

Worcester Municipal Charities (CIO)



who we are, what we do and a brief history

The Charity has published its detailed history book.
Copies are available at the Hive or can be read on our website.
www.wmcharities.org.uk



Charitable Objects

- (a) the relief of persons resident in the City of Worcester who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress including by making grants of money to individuals, or to organisations which provide relevant services; or providing or paying for items, services or facilities calculated to reduce the need, hardship or distress of such persons;
- (b) to carry on for the benefit of the Worcester City community the business of the provision of social housing in the form of almshouses and affordable social housing and any associated amenities for persons in necessitous circumstances upon terms appropriate to their means; and
- (c) the advancement of education by promoting education in the area of benefit being the City of Worcester, the Parishes of Powick, Bransford and Rushwick and the area of the Ancient Parish of Leigh, all in the County of Worcestershire, in such ways as the trustees think fit.

Affordable Housing

68 Almshouse flats for the Younger Homeless managed by Citizens Advice Worcester

The Charity owns 64 self-contained one bedroom flats, and a 4 bedroom HMO in the city centre, for the homeless who are in receipt of a low income and cannot afford private sector rents. The flats are let on licence, and are managed, with support for the residents, by Citizens Advice Worcester through its social housing scheme "SmartLets". To apply for help from SmartLets you can visit Citizens Advice Worcester at their offices in the Hopmarket. Opening times Tuesdays and Thursdays 9.30am to 12noon. Wednesdays 1pm to 3pm, for an initial assessment. Alternatively you can phone 0808 278 7891 or text 07984439479.

32 Almshouse flats for the Retired with a resident on-site part-time warden

The Charity owns two sheltered housing sites, 7 self-contained one bedroom flats at Berkeley Court, Foregate Street, and 25 self-contained one bedroom flats at Nash's & Wyatt's Court, New Street. If you are interested in applying please see the website or visit the Office by appointment to discuss and

pick up an application form. You must have lived in Worcester for at least 12 months, be of state retirement age, be in receipt of a low income and currently be inadequately housed e.g. sharing kitchen, bathroom or toilet, or under-occupying with more than one bedroom, or be in need of support from an on-site Warden.



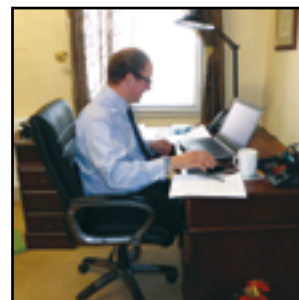
Berkeley Court



Nash's and Wyatt's Court



The Main Office



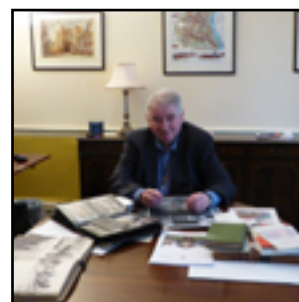
*Business Manager's Office
Adrian Robinson*



The Accounts Office



The Charities' Offices are opposite the Hopmarket. Telephone 01905 317117 for an appointment or simply call in.



*The Chairman's Room
Paul Griffith*



A Brief History *of* Worcester Municipal Charities and Berkeley's Hospital Almshouses and Chapel



The Board of Trustees in 2024

Independent

Paul Griffith MBE - Chairman
Roger Berry
Paul Denham
Graham Hughes
Margaret Jones
Jonathan Newey
Ron Rust
Brenda Sheridan
Martyn Saunders

Charity Representatives

Geraint Thomas - Vice Chairman
(Citizens Advice Worcester)
Dr Clive Skidmore (Maggs Day Centre for the homeless)
Sue Osborne (Armchair, Furniture Recycling)
Margaret Panter (WHAT, Tudor House Museum)

City Council Representatives

Tracey Biggs
Retired Cllr. **Richard Boorn**
Cllr. **Jill Desayrah**
Retired Cllr. **Roger Knight**

All enquiries to:

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Worcester WR1 3QG
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Office opening hours

Monday - Friday
Mornings 9am - 1pm
Afternoons 2pm - 5pm
Closed on bank holidays

For further information please look at our website www.wmcharities.org.uk

Worcester Municipal Charities

When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in 1536/40, and confiscated their lands, he set in train a course of events that was to influence charitable giving for centuries. His strict enforcement of the law of Mortmain, by which corporate bodies (that never died!) were not entitled to own property, effectively put an end to legacies to religious foundations. However in the creation of “feoffments” or trusts, a new way was found to evade the feudal dues. The device, which had to be agreed before death, made a bequest instead to named trustees, who were to “use” the money “for the benefit of the poor. Large numbers of benefactors chose members of the local Municipal Corporation to hold their gifts in trust in perpetuity.

