

Amersham United Charities

Residents' Handbook 2023-1

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Section 1 – Introduction & Management

Welcome

Amersham United Charities (the Charity) would like to extend a very warm welcome to you as a new resident. We hope that you will settle in quickly and be very happy here. This handbook sets out useful information about the Charity and its general administration and management. It also explains your responsibilities as a resident. Please do not hesitate to speak to the Clerk if you need further information on any matters.

Please note that the conditions stated in this handbook form part of your Residents Occupancy Agreement with the Charity and supplement the regulations given in your Letter of Appointment which you signed when you accepted your almshouse. It may be necessary to amend these rules and regulations from time to time but any changes will be discussed with residents beforehand when you will be given the opportunity to express any views or concerns.

The almshouse is your home and every reasonable effort will be made to help you remain independent, free to choose your own lifestyle, and able to benefit from the quiet enjoyment and dignity that the almshouses provide. I am sure you will appreciate the importance of everyone in the community respecting the wishes of others, allowing them their privacy if that is what they wish and ensuring that rumours and gossip are not allowed to develop.

The trustees have tried to minimise these rules and regulations which have been designed for the benefit of all residents and to ensure the efficient management of the Charity.

Once again, a very warm welcome.

Management

The Charity is governed by a board of volunteer trustees. Day-to-day management of its affairs are delegated to the Clerk.

There are nine Trustees made up of:-

- Three Ex-Officio Trustees comprising the Rector and two wardens of St. Mary's Church, Amersham
- Three Co-Opted Trustees
- Buckinghamshire Council Nominated Trustee
- Amersham Town Council Nominated Trustee
- Coleshill Parish Council Nominated Trustee

Constitution

Amersham United Charities is registered with the Charity Commission number 205033 and governed by the Charity Scheme, which is available to view on request.

The recognised definition of an almshouse is:

An almshouse is a unit of residential accommodation (usually a house or flat) which belongs to a Charity, is provided exclusively to meet the Charity's purposes (for example, the relief of financial need or infirmity) and is occupied or is available for occupation under a licence by a qualified beneficiary.

Section 2 – History and Management

Historical Note

Amersham Almshouses provide accommodation for 'poor single men or women' who are resident at the time of appointment in or near to Amersham. There are two sets of cottages, providing accommodation for 11 people in total.

Drake's Almshouses are Grade 2* listed buildings, built in the 1650s with a bequest from Sir William Drake. They were originally for 'six poor antient (old) well reputed widows' who were over 50 years of age and from the borough and parish of Amersham. One widow was appointed as Warden, the first being Anne Child. Each widow was to receive 2 shillings per week on Saturday and once a year, for the first 3 years, a gown of London Brown (and then every 2 years at Christmas a new gown) along with 2 pairs of shoes, stockings and shifts at Easter and Christmas.

The Almshouses were modernised in 1964 with the installation of bathrooms in place of coal cellars and again in 1993 when the number of dwellings was reduced to 4 to improve the living spaces for the residents. Each property now consists of a single bedroom, lounge, kitchen and shower room on one floor.

The properties all have access to a communal rear garden, and residents can have a small flower bed in the front courtyard if they wish. Access to the properties is via a stepped gated archway from Amersham High Street.

Miss Day's Almshouses, which are Grade 2 listed, originally consisted of a living room, two bedrooms, a kitchen and WC and a small backyard. In 1964 the back bedroom was converted into a bathroom. Access to the properties from the High Street is through a private arched alleyway.

In 2013 a scheme was developed to convert the existing nine independent homes into seven, retaining the historic façade and other important architectural features.

This work was completed in 2017 and, in 2018, was awarded the Almshouse Association Patron's Award by the King, then HRH Prince Charles.

The houses each now have greatly improved lounge and kitchen areas, and a downstairs toilet. The original crooked staircase has been replaced with a straight one leading to the enlarged bedroom and shower room. External walls have better insulation, utility services have been upgraded and more storage facilities provided.

There is a communal garden and each resident can have their own individual flower bed to maintain. A communal passageway to the rear leads to a small outhouse (formerly the outside toilet!) for each resident.

Almshouses Management

The Charity manages unfurnished dwellings which are often designed with the needs of older people in mind.

The principle behind everything that the Charity does is that residents should enjoy independence and the freedom to come and go as they please while living in comfortable and secure accommodation. Residents should feel confident in the knowledge that support will always be available, whether from the Charity itself or from outside agencies, should the need arise. Above all, the Charity respects residents' privacy.

Residents may expect to continue in occupation as long as they need the accommodation providing they continue to qualify as a beneficiary, are able to look after themselves, and their appointment as a beneficiary is not set aside. If a resident's health deteriorates they must be willing to accept advice and guidance, either from their own doctor or a medical consultant appointed by the Clerk/trustees. The Clerk/trustees will also consult with the next of kin, Social Services and other agencies if necessary.

Section 3 – Health and Safety

Doctor

If you do not have a general practitioner (GP), the closest to the Almshouses is:

* Rectory Meadow Surgery on School Lane in Old Amersham (HP7 0HG) 01494 727711.

Alternatively, there is also the

* Amersham Health Centre on King George V Road in Amersham-on-the-Hill (HP6 5AY) 01494 434344.

The name of your GP must be given to the Clerk.

You have every right to see your doctor, nurse or other carer in confidence and to keep your medical affairs entirely to yourself if you wish. However, if you have a chronic health problem, it would be advisable (and you might feel safer) for the Clerk or Housing Trustee to be made aware of it so that appropriate action can be taken in an emergency. Anything you tell the Clerk or Housing Trustee will be kept in confidence within the Charity.

‘Message in a Bottle’ is a free system that encourages people to keep their basic personal information and details of their current medication in a common place where it can be found in an emergency. The small plastic container is kept in the fridge where emergency services will find it. They will know residents use this system by two discreet labels. One is fixed to the front entrance of the resident’s accommodation, the other is displayed on the fridge where the information is kept. This scheme is run by Lions Clubs International and you can request a kit from Amersham and Chesham Lions Club by emailing aclions@hotmail.co.uk.

