

The Rt Hon the Lord Archer of Sandwell QC



“Christian love, with its source in God's love, should be 'wide as infinity', and the Methodist community has striven to fulfil that aspiration. But it must include a Christian concern for one another. Methodists have sometimes needed to be reminded of the needs of our fellow Methodists. Among our responses to those needs is the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society,

which over the years has offered loving provision for those who have devoted their lives to God's service”.



METHODIST MINISTERS' HOUSING SOCIETY

4th Floor, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR

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METHODIST MINISTERS' HOUSING SOCIETY

The story of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society (MMHS) is a remarkable one. From the founding of the Society, through the gift of a manor house in Barrow-on-Trent, Derbyshire until today the story is about growth, care, challenge and partnership.

Growth - The Society has grown from the 1 gifted property to more than 960 properties providing homes for retired Methodist Presbyters and Deacons. Over the years the Society has sought to provide, and continues to give, a good standard of housing as well as meeting the various requirements set by government. Our properties cover the British Isles – from the Channel Islands to the North of Scotland. All of this work is managed through the work of a dedicated staff of 11 led by a Chief Executive and supported by the MMHS Board.

Care - The growth of the work of the Society has not diminished the ministry of care with which MMHS began which it continues to offer. Some Ministers finance their own retirement housing but a number are not in that position. Each year around 70 ministers retire and of those some 35 approach the Society for Housing. The Society exists to provide homes for those ministers with little or no savings. According to their individual needs homes are provided giving security to the minister and the opportunity to continue their ministry within their particular community. In this way, and many others, MMHS continues a ministry of care.

Challenge - Throughout the history of the Society there has been the constant challenge of purchasing and sustaining appropriate housing. The present state of housing market together with maintenance costs has increased the financial challenge. The need to provide housing has remained constant. Ministers with limited means continue to seek the help of the Society in the purchase of modest properties to meet their retirement needs. MMHS continues to meet the challenge.

Partnership - This story of growth, care and challenge would not be possible without the partnership of many groups and individuals. Through the generous giving from Benevolent Funds, organisations and personal donations – including properties - the Society has been able to build up the housing stock across the British Isles. It is a partnership between the MMHS, donors of gifts and those ministers who upon retirement look to us for housing support - a partnership that lies at the heart of what we seek to do.

In thanking you for your support over the years I also hope we can continue to receive your help in the continuing story of MMHS and the support it gives to ministers in their retirement.

Ian T. White
Chair, Methodist Ministers' Housing Society

Baroness Revd Kathleen Richardson



"I moved into the housing society property in Winchmore Hill, North London in 2001. It is a bungalow left by a Methodist member to the society. I came here because I needed to be near my husband Ian in residential care, although he has now died. I have been here already for as long as any other house I have lived in and it is truly my home.

I used to say that I have held every office in the Methodist Church except the only two with any power (Circuit Steward and Circuit Superintendent) and was privileged to do so. But serving in the church meant that I was left with little financial resource and am grateful to the Housing Society for providing my home.

I am still at work, but in different ways. I sit in the House of Lords as often as I am able. I chair the Board of Management of Methodist Schools and am president or trustee for quite a number of charities. For the past few years I have been a panel member for an independent Inquiry into police activities in Northern Ireland and have been working in Belfast for most of this year – a post that was offered to me because of my Methodist experience.

'Sitting down' has not yet meant retreating from activity but when it does I shall rejoice in having a comfortable home to sit in".

Revd Alan Ashton



"I served in three circuits in East Anglia from ordination in 1978 to retirement in 2007 including Superintendancy in two circuits. I also held a number of District roles over the years - Synod Ecumenical Officer, Secretary of Policy Committee, Assistant Synod Secretary, Deputy Chair, and also served as Moderator of Churches Together in Suffolk.

I am very happy to have a comfortable 2 bedroom ground floor flat on the outskirts of Cambridge, just 2 minutes walk to the banks of the River Cam, and a few minutes walk to the bus stop which has a 10 minute service into the city. Direct rail links to London enable me to continue my interests in the theatre, opera and ballet whenever convenient. Undertaking volunteer work in Methodist Church House

within the Governance Support Cluster brings involvement at national church level.

Main hobby interest is Floral design and flower arranging working in local churches, flower festivals and at Anglesey Abbey, a local National Trust property where I also carry out Room Stewarding duties. I am a member of a local Flower Club and serve as their Club Secretary.

My three children are all married and I have 5 grandchildren - family have international facets, my eldest son is married to a Palestinian and their children are brought up with Arabic and English, my youngest son lives in Japan and their child is brought up with Japanese and English!"

The Rt Hon Hilary Armstrong MP



"MMHS provides a very valuable service to those who have served the church so well - it's Ministers.

I am delighted to be able to support the Society and congratulate and thank the staff for their very good work"



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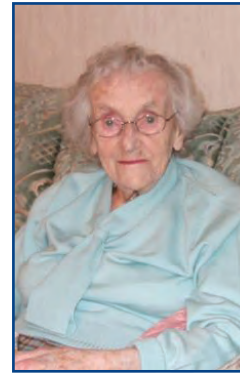
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Ian T. White
Chair, Methodist Ministers' Housing Society

Mrs Doris Smith



Mrs Smith celebrates her 100th birthday in December 2009.

“My husband, Peter, was ordained in 1945 and we began our Methodist ministry in Newcastle where we were responsible for running a Methodist youth club in a poor part of the city. Over the years we were at churches in Leeds, the Midlands and returned to the North East in 1962. Peter retired from the Consett Circuit in 1979 and the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society obtained for us a lovely bungalow in the village of Lanchester which was close to our son Kingsley and his family.

Sadly, Peter died in 1983. The Housing society allowed me to stay in my house which it updates regularly and takes care of any maintenance problems. Indeed they recently replaced the bath with a sit in shower which makes life much easier for me.

I will be 100 in December and I am surrounded by my family and good friends from the Church who help me enormously and I attend services where I can. None of this would be possible without the home the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society provide for me, for which I am truly grateful”.

Revd Jeff Thomas



“We are delighted with the house that MMHS has provided for us in Kendal. Originally donated to the Society, the property has been beautiful renovated to meet our needs. We had hoped earlier to settle elsewhere but it is amazing how things have worked out. After retiring I was sure that one aspect of my ministry, teaching spiritual and personal development, should continue. Since arriving here a year ago, wondering what we would find, doors have continually opened and opportunities abound locally, across the Methodist District and with our ecumenical partners. ‘New opportunities’ is also a key phrase for my wife who now studies music and language as well as involvement in our local church. We are grateful for the help and support of the Society for making this new stage in our continued ministry and leisure comfortable and secure”.