A swarm of hungry beggars who had been largely dependent on the monasteries for food and ale, were set loose on the land and new charities were desperately needed to fill the gap.

Sir Thomas White, by an Indenture of 1st July 1566 gave £2,000 to the City of Bristol for the benefit of poor young men, inhabitants of that City, with which the Corporation was to purchase land and buildings so that there should be a clear yearly value of six score pounds or more as interest. The covenant then placed upon Bristol Corporation a duty to pay interest of £104 per annum to each of the following, in rotation every 24th year. The Feast of St Bartholomew was the appointed day for payment, and the money was to be paid over in the Hall of the Merchant Taylor’s Company “while the World endureth.”

1577	City of York	1585	City of Chester	1593	Town of Shrewsbury
1578	City of Canterbury	1586	City of Norwich	1594	Town of Lynn
1579	Town of Reading	1587	Town of Southampton	1595	City of Bath
1580	Merchant Taylor’s Company	1588	City of Lincoln	1596	Town of Derby
1581	City of Gloucester	1589	City of Winchester	1597	Town of Ipswich
1582	City of Worcester	1590	City of Oxford	1598	Town of Colchester
1583	City of Exeter	1591	City of Hereford	1599	Town of Newcastle
1584	City of Salisbury	1592	Town of Cambridge		

Sir Thomas White’s generosity was echoed throughout the Country with numerous legacies to the Municipal Corporations like Worcester above, but sadly the trust was misplaced. The corporations were self-appointed bodies of Freemen whose mismanagement of the trust funds led to local and national inquiries into abuse.

Worcester Corporation was no exception. The first abuse inquiry was in 1624/6 by National “Commissioners” and the second was by Bishop Stillingfleet in 1694/5. During the Civil War, the money from charitable funds had, “been appropriated in doubtful circumstances, or applied to objects having no connection with the terms of benefaction.” The Bishop commented: “We desire an account what is become of the profits-over since that time: for it is not “pretended” [i.e. real] that this was taken up and lent for the King’s service in the time of the wars.” Stillingfleet effectively stopped the old Corporation from stealing the charities’ money in the 1650s, in order to make gifts to the King and Queen, and pay military bills, including uniforms for the King’s Lifeguards who were billeted in the City for the Battle of Worcester.

Lord Henry Brougham’s Charity Commissioners (in Worcester 1827 onwards) found serious abuse, including an illegal lease to Joseph Millington, himself a charity trustee who had been the Mayor. He, in turn, had sublet the “Artichoke Field” (in Salt Lane - now Castle St.) to the Governors of the Worcester County Infirmary who had already built a new hospital there. A very expensive private Act of Parliament was necessary in 1835 to unscramble the mess.

Then there was the notorious case of Lady Gresley who had paid Councillor John Garway, who was also a trustee, £96 10s. for the sub lease of an illegal lease. Lady Gresley tried to further sub-let this illegal lease of the Inglethorpe Almshouses town ditch site to John Hall for £3,000. The Commissioners referred the issue to the Court of Chancery and expressed “severe animadversion” to malpractices, including 4 “missing” and 7 “lost” loan charities.

These national inquiries led directly to the passing of the 1835 “Municipal Corporation Reform Act”, under which the money that remained from the charitable bequests set out below (except the final three which are of later date), was transferred from the old un-elected Worcester Corporation of “Freemen”, on the 24th December 1836, to the new independent body of Worcester Municipal Charity Trustees who remain in place to this day. They were originally chosen individually, as elsewhere nationally, by the Lord Chancellor Cottenham.

The trustees spend the interest from these endowments each year by making grants to Worcester people who are financially disadvantaged. The trustees also sponsor local charitable organisations with similar objectives, and provide some of them with properties on peppercorn rents.