Dentists

There are numerous dental practices in the Amersham area including but not limited to the following:

-Old Amersham Dental Clinic, 123 High Street, 01494 721846

-Amersham Dental Care, 146 Station Rd, 01494 725111

-Oasis Dental Care Ltd, 1A Lexham Gardens, 01494 721309

The Emergency Call System

See section 5 – Alarm Service

Emergency Contact Details

If you become ill or are in difficulties, please let your family know, if this proves difficult please let the Clerk know, who will make every effort to get in touch with your next of kin, your doctor, or the ambulance or social services on your behalf.

Please therefore sign the ‘GP Authorisation Form’ and ‘Next of Kin Information Form’ and provide Power of Attorney and Executor information if these are in place. This forms part of your Occupancy Agreement so that the trustees and Clerk have the authority to contact your doctor and next of kin directly in the event of emergency.

It is important that you let the Clerk have details (names, addresses, and telephone numbers) of these essential contacts. If the details change from time to time, please remember to inform the Charity. It can also be helpful to share the names of your executor and who holds your Will.

Fire Precautions

The almshouses comply with the appropriate fire regulations. The Health and Safety (H&S) Policy is reviewed annually. Residents will be consulted during Housing Trustee visits and H&S visits to ensure that every resident knows what to do and where to go in the event of a fire/emergency.

All of the almshouses are fitted with smoke detectors which, on sensing smoke, will alarm. If a resident is hard of hearing, they should ask for appropriate equipment to alert them in the event of an emergency.

Evacuation Policy:

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FIGHT A FIRE.

When you hear the fire alarm or discover a fire, please evacuate the building by the nearest route to the fire assembly point.

Turn off appliances, shut the door of your almshouse behind you and do not attempt to take any personal belongings with you. Wear warm clothing and leave your almshouse immediately.

Drake's Fire Assembly Point

On the pavement outside The Swan Pub

Miss Day's Fire Assembly Point

1. Out on the street in front of Elmodesham House.
2. Right hand corner of the garden, in the event that the archway is impassable.

Avoiding the Risk of Fire

Please be conscious of the risk of fire, for example, regularly checking at night or before going out that appliances have been fully switched off.

Do not wedge doors open or leave chip pans or candles unattended.

The use of chip pans, paraffin oil and portable gas heaters is strictly prohibited. Spare heaters are available, the Clerk should be consulted if additional heating is required.

Suspected Gas Leak

If you think you can smell gas

- Open all doors & windows
- Vacate the property
- Do not smoke or light matches
- Do not turn on OR off any electrical appliance or switch.
- Advise other residents
- Call 0800 111 999
- Inform the Clerk and or Charity Chair.

Smoking

Smoking or vaping of any other substance, including e-cigarettes, is not permitted within any Almshouse property or on Almshouse land.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Most accidents in the home are from slips, trip and falls; therefore the trustees wish to draw your attention to the need to exercise care when:

- Using the footpaths in wet, snowy or icy weather, the Charity will take reasonable precautions to keep them hazard-free.
- Trailing cables across rooms or adding rugs as these can be easily tripped over.
- Walking on wet floors after cleaning. The floor finishes in the almshouses have been carefully installed to ensure even surfaces as much as possible.
- Ascending and descending the stairs, ensure that there are sufficient lights on to be able to see and that you hold the handrail.
- Keep your spaces tidy so that you can move freely from space to space without hinderance.
- If you feel there is a hazard, please let the Clerk know.

The Trustees will not accept responsibility for any accidents caused by the age of the buildings, and the Resident must assess for him/herself whether the Almshouse is suitable for their occupation and for any guests who visit them.

Security

Please consider the following:

DO:

- Keep your front door locked at all times.
- Check who is there before opening the door if you are not expecting someone.
- Use the spy hole and/or chain to identify callers before opening the door (see Keys and Access section)
- The chain should only be used to open the door a few inches when identifying callers and not kept in permanent use as this may prevent access in an emergency.

DO NOT:

- Allow a stranger to enter your home without proof of identity. If you are in doubt, check with another resident, call the Clerk, a family friend, use the emergency call aid system if necessary or call the police.
- Leave ground floor windows open so that intruders can gain access.
- Keep large quantities of cash or valuables in your home.

BE AWARE OF bogus officials, scams or doorstep salesmen. Always ask for proof of identity. See section 8 on protecting yourself against scams.

Keys and Access

At Miss Day's you will be provided with two keys; At Drake's you will receive one security styled key.

The Clerk holds a master key which can open your front door, but it will only be used in an emergency or with your permission. You must not fit locks, chains or other devices without the trustees' consent as the buildings are listed and they may delay access for emergency services. Chains should only be used when you wish to identify callers before deciding whether to let them in.

Please do not obtain extra keys without first asking the Clerk, as this may lessen security.

Your privacy will be respected. The Clerk/trustees will only enter your home when:

- you ask her or him to do so;
- in an emergency;
- to allow periodic inspection of the Almshouse and for all repairs and maintenance works required to be carried out, even in your absence.

Stopcocks and Master Water Isolation

Water meters and master isolation valve for Miss Day's Almshouses is at the entrance to the archway and at Drake's Almshouses is in the footpath outside no.98.

At Drake's Almshouses the water stopcock are located in the bedroom cupboard and labelled accordingly.

At Miss Day's the single water stopcock which serves all the houses is located in the Outhouse 6. Access to this can be gained by entering the code '57' into the key safe just outside. A special spanner is provided to facilitate the turning of the tap.

Electrical Goods and Testing

Fixed electrical appliances will be tested 5-yearly by the Charity. Portable appliances can be tested either by the resident or on occasion the Charity may pay for this. Appliances provided by the Charity will be PAT tested on a 4 yearly cycle.

