

# Amersham United Charities

## Resident's Handbook 2025

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## Section 1 – Introduction & Management

### Welcome

Amersham United Charities, (the Charity), extend a very warm welcome to you as a new resident. We hope that you will settle in quickly and be very happy in your new home.

This handbook sets out useful information about the Charity, general administration and management. It also explains your responsibilities as a resident. Please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk if you need further information.

The Clerk is employed on a part-time basis to work two hours a day, Monday-Friday but can be contacted out of hours in the event of an emergency.

**Email: [clerk@amershamalmshouses.org.uk](mailto:clerk@amershamalmshouses.org.uk)**

**Telephone/text: 07407 147625.**

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 and the Charity reserves the right to do so. Changes relevant to residents will be discussed with residents in advance and you will be given the opportunity to express your views or any 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 benefit from the quiet enjoyment and dignity provided. Please consider the importance of everyone in the community and respect the wishes of others, allowing people their privacy if that is what they wish.

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.

### 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 provides 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**, are Grade 2 listed and 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 all now have greatly improved lounge and kitchen areas, and a downstairs toilet. The original crooked staircase has been replaced with a straight staircase that leads to the enlarged bedroom and shower room. Also, 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 is available, 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 provided that 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.

### **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.

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 and 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](mailto: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

### **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 is 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.

### **Legionnaire's Disease**

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 Buckinghamshire Council's website for a copy of the refuse collection calendar.

We encourage residents to recycle as much as possible.

Refuse must not be accumulated to prevent risk to the health and safety of everyone.

### **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 of, is personal to you and explains that you occupy the almshouse 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 for other reasons), 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.

Residents should not be absent from the Almshouse for more than twenty-eight days 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 as it is important in the event of 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 switched off, and unplugged if necessary, and windows shut. If you are leaving your almshouse during the winter months, please ensure radiators are set to a low temperature to minimise the risk of freezing and potential burst pipes.

The Trustees may take steps to protect a property as they consider appropriate and in respect of the welfare of residents.

### **Central heating, electricity and hot water**

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

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

**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-year cycle at the resident's cost as these can pose a serious safety risk. The Trustees would residents to use the additional heating appliances provide by the Charity.

As stated, 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.

Radiators are 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 the ambient, external temperature and can be controlled by 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 located in a designated Conservation Area and are listed for their architectural and historic importance.

Accordingly, any alterations, improvements or repairs to the properties may be restricted by statutory conditions and guidelines. Any 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 almshouses.

**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 works 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 the overall maintenance programme. If any proposed alteration may be structurally unsound; or reduce the amenities for other or any 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 which is disruptive to other residents or which involves the delivery or storage of items and/or business visitors to the buildings.

Residents are reminded that employment or being involved in a business may result in a change of circumstance such that a resident is no longer remain qualified to live in the almshouse as a beneficiary and their occupation may be set aside.

### **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 important 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**

Smoking or vaping of any substance, including e-cigarettes, is not permitted within any Almshouse property or on Almshouse land, this includes guests and visitors.

### **Pets**

Unfortunately, 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**

**Miss Day's:** Residents 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.

**Drake's:** Mobility scooters are not permitted due to the stepped access.

Should the need for mobility assistance arise for items such as shower seats or grab rails or a stair lift in Miss Day's properties, full details must be provided to the Clerk for consideration by Trustees. If agreed, proof of relevant insurance should 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**. Also, maintenance contributions remain payable until the notice period expires and the dwelling is vacated of all furniture and possessions and the keys returned.

When a 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 notice, they would be liable for paying the maintenance charge for a period of three months after the date on which they vacate as well as the 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.

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 use the proceeds to pay any outstanding amounts owing to the Charity, including outstanding weekly maintenance contributions and any other expenses such as 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 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 or representative.

### **Re-Housing**

If you wish to move from one almshouse dwelling to another, you should contact the Clerk. While every effort would be made to assist a resident, the decision would depend upon the availability of an alternative property and be entirely at the discretion of the Trustees.

**Please note:** 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 so that the information 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** is employed to support the administration of the Charity; deal with property management; and check on the general wellbeing of residents without interfering in their lives or intruding on their privacy. The Clerk is not a trained carer and cannot offer personal care for residents.

Please note that the Clerk does not work 24/7 and may not be immediately available.

If you think that you may require personal care support, please ask family or close friends to assist you or contact Social Services or your GP to provide advice about the services available to help you remain safe and live independently in your home. If necessary, the Clerk can liaise with others to arrange support services on your behalf with your permission.