The Benefactors

- 1559 KATERYN HEYWOOD** - Will of 1559 - Gave unto the Corporation of Worcester "100 Marks, to be delivered to the Chamber of the said city, to the end that it might be bestowed in lands for the poor people for ever." (9 pp 509,520) (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. Now consolidated as part of the CIO) This gift was apparently not transferred by the Lord Chancellor in 1836 because it had been associated with Robert Youle's gift who was a Six Masters' Trustee. This was corrected and the charity appears in the 1899 Scheme.
- 1559 THOMAS PRESTWOOD** - 1559 - £10, "to the end that the same might be bestowed in lands to and for the best benefit of the poor of the said City." (9 pp 509,520) (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. This gift was apparently not transferred by the Lord Chancellor in 1836. possibly because it had been associated with Robert Youle's gift who was a Six Masters' Trustee. This was corrected and the charity appears in the 1899 Scheme.
- 1560 ROBERT YOULE** (Worcester) - Will of 1560 - "**Youle's Rents**" from 17 residential and commercial properties amounting to £47. 2s. 4d annually. These were purchased with Heywood's and Prestwood's 1559 gifts together with money of his own.
- 1566 SIR THOMAS WHITE** (Coventry) - Indenture of 1566 (9 pp 516, 517) - £104 from Bristol Corporation every 24 years, from 1582 onwards, for 10 year loans of £25 to 4 poor young men, freemen clothiers preferred. Redeemed in 1974 for £57 and a sum equal to £4.33 for each year. (Now consolidated as part of the CIO).
- 1604 LAWRENCE PALMER** (Alcester) - Deed of 1604 - £20 "to be used and employed for the best benefit of the poor of the said city for ever." In 1635 the gifts of George Sherriffe, Mary Warmstree and Edmond Simonds were used to purchase the Stacking House Fulling Mill at a cost of £90. (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1604 JOHN CHAPPEL** (Worcester) - 1604 - £20 "for buying corn for the poor." (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1607 THOMAS BONNER** - Will of 1607 - £40 "to be lent to four young men, two freemen of the Company of Mercers, two of the Company of Clothiers, each to have £10 for three years, paying for the same yearly; ten dozen of white bread, to be given upon Christmas Eve to the poor." (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1611 ROWLAND BERKELEY** (Spetchley) - Will of 1611 - £100 to be lent gratis for two years to two thriving young men exercising the trade of clothiers in Worcester.
- 1613 LEWIS RANDOLPH** - Deed of 1613 - £80 "to be lent to four clothiers, being freemen, £20 each, for the space of two years at the rate of 10s. yearly for every £20, which interest, amounting yearly unto 40s., was to be annually distributed to the poor." (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1616 GEORGE AND JOICE SHERIFFE** (Grimley) - Will of 1616 - "Forty shillings, to be employed for the best use of the poor of the said city", to which Joice Sheriffe, his widow and executrix, at her decease, added forty shillings more for the same purpose. In 1635 the gifts of George Sherriffe, Mary Warmstree and Edmond Simonds were used to purchase the Stacking House Fulling Mill at a cost of £90. George was on the Chancellor's list, but Joice was not, but was added later. (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1618 RICHARD INGLETHORPE** (Worcester) - Will of 1618 - Bequeathed 15 houses and other property in the City and County of Worcester to build and endow Inglethorpe's Hospital for six poor men and one poor woman and pay pensions to them. Clothiers and Brewers were preferred. (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1623 WILLIAM & ELIZABETH SWADDON** - Deed of 1623 - "£4 per annum for ever, issuing out of certain lands in Singleberrow, in the county of Bucks, to be distributed amongst the poor of the said city, yearly." (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. William was on the Chancellor's list, but Elizabeth was not, but was added later. (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1623 DAME ELIZABETH BOOTH** (Bath) - 1623 - "£100 to be let out at 12d. in the pound, to ten poor tradesmen, housekeepers, and artificers, for one whole year. The interest of which, £5, was to be given at stated periods to the poor in bread." This gift was apparently not transferred by the Lord Chancellor in 1836 because it had long since been lost by the Corporation so nothing could be found to transfer. However the bread was distributed by the Municipal Trustees from 1836 onwards and eventually it was corrected and transferred (7 p 3)
- 1624 MARY FREEMAN** - (Bockleton, Worcestershire) - Will of 1624 - "£10 to be put out to the best use, the one half of the benefit in bread for the use of the poor people there, for ever, to begin in All Saints and so to go through the city." (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1628 JOHN PALMER** - (Suckley) - Will of 1628 - "£120., the sum of £100 whereof £6 a year was to be for the maintenance of a schoolmaster in Suckley and £20 was to be laid out in corn for the poor when it was cheap, and to be kept in store, and when corn should be dear, to be sold, to the poor in the city at such moderate rates as that the said £20 might again be raised." The John Palmer Educational Foundation was created with a Scheme by the Charity Commissioners in 21/01/1910 (Appendix 4) to be run independently in Suckley, with an annual income of £5 from this Charity. At the request of the trustees, the original £5 a year was converted in 1985 by the Charity Commission, to 1% of the Municipal Exhibitions Foundation, paid annually to the John Palmer Foundation for the benefit of Suckley Primary School and needy pupils in the Parish. (now c. £1,000 p.a.) (Now consolidated as part of the CIO). Text in blue are references to the book - The History of Worcester Municipal Charities.