Legionellosis

The risk of contracting Legionnaire's Disease from a domestic property where the water services are regularly used and maintained at the correct temperature is incredibly low. However the risk increases if the water services have not been used for an extended period. (It is recommended that the hot water system remains on.) Therefore, residents are advised, after being away for more than 7 Day's from their home:

- to run the hot and cold taps for at least 2 minutes on your return to the property;
- to run the shower at both maximum and minimum temperatures;
- to avoid splashing to minimise the release of water droplets / aerosols.
- to flush all toilets with the lid down.

Shower heads should be cleaned and descaled regularly to ensure no scale or algae build up. Any tap or toilet not in regular use must be run or flushed every week.

Refuse Disposal, Collection and Recycling

Refuse is normally collected Friday morning on a rota basis between types of refuse. Please consult the Buckinghamshire Council website for the correct collection calendar. We encourage residents to recycle as much as possible.

Refuse must not be accumulated so as to prevent rats and to not cause hazards to health and safety for all.

Routine Visits

Residents will be visited in their new home by a housing trustee and/or Clerk shortly after they have settled in, this is an opportunity to get to know you better

Thereafter the Housing Trustee(s), usually two, will make a general visit to the Residents twice a year and will give notice of the visit. This is an opportunity to continue to get to know you better and to address any issues and concerns. A mutually convenient time will be arranged beforehand.

A visit will also be made if a complaint is made to the Clerk or a Trustee.

Section 4 – Terms of Occupancy

Letter of Appointment

Your Letter of Appointment, which you have signed and have a copy, is personal to you, it explains that you occupy the almshouses as a beneficiary of the Charity. This means that neither you nor any relation or guest of yours is a tenant with the security of tenure that a tenancy offers. No other person is allowed to live at the property unless they have formally applied to the Charity and been granted beneficiary status in their own right and you have been jointly allocated the same dwelling.

In exceptional circumstances the trustees could ask you to find alternative accommodation and leave the almshouse (setting aside your appointment). In practice, this occurs very rarely when trustees believe that they have no alternative.

Examples of such circumstances are if:

- A resident is no longer able to look after themselves safely or is not able to live independently.
- The resident consistently fails to pay weekly maintenance contributions (WMC) without good reason.
- The behaviour of the resident is deemed to be unreasonable and anti-social, either in respect of other residents, trustees or members of staff.
- The resident's circumstances change significantly to the extent that they were no longer qualified to live in the almshouses as a beneficiary, or did not have the required qualification when first appointed.
- The resident fails to comply with the rules and regulations made by the Charity.
- The resident provided untrue or misleading answers or information in his/her application to be appointed a beneficiary of the Charity.

It is a condition of occupancy that residents provide the Charity with accurate and complete information of their financial circumstances and that residents inform the Charity if their circumstances change. The Charity may review residents' financial circumstances from time to time. However, residents are assured that only in

the most unusual circumstances would this lead to someone being asked to leave.

The Charity would only set aside an appointment as a last resort after every reasonable effort had been made to resolve the issues. If, having been asked to leave, a resident felt aggrieved, they have the right to have their case heard in the county court. If the decision to set aside the appointment was upheld, they would be given every assistance to find alternative accommodation.

Setting Aside an Appointment

In the event that a resident breaches their letter of appointment in such circumstances as those listed or possibly other scenarios, the following process will be applied:

1. A discussion will take place between a Housing Trustee and resident/family member about the breach and an informal written correspondence will document the conversation.
2. If the same / similar breach occurs again, a further conversation will take place as above and a formal written correspondence will document the conversation with a warning.
3. If these breaches persist after the warning a final conversation will take place as above (2) and a final formal written correspondence will document the conversation with a final warning.
4. Any further breach after a final warning will lead to the setting aside of the appointment and the resident being asked to leave.

Examples of breaches are: smoking in an almshouse, repeated failure to pay the weekly maintenance contribution, anti-social behaviour. In the event that the trustees deem that the breach by the resident is gross misconduct the resident may be given notice to leave immediately. Examples of this would be gross anti-social behaviours and violence, or conviction of a criminal offence that gives rise to safeguarding issues.

Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC)

Weekly maintenance contributions are payable monthly in advance on the first of each month by standing order, unless alternative arrangements have been made for a different date or interval agreed with the Clerk.

The amount you pay is a contribution towards the cost of running the Charity. Items covered by the WMC include:

- The management of the Almshouse premises.
- Day to day maintenance of the building structure, and interior fixtures and fittings which are the property of the Charity (Appendix 1 attached).
- Exterior re-decoration, generally every five years, but variable dependent upon condition.
- Interior re-decoration of walls, ceilings, joinery on an approximately ten-year cycle, or as otherwise appropriate depending upon condition.
- Provision of fitted floor coverings appropriate to the room in which they are installed, and replacement of such coverings at the end of their useful life.
- Maintenance of walls and boundaries owned by the Charity, also of gardens, yards, pathways and covered ways enclosed thereby, also the electric lighting to communal areas and accessways.
- Insurance of the land and buildings, including fixtures and fittings (but not any contents owned by the Resident).
- Water and sewerage rates.
- An Emergency Aid Call system.
- Servicing and repair of plumbing, gas and electrical installations.

The level of WMC is reviewed annually but the Charity reserves the right to review this more frequently if it is in the Charity's best interests.

Independent Living

As residents' letters of appointment and other sections of this Handbook make clear, accommodation at Drake's and Day's Almshouses is provided on the basis that residents are able to live independently. The Charity has no resources to provide care for residents.

This section deals with what the Charity means by independent living and what the residents and the Charity will do if a resident is unable to live independently.

1. In letters of appointment and in this Handbook, by "independent living" (and similar expressions) the Charity means that residents are responsible for looking after themselves and dealing by themselves with regard to their own day-to-day needs such as shopping, laundry,

preparing meals, dressing, bathing, toileting, personal hygiene and arranging visits to or from doctors, dentists, hospital or other healthcare professionals, and/or are able to live in such a way that they do not pose a risk to themselves or others either through illness (physical or mental), infirmity or frailty.

