

Viscountess Barrington Trust

An explanation by John Comley

(a former Trustee)

Just a year after the end of the First World War, Charlotte Mary Leycester Barrington, started to acquire the land for a provision of homes for retired ex-servicemen who had been injured in the war. The transactions were completed a year later and were devolved to a charity known as, 'Lady Barrington's Village Homes and Welfare Institute for Disabled ex-Servicemen.' The Memorial Hall and eight semi-detached homes were built and all completed by 1926. On Lady Barrington's death in 1935, the Charity Commissioners required that the charity be formally established and the land and buildings were legally conveyed from Lady Barrington's Executors to the original Trustees under the aegis of the Commissioners.

The Commission directed that a Trust be established to administer the homes and the lands on which they are established and named Viscountess Barrington's Homes for Disabled Ex-Servicemen. The Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground were conveyed in trust to the Parish Council, whose members are still the trustees.

The homes were originally reserved to men who were provided with a wound certificate to establish that their disability had been sustained in military service. The original trustees were local landowners, some with a service background. Under the rules of the carefully thought out scheme set up by the commission, the trust now wants members who are fully able to

meet the commissioners criteria; they now consist of four retired professionals, formerly serving officers and a chartered surveyor served by a clerk, normally of long residence in the area. The Trust administers the six dwellings in the Recreation Ground and two in the High Street, one divided recently into two flats. The High Street properties were larger than the others to provide room for a shop or other small business and still retain the low front and wide angled doors of the shop fronts. One of the shops continued trading into the 1950's.

The occupancy is still confined to ex-service people or their dependants although wounds received in battle are no longer insisted upon.

The gardens of most houses still have a capped off well - the original water source at the trust's land still contains a well, also sealed off - to provide water should it be required for the Memorial Hall. The Trust remains very active and is seeking planning permission for extra dwellings to accommodate qualified applicants from the local area.

The Trust currently accommodates five retired married couples, one young family and three widowed ladies.

(In 1925 the 7 completed cottages were said to be called; Stanley, Small, Purbrick, Craven, Barrington, Robey and Bouchier.)