



Pickering and Ferens Homes

100
YEARS
OF PROVIDING HOUSING IN HULL



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Introduction

Anyone new to Hull will soon become aware of the names Pickering and Ferens from the many municipal landmarks that bear a connection with these two great benefactors.

Not least of these are the bungalows and flats in the ownership of Pickering and Ferens Homes, which started from a small base, aided by Hull City Council and the Housing Corporation, to become the largest, locally-based independent housing association in the city specialising in providing accommodation for people over the age of 60.

Pickering and Ferens Homes is governed by a charitable deed to which other charitable organisations, with their special terms of reference, have been added.

The association is administered by a select group of Trustees, supported by dedicated staff, all of whom strive to meet the needs of residents and those who have applied to become residents.

Vernon Tattersall

Recently retired Trustee and immediate past Chairman





Message from the director

The names Pickering and Ferens are synonymous with Hull – both men having contributed greatly to the welfare of its residents.

From humble origins as Pickering Homes and the Ferens Haven of Rest, the association has become what it is today – an organisation providing over 1,200 properties for rent in the city.

In this commemorative booklet we look at the association's history and talk to some of the residents about life with Pickering and Ferens Homes.

We also look forward to the future, moving on from the floods of June 2007 which resulted in a great deal of distress and hardship for residents and involved staff in a lot of extra work. Additional expenditure was also incurred by the organisation.

Despite the unexpected challenge of overseeing the reinstatement of flooded homes, the association has reduced its loans and increased its investments as well as maintaining its many positive assessments.

Plans for the future include the progression of governance arrangements, future improvement and major repair programmes, increased resident involvement and participation, annual progress reports, and possible new developments.

The association continues its close relationship with the Almshouse Association, the Charity Commission, Hull City Council, the Housing Corporation and, of course, the residents to whom we are grateful for their involvement through bodies such as the Community Development Forum.

We look forward to going from strength to strength and meeting the challenges which the coming years will undoubtedly bring.

Roger Elliot

Director of Pickering and Ferens Homes





The chairman writes...

A success story – that is Pickering and Ferens Homes. Just think about it. In the early '80s the charity had less than 40 properties – today it has over 1,200.

This success came about by the unlikely collaboration of political extremes. The Labour Party controlled Hull at the time and the Conservatives, under Margaret Thatcher, were in government.

The offer of the Tory administration to make substantial grants to housing associations allowed Hull City Council to ease its waiting list by giving Pickering and Ferens Homes land on which to build.

This, along with grants, made development viable – while the association agreed to allot a certain number of properties to those on the council waiting list. It was a simple, well-managed solution, which shows what can be achieved by parties working together.

We now have a thriving community of older people and continue to develop. This has been an opportunity to deliver a better customer experience, improved value for money and more sustainable communities. It has been money well spent.

I look forward to more resident benefits in the future as we continue to expand.

Bryan Burgess

Chairman of the Board of Trustees





A few words from our partners...

The Almshouse Association

To quote from the words of the association's vice-patron, David Dimbleby, "Almshouses are communities of people choosing to live together for their mutual comfort and support.



THE ALMSHOUSE ASSOCIATION

"Where old people's homes can often have an air of despair, of the elderly being abandoned by their families, almshouses speak of optimism and confidence in old age.

"As with all buildings, their design and their architecture tell the story. The finest exude a sense of communal well-being: intimate, almost cosy, but with their own special proud and distinctive style."

Pickering and Ferens Homes, as a valued member charity of The Almshouse Association, is a fine example of all that Mr Dimbleby describes.

The quality of the accommodation that the organisation provides on a broad scale to those in need, the elderly, the sick and the disabled is beyond doubt making the charity an institution of which those in the city of Hull must surely feel proud.

A long-standing and successful association exists between us and Pickering and Ferens Homes as its former Chairman, Vernon Tattersall, was Chairman of The Almshouse Association from 2001 to 2005 and is a member of our Advisory Body.

Long may this happy association between the charity and ourselves continue and I would take this opportunity to wish all at Pickering and Ferens Homes, the Trustees, residents and all involved with the running of this worthy almshouse charity every success and happiness in the future.

Lt Col A P De Ritter

Director - The Almshouse Association





The Housing Corporation

The Housing Corporation is pleased to contribute to this commemorative booklet about Pickering and Ferens Homes. This almshouse charity has built a deserved reputation in Hull for providing housing services to the older members of the community.



