

# **OLD WINDSOR UNITED CHARITIES**

## **PENNY ROYAL ALMSHOUSES**



## **RESIDENTS HANDBOOK**

**OLD WINDSOR UNITED CHARITIES  
PENNY ROYAL ALMSHOUSES**

**RESIDENTS HANDBOOK**

**INTRODUCTION**

This handbook provides you with information about occupying your alms-house and about the Charity and its management. It explains the regulations set out when you accept the appointment and the trustees hope you will find the information in this booklet helpful.

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## **OLD WINDSOR UNITED CHARITIES PENNY ROYAL ALMSHOUSES**

### **HISTORY OF THE CHARITY AND ITS MANAGEMENT**

#### **History**

The Penny Royal cottages date back to 1797. The two centre properties were originally a schoolhouse flanked by a pair of cottages on each side and adjoining land was retained as allotments for the tenants.

These cottages were enlarged and repaired in 1813. In 1954 money was needed for repairs and the allotments which had grown derelict were sold for this purpose.

In 1976 seven new properties were built and in 1991 the six old cottages were substantially renovated. Extensions with new kitchens and bathrooms were added and internal walls removed to make larger rooms. The original façade was retained.

There are two theories about the name 'Penny Royal'. One is that a penny a week was paid by the Alms persons and the other is that the cottages were built on land adjacent to Pennyroyal pond.

#### **Trustee Body**

The charity is run in accordance with English charity law and the Charity Commission regulations and is administered by volunteer trustees. Day to day administration is carried out by the clerk.

#### **Almshouses**

The Almshouses are unfurnished dwellings designed with the needs of older people in mind. The aim is to provide convenient and comfortable accommodation in a setting which allows residents to live as independently as possible. Each unit has an emergency call system allowing residents to get help quickly should the need arise.

### **SAFETY**

#### **Emergency Call System**

The emergency call pendant/wrist fobs and smoke detectors are connected to a 'base unit', in your house that connects to a call centre. In the event of the system being activated an 'Emergency Call Handler' (ECH) will contact you via the two-way communications system in the 'base unit' to ask the reason for the call.

1. If it was a mistake, the ECH will confirm with you and close the call down.
2. If you need assistance, the ECH will contact a nominated person (either a trustee or the clerk). The nominated person will then either attend or call an ambulance and your next of kin.
3. If it's an emergency, the ECH will call 999 and notify your next of kin.
4. If you don't answer, the ECH will call back on your other phone (landline or mobile), if you have one and then follow step 1, 2 or 3.
5. If you don't answer the ECH will call your nominated contacts to let them know that you haven't responded. If no one can be reached or can attend, the ECH will call the ambulance service, so that someone will always attend if you press the button.

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If any situation other than '1' happens, the call will stay open and the ECH will check back periodically until someone answers or a paramedic has attended and confirmed the situation is under control.

The pendant/wrist fobs work within a 300m range of the base units, so cover the car park and gardens. They are hot water resistant so that they can be worn at all times, including in the bath or shower.

**The trustees strongly advise that residents wear their pendant/wrist fob 24 hours a day.**

### **Emergencies and Sickness**

In order for the clerk to respond effectively in an emergency it is important that you ensure all contact details for your next of kin or nominated person be kept up to date.

If you are admitted to hospital please inform the clerk or ask another person to do so on your behalf.

### **Fire Precautions**

The almshouses are inspected regularly to check that they conform to fire regulations. Smoke alarms are provided in each property and must not be disconnected. They are not battery operated so need no regular attention. Should you have any concerns about your smoke alarm please contact the clerk.

Fire blankets are provided in each kitchen but fire brigade advice is in the event of a fire leave the premises immediately.

If you or your visitors smoke **please dispose of cigarettes safely.**

**Please note that the Trustees would prefer residents and visitors to smoke outside.**

Please **DO NOT** leave cooking pots unattended.

**IN CASE OF FIRE:** leave the building immediately, shutting the door behind you.

**DO NOT** attempt to fight any fire.

### **For your own security**

Please keep your door locked at all times.

Do not open your door to unidentified callers.

Do not allow strangers to enter your home without proof of identity.

Please do not get extra keys to your property cut without the permission of the trustees.

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**SERVICES PROVIDED**

**Cleaning**

You are responsible for keeping your almshouse clean.

**Clerk**

If you have any problems with your almshouse please report them to the clerk in the first instance. The clerk will report your problem to the maintenance contractor.

The clerk will not provide personal care except in an emergency. However, he/she will advise you how to get the help that you require elsewhere.

**Master Key**

Master keys are kept securely by the clerk. They will only be used in an emergency by the clerk or the trustees or at your request.

