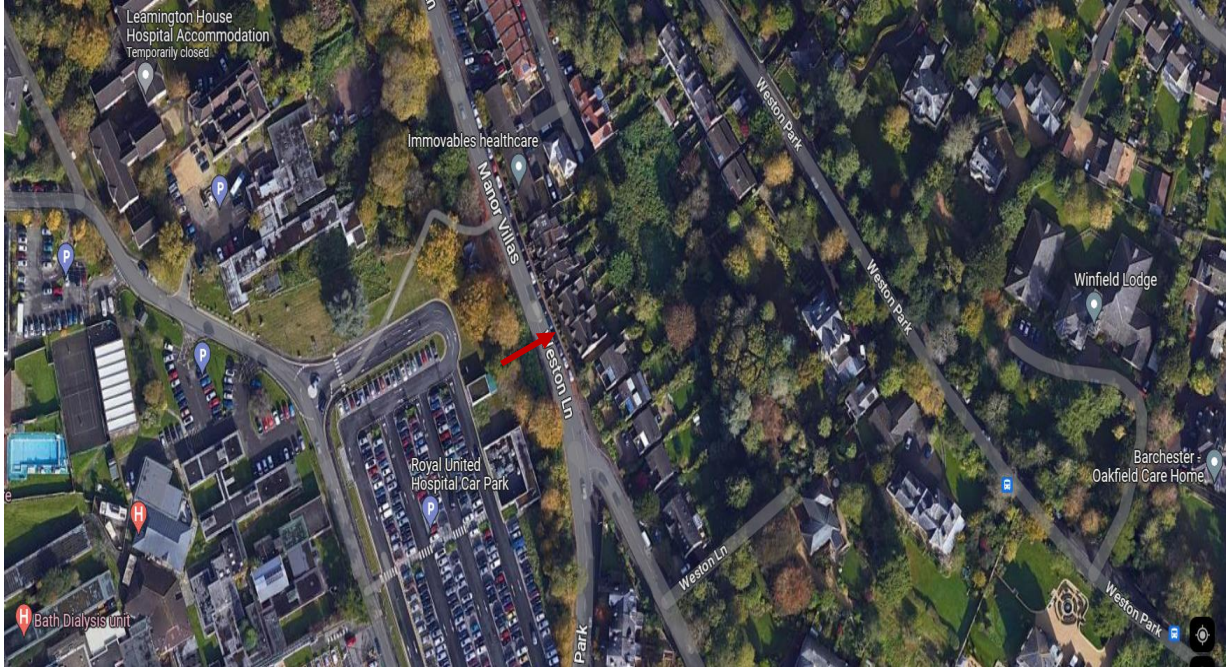
Bath BA1 4BX

Or via email to williamcarrsalms Houses@gmail.com

The closing date for submission of views and questions is 6 weeks from 9 October 2023.

Annex

Location map



Photo

