

Amersham United Charities

Residents' Handbook: September 2026

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Section 1 – Introduction

Welcome

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

This Handbook provides useful information about the Charity and the general management of the almshouses.

The document also explains your responsibilities as a resident and beneficiary of the Charity. Please contact the Clerk if you need any additional information.

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

Email: clerk@amershamalmshouses.org.uk
Telephone/text/WhatsApp: 07407 147625.

Please note that the terms and conditions set out in this Handbook form part of your Residents Occupancy Agreement with the Charity and serve to supplement the regulations provided in your signed Letter of Appointment.

It may be necessary to amend the terms and conditions or regulations from time to time and the Charity reserves the right to do so. Please note that proposed, significant changes that are directly relevant to residents will be discussed with residents in advance and residents will be given an opportunity to express their views.

The terms, conditions and regulations have been developed for the benefit of all residents and to ensure the efficient management of the Charity.

The allocated almshouse is your home and every reasonable effort will be made to help

you to remain independent, free to choose your own lifestyle and benefit from the peaceful, community environment.

Please consider the importance of everyone in the community and respect the wishes of others, allowing people to retain their privacy if they wish.

Amersham United Charities

The Charity is governed by a board of trustees, who are all volunteers, and the day-to-day administration of its affairs have been delegated to the Clerk.

There are ten trustees on the board: -

- Ex-Officio Trustees comprising the Rector and wardens of St. Mary's Church, Amersham;
- Co-Opted Trustees;
- A Buckinghamshire Council Nominated Trustee;
- An Amersham Town Council Nominated Trustee; and a
- 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.

What is an almshouse?

The recognised definition is:

- a unit of residential accommodation that belongs to a Charity;
- a property provided exclusively to meet the purpose of the Charity, (for example, the relief of financial need); and
- a property that is occupied or available for occupation under licence by an eligible beneficiary as a resident.

Section 2 – History

The Charity provides accommodation for eligible individuals who are resident at the time of appointment in the local area of benefit.

There are two sets of cottages located on the High Street in Old Amersham that can provide accommodation for eleven people.

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

Drake's 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 from six to four, to improve the living space for residents. Each of these ground floor properties now consists of a single bedroom, lounge, kitchen and shower room. Residents all have access to a communal rear garden.

Access to Drake's almshouses is via a stepped, gated archway from the High Street in Old Amersham. The courtyard frontage of this property is popular with visitors to Amersham who like to take photographs.

Miss Day's Almshouses: are a terrace of Victorian cottages that are Grade 2 listed. Each dwelling originally consisted of a living room, two bedrooms, kitchen and WC and had a small backyard. In 1964, the back bedroom was converted into a bathroom. Access to the properties from the

High Street in Old Amersham is through a private, gated entrance.

In 2013, a scheme was developed to upgrade the nine cottages and reduce the number to seven dwellings. The historic façade and other important architectural features were retained. The redevelopment project was completed in 2017 and was awarded the Almshouse Association Patron's Award in 2018 by HRH Prince Charles, now King Charles III.

The terraced cottages all now have separate lounge and kitchen areas and a downstairs toilet. The original, crooked staircases have been replaced with a straight staircase that leads up to enlarged bedrooms, bathrooms and walk-in wardrobes in some of the properties. External walls were better insulated; utility services were upgraded and more storage facilities provided.

There is a communal garden at the front of the terrace and each resident can choose to manage their own flower bed. A communal passageway along the back of the terrace is where a small outhouse is provided for each resident.

Section 3 – Property Management

The Charity manages all the unfurnished dwellings, which are designed with the needs of older people in mind, as well as the surrounding grounds and outbuildings.

A key principle of the Charity is to provide accommodation for residents to enjoy living independently in comfortable and secure dwellings. A concierge service is not provided and the Charity does not have wardens living on site, but residents should feel confident in the knowledge that support is available should the need arise, by contacting the Clerk, a Trustee or an outside agency.

Residents may expect to continue in occupation as long as they need the accommodation; as long as they continue to qualify as a beneficiary; are able to look after themselves; and their appointment as a beneficiary is not set aside by the Charity.

If a resident's health deteriorates, they must be willing to accept advice and guidance, from their doctor or a medical consultant appointed by the Clerk or Trustees, to ensure that they can continue to live independently. (Please refer to the Charity's Independent Living Policy for more information).

Section 4 – Health & Safety

Doctor: If you do not already have a general practitioner when you are appointed as a resident, the closest surgery to the High Street in Old Amersham is:

Rectory Meadow Surgery, School Lane, Old Amersham (HP7 0HG) 01494 727711.

The name of your G.P. must be given to the Clerk.