**TV Licence**

Residents over the age of 75 are covered by the ARC (concessionary) TV licence organised by the clerk. Residents aged between 60 and 75 and retired, there is a charge, but this is covered by the charity and organised by the clerk. *Residents aged between 60 and 75 who are NOT retired will need to apply and pay for their own TV licence.*

**TERMS OF RESIDENCY**

**Letter of Appointment**

It is a condition prior to occupation of an almshouse that new residents should sign a letter of appointment. You should have a letter of appointment, signed by you when you were appointed as a resident.

As a beneficiary of an almshouse charity you are not a tenant, but the trustees will not ask you to leave unless there are exceptional circumstances such as you ceasing to be an eligible beneficiary of the charity or do not comply with the terms of your letter of appointment. This exceptional circumstance could include any significant change in finances that would mean you would no longer qualify under the "in financial need" criteria, or fail to pay the full monthly maintenance contribution.

**Monthly Maintenance Contribution (MMC)**

You have agreed to pay a Monthly Maintenance Contribution which includes an amount for the services provided, payable on a monthly basis. MMC payments go into a global pot and are not ring-fenced for the individual paying. The amount you pay covers the cost of running the Almshouses and includes:

Water and sewage charges

Repairs and maintenance

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### Building Insurance

(RESIDENTS ARE ADVISED TO OBTAIN THEIR OWN CONTENTS INSURANCE)

Upkeep of the grounds but not your own personal garden.

Emergency call system

You will be given advance notice of any increase in MMC.

A resident, or in the event of the death of a resident, their next of kin is responsible for the MMC until the premises are cleared and the keys returned to the Clerk/Trustees.

### Housing Benefit

If your income consists of basic retirement pension and you have little or no capital, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit to help with your housing costs. To claim Housing Benefit you should ask for a form at your local Benefits Office (DWP) or Housing Department. If you have some additional income to your basic retirement pension you may still be entitled to some help with housing costs.

### Council Tax

Residents are responsible for paying their own council tax. Currently residents are allowed a discount for single person occupancy.

### Occupation of the Almshouses

Residents are required to occupy the property quietly and with thought for other residents and neighbours.

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

Residents may expect to continue in occupation for as long as they need the accommodation and can look after themselves as per the charity's Independent Living Agreement (Appendix I). If health deteriorates they must be willing to accept advice and guidance from time to time, either from their own doctor or a medical consultant appointed by the Trustees. The Trustees will also consult with the next of kin, Social Services, etc. to make the most suitable arrangements. (See **Appendix I**)

Should the Trustees resolve to Set Aside an Appointment (ie, ask a resident to leave), not less than 1 month's notice in writing will be given by the Trustees to the resident(s).

The Almshouse or its garden **Must Not** be used as a place of business, either to conduct business or to store any items.

In the interest of your care and security please inform the clerk if you intend to be away from home for more than 3 days. The on-site post box may be used for this purpose.



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Residents should not vacate their home for more than 28 consecutive days without prior agreement from the clerk/trustees.

### **Relatives and Friends**

The clerk cannot take the place of your relatives and friends. We hope your relatives and friends will give you the same help and support as if you were living elsewhere. With their help and, if necessary support from Social Services we hope you will be independent for as long as you are able.

### **Next of Kin**

The name and address of the next of kin should be supplied to the trustees. This information will be held in a secure place by the clerk and trustees and will be used on the contact list for the emergency response system.

### **Visitors**

Visitors are not permitted to stay in an almshouse, except with the consent of the trustees. This should be applied for in writing in advance and is a requirement of the local fire brigade.

### **Pets**

At your interview the trustees will have explained their policy with regard to keeping pets. If you wish to keep a pet you must first obtain the written permission of the trustees. Small animals or caged birds are usually acceptable but must not become a nuisance to other residents. Please tell the clerk what arrangements you have made for the care of your pet if you are on holiday or become ill.

### **Gardens**

The communal gardens, greenhouse, flower beds and fruit and vegetable patches are a shared resource for the use of all the residents.

Please do not leave out food for the birds, either on feeding tables or on the ground. This provides a food source for rats, which can be a persistent problem, damaging property and can become a health risk.

### **Heating and Hot Water**

The gas boilers are maintained by the Trustees.

Use of paraffin oil and portable gas heaters is strictly prohibited. Electrical heaters may be used if desired.

### **Electricity Meters**

Meters, their locks and fittings may not be altered in any way. If for any reason the supply is disconnected please tell the clerk immediately.