- 1636 **EDMOND SIMONDS** - (Hartlebury) - Deed of 1636 - "£5 to be employed for the best benefit of the poor within the city of Worcester." In 1635 the gifts of George Sherriffe, Mary Warmstree and Edmond Simonds were used to purchase the Stacking House Fulling Mill at a cost of £90. (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1636 **MARY WARMSTREY** (Worcester) Deed of 1636 - "£10 to be employed for the best benefit of the poor within the city of Worcester." (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. In 1635 the gifts of George Sherriffe, Mary Warmstree and Edmond Simonds were used to purchase the Stacking House Fulling Mill at a cost of £90. (Originally part of the St. Thomas's Day Dole Charities. Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1642 **JOHN WORFIELD** (Allhallows, London) - Will of 1642 - All his property in Powick, Wick, Leigh, and Bransford, "for ever for and towards the maintenance and bringing up in learning of fourteen poor male children, (No bastards) whose parents are dead, or towards the maintenance of such children whose parents are of very mean ability and have not wherewith to allow maintenance unto them." That part not passed over as part of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869, was included in the Worcester Municipal Exhibitions Foundation. (All now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- HENRY GOULSBUROUGH** (Worcester) - date unknown - £40, at the best benefit that can be devised, for the raising of a yearly profit, to be bestowed betwixt three of the poorest children of the Free-school at Worcester, so as they should be hopeful to prove scholars.
- 1661 **ALDERMAN JOHN NASH** (Fryars' St) - Will of 1661 - Land, property and tithes in Worcester and Powick "to set up and endow Nash's Hospital Almshouses for eight of the most impotent, decrepit, single poor men and 2 poor women, and pay pensions to them. Three to be weavers and five of other trades. "Nash's Almshouses, were condemned as slums and rebuilt in 1959/60 on the original site at 15 New St. Four new Wyatt's almshouses were re-built there in 1964 in front of Nash's Almshouses and the site was renamed "Nash's and Wyatt's" (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1667 **THOMAS, LORD COVENTRY** - Deed of 1667 - "One yearly rent of £25 from meadow-ground lying in Powick called the Great Hamme, to be paid at the Feasts of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary and Saint Michael the Archangel, by equal portions, to inhabitants of Worcester." (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- NICHOLAS ARCHBOLD** - date unknown - £30 for ever for the use and benefit of young beginners, and other honest citizens, and towards the relief of the poor there, and of the Hospital of Saint Oswald.
- 1692 **ROBERT BERKELEY** (Spetchley) - Deed Poll and Will of 1692 - (Grandson of Rowland Barklay) - his trustees instructed to raise by annual sums of £400 out of the rents of his manor, lands and premises, the sum of £6,000 bequeathed, £2,000 to build Berkeley's Hospital Almshouses, and £4,000 to buy property to endow the Hospital, for 12 poor men and one poor woman and to pay pensions to them. Berkeley's Almshouses and Chapel still stand as Grade I listed buildings on the same site in Foregate St., modernised twice, and added to twice, they now have 7 residents. (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1710 **SAMUEL SWIFT** - Will of 1710 - "£400, to be lent out, gratis, to ten honest tradesmen, such as were young beginners, and freemen of the said city, by ten equal portions, for five years." (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1716 **BENJAMIN THORPE** (St Swithun's) - Will of 1716 - "The yearly sum of £5 to be applied in buying ten coats for ten poor men of the city on All Saints Day." (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1722 **WILLIAM NORTON** - Will of 1722 - "The interest on £200 to be given to poor prisoners in the gaol of this city." Merged with Shephard below no. 24. (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1725 **MICHAEL WYATT** (Fryars' Street) - Will of 1725 - Six houses and gardens in Fryars' street for Wyatt's Almshouses, for six aged honest poor men, £300 to repair them, and six tenements and gardens in Worcester; three in Cooken St., one in Powick-lane, one in the Broad-street, and one adjoining the Bishop of Worcester's Palace, the rents to be used to pay for the upkeep and inmates' pensions. (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1734 **THOMAS SHEPHEARD** (Hallow) - 1734 - £100 on trust at an interest of five per cent per annum, for the releasing and discharging of poor prisoners for debt or gaol fees. Merged with Norton above. By 1871 a change in the law had "rendered the charity unnecessary". As a result in 1890 Norton's and Shephard's were transferred to the Visitors of Worcester Prison to be used by the Worcester Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society. (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1789 **CHARLES GEARY** - Will of 1789 - Two tenements in Taylor's Lane, called "Nash's tenements", and two tenements on land belonging to "Wyatt's Charity", for the habitation of four poor impotent women, an annuity of £15 per annum, charged on certain premises in Pershore to pay for repairs, and interest on £300 for ever, for their fuel, maintenance, support and pensions. Both sets of almshouses were sold, when the main almshouses on the two sites were sold (Inglethorpes 1899, and Wyatt's 1968). (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)
- 1792 **JOHN STEWARD** (Worcester) - 1792 - £50 the interest of which was to be paid in equal proportions, annually, to the almswomen in **Trinity Hospital**, in the said city.
- 1804 **LETITIA HACKETT** - Will of 1804 - "£140 and that out of the interest arising therefrom should be purchased two tons of coal, to be divided in four equal parts among the 4 poor persons in "Geary's Hospitals", so that each person might receive one ton of coal, instead of half a ton, the quantity then given and the residue of such interest-money, to be distributed and divided in equal weekly payments amongst the four persons to make their pension up to at least 3s. per week." The funds went into the General or St. Thomas Day Fund when Geary and Hackett's Almshouses were demolished with Inglethorpe's in 1899. (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)