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

'Message in a Bottle' is a free system run by Lions Clubs International 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 – typically in the fridge. Emergency services will know where to find the bottle if the 'Message in a Bottle' sticker is fixed to the door of the fridge. Further information is available on this website: lionsmessageinabottle.co.uk

Dentists

There are a number of 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 difficulty for any other reason, please let your family and friends know and if this proves difficult, please contact the Clerk. The Clerk will make every effort to contact your next of kin, a doctor, an ambulance or social services on your behalf.

Please ensure that you sign the '*GP Authorisation Form*' and '*Next of Kin Information Form*' and provide Power of Attorney and Executor information to the Clerk. This information forms part of your Occupancy Agreement so that the Trustees and the Clerk have the authority to contact your doctor, next of kin or other relevant parties direct in the event of an emergency.

If the contact information for your next of kin family or friends should change, please remember to inform the Clerk. It can also be helpful to share the names of your executor and contact information for the person or lawyer who holds your Will.

Fire Safety

The almshouse properties comply with the appropriate fire regulations and the Health and Safety (H&S) Policy is reviewed annually.

Residents will be consulted during Housing Trustee 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 are hard wired and have back-up batteries. The smoke alarms are serviced every year by a maintenance company engaged by the Charity.

If a resident is hard of hearing, they should ask for appropriate equipment to alert them in the event of an emergency.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FIGHT A FIRE

If you hear a fire alarm or discover a fire, please evacuate the building by the nearest route, shut the door to your almshouse behind you, do not attempt to collect personal belongings to take with you and go to the fire assembly point.

FIRE ASSEMBLY POINTS

Drake's Almshouses: On the High Street, outside The Swan Pub, (turn left out of the entrance gate).

Miss Day's Almshouses

1. High Street, in front of Elmodesham House; or
2. In the event that the passageway to the High Street is impassable, move to the far corner of the communal garden nearest the bench by the River Misbourne.

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

The use of candles, chip pans and paraffin oil, portable gas and open bar electric heaters is strictly prohibited. Contact the Clerk if additional heating is required.

Before going out and at night, please check that any portable appliances have been fully switched off.

Do not wedge doors open or leave pans on the cooker or items in the cooker unattended.

Suspected Gas Leak

If you think you can smell gas:

- Open all the doors and windows
- Vacate the property
- Do not smoke or light matches
- Do not turn on OR switch off any electrical appliance
- Advise other residents if feasible to do so
- **Call 0800 111 999** (open 24/7)
- Inform the Clerk or a Trustee

Slips, Trips and Falls

Most accidents in the home are due to 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 the footpaths hazard-free.
- Trailing cables across rooms
- 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 stairs at Miss Day's almshouses, ensure that there is sufficient light to see and hold the handrail if necessary.
- Keep your property tidy so that you can move freely from space to space without hindrance.
- If you discover a hazard, please notify the Clerk.

The Trustees will not accept responsibility for any accidents caused directly or indirectly by the age of the buildings and the Resident must assess for themselves whether the allocated almshouse is suitable for their occupation and for any of their guests who may visit.

Security

Please consider the following:

DO:

- Keep your front door locked at all times.
- Check before opening the door if you are not expecting a visitor.
- 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 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 any doubt, call the Clerk or another resident or family friend or call the police.
- Leave ground floor windows open so that an intruders could 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.

Keys and Access

Residents of Miss Day's almshouses will be provided with two, main door keys.

Residents of Drake's almshouses will be provided with one main door key.

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

The Charity has a master key that is kept in a safe for all main doors and 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. The buildings are listed and new locks or use of door chains may delay access for the emergency services.

Your privacy will be respected. The Clerk or Trustees will only enter your home when:

- you invite them to do so;
- in an emergency;
- to allow periodic inspection of the Almshouse; and
- for all repairs and maintenance work required to be carried out, even in your absence if necessary.

Stopcocks and Master Water Isolation

Miss Day's almshouses: The communal water meter and master isolation valve is located beneath a grid on the High Street, immediately outside the gated entrance.

There is a single water stopcock in Outhouse 6 that serves every property and each dwelling also has a stopcock. A special spanner is provided to turn the tap.

Drake's Almshouses: The communal water meter and master isolation valve is beneath a small grid on the High Street pavement, near the wall and in line with the rear of property no. 94. Each dwelling also has a stopcock.

Electrical Goods and Testing

The Charity arranges for the maintenance and servicing of fixed appliances including the installed alarm systems. The Charity also arranges and pays for PAT tests for portable electrical appliances on a periodic basis.

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 switch remains on and the temperature of the hot water tanks kept at a minimum of 60C.