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### **Parking**

There are limited parking spaces for residents available; these spaces are not dedicated to any particular property. Please ask visitors to park in the road or opposite The Union pub.

### **Waste Disposal and Recycling**

Rubbish and recycling collection is weekly, on a Tuesday.

Please ensure all refuse is wrapped before placing in bins and that the rubbish area is kept clean and tidy.

### **Repairs to dwellings**

The trustees undertake to carry out all internal/external repairs and external decoration (residents are responsible for internal decoration). Residents are not allowed to make any structural alterations without prior consent of the Trustees. No fences or structures can be erected in the garden areas (private or communal).

### **Damage to fixtures, fittings and white goods**

All damage to fixtures, fittings and white goods - that are not the result of everyday wear and tear or age - must be paid for by the resident. The replacement item or fixture should be agreed by the trustees and the work must be undertaken by a contractor agreed by the trustees. Please ensure that your household contents insurance covers accidental damage.

### **Consulting Residents**

The trustees will consult you before any work is done on your Almshouse (except in an emergency) and before anyone enters your home.

### **Moving**

A resident wishing to leave his/her dwelling to live elsewhere must give the Trustees 4 weeks written notice. Monthly Maintenance Contributions remain payable during this period.

### **Gifts and Legacies**

It is the Trustees policy that no one involved in the running of the charity should accept any gift or legacy.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Residents should be encouraged to raise minor complaints informally in the first instance with the clerk, preferably verbally, as this can lead to better understanding and very often to a quick resolution of the issue. If the complaint cannot be solved quickly or if the complaint is more serious, it should be made in writing. A written complaint should include sufficient detail to enable the charity to investigate.

Please see the charity's Complaints Policy for further details.

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**USEFUL INFORMATION**

**Stopcocks & Electricity supply**

The water stopcock is on the path outside the property and needs a special key to operate. If you need to isolate the water supply summon help from the maintenance contractor.

The gas stopcock is in the gas meter cupboard.

Electricity supply can be isolated from the consumer unit - the location of which will vary from property to property. Summon assistance if you have a problem.

**Policies**

The Old Windsor United Charities have in place the following policies:

- Anti-social Behaviour
- Complaints
- Conflict of Interest
- Data Protection
- Financial Control
- Health & Safety
- Investment
- Reserves
- Risk Management
- Safeguarding

Please contact the clerk if you would like a copy of any of the policies listed above.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERMS OF RESIDENCY:**

It is a condition of occupancy that a new Resident should sign a copy of their Letter of Appointment and The Terms of Residency (this Handbook) signifying their willingness to abide by the terms before taking up occupation of an Almshouse.

I have read and understand the Terms of Residency. I also understand that if my financial situation changes so that I no longer fit the criteria for Almshouse residency, or if it comes to light that I provided misleading information on my application form, the Trustees may wish to reconsider my residency.

Signed .....(resident)

Date .....

Registered charity no. 240660

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**APPENDIX I - INDEPENDENT LIVING AGREEMENT**

**Definition: Independent living at Penny Royal is defined as being able to do the following unassisted:**

- get up in the morning,
- wash and dress,
- make a meal,
- the ability to leave the property quickly in the event of a fire.

Any concern about a resident should be followed by an assessment and action.

**Process to assess independent living:**

1. The Trustees or NOK become aware that the resident is unable to get up in the morning, wash and dress, make a meal unassisted OR is unable to leave the property quickly and unassisted in the event of a fire.
2. The House Manager advises the resident that the Trustees want to arrange for the Local Authority to undertake an Independent Living Assessment.
  - a. If the resident agrees then the assessment is arranged.
  - b. If the resident refuses then the Setting Aside Process begins (ending the right to occupy the alms house).
3. After 2a (assessment) the Local Authority representative may advise the provision and installation of the following equipment: grab rails, handrails, shower seat, perching stool, bed rail, bed riser, chair risers, wrist/pendant alarm or inflatable chair cushion.
4. If a wrist/pendant alarm is provided then the resident needs to commit to wearing it at all times whilst in their house.
5. The resident and their NOK may be asked to investigate and arrange alternative care provision if:
  - a. If more than the equipment outlined above is required or if the resident refuses to use the equipment.
  - b. The resident is unable to leave the property quickly and unassisted in the event of a fire.
  - c. The resident needs more than three care calls a day.
6. If the resident and the NOK do not agree to investigate and arrange alternative care provision then the Trustees may arrange for a private Occupational Therapist to provide an Access Assessment. If the OT agrees that the resident does not fulfil the requirements of independent living at the Penny Royal Almshouses then the Setting Aside process would begin.

This process would be repeated if the resident's circumstances change.