

## 18. FHA. FALMOUTH'S HOUSING CRISIS 12 JUNE 2024

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By the middle of the nineteenth century, Falmouth's population had almost doubled from less than 5,000 in 1801 to around 9,000, but the existing accommodation available had not increased. The resulting severe congestion and overcrowding contributed to the spread of diseases.

Contaminated water supplies and minimal sanitation were common. The use of open fires created a high fire risk. Cholera, typhoid and dysentery were rife, and the Falmouth burial ground was full. Buildings were damp and frequently leaked. Rats, and other vermin were widespread.

The Public Health Act of 1854 formally identified the problems, and before the First World War, some housing had already been condemned as unfit for human habitation.

The Working Classes Act of 1910 funded the first new council houses in Falmouth. Land at Penwerris, behind The Beacon, was purchased as a site for three hundred homes. In the 1930s, as part of a nationwide scheme, wholesale demolition of sub-standard properties began, allowing tenants to be re-housed. However, some empty and condemned buildings weren't demolished until the 1960s.

The main areas affected included behind Arwenack Street, Church Street, Market Street and at the top of the High Street, and some smaller locations at Swanpool, Goldenbank, and by the Falmouth Hotel.

As well as impacting existing communities, many local street names were lost in the process, including Back Hill, Mill Row, Gutheridge's Court, Briton's Yard, Koh-in-Noor Place, Winchester Buildings and Jane's Court ...

Find out more at the Poly!

[Photographs: Houses in Smithick Hill. Winchester Buildings. RCPS.](#)