MAURICE HILLER - Date unknown. "Six acres, called "Hooper's", lying in Kempley, in the county of Gloucester, the profits thereof to be, yearly, on the 1st day of November, laid out in buying necessities and warm clothes for such and so many poor people as were not of ability to buy for them-selves, as the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens, in their discretion, should think fit" (Now consolidated as part of the CIO)

Post Municipal Corporation Reform Act

- 1861** **CHRISTOPHER HENRY HEBB** (Britannia Square) - Will of 1861 - **Hebb's Charity Almshouses** at 18, 20, 22 and 24 South Street as an Asylum for four decayed Members of the Municipal Council, and for two poor Widows of Members of that Body. **The Municipal Anniversary Gifts** which took the form of redeemable tickets, distributable on the 9th of November and were of the value of seven shillings each, in tea, and sugar. Recipients were poor widows, or married women with large families.
- 1866** **EDWARD CORLES'S CHARITY** - 1866 - founded by the former Secretary under which each Worcester Municipal Charities almshouse inmate receives annually five shillings' worth of "Christmas Fare."
- 1868** **THOMAS FARLEY** - Scheme of 1869 - £361 16s 2d in investments at 3% to be spent on two pensions of 2s per week to two poor deserving men, preferably Freemen residing in St Andrew's, St Alban's or All Saints.
- 2014** **THOMAS SHEWRINGE'S CHARITY (1702) & ROBERT GOULDING'S CHARITY (1814)** - Schemes originally to provide almshouses, pensions and relief in need for Worcester citizens. The joint scheme was wound up and the assets transferred to Worcester Consolidated Municipal Charity in 2014.

Summary & the Constitutional Changes Leading to the Present Day

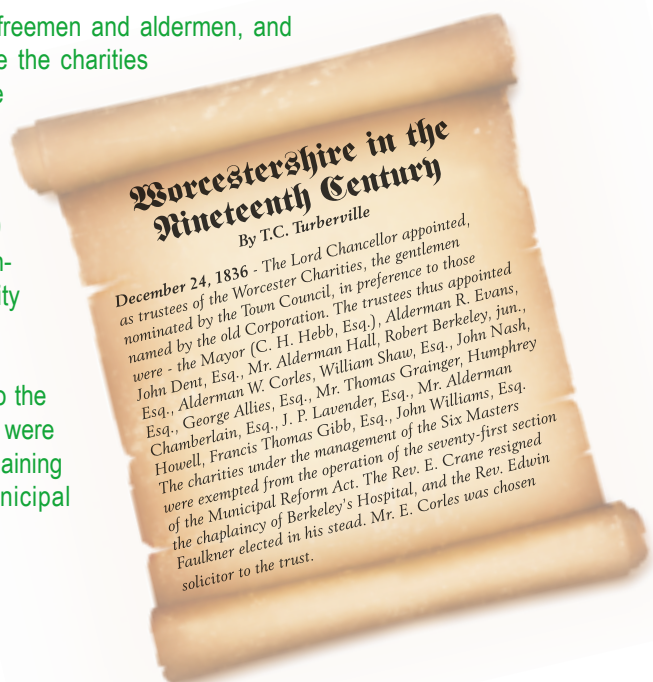
After Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries (1536 - 40) the new church inspired little confidence and benefactors began leaving money in trust to the local Municipal Corporations instead. Katern Heywood, the first such donor, in her will of 1559, "gave unto the Corporation of Worcester, 100 marks, to be delivered to the Chamber of the said City, to the end that it might be bestowed in lands for the poor people for ever." Many other benefactors followed suit with the vast majority coming from the cloth trade i.e. spinners, weavers, walkers and mercers.

