



Two manuscript copies of Bishop Suffield's second foundation charter survive. The first, which appears below in translation from the original Latin, is a near-contemporary copy of Pope Alexander IV's confirmation of 15 October 1257, and is preserved in the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Norwich cathedral (NRO, DCN 43/48). The second is a copy of the inspeximus of Alexander's letters issued in 1272 by Roger Skerning, bishop of Norwich, which is to be found among the legal material recorded by the civic authorities in their mid-fifteenth-century Book of Pleas. Entered under the heading 'Foundation of the Hospital of St Giles in Norwich', this is a corrupt text containing a number of minor errors and omissions (NRO, NCR, 17B, Book of Pleas, ff.48^r-50^r). It appears, along with a copy of William Dunwich's grant of land and rents in Holme Street to the hospital, between a rental of acquisitions made by the same authorities in 1377-78 (f. 47^v) and evidence relating to purchases of property by the Norwich Carmelites (f. 50^r).

Suffield's second, and evidently definitive, set of statutes drew heavily upon his first foundation charter, known to us in three thirteenth-century copies (NRO, NCR, 24B/1 – the copy which appears on this site, and NRO NCR, 24B/3; DCN 40/7, ff. 76^r-78^v). In order to give a clear sense of the changes and improvements he wished to make, significant words and phrases which appear in the first charter, but which were omitted from, or altered in, the second, are here italicised.

[English translation of foundation charter taken from, C. Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul: The Life, Death and Resurrection of an English Medieval Hospital. St Giles's, Norwich, c. 1249-1550* (Stroud, 1999), Appendix 1]



Alexander, the bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his beloved, the master and brethren of the hospital of St Giles, Norwich, greeting and apostolic benediction. When what is just and honest is sought from us, both the force and justice and the order of reason require that it should be put into effect through the solicitude of our office.

Your petition shown to us explained that Walter, bishop of Norwich, of blessed memory, considering those rewards by which the king of eternal clemency repays zeal for money, founded on his own estate in the city of Norwich, from the goods which he had acquired by his own industry, in honour of the Holy and undivided Trinity, the glorious Virgin Mary, the blessed Anne, mother of that glorious Virgin, the blessed Giles, and all the saints, the hospital in which you live the communal life, ordaining, among other things, that for all time there should be in the same hospital a master, who should diligently take care of the same, both in spirituals and temporals; and that four lay brethren should reside there continually to give faithful attention to the business of the hospital according to the disposition and order of the said master, both within the hospital and without, as is more fully contained in the letters of the same bishop made in this behalf.

We therefore, bishop, confirm it by apostolic authority, and strengthen it with the support of this present writing. Now we have caused the tenor of the said letters to be written down word for word, which is as follows:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, in the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen. We, Walter, by the Mercy of God, bishop of Norwich *although unworthy*, omitting all verbose commentary and preface *of any kind*, have decided to express by these presents the purpose and intent which we have long had in mind, and the desire which surpasses and exceeds every longing of our heart,

ordaining, defining and enacting that the things in the present writing should be inviolably observed for all time.

1. First, we have founded the hospital, which is called of the blessed Giles, in the city of Norwich in honour of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, the Glorious Virgin, the blessed Giles, and all the saints, on our estate and land which is free of our church of Norwich, acquired by our industry from the free tenants of the same.
2. Of which hospital one end extends to the street opposite the church of St Helen, beneath the wall of the court of the prior and convent of Norwich. And in width it stretches to the north as far as the bank of the great river flowing by the said city. And in length it stretches towards the bridge called bishop's bridge, as far as the ditch which lies between our fee and the fee of the noble matron, Lady Isabel de Cressy.
3. Moreover, we will and have ordained that there be in this hospital in perpetuity a master to take good care of the same hospital, both in temporals and in spirituals as we rehearse below, and this we enjoin upon him for the remission of our sins.
4. There shall also be four lay brethren there to attend diligently and faithfully to the business of the hospital according to the disposition and ordinance of the master, both within the hospital and without.
5. There shall also be *in the house at least* three or four women there, of good life and honest conversation, approved over many years, being fifty years old or a little less, to take good *charge and* care of all the infirm and other sick lying there. They shall change the sheets and other bed clothes as often as necessary, and serve them humbly in necessary things as far as they are able; and we firmly forbid that there shall be more women there, but everything should be done by the men, both in the brewhouse and in the other offices.