The Corporation's relationship with Pickering and Ferens Homes goes back to 1978 when Pickering Homes was first registered. Following amalgamation with the Ferens Haven of Rest in 1992, the almshouse charity of Pickering and Ferens Homes was registered with the Corporation.

John Carleton, Field Director, North, said: "As the Housing Corporation prepares to hand on its investment and regulatory responsibilities to the Homes and Communities Agency and the Tenant Services Authority, it wishes Pickering and Ferens Homes well for the future."

Hull City Council

The partnership between Hull City Council and Pickering and Ferens Homes has provided a wide choice of good quality and affordable housing to meet the needs and aspirations of older people in the city.



Hull
City Council

Our partnership with Pickering and Ferens Homes continues to provide this specialist accommodation which has been, and still is, critical to delivering the city's housing strategy objectives.

John Hocking

Director of Housing





*Pickering Crescent 1947
Photo courtesy of Mail News & Media Ltd*



The history of Pickering and Ferens Homes

The early days

Pickering and Ferens Homes began life almost 100 years ago thanks to the generosity of two of Hull's most famous forefathers – Christopher Pickering and Thomas Ferens.

In 1910, Christopher Pickering, a successful trawler owner, donated £6,300 to build 12 almshouses for ex-fishermen at what became Pickering Crescent in west Hull. He also gave land and money for the construction of Pickering Park in the city.

A further 12 almshouses were built in 1919 and 1955 to house more former fishermen.

While Pickering Homes was developing on the west side of Hull, the Ferens Haven of Rest (now known as Ferens Haven) was taking shape in the east of the city. Thomas Ferens began the charity when he built 12 almshouses near East Park in 1912.

They were administered as a trust which built further properties at Staveley Road, Babington Row, Barham Road and Holderness Road.

The two trusts merged on September 2, 1992, and became the Pickering and Ferens Homes housing association.

Recent times

Today, Pickering and Ferens Homes is the largest, locally-based independent housing association operating exclusively in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

It is a non-profit making registered social landlord, a registered charity and a member of the Almshouse Association, providing high-quality accommodation for people in need over the age of 60 in Hull and the East Riding.

In recent years, Pickering and Ferens Homes has concentrated on developing new homes in Hull and now owns 1,184 properties. The association also provides management and agency services to 31 one-bedroom flats in Hull and Bridlington, in the ownership of the Mrs D L Richardson's Almshouse Charity.





Photo courtesy of Hornsea Museum



Who were Pickering and Ferens?

Christopher Pickering

Christopher Pickering was born in Hull in 1842 and went on to become a great benefactor to the city.

He had a long connection with the fishing industry and his obituary, which appeared in the Hull Daily Mail in 1920, stated: "it may truly be said that he was the architect of his own fortunes".

His first job, at the age of 10, was in a fish-curing house. He became the owner of a fleet of fishing smacks and then steam trawlers.

Pickering was presented with the Freedom of the City in 1910. His obituary says that the address was presented in a silver gilt casket and that "on the side panels were views of the entrance gates of Pickering Park and of Hull Billingsgate".

He died in Hornsea at the age of 78.

Thomas Robinson Ferens

One of Hull's major thoroughfares was named in honour of Thomas Robinson Ferens – who contributed greatly to the fortunes of his adopted hometown.

Born in County Durham in 1847, he left school at the age of 13 to work in the office of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

Local historian John Markham recalls in his book *Colourful Characters* that Ferens came to Hull to take up the post of clerk to James Reckitt in 1868. He quickly rose through the ranks to become chairman of the Reckitt empire.

Ferens was a Liberal MP, representing east Hull, and his benefactions included the land for East Park boating lake, Ferens Art Gallery and the site and £250,000 endowment to establish the University College.

He died in 1930 and his ashes were buried in the garden of his former home, Holderness House, which was left as a home for gentlewomen.

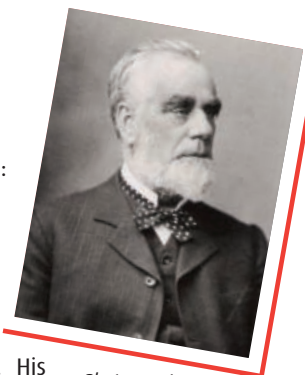


Photo courtesy of Hornsea Museum

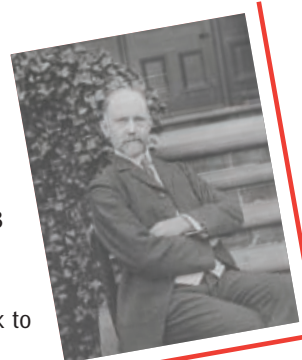


Photo courtesy of Hull Local Studies Library





The floods of 2007

The date June 25 will be etched on the memories of the people of Hull for many years to come.