2. As between residents and the Charity, "independent living" does not have the meaning given to it in other social and care contexts, or how that expression may be understood by other agencies, statutory or non-statutory.

3. It is recognised that there will be times when residents may need the services of a carer to help them live independently. However, when the attendance of a carer becomes substantial or full-time, then the Charity will consider whether the needs of the resident (and other residents) would be best met by ending the appointment as set out below.

Residents should inform the Charity if they need to have the services of a carer or if the attendance of a carer has to be increased.

4. In the case of residents experiencing increased frailty, where practical (and legally permissible) the Charity will endeavour to authorise reasonable adaptations to their almshouse to make life easier provided that it remains safe for the resident to live by themselves. The cost of these adaptations must be met by the resident. However, written permission must be first obtained from the Charity before any adaptations are made. If it is necessary for a care package to be put in place, again residents must first inform the Charity accordingly.

5. If a resident (or their next of kin or holder of a power of attorney) becomes aware that they may not be able to continue to live independently, they should first contact the Clerk to discuss the situation.

6. If increased frailty or ill health (whether physical or mental) makes it impossible for a resident to continue to live independently, after full consultation with the resident, their relatives, if applicable, and medical practitioners, the Charity may require the resident to move to more appropriate accommodation where care could be provided. The termination of a resident's right to reside is called "setting aside an appointment".

7. Before taking action to set aside an appointment due to a resident's inability to live independently, the Charity will take part in any necessary multi-disciplinary meetings with housing, health and social welfare agencies organised through the local authority.

8. Residents, their families, next of kin and holders of powers of attorney should understand that the Charity is not responsible for a resident's care and that the Charity cannot permit residents to continue to occupy almshouse accommodation if they are not able to live independently.

Cleaning

You are responsible for keeping your own almshouse clean inside, including cleaning the windows. If cleaning becomes difficult you should speak to your family or arrange for a cleaner.

Storing excess items presents a safety hazard (inside and outside) and in extreme cases of hoarding, trustees may have to consider setting aside the resident's appointment.

Residents below State Retirement Age

If a Resident is below state retirement age, the appointment to the Almshouse will be reviewed regularly at an interval of no longer than five years.

Consulting Residents

The trustees will hold meetings approximately every two months to discuss the running of the almshouses. You and your neighbours will be contacted prior to the meeting to see if there are any items of concern that need to be covered on the agenda. Also, you can talk to the Housing Trustee in private by asking the Clerk to arrange this, contacting the trustee yourself or at your routine visit mentioned on page 6. Consultation and involving the residents in the day-to-day running of the Charity's almshouses is a form of participation which will benefit all concerned. Trustees welcome the residents' views on matters affecting their quality of life at the almshouses.

The trustees will consult you:

- Before any changes are made to the rules and regulations applicable to residents;
- before any work is done on your almshouse (except in an emergency);

- before making changes to the communal facilities, such as the shed, bin alley, etc.
- before anyone enters your home unless it is an emergency; and
- if you raise a difficulty with them.

In the event of an unforeseen circumstance such as pandemic, the Clerks/trustees may decide to implement temporary rules for the safety and protection of residents. Where such rules go beyond those implemented by the government or local authority, residents will be consulted on these rules.

Absence from Home

You are expected to be in full time occupation of your almshouse. Extended periods away during the year might lead the trustees to conclude that you have less need for almshouse accommodation than others. Therefore, residents should not be absent from the Almshouse for more than a total of twenty-eight Day's in any one year without the prior consent of the Clerk and should inform the Clerk if they will be away for more than a week at a time.

Should you return earlier than planned, please inform the Clerk immediately you arrive home as it is important in an emergency to know if any residents are away.

Before going away, please ensure that all food has been put away, taps and appliances have been fully switched off and windows shut. If you are leaving your almshouse during the winter months, please leave some of the radiators on low to minimise the risk of burst pipes, etc.

The Trustees may take steps, as they think proper, in the administration of the Charity and for the Residents' welfare.

Central heating, electricity and hot water

In addition to the weekly maintenance contribution, residents are responsible for paying for utility bills.

The gas and electricity charges at Drake's are paid directly by the individual resident to their chosen utility supplier. Please advise the Clerk which utility provider you choose or if you make a change.

At Miss Day's the gas and electricity supplies are provided collectively with a single main metered supply serving all the properties. The Charity pays these accounts which are then apportioned between the residents.

Residents may provide their own electrical heating appliance. PAT Testing (Portable Electrical Appliance Test) of these items is available through the trustees on a 4 years cycle at the resident's cost as these can pose a serious safety risk. The trustees would prefer it if residents used the additional heating appliances provide by the Charity.

As stated on page 5 the use of paraffin oil and portable gas heaters is strictly prohibited. The Clerk should be consulted if additional heating is required. The Charity has spare appliances available.

Each radiator is fitted with a thermostatic valve which enables residents to adjust the temperature as required.

Miss Day's heating runs 365/24/7 and varies to ambient temperatures and is controlled by the thermostatic radiator valves.

Drake's heating is managed by residents setting individual controls and temperature settings.

Plumbing

Please do not put wipes or nappies down the toilets.

Improvements to your Home

The Almshouses are listed buildings and stand in a designated Conservation Area and are listed for their architectural and historic importance. As a result alterations, improvements and repairs to the Almshouse may be limited by Statutory controls and conditions. Such limitations have been, or may have to be, accommodated in the design, building methods and timing of the work required to properly maintain the Almshouse.

You must not carry out any internal or external improvements, alterations, repairs or decoration, plumbing or electrical installations to your home without the prior permission of the trustees. No shelves, cupboards, locks or fittings shall be fixed or removed without prior consent. Payment for

these may be at the cost of the resident. For all major works, the trustees will instruct an architect or surveyor to design and plan the work before placing an order with a building contractor. Payment for major improvements is the responsibility of the trustees.