Virtually all of the "Municipal" almshouses and trusts founded over the 150 years' period from 1559 onwards, were essentially funded by donations from the fruits of the city's "three hundred and fourscore great loomes whereby 8,000 persons wer well meynntened in wealth and abilitie, besides mothers and their children".

However these corporations comprised self appointed freemen and aldermen, and widespread concern grew about their ability to manage the charities properly. Charity Commissioners were appointed in the first part of the 19th Century to inspect all the charities throughout the land, and their national inquiries led directly to the passing of the "Municipal Corporation Reform Act" in 1836. All the money that remained from the original 29 charitable bequests was then transferred from the old un-elected Corporations to new independent bodies of charity trustees initially appointed by the Lord Chancellor.

15 remaining relief in need charities were handed over to the Worcester Municipal Charity Trustees in 1836, and they were consolidated into one holding charity in 1899. The 7 remaining educational charities were consolidated into the Municipal Exhibitions Foundation in 1909.

In 2016 WMEF and WCMC were registered jointly as Worcester Municipal Charities (CIO).



The Refurbishment of Berkeley's Hospital Chapel



Pictured above the Almshouses and Chapel at the turn of the 20th Century. The Courtyard was laid out and the new cherry trees felled in 1952 "to admit more light and air to the almshouses." Lawns and rose beds were created all at a cost of £270.9s 4d.

1986 - Chapel Falls into Disuse

By 1986 it was apparent that the residents were attending Chapel Services very infrequently and with the resignation of the Chaplain in 1987 the trustees decided not to make a re-appointment.

1987 - By now the Chapel was in a poor state of repair, with window panes missing, inadequate electric heating, an unattractive false ceiling, an intrusive porch, smelling musty and looking generally very down at heel. Even the Trustees themselves rarely visited as their meetings were held in their Clerk's office at The Avenue on The Cross.

1988 - Finding the Money

In 1988 the newly appointed Trustees had commissioned a value for money audit and adopted an ambitious reinvestment policy which involved moving the endowment funds out of agricultural and stock-market holdings and shifting the investments into commercial properties with much better financial returns.



The altar in 1994

1994 - Conversion Plans Agreed

In the belief that an ancient building has no future unless a modern day use can be found, the Trustees took a pragmatic decision to convert the Chapel into a community room for the residents, a meeting room for themselves and other city based charities, and for occasional use as a Chapel when required.

The Reverend Canon John Everest, Rector for the City Parish, and also a Trustee at the time, gave his complete support to the proposals.

Planning Consent Opposed

However, the planning and listed building application proved hotly contentious with local preservation societies alarmed by the alleged "vandalism" to a 17th Century building of national importance. An alternative proposal was put forward to site the planned kitchen and toilets in the middle of the rear lawn rather than next door on the site of the old privies.



The porch to the door in 1994 with electric fan heaters on top

The main concern was the destruction of part of the rear wall, the creation of a new doorway there, and the construction of a modern kitchen and toilets as a wart-like annexe, spoiling a beautiful old building.

1994 - Will Scott, the City's conservation architect, was very supportive and the City Planners eventually agreed to give their consent in 1994. The Trustees had no funds immediately available to start the work which was estimated at £150,000.



The rear of the chapel in 1994 before the door to the kitchen area was created. Note the false ceiling which was removed and the window which was reduced in size to make space for the new door



The rear of the chapel after work was completed

1997 - The first call on the newly found surpluses was the repair of the rooves of the two main houses at Berkeley's but, after that, a decision was taken to plough some of the proceeds into a chapel refurbishment sinking fund. By the end of 1997 the necessary funds had been accumulated.



The original almshouses' privies in use as sheds but replaced by the kitchen and toilets in 1997



The new kitchen and toilets built in 1997

1997/8 - The Programme of Works

The conversion and refurbishment went ahead in late 1997/8 under the careful supervision of the Charities' Architect, Martin Jones.