If residents are away from home for more than seven days, it is recommended that they

- run the hot and cold taps for at least 2 minutes on return to the property;
- run the shower at both maximum and minimum temperatures and avoid splashing to minimise the release of water droplets / aerosols.
- 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 on Friday mornings and there is a rota for the collection of different types of refuse.

At Drake's almshouses, refuse and recycling bins are collected from the communal passageway.

At Miss Day's almshouses, refuse and recycling bins should be left for collection outside each front door, adjacent to the footpath.

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

Link: [Check your bin collection day | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

We encourage residents to recycle as much as possible.

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

Routine Visits

Residents will be visited in their new home by a housing Trustee and/or the Clerk shortly after they have settled in, to find out if you have any questions about the property.

The two Housing Trustees will also visit residents at least twice a year. These visits provide an opportunity to continue to get to know you and address any issues or concerns. A mutually convenient time will be arranged in advance.

A visit will also be arranged if a resident submits a complaint to the Clerk or a Trustee.

Section 5 – Terms of Occupancy

Letter of Appointment

Your signed Letter of Appointment explains that you occupy the almshouse as a beneficiary of the Charity. Please keep your copy of the document in a safe place for reference.

As a beneficiary of the Charity, 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.

In exceptional circumstances, the Trustees could ask you to find alternative accommodation and leave the almshouse which is known as 'setting aside your appointment'.

Examples of the circumstances in which an appointment may be set aside:

- 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 meet the eligibility requirements 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 their 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 also request to review residents' financial circumstances from time to time.

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 the Charity considered that a resident had breached the terms of their appointment, the process set out below would be followed:

1. A meeting and discussion will take place between the Housing Trustees and the resident (who may ask a family member or close friend to attend) about the breach and the resident will be provided with informal written correspondence to act as a record of the meeting.
2. If the same or a similar breach occurs again, a further meeting will take place (as above) and a formal written warning will be issued to the resident which will include details of the meeting.
3. If these breaches persist after the warning a final meeting and conversation will take place (as above) and a final, formal written warning will be issued in writing to the resident.
4. Any further breach after a final warning is issued 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 without good reason; and 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 concerns.

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 that are the property of the Charity
- Exterior re-decoration, generally every five years, but this can vary depending upon the condition.
- Interior re-decoration of walls, ceilings, and joinery on an approximately ten-year cycle, or as otherwise appropriate depending upon the 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 owned by the

Charity (but not contents owned by the Resident).

- Water and sewerage rates.
- Servicing and repair of plumbing, gas and electrical installations.

The WMC is reviewed annually but the Charity reserves the right to review it and make changes more frequently if it is in the Charity's best interests.

Independent Living

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.

The Charity has adopted an Independent Living Policy and a copy can be obtained from the Clerk. The policy sets out what is meant by independent living and what measures may be taken by a resident or the Charity if a resident's circumstances change in respect of living independently, as referenced below.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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, residents must first inform the Charity.

E. 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.

F. 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".

G. 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.

H. 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

Residents are responsible for keeping their own almshouse clean inside, including cleaning the inside of 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 and at intervals of no longer than five years.

Consulting Residents

The Trustees hold meetings approximately every two months to discuss the running of the almshouses. Please notify the Clerk or the Housing Trustees if you have any items of concern that need to be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees.

You can also talk to the Housing Trustees or Clerk in private if you wish. 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 an issue with them.

In the event of any 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.

Holidays and 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.

Please note: Residents should not be absent from the Almshouse for more than twenty-eight days in total 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 shut the windows. If you are leaving your almshouse during the winter months, please ensure radiators are kept on and 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 to help protect the welfare of residents.

Utilities

In addition to the weekly maintenance contribution, residents are responsible for paying electricity and gas utility bills. Water bills are paid by the Charity.

Drake's: Each property has separate gas and electricity meters and bills are paid directly by individual residents to their chosen utility supplier. Please advise the Clerk which utility provider you choose and if you make a change. The temperature setting and timing of the central heating and hot water supply is managed by each resident for their own dwelling.

Please note: the temperature inside each property should be kept at a minimum of 18C to prevent moisture condensing on the historic, lime plaster walls.

Miss Day's: Each property has a separate electricity sub-meter which is located outside the dwelling in an outhouse owned by the Charity. The electricity supply is arranged and paid for by the Charity.

Sub-meters for each property are read on a retrospective, quarterly basis. Residents are provided with a credit payment or a request for an extra payment based upon the difference between the usage reflected in the meter reading and the average, estimated cost added to the Weekly Maintenance Contribution.