As the trustees have responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the almshouses, they have to consider individual resident's requests for alterations alongside their own maintenance programme. If an alteration would be structurally unsound, reduce the amenities for subsequent occupants, or increase future maintenance costs, it will not be approved.

Whilst at all times the Charity will respect the privacy of residents, it is a condition that residents allow reasonable and regular access to their almshouses for repairs and decoration to be carried out. Representatives of the Charity will visit from time to time by prior appointment.

Employment and Running a Business

A resident may work from home in their Almshouse over the internet either as an employee, as a self-employed person or as an official (e.g. director) of a company. Any other use of an Almshouse or of the Charity's property in connection with a business is prohibited.

A resident must not carry on any activity relating to a business in which the resident is involved which is disruptive to other residents or which involves the delivery or storage of items and/or visitors to the buildings.

Residents are reminded that employment or being involved in a business may result in a change in circumstances significantly to the extent that they no longer remain qualified to live in the almshouses as a beneficiary, and that their occupation may be set aside in accordance with Section 4.

Visitors – Family and Friends

Visitors are not permitted to stay overnight in the Almshouse, except with the consent of the Clerk or Chair of the Trustee. Where permission is granted, occasional overnight stays only will be permitted but these must not be regular occurrences. It is vital that trustees are aware of any overnight visitors for safety and security reasons.

Neither the resident nor any relation or guest of the resident will be a tenant of the Charity or have any legal interest in the Almshouse.

Smoking

As highlighted on page 5, smoking or vaping of any other substance, including e-cigarettes, is not permitted within any Almshouse property or on Almshouse land, this includes guests and visitors.

Pets

Pets cannot be kept at the Almshouses.

Behaviour

Residents are required to occupy the Almshouse quietly and with thought for other Residents and/or neighbours.

No radio, TV or music system should be operated in such a manner as to cause a disturbance, nor shall anything be done in, upon or about the Almshouse which shall be a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to the occupants of other Almshouses, adjoining property, or to the general public. Anti-social behaviour will not be accepted in any form, this is defined as behaviour which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person.

Mobility Scooters or Equivalent Devices

Residents at the Miss Day's Almshouses may apply to the Clerk to keep a mobility scooter at the Charity's premises. A storage location would need to be agreed. All such vehicles are kept by the Resident entirely and solely at the Resident's risk. Proof of suitable insurance shall be provided to the Clerk if the Charity accept the application. And maintenance of the scooter will be required annually.

Mobility scooters are not possible at Drake's Almshouses as there are steps.

Should the need for mobility assistance equipment arise for use within Miss Day's Almshouse, for example a shower seat, grab rails, stairlift, full technical details of the requirement must be provided to the Clerk for consideration. If agreed, proof of suitable insurance shall be provided to the Clerk.

Moving Out

If you wish to vacate the almshouse to live elsewhere, you must give the trustees written notice of not less than three calendar months. Maintenance contributions remain payable until the notice period expires and the dwelling is vacated of all furniture and possessions and the keys returned. When the resident vacates for whatever reason, all items belonging to the resident should be removed by him or her forthwith.

If a resident were to leave their almshouse dwelling without giving notice, they would be liable for paying their maintenance charge for a period of three months after the date on which they vacate as well as utility bills.

In the event of the death of a resident, their personal representatives are responsible for the maintenance charge until the premises are cleared of personal possessions and the keys are returned.

Trustees have the right to start the process of setting aside the appointment in the event of non-payment of the maintenance charge as set out in Section 4.

In the unlikely event that any possessions, chattels or goods are, without the written agreement of the Charity, left abandoned by the resident in the almshouse after the resident has vacated, the Charity will take reasonable care of them for a period of up to one month. After this period the resident agrees by signing the Letter of Appointment that the Charity may sell them and, out of the proceeds, pay any outstanding amounts owing to the Charity, including outstanding weekly maintenance contributions and any other expenses, including disposal and removal costs. Any outstanding costs incurred by the Charity are to be paid by the resident.

On vacation of the Almshouse the Resident is to leave the property clean and tidy. The condition of the Almshouse interior will be inspected by the Trustees or their appointed representative upon vacation by the Resident. If unrepaired damage other than that due to fair wear and tear is found, the Charity will seek to recover the cost of the necessary remedial works from the departing Resident or their family.

Re-Housing

If you wish to move from one almshouse dwelling to another, you should contact the Clerk to discuss the matter. While every effort would be made to assist a resident to move if there was a good reason, the decision would depend upon availability and be entirely at the discretion of the trustees.

There may be circumstances, for example during extensive refurbishment or other unforeseen circumstances, when the Charity may need to ask you to vacate the dwelling and move, either temporarily or permanently to alternative accommodation. Your views would be taken into

account and you would be given at least three months' notice should a move be necessary.

Gifts and Legacies

It is the trustees' policy that no one involved in the running of the Charity should accept any gift or legacy from a resident. If you wish to donate anything to the Charity please contact the Clerk to the trustees so that this can be recorded. All such matters will be dealt with in confidence.

Financial Advice

The Clerk and Trustees are unable to offer any resident financial advice.

Section 5 – Services Provided

The Clerk

The Clerk supports the general wellbeing of residents without interfering in their lives or intruding on their privacy. The Clerk is not a trained carer and cannot therefore offer personal care support. If you think that you require personal care support you should ask your family to assist you, contact Social Services or your GP who should be able to look into the services you require to ensure that you receive the help you need to remain safe and independent in your home. The Clerk can where necessary liaise on your behalf. External services might include help with personal care and hygiene, meal preparation and provision, cleaning or shopping or the provision of physiotherapy or occupational therapy aides for use around the home.

Where the trustees feel there would be a real risk to the health or welfare of the individual, they may insist that such calls are made.

Please remember the Clerk does not have set hours like a warden so may not always be immediately available. The Clerk can suggest routes of assistance. You can contact the Clerk by phone, email or text.

Gas, Electrical and Buildings Inspections

The Charity arranges for the boilers to be inspected on an annual basis and the company doing this on the charity's behalf will contact you to arrange access.