For that was the day in 2007 when some of the worst rain storms in living memory flooded huge swathes of the city.

Dark, stinking water, at times reaching waist height, surged into properties and crept insidiously through floors – with an ensuing repair bill running into millions of pounds.

For staff at Pickering and Ferens Homes, the floods of 2007 presented a logistical nightmare.

Residents could only watch in disbelief and gather together what possessions they could as the gravity of the situation became clear. Meanwhile, at the association's Silvester House head office, the switchboard was jammed with almost 400 callers.

Anxious householders rang in to report rooms being flooded, toilets overflowing, electrics and heating failing to work – and their homes becoming uninhabitable.

One 71-year-old resident commented: "It was like a river outside. We were watching TV and the floor began to ripple."

Nearly 200 flats and bungalows were badly damaged. Work immediately began to clean, dry out and sanitise these homes before the process of ripping out the interiors could begin.

Some people went to stay with family or friends, while others were re-housed temporarily in hotels or allocated guest rooms at the association's sheltered housing schemes.

All the properties were refurbished by July 2008 and the residents have been able to move back into their homes.

The cost of repairing the damage, from day one to the last resident moving back home, is estimated to be £9 million – met almost in full by insurers.





The residents' tales

Brian Routh

For Brian Routh, the offer of a Pickering and Ferens Homes bungalow couldn't have come at a better time.

Brian, 60, was living in private rented accommodation and was plagued by damp walls and ceilings – conditions which were having an adverse effect on his health.

Just two weeks after putting his name on the association's waiting list, he was offered a one-bedroom bungalow, behind Thomas Robinson Ferens' original almshouses on Holderness Road in east Hull, and is now settling into his new home.

Brian, who has been diagnosed with cancer, says that he feels lucky to have found such an ideal location to put down roots.

"I love it here, it's nice and quiet – although I do sometimes get woken by the peacocks and roosters from the zoo at East Park which is close by," he laughs. "The place is really well maintained and everyone seems really nice."

Brian is keen to get involved in the running of the association and put his name forward as a potential second nominated resident Trustee. He also intends to join the Editorial Forum which plans each issue of the New Horizons newsletter.

Born in Gateshead, Brian has lived all over the world, but his father's family originates from Routh, near Beverley, which gave him his surname. His career was spent as a performance artist and teacher and today he is still passing on his skills by mentoring up-and-coming students.

He also does voluntary work for Dove House Hospice, where he is involved in a carers' support group.

Brian is looking forward to getting to know more of his neighbours and making use of the nearby Broadway Pavilion Pop-In.

"It was like a blessing moving here," he says. "It's nice to have a place where I can finally put down roots."





Gerald & Brenda Leathley

When young engine driver Gerald Leathley shunted locomotives up and down Hull's Priory sidings, he little thought that one day this would be his home!

Two decades ago, the area began to witness an amazing transformation as what is now the Summergroves development off Hessle High Road in west Hull began to take shape.

New homes replaced rail tracks and engine sheds, and among the first residents were Gerald and his wife, Brenda, who received the keys to their Wheatfield Close bungalow with great excitement.

That was in 1990 and now, 18 years on, they say that they could think of no better place to live.

"We'd heard that Pickering Homes, as it was then, were building bungalows," recalls Gerald. "There were 48 dwellings here and we all moved in as strangers."

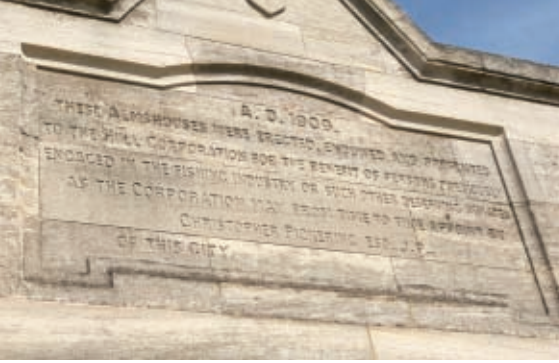
The opening of the Wheatfield Close Pop-In helped to bring the community together and Gerald, a former trade union branch secretary, became its second chairman. Its popularity grew so great that the premises, at number seven, were eventually extended.