A.E. Probert, local master builder was appointed as contractor, with proprietor David Healey personally supervising the work. The following work was accomplished:

- Altar and pews removed
- Earthen floor under the old pews covered with matching tiles
- False ceiling removed and the old plasterwork restored
- New entrance formed in the South wall with new door
- New kitchen and toilets constructed
- Windows restored using original glass
- Curtains fitted to old door and windows
- Rewiring, new chandeliers and uplighting
- Gas fired central heating installed
- Hearing aid loop installed
- Wooden notice board refurbished and moved inside

1998 - Re-opening Ceremony

Worcester City Mayor Councillor Derek Prodger officiated at the formal re-opening on 27th November 1998.

1999 - A Welcome Guest

In 1999 the Trustees welcomed Miss Juliet Berkeley, a direct descendant of the founder, to Christmas Lunch with the residents. Robert Berkeley's family still lives at Spetchley Court. Miss Berkeley became a regular Christmas guest.

2008 - A Royal Visitor



In 2008 the Princess Royal, H.R.H. Princess Anne, visited the Chapel to meet volunteers, staff, trustees, partners and funders from the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Paul Griffith
Chairman of The Trustees



Chronological History of the Chapel & Almshouses

1692 - Berkeley's Hospital was founded by Robert Berkeley, Esquire, of Spetchley, a prosperous local sheep farmer, and clothier, who, by his will of 1692 directed his trustees "in default of any issue of his body, to raise by annual sums of £400 out of the rents of his manor, lands and premises, the sum of £6,000." [This would take a total of 15 years.]

£6,000 was to be laid out, by his trustees, in erecting an Hospital in or near the city of Worcester, and purchasing lands for the maintenance thereof; the said Hospital to consist of twelve poor men and one poor woman, to be all of the city of Worcester, and to be of the age of 60 when admitted, and to each of them £10 per annum, to be paid them quarterly; and £20 per annum to a Chaplain to officiate and say prayers morning and evening, and also to administer to the sick; and £20 per annum to a steward to take care of the Hospital and lands belonging; the said Chaplain and Steward to have lodgings built and assigned them to reside in; and likewise a Chapel to be built near the almshouses for Divine Service."

£2,000 of this was to be expended in erecting a chapel and almshouses for the poor people, and lodgings for the Chaplain and Steward.

The remaining **£4,000** was to be laid out in lands of inheritance in the names of such feoffees as his said trustees should approve;" and that, after the repairs of the Hospital and premises thereunto belonging, the overplus of the revenue of the Hospital lands to be given to the poor of the parish where the said Hospital stands. ["feoffees" hold the property in trust for the use of the poor].

The Hospital management should be vested in the Mayor, Aldermen, Town Clerk and certain named members of the Corporation of the City of Worcester, and such new ones as the survivors of those persons should nominate to succeed them.

1702	The Foregate and part of the old City Wall were demolished leaving the site clear.			
1705	Site purchased from the City Council for	322.	3s.	0d.
1706	For Garlesford Court, in the parish of Great Malvern	2,240.	0s.	0d.
1708	For the Cakebold Farm, in Chadsley Corbett,	1,680.	0s.	0d.
1718	For land at Bergis Green, part of the Cakebold Farm	121.	1s.	0d.
		<u>£4,363</u>	<u>4s.</u>	<u>0d.</u>
1711	An old account book shows the vault under the almshouses being let at Lady-Day, 1711, to a Mr. Baddeley for three years, at a rent of £4 per annum.			

Note: With the site not being purchased until 1705, and the Hospital building taking place between 1705 and 1708, the date of 1703 on Robert Berkeley's statue is probably a painter's mistake and should be 1708.

There is no record of the architect but American author and historian John Fitzhugh Millar convincingly suggests, in a book to be published, ("The World's first woman architect") **Elizabeth, Lady Thomas Wilbraham** from Shropshire, whose work was strongly influenced by Flemish architecture. The design similarities with Hanbury Hall, which Millar believes was also a Wilbraham project, are striking. Interestingly, Robert Berkeley himself was ambassador to the Stadtholder of Holland (later King William III of England). Whoever designed it, the result has been described as a happy marriage between the native architecture of the Netherlands and the domestic style of the England of Queen Anne.

Records kindly provided by Karen Davidson MA, the Berkeley's Estate Archivist show that the builder was almost certainly John Hughes.

