

Worcester Municipal Charities (CIO)



who we are, what we do
and our history



Pictured above 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. H.R.H. is seen above talking to Anthony Glossop, chairman of CAB/Whabac. The Lord Lieutenant, Michael Brinton follows behind.

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 for the Homeless

The charities own 23 self contained one bedroom flats, and a 4 bedroom HMO in the city center, 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 and supported by Worcester CAB & WHABAC through its social housing scheme "SmartLets".

To apply for help from SmartLets you can call in to Worcester CAB & WHABAC at their offices in the Hopmarket. Opening times Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30am to 4pm (closed Thursdays) for an initial assessment, or call 03444111303.

With support from the Government's Homes and Communities Agency ("HCA"), the Charities are also developing a further 10 flats in Sansome Place in 2018. More may be developed in 2019 subject to planning consents and grants from the HCA.

Almshouse Sheltered Housing for the Retired

Worcester Municipal Charities (CIO) own two blocks of sheltered housing, respectively at Berkeley Court, Foregate Street (7 flats) and Nash's & Wyatt's Court, New Street (25 flats). 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 retired or near retirement age, be in receipt of a low income and currently be inadequately housed and/or in need of an on site Warden.



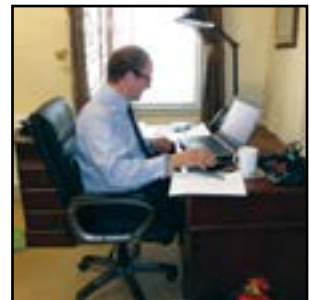
Berkeley's Court



Nash's and Wyatt's Court



The Main Office



Business Manager's Office



The Accounts Office



The Charities' Offices are opposite the Hopmarket Telephone 01905 317117 for an appointment



The Chairman's Room



A Brief Ancient History *of* Worcester Municipal Charities (CIO) Berkeley's Hospital Almshouses and Chapel



The Board of Trustees in January 2018

Independent

Paul Griffith MBE - Chairman
Margaret Jones
Roger Berry
Graham Hughes
Ron Rust
Brenda Sheridan
Geraint Thomas

Charity Representatives

Mel Kirk (Maggs)
Sue Osborne (Armchair)
Margaret Panter (WHAT)
Martyn Saunders - Vice Chairman
(CAB/WHABAC)

City Council Representatives

Richard Boorn
Paul Denham
Alan Feeney
Roger Knight
Rob Peachey
Geoff Williams

For further information please read our Annual Report on our website www.wmcharities.org.uk

All enquiries to: Worcester Municipal Charities (CIO)
Kateryn Heywood House
The Foregate
Worcester WR1 3QG
Telephone 01905 317117

Office opening hours
Monday - Friday
Mornings 9am - 1pm
Afternoons 2pm - 5pm

Worcester Municipal Charities

This tablet was erected in the Chapel by the trustees to commemorate 450 years of charitable work, since the first donation in 1559 of 100 marks from Kateryn Heywood

“WHILE THE WORLD ENDURETH”

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 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 Freeman 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 that this was taken up and lent for the King’s service in the time of the wars.”

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 “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, on the 24th December 1836, to this new independent body of Worcester Municipal Charity Trustees. They were 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.
- 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.
- 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 - £104 from Bristol Corporation every 24 years, for 10 year loans of £25 to 4 poor young men, freemen clothiers preferred. His stated intention was that the gift was to continue “while the World endureth”.
- 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.
- 1604 **JOHN CHAPPEL** (Worcester) – 1604 - £20, for buying corn for the poor.
- 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.
- 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; £5 each to be lent to four poor honest butchers for 2 years.
- 1616 **GEORGE 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.
- 1618 **RICHARD INGLETHORPE** (Worcester) - Will of 1618 - about 15 houses and commercial 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 preferred.
- 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.
- 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.
- 1624 **MARY FREEMAN** - (Bockleton, Worcs.) - 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.
- 1628 **JOHN PALMER** - (Suckley) - Will of 1628 - £120, the sum of £100 whereof (£5 a year) was to be for the maintenance of a schoolmaster in Suckley and £20 “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.”
- 1636 **EDMOND SIMONDS** - (Hartlebury) - Deed of 1636 - £5 to be employed for the best benefit of the poor within the city of Worcester.