The development's connections with the fishing industry, through trawler owner Christopher Pickering, are reflected in the fact that the Pop-In could not be painted green and there is no number 13 Wheatfield Close.

For the couple, who are both 82 and now have great-grandchildren, the decision to move from their former home on Boothferry estate is one they are pleased they made, especially as their plot has a good-sized garden complete with greenhouse where Gerald grows his tomatoes.

"I would not swap this to go anywhere else," he says. "To me this is ideal."





Ron Maddison

Ron Maddison says that living in one of the association's original almshouses on Pickering Crescent takes him back to his boyhood when home was a miner's cottage in County Durham.

The 79-year-old former Merchant Navy seaman moved into his property three years ago and is proud to live in a place with so much history – Christopher Pickering donated some of his substantial wealth to build the almshouses in 1910.

"I used to pass this place and think I'd love to live here," said Ron. "It's perfect. You wake up and you can hear the birds singing and see squirrels running around."

The almshouses were modernised to provide bathrooms and kitchens, but they still retain their charm with high windows and cosy sitting rooms which once doubled as a sleeping area.

Ron, who lost a leg as a result of an accident, gets around on his motorised scooter and likes nothing better than to enjoy the outdoors with six-year-old granddaughter Molly. One of their favourite haunts is Pickering Park, the gates of which are just a stone's throw from Ron's home.

He does not let his disability prevent him from leading a full life and several years ago abseiled off the Humber Bridge, raising nearly £700 for Cancer Research in memory of his wife, Edith, who died from the disease.

Ron likes the fact that he can store his scooter securely behind his home and says that the local schoolchildren are keen to help when he gets to the gate at the front of the crescent, opening and then closing it behind him.

"I feel as if I've come home and it's where I belong," he says. "It takes me back to the miner's dwelling I lived in as a boy."





Where we are now

Our properties

Pickering and Ferens Homes is presently responsible for the management of 1,215 properties in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The association provides sheltered housing and non-sheltered accommodation – some of which has communal facilities.

The five sheltered housing schemes are at Ada Holmes Circle in north Hull, Broadway Manor, Humber View and Malin Lodge in east Hull, and Christopher Pickering Lodge in west Hull.

Accommodation at the sheltered schemes is mainly in self-contained flats and residents have the services of a scheme manager who can provide support and advice.

The flats and bungalows in the villages surrounding a scheme also have access to the scheme manager and the communal facilities such as specially-equipped bathrooms, a laundry, guest room, library, quiet room, communal lounge and kitchen, and hairdressing facilities.

Non-sheltered accommodation is provided in self-contained bungalows and flats and is designed for more independent living.





The services we provide

As well as providing quality accommodation for its residents, Pickering and Ferens Homes offers a range of services to enable people to lead full and independent lives.

In addition to planned maintenance and responding to requests for repairs, the association provides aids and adaptations to properties, allowing residents to stay in their homes as their needs change.

The association is committed to community involvement and residents are encouraged to attend meetings of the Community Development Forum where issues affecting them are discussed.

Residents are involved in producing the association's quarterly newsletter, *New Horizons*, by taking part in Editorial Forum meetings at which ideas are put forward for inclusion in each forthcoming issue.

The Board of Trustees, which oversees the running of the organisation, includes two nominated resident Trustees, Mr Len Middleton and Mr Mike Cox. Mike was appointed in July 2008.

The year 2008 also saw the formation of a Residents' Committee.

Pickering and Ferens Homes runs a network of Pop-In centres, which provide a venue where residents can meet and enjoy social activities ranging from bingo to appearances by entertainers.

The Pop-Ins, which are run by committees of volunteers, can be found at the association's schemes in Barrington Avenue, Broadway Drive, Hebrides Close, Majestic Court, Priory Road, Westgarth Avenue and Wheatfield Close.





Awards and assessments

Pickering and Ferens Homes is acknowledged for both its role as a provider of quality accommodation and as a good employer.

Here is a summary of the awards and assessments that have taken place:

Customer Service Excellence

The association became one of the first organisations in the region to achieve the government's new Customer Service Excellence standard in 2008.

The inspector's report showed a clear and strong customer focus throughout the association and strong evidence of effective teamwork. He also found an open culture where individuals – and the organisation – were willing to learn and develop, and consistently good feedback from residents.