1819 - Two new additional almshouses built - at a cost of £212 13s - for 2 poor men from Saint Nicholas' Parish.

1836 - All the Municipal Charities transferred by Act of Parliament from the old unelected Worcester Corporation, comprising Freemen only, to an independent body of trustees. The transfer included 32 charities, principally Berkeley's Almshouses, Nash's Almshouses, Wyatt's Almshouses, Inglethorpe's Almshouses, Geary's & Hackett's Almshouses, Worfield's Educational Charity, and the "St. Thomas' Day" Charities which annually gave two shillings' dole to the first 2,600 in the queue outside the Guildhall, much being spent on gin and ale!

1899 - Berkeley's Almshouses are "deficient in accommodation, damp, and badly lit." The Clerk's report also states "When it becomes necessary to re-build them, the cost could no doubt be defrayed by selling the valuable site and moving to a less central situation."

1952 - Courtyard laid out and cherry trees felled by the Corporation to admit more light and air to the almshouses. Lawns and rose beds created all at a cost of £270. 9s 4d.

1953 - Pulpit disposed of. There was great difficulty finding a new home for it.

1953 - Carved notice board erected just inside the gate at a cost of £49. 10s 0d.

1954 - Refurbishment of pews and woodwork and redecorating to match the new Altar and Panels. (Red felt is finally chosen for the pews at a cost of £41. 5s 0d) Anonymous gift of paten and chalice and oak alms plate.

1961 - Model Railway Club give up lease of cellar under almshouses. Midlands Electricity Board to have it instead for a sub-station, with a large rent increase.

1963 - After the destruction of the old Theatre Royal by fire, Colmore Depot had demolished the building and excavated the site next door to the chapel to a depth of 15 - 20 feet to build a car showroom (now a supermarket). The wall between had collapsed and the chapel and two almshouses were at serious risk of collapsing. An Injunction was obtained forcing the Colmore Depot to shore up the land and pay for any permanent damage.

1965 - First refurbishment of the Almshouses. Each bed sitting room had a bed which was hinged to the wall. There was also a coal cupboard and a sink. Outside there was a block of communal privies by the chapel. Each bedsit was given a new kitchenette, bathroom and toilet - Architect: Martin Jones, Builders: Pardoes.

1972 - Chapel roof re-slatted by Broads at a cost of £720.

1973 - Chapel closed for 11 weeks for extensive repairs. Re-panelling £1,768 by Antique Reproductions. Re-paving at a cost of £554.66 by Barratt & Robbins.

1981/2 - Second refurbishment of the Almshouses. Two almshouses were turned into one with a bedroom, kitchen and toilet - Architect: Martin Jones, Builders: Spicers

1997/8 - Berkeley's Chapel converted into a community/meeting room at a cost of £150,000 by builders Proberts, overseen by Martin Jones as architect. False ceiling removed, new exit in the South wall to new kitchen and toilets, windows replaced using original glass, altar and pews removed, and the floor tiled over. Notice Board refurbished and moved inside. The formal re-opening was performed by the Mayor, Derek Proddger.

1999 - The trustees welcomed Miss Juliet Berkeley, a direct descendant of the founder, to Christmas Lunch with the residents. Robert Berkeley's family still lives at Spetchley Court, and Miss Juliet is now a regular and most welcome visitor, especially at Christmas.

2008 - The Princess Royal, H.R.H. Princess Anne visited the Chapel to meet volunteers, staff, trustees, partners and funders from the Citizens Advice Bureau.



2009 - Maggs Day Centre for the Homeless
St Alban's Chapel, Grade 2 Listed Building and Ancient Monument, provided rent free by the Charity



2016 - 59-60 The Tything purchased by the Charity for **Maggs Clothing Project**, Maggs Activity Centre and 2 Social Housing Flats

2006 - The Old Glove Factory, Grade II listed building.

The two shops at the front are now occupied commercially. The Charity provides the rest of the property to Citizens Advice rent free



2012 - Medway Community Centre
Let to All Sorts of Performing Arts on a peppercorn rent for their educational programme

2008 - Tudor House Museum
Grade 2 Listed Building. Let to Worcester Heritage and Amenity Trust on a peppercorn rent*



A Social Investment Programme for other Worcester charities has been in existence since 1996 and provides rent-free accommodation and annual grants for like-minded Worcester charities who help the poor in financial need, or provide subsidised educational facilities. These properties are all examples still running in 2021.

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www.wmcharities.org.uk • Charity Registration Number: 1166931
 Registered Housing Association Number: 4855