Both the building fabric and electrical services will be inspected on a five yearly basis and again the company commissioned to do this on the part of the Charity will make contact with you to arrange access to enable reviewing these areas.

Alarm Service

It is a condition of occupancy that upon residents reaching state retirement an Emergency Aid Call system is installed. (or The Charity provides an emergency call aid system to all residents who need it.) All telephone contact details must be advised to the Clerk. This helpline connects the resident to a call centre which is manned 24 hours a day, 365 Day's year. Currently a phone line is required for this however with digital

switchover a broadband line will required instead in the future.

This includes a box with alarm button and a pendant alarm which can be worn whenever you are in your almshouse in case of emergency.

Furniture and Fittings

Although the almshouses are offered unfurnished, the Charity provides some items, these are listed on your Letter of Appointment.

Gardens

Residents who enjoy gardening may look after the garden beds allotted to their Almshouse. This can be arranged between the Resident and the Gardens Trustee and/or the Clerk. If the resident changes their mind about maintaining a garden plot, they should advise the Clerk and hand it back.

Repairs and Decorations

Residents are required to properly clean and make good any accidental damage to the Almshouse interior, except for that due to fair wear and tear.

The Charity is responsible for both external and internal repairs and decoration to your home and the communal parts. Please report all necessary work or defects to the Clerk immediately who will arrange for it to be carried out.

You will be consulted in advance about arrangements for work to be carried out. Workmen may need to enter your home while you are out to enable works to take place however you will be informed of this, and every effort will be made to complete work when you are in. Don't forget to ask workmen for ID. An exception will have to be made, however, if an emergency arises such as a water leak.

Insurance

The Charity insures the building and its own contents. You must insure your own contents.

Please do not keep more cash in your home than is necessary to meet day-to-day expenses and keep valuables out of sight.

Television Licence

The Charity will organise a Concessionary TV Licence under the Accommodation for Residential Care Scheme for each resident where they meet and confirm their eligibility. These criteria are :

- i) retired aged 60 or over and not working in paid employment for more than 15 hours per week
- ii) disabled (as set out by TV Licensing). The cost of this is paid by the resident. Currently £7.50 or free for the over 75s.

All other residents need to purchase a television licence to use any television-receiving equipment including TV set, set-top box, video or DVD recorder, PC or mobile phone to watch, stream,

or record programmes as they are being broadcast. This includes foreign broadcasts.

Familiarisation

When you move into your home the Clerk / trustee will ensure that you are familiar with:

- action to be taken in the event of a fire
- how to operate all the equipment in your home
- central heating, emergency call systems.

Telephones

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for installing a telephone in your almshouse through your chosen provider and paying for the line rental and usage.

Section 6 – General Information

Electricity Meter Mains Switch and Fuse Box

At Miss Day's the electricity meters are located in the outhouse no.6. If you'd like to see them please ask the Clerk. Gas meter at Miss Day's is located on the exterior wall of Outhouse 6.

At Drake's the electricity meters are located in the alleyway to the back garden between #98 and #100. The gas meter at Drake's are located in the gardens under the bedroom / living room window.

The electricity mains switch is located in the lounges at Miss Day's Almshouses and Bedroom or hall cupboard at Drake's Almshouses along with the consumer unit (fuse board).

Council Tax and Council Tax Benefit

You are responsible for paying your own council tax and will receive the annual council tax notice from the local authority in February / March each year. People living alone are currently entitled to council tax relief of 25%.

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have only modest savings, you may be entitled to Council Tax Benefit. Depending upon your precise circumstances, this could pay your council tax in whole or in part.

Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance/Universal Credit

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have little or no capital, you will almost certainly be entitled to Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance to help with your housing costs. Even if you do have income in addition to your basic retirement pension, you may still be entitled to some help with housing costs. To claim Housing Benefit / Local Housing Allowance you should ask for an application form at your local benefits office (DWP) or Housing Department. It is important that you inform your local benefits office if there are changes in your financial circumstances as they have the power to demand reimbursement in the event of an over-payment. If you are experiencing difficulties in claiming, please let the Charity know.

Eligibility for state benefits changes from time to time. Other sources of information are the

Citizens Advice Bureau in Chesham located in Townsend House, Townsend Road, HP5 2AA which is currently open on Thursdays 0930-1630hrs, call 0808 278 7938 or contact them at citizensadvicebucks.org.uk/get-advice/online-info and

Age UK which are based at 145 Meadowcroft Aylesbury, HP19 9HH. 01296 431911

Parking

Neither set of almshouses comes with parking. The only parking is on the High Street on a first come first serviced basis. Please note all parking is suspended when the Fair is setting up and operating 18th – 20th September every year and on Heritage Day which falls the first or second weekend in September.

Wills

You are strongly advised to make a will and it is best to ask a solicitor to help you with this. If you need help in finding one, the local Citizens Advice Bureau (see earlier) will be able to suggest names. Please provide the details of your executor to the Clerk.

As stated under 'Gifts and Legacies' it is the Charity's policy that no one involved in the running of the Charity should accept any gift or legacy from a resident. If you want to donate anything to the Charity, please speak to the Clerk. All such matters will be dealt with in confidence. Neither staff nor trustees can act as executors of residents' wills.

Next of kin

The name and address of your next of kin, or a nominated representative, should be supplied to the Charity. He or she may be contacted should the trustees have concerns about your wellbeing.

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPOA)

It is strongly recommended that you arrange a Lasting Power of Attorney, which allows you to appoint someone to look after your finances and to take welfare and healthcare decisions on your behalf in the event of your mental incapacity. Again, you should seek legal advice from a solicitor. If you have a LPOA please share the Attorney detail with the Clerk.