Investors in People

Pickering and Ferens Homes was awarded Investors in People recognition after an assessment in 2005.

A further assessment was undertaken in 2008 and the association retained its Investors in People status.

The inspector said that the organisation had to manage the significant impact of the Hull floods on its properties and commended staff for their hard work.



Housing Corporation assessment

In 2006 the Housing Corporation awarded Pickering and Ferens Homes "three green lights" for being financially viable, properly managed and properly governed.

The organisation is also considered to be a low-risk housing association.

Good Mark Award – Hull Civic Society

In 2001 Hull Civic Society commended the association for the refurbishment of eight properties at Laburnum Avenue in Hull's Garden Village district.

The award was given for "sympathetic refurbishment and a positive contribution to the living environment of Hull".





Looking to the future

Exciting times ahead

There is no doubt that Pickering and Ferens Homes has moved a long way since the two trusts came together in 1992 – and the association has ambitious plans for the future.

Amalgamations with four other, smaller almshouse charities have taken place recently. Thirty-six properties owned by these charities, with a valuation in the region of £3 million, were transferred to Pickering and Ferens Homes in October 2008.

The association is keen to build more homes in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire. Discussions are taking place and potential new schemes are currently being considered.

The provision of extra care accommodation, for those who need more support in their daily lives, is also being looked at. It is possible that this could be provided by re-modelling existing schemes or by constructing new ones.

Most of the association's properties were built after 1988 or have been improved in recent years. The only exception is four bed-sitters located at Frederick Reckitt Havens, Garden Village, that are due to be converted into two bungalows, each with two bedrooms.

Pickering and Ferens Homes is conscious that the cost of keeping warm in winter is a burden for many residents and has utilised grant funding to guarantee with its own finances to provide cavity wall and additional loft insulation to the majority of its properties. Additional energy efficiency and carbon emission reduction programmes are also being considered.

The organisation intends to ensure that all its properties continue to be maintained to very high standards in future years.





Exciting times ahead

Changes are taking place to the composition of the Board of Trustees. A second nominated resident Trustee has been appointed as part of the association's commitment to giving residents an increased role in the decision-making process.

This has also included establishing a Residents' Committee. Three meetings of this new committee have taken place to date and have been well attended.

Residents will also be asked for their opinions in a resident satisfaction survey, which is due to take place in May 2009.

It is expected that the Audit Commission will inspect the association at some time in the future to assess how it is performing.

The Audit Commission has introduced a system known as Key Lines of Enquiry – a series of detailed questions that help it to judge housing associations. The association is using these questions to monitor its performance and to prepare for a future inspection.

Pickering and Ferens Homes is constantly looking at ways to improve the quality of life of its residents – and to plan ahead for the needs of the residents of the future.

Mission statement

The mission statement of the association is:

“To provide high-quality homes for older people with or without a disability, who are in housing need throughout the city of Kingston upon Hull (and the East Riding of Yorkshire)”

We will achieve this by:

- Providing as comprehensive a range of housing services as possible to enable our residents to lead as full and independent a life as possible within the community
- Promoting a greater awareness of the housing needs of older people, and by
- Maintaining a leading position in the provision of social accommodation for older, sick and disabled people within the city





Charles Jacobs Homes and the Esther Jacobs Homes



Elizabeth Stephenson almshouses

Recent amalgamations

Since its humble beginnings almost 100 years ago, Pickering and Ferens Homes has grown considerably and has taken under its wing accommodation formerly in the ownership of other smaller, private concerns.

The year 2008 marked another milestone in the association's history with the amalgamation with four smaller almshouse charities in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The almshouses concerned are:

- The Almshouse Charity of Elizabeth Stephenson – five almshouses in Main Street, Tickton, near Beverley, which were built in 1872
- The Sir James Reckitt Village Haven – 12 large bed-sitters at the Sir James Reckitt Village Haven in Village Road, Garden Village, Hull, which were constructed in and after 1924 and
- The Charles Jacobs Homes and the Esther Jacobs Homes – 19 one-bedroom bungalows adjacent to Askew Avenue in west Hull which were built in the 1930s and 1980s

The amalgamations were proposed as Pickering and Ferens Homes was in a position to provide an enhanced service to the residents of these almshouses.

The move will also mean that the properties can be improved in the future.





100 YEARS

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Pickering and Ferens Homes

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