A communal gas boiler provides central heating to all seven properties and runs 24/7 365 days of the year. The gas boiler temperature varies with the ambient, external temperature and is set to provide central heating to each property when the boiler's thermostat dips below 18C.

There is no thermostat in individual properties but the temperature in each room can be controlled by thermostatic valves fitted to the radiators.

The Charity manages the supply and payment of the gas used for central heating and the cost is apportioned equally amongst residents in line with average, annual usage.

Plumbing

Please do not flush wipes or nappies down the toilets.

Improvements to your Home

The Almshouses are located in a designated Conservation Area and are listed buildings because of their architectural and historic importance. Accordingly, any alterations, improvements or repairs to the properties may be restricted by statutory conditions and planning guidelines. Any such limitations have been, or may have to be, accommodated in the design, building methods and timing of the work required to 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 any approved alterations may be at the cost of the resident and permanent fixtures, such as a power shower, will remain the property of the Charity if the resident vacates the almshouse.

For major building works, the Trustees will instruct an architect or surveyor to design, plan and manage a programme of work. Payment for major building and refurbishment work is the responsibility of the Trustees.

The Trustees have collective responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the almshouses and will consider individual resident's requests for alterations. If a proposed alteration may be structurally unsound; or reduce amenities for other or

any subsequent occupants; or increase future maintenance costs, it will not be approved.

Whilst the Charity respects the privacy of residents, it is a condition of an appointment that residents allow reasonable and regular access to their almshouses for maintenance, repairs and decoration.

Employment and Running a Business

A resident may work from home in their almshouse either as an employee or on a self-employed basis 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.

Please note: 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 prior consent of the Clerk or Chair of the Board of Trustees.

If 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.

Pets

Unfortunately, residents are not permitted to keep pets in an almshouse.

Anyone who brings pet dogs to visit a resident of an almshouse must keep their dogs on leads at all times whilst they are on the premises.

Noise

Residents are required to occupy their allocated almshouse quietly and with due consideration for other residents and neighbouring properties.

No radio, TV or music system should be operated in such a manner as to cause a disturbance to residents in neighbouring almshouses or other properties.

Nor shall anything be done to cause a nuisance or disturbance to the occupants of other almshouses, adjoining properties or the general public. Anti-social behaviour will not be accepted in any form.

Mobility 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 appropriate maintenance of the scooter will be required.

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, requests must be submitted to the Clerk for consideration by Trustees.

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 to the Clerk or a Trustee.

All items belonging to a resident who leaves an almshouse on a permanent basis should be removed immediately by them or their representatives.

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 of a resident in the event of non-payment of the maintenance charge.

In the unlikely event that any possessions, left abandoned by the resident in the almshouse after the resident has vacated, without prior written consent by the Charity, the Charity will take reasonable care of the possessions for a period of up to one month. After that 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 on departure. If any 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.

Utility meters will be read by the Clerk or a Trustee when a resident moves out.

Relocation

If you wish to move from one almshouse to another owned by the Charity, you should contact the Clerk. The request would be considered by the board of Trustees and a relocation would depend upon the availability of an alternative property. The option to permit a move to a different almshouse would be entirely at the discretion of the Trustees.

Please note: There may be circumstances, during a planned, extensive refurbishment or sudden, unforeseen circumstances, for

example, when the Charity may need to ask you to vacate the dwelling and move on a temporary or permanent basis to alternative accommodation. Your opinion about any alternative options (such as staying with family or friends) relating to a required change of accommodation would be taken into account. Residents would be given advance 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 not permitted to offer financial advice to any resident.

Section 5 – Services

The Clerk is employed on a part-time basis to support the administration of the Charity; deal with property maintenance; and check on the general wellbeing of residents without interfering in their lives or intruding on their privacy. The Clerk is not a carer and cannot offer personal care for residents.

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

Independent Living: 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 or the Housing Trustees can liaise with other parties to arrange support services on your behalf with your permission. External, support 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. It's also possible that alternative accommodation may be more suitable for a resident's needs and the Trustees may decide to set aside an appointment in the best interest of a resident.

A copy of the Charity's Independent Living Policy is available on request from the Clerk.

Building Inspections

The Charity arranges for the buildings to be inspected every five years by an independent surveyor. Access to individual almshouses would be arranged in advance with residents.

Furniture and Fittings

Although the almshouses are made available on an unfurnished basis, the Charity may provide some items which will be referenced on the 'Moving in Checklist' which is shared with a new resident when they move into an almshouse.

White Goods: In March 2026, the Trustees agreed to adopt a new policy for White Goods (cookers; fridge/freezers; and washing machine). Please refer to the Clerk to request a copy of the White Goods Policy.