6. The master shall also have with him four priests of good fame and honest conversation, and well instructed in the divine office, also two clerks, to wit a deacon and a sub deacon, attending chiefly to divine service and worship, besides those things which Our Lord Jesus Christ shall inspire. Each of them shall specially observe this form:
7. All shall rise *in the morning* at dawns when the great bell strikes, and leave the dormitory together *at the same time* and enter the church together, dressed in surplices and black, round closed copes. They shall sing matins and other hours with due chant and measured delivery, and immediately celebrate the mass of the day solemnly *with chant*; and the brethren and the sisters shall be there and hear divine service reverently. And let none of them presume to leave the church or wander about the buildings or precinct before these things are finished, the master excepted, who may go out for necessary cause, and may give licence to the others to go out *with good cause* for the utility of the house.
8. And in the offices of the Church we wish the use of the church of Sarum to be followed.
9. We will and ordain also that three masses should be celebrated in the hospital every day: one mass of the day; the second of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and the third of the dead. Provided that one day each week there is a full service of St Giles, unless it happens that it be hindered by the service of Lent or other *continuous* solemn feasts.
10. After divine service is over the priests and clerks shall not wander about the city or other streets, but shall spend the day in reading, prayer, visiting the sick and other works of charity, unless by the order and licence of the master they should occupy themselves in other useful and honest business. We wish the same thing to be observed both by the brethren and the sisters. And in giving such licences, as in correction and other matters, the master shall be prudent and discreet.

11. And in this hospital there shall be thirty beds or more, according to its means, with mattresses and sheets and coverlets for the use of the infirm poor, so that when any poor man beset by illness comes thither he shall be received kindly and taken care of honestly *and appropriately* as benefits his illness, until he is restored to health. And when he is made well, everything he has brought with him shall be restored faithfully to him and he shall depart freely therewith.
12. Moreover, all the poor priests of the diocese of Norwich, who are broken with age or bedridden with *labour under* constant sickness so that they cannot celebrate divine service, if they have no other support *on which to they are able to live* shall be received in the hospital to dwell there as long as they live, and shall be supported fittingly from the goods of the hospital *and have an honest place ... and appropriate victuals* according to its means.
13. And seven poor scholars of the schools of Norwich, apt to be taught in grammar, chosen faithfully by the faithful counsel of the schoolmaster on oath, shall have every day of the year while the school is in session one meal in the aforesaid hospital. And, once they are properly taught in grammar, seven others shall be chosen to succeed them, according to the form stated above. And we wish this to be observed in perpetuity *in the said hospital*.
14. Moreover, there shall be fed in this hospital every day of the year in the same, to wit, in the house of the hospital, thirteen poor men who shall sit by the fire in front of the chimney *of the hospital in winter* and similarly in the same place in the summer, and they shall have *sufficient* good bread and drink and one dish of meat or fish, and sometimes of cheese and eggs *in appropriate quantity*.

15. And in this hospital there shall be an ark of the Lord [a poor box] from which poor people passing by shall receive alms and free charitable assistance every day, according to the means of the hospital. And from the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary [25 March] to the Assumption of the same glorious Virgin [15 August] there shall be every Saturday at a fixed time of the day, the great bell being first rung, a distribution of bread to each of the poor persons then present, as much as may banish the hunger of the recipients for that time.

16. And, because this hospital will be the house of God and a *church* of the bishops of Norwich, we will and ordain that, as often as the bishop of Norwich passes by the hospital and enters it and gives his blessing to the sick and infirm lying *and residing* in the hospital, he shall feed thirteen poor men there, for the health of his soul and the souls of all living and departed; and on the morrow a mass of the Holy Spirit shall be celebrated for him and for all the dead.

17. And the master, priests *and his chaplains* and brethren shall eat in common in the same house of the same food and drink.

18. And after dinner, all returning thanks together after the versicle without drinking, at the tolling of the great bell, enter the Church of the aforesaid hospital of St Giles, saying the psalm *Miserere mei Deus*. And when these things have been done according to custom, the master may return to the guests *taking with him whom he wishes, not for immoderate drinking or sitting about for long periods*, but for recreation and seemliness. And when the master is absent, the senior priest shall supply his place in these matters.