External services might include help with personal care and hygiene, meals, cleaning, shopping or the provision of physiotherapy or occupational therapy aides for use around the home.

If the Trustees consider that there would be any risk to the health and safety or welfare of a resident, they may insist that support for a resident is arranged.

### **Gas, Electrical and Building Inspections**

The Charity arranges for the boilers to be inspected on an annual basis. The contractor engaged to carry out the work on behalf of the Charity will contact you to arrange access if required.

The fabric of the buildings and electrical services will be inspected on a five yearly basis. The contractors engaged to carry out the work on behalf of the Charity will contact you to arrange access as required.

### **Furniture and Fittings**

Although the almshouses are made available on an unfurnished basis, the Charity may provide some items which will be listed on the Checklist to be signed when you move into an almshouse.

### **Gardens**

Residents who enjoy gardening may look after the flowerbed allotted to their almshouse and this can be arranged between the Resident and the Gardens Trustee and/or the Clerk. If the resident subsequently changes their mind, they should ask the Clerk to make alternative arrangements.

Please note that the Charity arranges for the grass to be mown and communal flower beds to be maintained.

### **Repairs and Decorations**

Residents are required to clean their home and notify the Clerk about any accidental damage to the interior of the almshouse which they may be required to pay for to make good. Property damage due to fair wear and tear should also be reported to the Clerk.

The Charity is responsible for both external and internal property repairs as well as the decoration of all almshouses and maintenance of communal areas.

Please report all necessary work or defects to the Clerk, who will arrange for repairs or redecoration to be carried out as required.

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 but you will be informed in advance and every effort will be made to complete work when you are in. Don't forget to ask workmen for ID.

Please note that an exception with regard to the provision of advance notice would have to be made if an emergency arises, such as a water leak.

### **Insurance & belongings**

Please note that you must insure your own contents and property. The Charity insures the building and its fixtures and fittings.

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

### **Television Licence**

The Charity can organise a Concessionary TV Licence under the 'Accommodation for Residential Care Scheme' for individual residents who meet the eligibility criteria:

- i) retired aged 60 or over and not working in paid employment for more than 15 hours per week; or
- ii) disabled (as defined by TV Licensing).

The cost is paid by the resident and is currently £7.50 or free for those age 75 and above.

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, including foreign broadcasts.

### **Familiarisation**

When you move into your home the Clerk or Trustee will ensure that you are familiar with:

- action to be taken in the event of a fire
- how to operate any equipment installed in your home by the Charity; and
- central heating.

### **Telephone & Internet**

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for installing a telephone or internet connection in your almshouse by your chosen provider/s and pay their charges.



## Section 6 – General Information

### Electricity Meter Mains Switch and Fuse Box

**Miss Day's:** Electricity meters are located in outhouse no.6. If you'd like to inspect the metres, please ask the Clerk. The gas meter is located on the exterior wall of the same outhouse. The electricity mains switch is located in the lounge of each property.

**Drake's:** Electricity meters are located in the alleyway to the back garden between #98 and #100. Gas meters are located in the garden under a bedroom or living room window. The electricity mains switch is either in the bedroom or hall cupboard 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 or 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, the Benefit 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 may 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 benefit 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 benefits, please inform the Clerk or a Trustee.

Eligibility for state benefits changes from time to time and information can be provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau. The nearest branch office is at Townsend House, Townsend Road, Chesham, HP5 2AA. Please call 0808 2787938 to make an appointment

Age UK can also provide advice and the nearest office is at 145 Meadowcroft Aylesbury, HP19 9HH. Tel. 01296 431911 (09.30 to 12.30) or email: [age@ageukbucks.org.uk](mailto:age@ageukbucks.org.uk)

### Parking

No allocated parking is provided but parking is available on the High Street on a first come first serviced basis.

Please note that all parking along the High Street is suspended when the Annual Fair is setting up and operating and on Heritage Day, both of which take place 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 contact details for the executor of your will to the Clerk and note that Trustees and staff employed by the Charity cannot act as executors of a resident's will.

As stated under the 'Gifts and Legacies' section, 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.

### **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 incapacity. Please seek professional advice to set up a Lasting Power of Attorney.

If you have a LPOA, please share the contact details of those appointed to act on your behalf with the Clerk.