- 1636 **MARY WARMSTREY** (Worcester) Deed of 1636 - £10 to be employed for the best benefit of the poor within the city of Worcester.
- 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 necessaries and warm clothes for such and so many poor people as were not of ability to buy for themselves, as the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens, in their discretion, should think fit.
- 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.
- 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** 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.
- 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.
- 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 – A total of £6,000 - £2,000 to build **Berkeley's Hospital**, and £4,000 to buy property to endow the Hospital, for 12 poor men and one poor woman and to pay pensions to them.
- 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.
- 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.
- 1722 **WILLIAM NORTON** - Will of 1722 – to dispose of the interest of the £200 given to this city, to such poor prisoners in the gaol of this city, as they or the major part of them shall think proper.
- 1725 **MICHAEL WYATT** (Fryars' Street) - Will of 1725 - six houses and gardens in Fryars' Street Worcester 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 pay for upkeep and pensions.
- 1734 **THOMAS SHEPHEARD** (Hallow) £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.
- 1789 **CHARLES GEARY** - Will of 1789 – **Geary's Hospitals** - 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.
- 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, 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 residing 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.

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.

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 annex, 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 roofs 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 has become 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, 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, the date of 1703 on Robert Berkeley's statue is probably a mistake.

There is no record of the architect but American author and historian John Fitzhugh Millar convincingly suggests, in a book to be published, **Elizabeth, Lady Thomas Wilbraham** from Shropshire ("The World's first woman architect"), 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).

The builder was possibly **Charles Green**, a Worcester bricklayer-mason whose work flourished around 1700/1731. When the Foregate was demolished the Corporation paid him to rebuild an adjoining house. 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.

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.

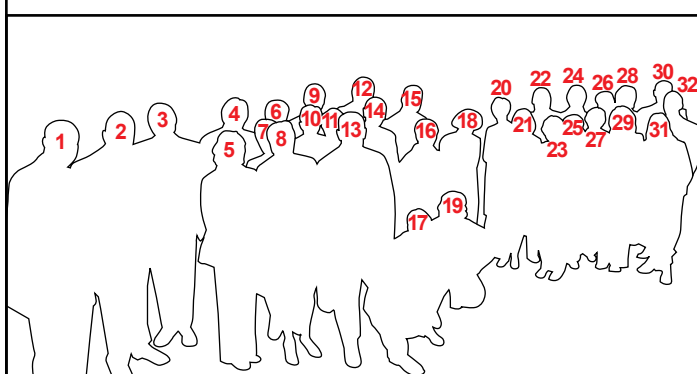
1973 - Chapel closed for 11 weeks for extensive repairs. Re-panelling £1,768 by Antique Reproductions. Re-paving at a cost of £554.66 by Barratt & Robbins.

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.



25th September 2013 – the official opening of the Charities' new offices by Miss Juliet Berkeley from Spetchley Hall, a direct descendant of Robert Berkeley, the original benefactor of the Chapel and Almshouses, who, in his will dated 1692 left £6,000 to build Berkeley's Hospital, and to buy property to endow the Hospital, for 12 poor men and one poor woman and to pay pensions to them. Those present include Miss Berkeley (wearing a black hat) trustees, staff and advisers of Worcester Municipal Charities and Laslett's Charities.

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| 1 Rob Peachey - WMC Trustee | 17 Mel Kirk - WMC Trustee |
| 2 Philip Jones - WMC Valuer | 18 Juliet Berkeley - Descendant of Robert Berkeley |
| 3 Ron Rust - WMC Trustee | 19 Mary Barker - Deputy Clerk |
| 4 Tony Whitcher - WMC Trustee | 20 Margaret Jones - Laslett's & WMC Trustee |
| 5 Julie Clayton - WMC Cleaner | 21 Ann Lodge - Laslett's Trustee |
| 6 Margaret Panter - WMC Trustee | 22 Paul Denham - WMC Trustee |
| 7 Yvonne Parker - WMC Finance Officer | 23 Brenda Sheridan - WMC Trustee |
| 8 Lorraine Saunders - WMC Berkeley Court | 24 Peter Sweetland - WMC Architect |
| 9 Andrew Greany - Laslett's Chaplain | 25 Ann Pugh-Cook - Laslett's Trustee |
| 10 Paula Wittenberg - Laslett's Trustee | 26 Margaret Lister - Laslett's Warden |
| 11 Stan Markwell - WMC Trustee | 27 Gloria Newman - Laslett's Trustee |
| 12 Jim Panter - Laslett's Almshouse Chairman | 28 Ian Pugh - WMC & Laslett's Clerk |
| 13 Dave Uren - WMC Caretaker | 29 Sue Osborne - WMC Trustee |
| 14 Roger Berry - WMC Trustee | 30 John Henderson - Laslett's Trustee |
| 15 Paul Griffith MBE - WMC Chairman | 31 Maggie Inglis - Graphics and Administration |
| 16 Eila Bonnett - Retired Laslett's Chairman | 32 Adrian Robinson - Laslett's Land Agent |

Worcester Municipal Charities (CIO)

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