19. In fasts, refreshments and foods, the master, priests, brethren and sisters shall adopt and observe the custom of those who keep the rule of St Augustine, but they shall not wear their habit.

20. The master and priests shall wear honest clothes of their own choice, so long as they are neither prohibited nor indecent, provided that in church they shall wear surplices and black, round copes as noted above.

21. The brethren shall be dressed in white tunics and grey scapulars. The sisters shall be dressed in white tunics and grey mantles and wear black veils.

22. And the master and priests shall come to rest and sleep under the same roof.

23. The brethren shall also be together in a house by themselves.

24. The sisters shall eat and sleep in one house together by themselves, and no-one shall presume to enter their house except for necessary cause, having first sought and obtained permission from the master.

25. After compline has been said, all shall go together to the dormitory *to lie down*, unless the master or another by his special command or licence has to remain on account of the guests *for work*, or for some other honest of necessary cause.

26. The master of the aforesaid hospital, priests, brethren and shall not eat or drink in the city of Norwich outside their own house except in religious houses ... *and we strictly forbid them to engage in trade or work for filthy lucre*.

27. The brethren and sisters shall vow continence. They shall having nothing of their own, but shall receive all their needs from the house by the hand and distribution of the master, and they shall also promise and observe obedience to the master, as the priests do.

28. The master shall receive and admit the brethren and sisters freely, and not present them to the bishop.

29. And all those dwelling in the said hospital, that is to say priests, brethren, sisters, clerks and others shall be canonically subject to the jurisdiction, coercion and, canonically, to the punishment of the master.

30. We will also that the master shall hold a chapter meeting every Sunday, and on other occasions when required, and correct and amend all excesses and faults, and punish and correct delinquents according to the seriousness of the offence.

31. The master of the hospital shall have no-one riding with him except one of the priests, brethren, or clerks of the same hospital, and the number of riders shall never exceed *two or three*. We will also that there be no squires or wanton boys in the said hospital.

32. Furthermore, we will that no woman be received to sojourn or stay in the aforementioned hospital. And as often as this statute is broken *and anyone admitted* we will and ordain that the chapel of the hospital be suspended *ipso facto* from the divine office as long as the woman remains there. But one mass only for the sake of the sick near the altar shall be said for them only.

33. The master of the hospital may hold and keep an ecclesiastical benefice, even having cure of souls annexed, and other possessions which he canonically held before he was made master. But that which he shall acquire after he becomes master shall be reserved to the use of the hospital. And all those things shall be conserved in the lordship of the same hospital; and they shall remain in the possession of the said hospital in perpetuity. And he shall promise that he will do, effect and conserve this, making a corporal oath in confirmation.

34. The common seal of the house shall be under two keys, namely of the master and the senior brother of the same. Nor shall anything be sealed with the same except in a meeting of the chapter, and in the presence of the brethren then in residence.

35. And when our beloved son in Christ, Hamon de Calthorpe, now master of the hospital, resigns or dies *and on every subsequent vacancy*, we will that this form be observed in perpetuity for the election of the master: When the master is dead and his body had been buried, or when he has resigned, the vacancy in the hospital shall be announced by two brethren to the prior of the church of Norwich. And the prior himself shall immediately summon the archdeacons of Norwich and Norfolk by authority of this our ordinance to meet at Norwich on a fixed day within three weeks, to be reckoned from the death of the master or his resignation, within the hospital itself, to consider with one mind *according to the will of God* the making of a new master. And these three, having first enquired diligently by the sworn testimony of the brethren of the same hospital *upon the suitability of the chaplains residing there*, shall elect and appoint a fit and honest person to rule the said hospital from those priests, or from other priests from outside, as seems expedient to them according to God and their consciences, whom they shall present by their letters *patent* to the bishop of Norwich within the space of eight days after the election is made. And if the bishop of Norwich be then outside like the bishop, shall admit him without any obstacle or contradiction. But if the said archdeacons do not come on the day appointed, we will that they be awaited for two days following; and if they do not come during this time the said prior *of Norwich without further delay*, associating with himself the Official of the Consistory of Norwich and the dean on Norwich, shall proceed in the business for that turn as he should proceed with the aforesaid archdeacons. And we will that the same form be observed if it happen that the said archdeaconries are then vacant. But if one archdeaconry be vacant, or it if happens that one archdeacon be then absent, then the said prior

35. shall proceed in the business with the [other] archdeacon present, associating with them the said Official of the consistory or dean, according to the form recited above. And we will that the same form be observed by the said archdeacons if the prior will not join with them, or if the priorate is then vacant. We will, moreover, that if the master of the hospital happen to resign or die while the priory of Norwich is vacant, the vacancy of the same hospital be announced to the said archdeacons forthwith, [and] that they should meet and come to elect a master under the form written. But if the prior and others named above have not agreed on a specific person, as aforesaid, within five weeks after the body of the master of the hospital is buried, or after his resignation, the bishop of Norwich shall provide a fit person for that turn.