## Local Churches

### Church of England:

- St Michaels & All Angels, Sycamore Rd, Amersham. 01494 727 553
- St Mary's, Church Street, Old Amersham. 01494 729 380

### Romal Catholic

- Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Amersham Road, Amersham. 01494 727 469

### Methodist

- The Methodist Church, High Street, Old Amersham. 01494 433 504

### Quaker

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

### Baptist

- The Kings Church, Raans Road, Amersham. 01494 431 882
- Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road. 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 Social Events

Many of the Charity's residents take advantage of the wide variety of local organisations and interest groups. A list can be found on the website: [amershamtogether.co.uk](http://amershamtogether.co.uk). Please ask the Clerk if you would like a printed copy.

## Amersham Museum

The museum is based in a medieval hall house and located a few minutes' walk from Miss Day's Almshouses along Old Amersham High Street. Various, changing exhibitions are on display, special events are held and guided walks are arranged. The museum premises also include a lovely herb garden, packed with plants used for medicinal purposes. The museum is primarily staffed by volunteers and is open on a seasonal basis from Wednesday to Sunday plus Bank Holiday Mondays, from 12 noon to 4.30 p.m. Admission tickets are typically required unless people meet the criteria for free access.

## 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 are awarded. All you need is interest and enthusiasm! More information can be found at:

<http://chiltern-u3a.org.uk/index.html> or email: [enquiries@chiltern-U3a.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@chiltern-U3a.org.uk)

## Social Activities

A sense of community can result from residents taking part in social activities together. Friendships can develop and opportunities may arise to support one another through difficult times.

For your information, the Charity typically organises an annual tea party for Residents and Trustees but there is no obligation to take part in any activities that may be arranged by the Charity.

## Old Amersham Annual Fun Fair

The Amersham Charter Fair was founded in 1200 and takes place mid-September. All parking along Old Amersham High Street is suspended for the duration.

**Social Media**

Those residents who use social media such as Facebook, Instagram or X, are asked to respect the fact that no views should be expressed via social media about the Charity, its Trustees, any other residents or staff.

Trustees ask that residents avoid expressing controversial views that may affect the trust and please note that certain posts may be considered to be anti-social behaviour.

**Charity Website**

The Charity's website provides details of the Trustees, our policies as well as news and information about its history:  
[www.amershamalmshouses.org.uk](http://www.amershamalmshouses.org.uk)

**Almshouse Association**

The Charity is a member of the Almshouse Association and you can read more about the association on its website:  
[www.almshouses.org/about-the-association/](http://www.almshouses.org/about-the-association/)

**Charity Commission**

Amersham United Charities is registered with the Charity Commission under number 205033. Information about the Charity is published on the Charity Commission website.

## **Section 7 – If Things Go Wrong**

### **Personal Problems**

If you have any personal problems about money or any other issues and you have no family or friends with whom you feel able to talk and seek advice, please contact the Clerk or a Trustee. We will endeavour to offer advice or provide contact details for those who offer support. Your concerns will be treated in strict confidence.

If residents wish to raise a formal complaint in connection with the occupation of their almshouse or about services provided by the Charity, please contact the Clerk for details of the Charity's Complaints Policy.

### **Complaints & Issues**

If you have any concerns, please bring them to the attention of the Clerk who will do their best to resolve them or find a solution.

In the majority of cases, minor issues can be dealt with informally, quickly and efficiently and to the resident's satisfaction.

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

## Section 8 – Scamming Information

There are many ways in which scammers might try to part you from your money and scams can come in many different disguises. It is important to know the warning signs to look out for and what to do if you have or think you have been targeted. Advice is available from your Bank and other organisations about how to stay safe and we have set out some examples below to help you stay safe.

**An email scam** is where you appear to get a message from a legitimate source, such as your bank, HM Revenue and Customs, delivery company or some other official looking organisation. Quite often, these emails contain lots of typos or partial information and ask you to click on a link or attachment.

***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 and may even appear to be from a local telephone code number. The caller may say, for example, that your account has been compromised in some way and encourage you to transfer money to a “safe account”.

***If you have any suspicions, end the call. If you're worried about the security of your bank account, call your bank directly.***

**Text messages.** Scammers will claim to be from your bank or other organisation saying you need to update your personal details, or there is some kind of problem with a delivery for example. The text might contain a link to click on or a phone number to call. Texts will typically contain typos or contain inaccurate information and some may be generated by individuals rather than an organisation.

***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, to ask for help or access for some reason.

***Be suspicious of anyone you do not know arriving unannounced at your door. Don't be fooled just because someone has identification as it's easy to make a fake ID and it's no guarantee that it is legitimate.***

And finally:

- Always shred bills, bank statements and other documents containing your personal details before disposing of them.
- Check your bank statements for any unusual activity and, if there is a transaction you don't recognise, contact your bank immediately.