Gardens

Residents of Miss Day's almshouses who enjoy gardening may look after the flowerbed allotted to their almshouse by arrangement with the Clerk. If a resident subsequently changes their mind, they should ask the Clerk to make alternative arrangements.

Residents of Drake's almshouses may also be allocated space for gardening on request.

Please note that the Charity arranges for the grass to be mown and communal flower beds, shrubs and trees to be maintained at Miss Day's and Drake's almshouse sites.

Repairs and Decorations

Residents are required to 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; the decoration of all almshouses; and maintenance of communal areas.

Please note: Residents should not instruct or challenge contractors engaged by the Charity nor contact a contractor's manager or office directly. If any issues arise with regard to an onsite contractor or their work, please contact the Clerk or a Trustee.

If necessary, and in case of an emergency, contractors engaged by the Charity may need to enter your home while you are out and you would be notified in advance. If work is arranged whilst you are at home, don't forget to ask workmen for ID or check with the Clerk that maintenance work has been arranged.

Please note that an exception would have to be made to the provision of advance notice in the event of an emergency such as a fire or significant water leak.

Insurance

Please note that you should arrange insurance for your own property.

The Charity insures the buildings and fixtures and fittings.

Please do not keep more cash in your home than is necessary for any day-to-day expenses and keep 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 listed below:

- 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 in order to watch, stream or record programmes as they are being broadcast, including foreign broadcasts.

Moving In

When you move into your home the Clerk or a 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

Residents are responsible for making their own arrangements for installing a telephone or internet connection provided by their preferred supplier in their allocated almshouse and must pay the charges direct to the supplier.

Section 7 – General Information

Electricity and Gas Supplies

Miss Day's: Electricity sub-meters for each property are located in outhouse no.6 which is owned by the Charity. If you'd like to inspect the meter allocated to an almshouse, please ask the Clerk.

An electricity fuse board (consumer unit) is located in the lounge area of each property.

The single gas meter is located on the exterior wall of the Charity's outhouse no.6 and relates to the single, gas boiler which provides central heating in each property.

Drake's: Electricity meters are located in the communal passageway. The electricity mains switch in each property can be found either in the bedroom or hall cupboard along with the fuse board, (consumer unit).

Gas meters are located in the garden beneath ground level covers adjacent to each property.

Council Tax and Council Tax Benefit

You are responsible for paying your own council tax to Buckinghamshire Council. The Council Tax Team can be contacted by calling 0300 131 6000 or by email to: counciltax@buckinghamshirecouncil.gov.uk.

Council Tax is usually paid in 10 instalments throughout the year but you can choose to pay in 12, smaller instalments instead.

People living alone are currently entitled to a council tax discount 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 specific 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 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 office is at Townsend House, Townsend Road, Chesham, HP5 2AA. Please call 0808 278 7938 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

Parking

Parking is available on the High Street on a 'first come first served' basis.

Please note: All parking along the High Street is suspended for the Annual Charter Fair 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 a solicitor, the local Citizens Advice Bureau (see earlier) will be able to provide support.

Please provide contact details for the executor/s of your will to the Clerk.

Note: 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 wish 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 Clerk or 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, (LPOA).

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

Roman 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'

Please ask the Clerk if you would like a printed copy.

Amersham Museum

The museum is based in a medieval hall house and located on the High Street close to Miss Day's Almshouses. Various, changing exhibitions are on display; special events are held; and guided walks are arranged. The premises include a lovely herb garden, packed with plants used for medicinal purposes.

The museum is open on a seasonal basis from Wednesday to Sunday plus Bank Holiday Mondays, from 11.30 a.m. 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! Information can be found on the website: Chiltern-u3a.org.uk or email: 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, Trustees and invited guests but there is no obligation to take part in any activities.

Old Amersham Charter Fair

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

Social Media

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

Trustees ask that residents avoid expressing controversial views that may affect the Charity.

Please note: certain content posted online may be considered to be anti-social behaviour.

Charity's Website

The Charity's website provides information about the history of the almshouses; news of any vacancies; and copies of our policies. The website address is:
'amershamalmshouses.org.uk'.

Almshouse Association

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

Charity Commission

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

Section 8 – If Things Go Wrong

Personal Problems

If you have any personal problems about money or any other issues and 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 people or organisations that provide 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 in the first instance. They will do their best to resolve the issue and find solutions.

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

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

Section 9 – Scamming

There are many different ways in which scammers might try to part you from your money. 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.

An email scam happens when you appear to get a message from a legitimate source, such as your bank, HM Revenue and Customs, Royal Mail, a 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. The caller's number may even appear to be from a local telephone code, such as 01494. 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 that 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 is 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.