Churches

Church of England:

- St Michaels & All Angels, Sycamore Rd, Amersham. 01494 727 553
- St Mary's, Church Street, Old Amersham. 01494 729 380
- St Leonard's, Bois Lane, Chesham Bois. 01494 726 139
- St George's, White Lion Rd, Little Chalfont. 01494 762 552

Catholic

- Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Amersham Rd, Chesham Bois. 01494 727 469

Methodist

- The Methodist Church, High Street, Old Amersham. 01494 433 504
- Little Chalfont Methodist Church, Chalfont Avenue. 01494 766 067

Quaker

- Friends Meeting House, Whielden St, Old Amersham. 01494 433 905

Baptist

- The Kings Church, Raans Road, Amersham. 01494 431 882
- The Amersham Free Church, Woodside Rd. 01494 727 100

Muslim

- Chesham Central Mosque, 212 Bellingdon Rd, Chesham HP5 2NN. 01494 772 065

Jewish

- Maidenhead Synagogue. Grenfell Lodge, Ray Park Rd, SL6 8QX. 01628 673012

Hindu

- Arul Gana Miku Uchi Murugan Kovil Temple. Bridge St, High Wycombe HP11 2EL. 07841 522514

Local Organisations and Services

Many of the Charity's residents take advantage of a rich variety of organisations and services for the elderly in the borough. These include:

- *OASIS – Old Amersham Seniors in Society.*

A group for local residents over 50 yrs giving the opportunity to meet together, share information, news & interest. They hold monthly meetings in Stevens House Lounge, Whielden Close on 2nd Friday of the month, 2.30pm – 4.00pm. New members very welcome to come and hear others

discuss local issues or just come for a cup of tea and a chat. There may be a speaker giving talks on relevant topics, e.g. transport, safety, health, beauty, chiropody, legal issues etc. Membership is £5 per year. You can just turn up or contact Geraldine on 01494 433 735

- *Age Concern Lunch Club,* Drake Hall, Amersham Community Centre, Chiltern Ave, Amersham HP6 5AH. 01494 725 973 For the over 70s who live alone and would like to eat and socialise with others. Members mainly come from the Amersham-on-the-Hill area. New members are asked to call the number above to find out more and book their place.

- *Camaraderie Lunch Club* Gower House, Chestnut Ln, The Gowers, Amersham, HP6 6ES. 07769917792 (Fiona Goodall)

The Camaraderie club is a lunch group for older people in the local Amersham community, run on Wednesday's at 12noon. There is the chance to socialise, take part in activities and enjoy a hot lunch and afternoon tea.

- *Amersham Museum*

The museum reopened in summer 2017 after a major refurbishment and expansion, located a few doors down from Miss Day's Almshouses. The museum's medieval hall house is now more clearly visible for visitors to see and enjoy. The new museum displays explore life in the town in 1580, 1775, 1892, 1939 and 1964. Complete your visit with a wander through our wonderful herb garden, which is packed with plants used for medicinal purposes.

The Museum is almost totally run by volunteers, of which there are about 120, who take on roles in many different areas of the museum including: stewarding, education, DIY, gardening, guided walks, helping with events, research and cataloguing the collection. You could get involved, why not pop along there and have a chat with the curator or any volunteer.

- *Chairbelles*

This is a chair-based exercise club for retired people with mobility issues. Choreographed routines to 1950's music and suitable for people with walking aids. Contact Louise on 07910 963530 for a free trial. louise@goodforever.co.uk

- *Simply Walk*

Volunteer led walks run throughout the year in 50 different locations across the county where you can walk at your own pace – so don't worry about being left behind or feeling left out. The walks welcome all even if you haven't exercised in a long time. It's really easy, just choose your walk and arrive 15 minutes before departure to register with the walk leader. The current Simply Walk programme is available at <https://bookwhen.com/simplywalk>

- *Walking Football for the 55+*

For ladies and gents run at the Woodrow High House and Burnham Park. Contact <https://redkites.weebly.com/> or Wycombe Wanderers have recently set up Walking Football sessions at Amersham & Wycombe on Tuesday 7 - 8pm or Thursday 6 - 7pm at Cressex Football Centre. For further information please contact Nathan.Jopp@wwfc.com

- *Learn My Way - Computer skills*

Want to brush up on your computer skills? These bookable sessions are free.

At Amersham Library, Chiltern Avenue, Amersham, HP6 5AH. On Tuesday's, 2pm - 3pm. Covering the basics: using a keyboard & mouse; internet searching, using email, staying safe on-line, using basic online public services, online shopping, social media, banking online and much more. For more information please call 01296 382415 or email: lib-ame@buckscc.gov.uk

- *Chiltern U3A*

The University of the Third Age (U3A) provides over 300 activities for members to share their knowledge, experience and develop their own capabilities through each other. No qualifications are required, and none is given. All you need is interest and enthusiasm. Subjects are diverse and include art, foreign languages, music, history, sciences, literature, poetry, theatre, philosophy, bird-watching and computing.

Most meetings take place at the Amersham Community Centre in Chiltern Avenue, Amersham. More information can be found at <http://chiltern-u3a.org.uk/index.html>

- *Amersham in Bloom*

Bloom is a wonderful way of encouraging us to make Amersham a more beautiful place to live through planting, cleanliness and sustainability.

With the help and enthusiasm of local schools, businesses, community groups and residents we are making a real difference to our town. To join the team call 01494 434000 or email admin@amersham-tc.gov.uk

- *Methodist Church Social Group*

Coffee Morning every Wednesday at 10am. Fun & Friendship Meet on Last Friday of each month at 2.30pm usually with a speaker. High Street Old Amersham HP7 0DY. 01494 621721.

- *Amersham Hospital Volunteering*

It's an opportunity to make a real difference to our patients, their families, friends and relatives. You may feel inspired to help after visiting someone in our hospitals, or being a patient with us. Current opportunities and how to apply can be found on this website: <https://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/get-involved-2/volunteering/>

Social Activities

A welcome sense of community can result from residents taking part in social activities together. Friendships grow and there is a greater readiness to support one another through difficult times. We find that some residents enjoy occasional opportunities to do things together, while others prefer to pursue their interests on their own. There is no pressure therefore to take part in the organised activities. We try to organise an annual tea party for the Residents and Trustees to get together.