36. This provision being *always* strictly observed: that whoever is to be appointed should be priest and should swear continual residence *immediately after his admission*. But if he has an ecclesiastical benefice he may spend time there, provided that he remain there no longer than eight days on any one occasion. Moreover, the said master shall swear at his appointment that, as far as he possibly can, he will well and truly keep and manage the hospital and everything that belongs to it; also that he will not alienate its immoveable property, and that he will faithfully expend the moveable property for the use of the house and Christ's poor within it, according to our ordinance, and cause it to be spent effectively.

37. And while the said hospital is vacant it shall be under the guardianship and care of the bishop of Norwich on these terms: that the bishop shall receive nothing at all of the goods of the hospital in the vacancy, but immediately and without

any difficulty shall commit the custody for the time to one of the more discreet priests of the said hospital, who shall preserve everything faithfully and without fraud to the use of the poor and sick, according to his oath, and who shall account faithfully to the master, who shall be appointed there, for all his receipts and expenses in the interim.

37. We will and command that these our statutes and others to be enacted by us in future for the correction, reformation, honesty and utility of the said hospital are to be strictly observed.

38. And we give this hospital thus founded with *the estate in which it is sited and* all its appurtenances to perpetual liberty. And everything within the bounds of the said hospital we grant and give to the said hospital, master and brethren *of the house* to the maintenance of them and the poor in free, pure and perpetual alms, without and service, exaction, suit of court or demands saving to ourself and our successors the right of patronage of the same hospital, and also specially reserving the correction and reformation in spirituals of all dwelling in the said hospital to us and our successors.

39. And that this our provision and ordinance may not be hindered for want of things necessary in future, we grant the above-named possessions, and also land in Hethel, with its appurtenances, to the aforesaid hospital, master and brethren for the maintenance of the poor and sick, and confirm to them by the protection of this present charter all the aforesaid things, together with other goods which they possess at present, or will be able to acquire in future.

42. We also grant and confirm the churches of Calthorpe, Costessey, Cringleford, St Mary [South] Walsham, Hardley and Seething to their own use, saving to our beloved Christ, the prior and convent of Norwich, ten marks from the goods of the church of Seething when it is vacant, to be paid to them yearly at the two synods at Norwich by the hands of the master of the hospital after they have obtained peaceful possession of the said church. We grant also that they may lawfully enter and hold possession of the said churches of St Mary [South] Walsham and of Seething when they are vacant by the authority of this our collation and confirmation, without requiring and other consent or asset.

43. Moreover, we grant to them a perpetual and free chantry in the chapel of the hospital, which we have consecrated, along with their other oratories, together with the right of burial for the use of all who die there, and also of anyone else who wishes and chooses to be buried there, saving the rights of the parish churches.

44. And to all who observe this our ordinance, and who labour by counsel and aid that it may be kept, we impart the blessing of Almighty God and of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And we release them mercifully every year at the feast of St Giles from forty days of enjoined penance. But those who shall labour for the subversion of this our ordinance, or shall procure anything whereby the said ordinance may obtain less effect in future, or who shall engineer anything against it maliciously be bind them with the chain of excommunication by the authority of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

41. And that all the above shall stand firm, stable and valid in perpetuity, our seal is affixed to the present writing, together with the seal of our chapter of Norwich, by whose express consent and assent we have granted, ordained and conferred all the above. Done in the chapter [house] at Norwich in the presence of our beloved in Christ, Simon, prior of Norwich, and his convent.

Therefore no man at all may make void this page of our confirmation, or through rash act contradict it. But, if anyone presume to attempt this, let him be aware that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of his apostles, Peter and Paul. Given at Viterbo, on the Ides of October in the third year of our Pontificate (15 October 1257).