There is also a useful document "**A guide to services for older people living in and around Amersham**" available on the www.colehill.org website, just search for: Guide for services for Older people in Amersham, Colehill and the surrounding area.

Old Amersham Annual Fun Fair

The Amersham Charter Fair is a yearly fair steeped in history. It is always on 19th and 20th September. The fair was founded in 1200 when King John granted the fair and market to Geoffrey FitzPiers, and has been held yearly ever since. The fair has been continuously running and has the right to run every year in the future. Even during World War II, the fair continued, although on a much smaller scale.

In the 20th Century, the fair grew to include side shows and stalls where visitors could win prizes, and since then Irvin Leisure has been on the scene to provide rides both traditional and modern, from the Victorian style Carousel to the more up to date White Knuckle Rides.

So come and enjoy this traditional street fair, presented by George Irvin, one of the oldest funfairs in Britain with great up to date entertainment to add to the history of this fun fair!

Please note all parking is suspended when the Fair is setting up and operating.

Social Media

Those residents (and Trustees) using social media such as Facebook and Twitter, are asked to respect the fact that no views should be expressed via social media about the Charity, its trustees, other residents or staff. Trustees ask that residents avoid expressing controversial views that may effect the trust, this could be considered anti-social behaviour.

Charity Website

The almshouse Charity 'Amersham Untied Charities' does have its own website: amershamalmshouses.org.uk

Take a look, you will find details of the trustees, our policies as well as the history and news.

Almshouse Association

Amersham United Charities are a member of the Almshouse Association. You can read more about AA on their website: www.almshouses.org/about-the-association/

Charity Commission

As already mentioned Amersham United Charities is registered with the Charity Commission under number 205033. These details can be viewed here: register-of-charities.Charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity-details/?regid=205033&subid=0

Section 7 – If Things Go Wrong

Personal Problems

If you have any personal problems over money or any other matter and you have no family or friends whom you feel able to consult, the trustees will be pleased to help or offer advice if they can. You can ask to see the Clerk or any of the trustees and your concerns will be treated in the utmost confidence.

Complaints & Issues

Please note that any matter raised with the Clerk will be referred to the Trustees when appropriate

If you have any concerns, please bring them to the attention of the Clerk who will do their best to resolve them. In the majority of cases, minor issues can be dealt with informally, quickly and efficiently and to the resident's satisfaction. The trustees and the Clerk can only resolve problems and improve the service if you speak up when things go wrong.

If you find the informal route does not work, appended to this Handbook you will find the Complaints Policy to be followed if residents wish to raise a complaint in connection with the occupation of their almshouse, or about services provided by the Charity.

Housing Ombudsman

If you remain dissatisfied with the trustees' decision, you have the right to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service whose address is:

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych, London
WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

You will need to give the Ombudsman your full name, address and telephone number and set out the details of your complaint. The Ombudsman will only be able to consider your complaint if he/she is satisfied that the Charity's own procedure for handling complaints has been exhausted.

Section 8 – Scamming Advice Note for Our Residents

24th Feb 2021

We are aware of some local incidents of scammers targeting people in the area including some connected to the coronavirus outbreak. Sadly, there are many ways scammers might try to part you from your money and scams can come in many different disguises.

It's important to know the warning signs to look out for and what to do if you have or think you have been targeted. There is advice available from your Banks and others about how to stay safe. We have however set out below a few brief examples to help raise general awareness and to help keep you safe:

- An email scam is where you appear to get a message from a legitimate source, such as your bank, HM Revenue and Customs or some official looking organisation.

Never click the links in a suspicious email or open suspicious attachments

- A phone call may be made where the scammers pretend to be from your bank, building society or even the Police or a government agency. They will say your account has been compromised in some way and encourage you to transfer all your money from your bank or to a "safe account".

If suspicious, just hang-up the phone. A real Bank would never do this, they would never ask you to move money to a so-called secure, safe or holding account or to transfer funds to a new sort code and account number. If you're worried about your account security, call your bank directly.

- Text message-based scams. Scammers will claim to be from your bank or similar organisation saying you need to update your personal details, or there is some kind of problem. The text might contain a link or a phone number to call. The phone number is fake and if you call the fraudsters will attempt to get you to reveal your details.

Do not click any links in text messages or ring phone numbers sent in an unsolicited text or e-mail.

- Door to door scammers may simply knock on your door.

Be suspicious of anyone arriving unannounced at your door. Don't be fooled just because someone has identification. It's very easy to make a fake ID and it's no guarantee of legitimacy. Do not engage with anyone who knocks on your door unannounced. Anyone you suspect of trying to scam you or your neighbours should be reported to the police.

Typical advice from one Bank advises:

- Do not disclose your debit card personal identification number (PIN), your full telephone banking passcode or full online banking membership number/login details. You will never be asked for these by your bank.
- Don't be pushed into making any hasty decisions. Always take your time and remember that legitimate organisations shouldn't push into anything.
- If in doubt that a company contacting you is genuine, contact them directly to check whether or not they have been in touch with you.
- If something looks too good to be true it usually is, so steer clear of any investment promising unrealistic returns.
- Always shred bills, bank statements and other documents containing your personal details before disposing of them.
- Regularly check your bank statements for any unusual activity. If there is a transaction you don't recognise, contact your bank immediately.
- Your bank and the Police will never collect cash or your bank card and will never ask for your PIN, so never hand these over to anyone.

Other well-known forms of scams are

- emails purporting to be from your internet provider threatening to close your account. They can be detected by hovering your cursor over the sender's e-mail name, which will reveal the scammer's e-mail address which will not bear any resemblance to an official one from your service provider.
- Phone messages purporting to be from Amazon. These are almost invariably in an American accent and recorded.
- Phone or text messages claiming to be "about your accident", or about loft insulation.

We hope these points are useful and we will look at how we can help further to keep you safe. Please let us know if you have any comments or questions or if you think you may have been targeted by a scammer.