

# SAMPSON'S ALMSHOUSES



## Residents' Handbook

Issued: September 2015 (updated November 2020)

## FOREWORD

This handbook provides you with information about occupying your almshouse, about the almshouses and about the Charity and its management. It supplements and explains the rules and regulations as set out in your Appointment Letter, a copy of which you signed when you accepted your appointment.

The Trustees hope that the information this book provides will help you to be happy here.

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# SAMPSON'S ALMSHOUSES RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **History of the Sampson's Almshouse and its management**

#### **1.01 History**

The Sampson's Almshouses were originally located in Mead Lane, Farnham, where five cottages were built and given by Robert Sampson to be almshouses in 1854. They were replaced in 1934 by the five terraced homes on the present site, bequeathed to the Sampson's Trust by Alan Andrews the owner of Coxbridge Farm. The terrace of five cottages was designed by local architect H. Falkner. The accommodation was extended when the 11 bungalows were completed in 1977.

The Mead Lane houses had a sad end: first falling into disrepair when the then Trustees' attempts to sell them were unsuccessful and finally deteriorating into dangerous ruins before the eventual sale of the land.

#### **1.02 Constitution**

The purposes of the Charity and requirements and constraints with which the Trustees are obliged to comply are set out in governing documents sealed by the Charity Commission in 1933, 1970 and 1980 (although some of these have been amended by subsequent legislation). In particular vacancies must be advertised and the almspersons who are appointed must be '*poor persons of good character who are members of the Church of England*'. Within the prescribed limits, the Trustees are conferred full powers to make regulations governing the management of the Charity.

#### **1.03 Trustee Body**

The Charity is administered by Trustees who are all volunteers.

Individual Trustees often take on the research into and the management of special projects but the day-to-day administration is carried out by the Clerk to the Trustees.

#### **1.04 Almshouses**

The Almshouses are unfurnished dwellings. The aim is to provide convenient and comfortable accommodation in a setting which allows residents to come and go as they please. Almshouses provide security and residents are encouraged to make friends and to share a wider social life through use of the communal areas. The Sampson's Almshouses do not have a resident warden. It is one of the conditions of appointment and continuing occupation that residents are able either to care for themselves or make their own arrangements to be provided such care as they need through other service providers.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Health and Safety**

#### **2.01 Health and Safety Policy**

The Trustees of the Sampson's Almshouses Charity are committed to the maintenance of a safe living and working environment for all those who have access to the Charity's premises.

The Clerk to the Trustees is responsible to the Trustees for coordinating health and safety matters in the Charity. Where relevant, she will pass on to the Trustees and guidance for residents or warnings that she receives from the Charity's advisors or regulators. However, everyone has a part to play and Trustees and residents should be keen to take a sensible interest in health and safety matters and let each other know of any issues that are relevant to the Almshouses.

#### **2.02 Emergency Call System**

An emergency call system can be arranged through Waverley Borough Council. In an emergency, you can summon help at any time of the day or night from a specialised call centre operated by Waverley Borough Council.

If you do not have this facility, you should call the appropriate emergency services of Police, Fire Brigade, or Ambulance by phoning 999.

#### **2.03 Electrical Installations**

**Residents must never attempt to dismantle or repair any electrical appliance, fitting or installation.**

#### **2.04 Slips, Trips and Falls**

The Trustees wish to draw your attention to the need to exercise care when using the footpaths to the front doors in wet, snowy or icy weather. In the absence of site staff to keep them hazard-free, residents must expect to take responsibility for their own welfare.

#### **2.05 Lifting**

The Trustees' Lifting Policy aims to ensure that, if for example, a resident falls, he or she is not further injured by being helped to his or her feet in the wrong way and that any would-be helpers are not also injured. If you or another resident falls and cannot get up, please call an ambulance and explain that someone has had a fall and requires assistance to stand up again. Ambulance crews are trained in safe lifting techniques and their vehicles carry specialist equipment.

## **2.06 Fire Precautions**

The Charity has been advised by the Fire Brigade that residents should not attempt to put out a fire that cannot be controlled by a fire blanket. A fire blanket is provided in your kitchen; please read the instructions on the container. If you think it needs replacing, please contact the Clerk.

**In the event of a fire, the advice is to get out of the house as quickly as possible, ring the Fire Brigade, and let your neighbours know.**

## **2.07 Security**

Please bear in mind the following:-

- DO** keep your front door locked at all times and use an appropriate window to identify callers before opening the door.
- DON'T** allow a stranger to enter your home without proof of identity.
- DON'T** leave ground floor windows open when you are not able to watch over them to prevent intruders from gaining access.
- DON'T** keep unnecessary cash or valuables in your home.

## **2.08 Control of Keys**

The Chairman and Clerk must each be provided with a set of keys to your front door. In normal circumstances these will only be used in an emergency or with your permission, but you must allow reasonable access when required by the Trustees. You must not fit locks and chains without the Trustees' consent as these may delay helpers in an emergency.

Please do not get extra keys without first asking the Trustees, as this endangers security.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Services Provided**

#### **3.01 Communal Facilities**

The garden is the only communal facility provided by the Charity. This is kept mowed and clean on a regular basis. Each house has its own small garden. You are expected to keep your garden area neat and tidy. If you are unable to do so, please advise the Clerk.

The Trustees do try to provide suitable seating and garden furniture for the communal garden but to do this they rely upon gifts or donations.

#### **3.02 Repairs**

The Trustees are responsible for both external and internal repairs to your home and the communal parts. In the first instance please report all necessary work to our approved managing agent as listed inside the Front Cover.

#### **3.03 Decorations**

You are expected to maintain the internal decorations of your home, but the Trustees are responsible for a programme of redecoration. You will be consulted in advance about any arrangements for redecoration.

If a resident wishes to carry out redecorations for their own satisfaction, they must first obtain the permission of the Trustees, giving assurances as to the quality and standards of the proposals, and they will normally be required to pay for the work and materials themselves.

Workmen will normally not be allowed to enter whilst you are out unless you have agreed to satisfactory arrangements. An exception will have to be made if an emergency arises or access is required to rectify an urgent problem, and you must also allow reasonable access when required by the Trustees.

The Trustees will normally exercise their right to inspect the Charity's property before and after any significant work.



### **3.04 Insurance**

The Charity procures insurance for the buildings but you are responsible for insuring the contents of your home.

Please do not keep more cash in your home than you need for your day-to-day expenses.

### **3.05 Television Licence**

The Charity pays for your TV Licence. For residents over 75 years old the licence is free. Those over retirement age, and below 75 years old, may be entitled to a concessionary licence. Each year the Clerk applies for a general concession, and he will need to collect information from you to justify the application.

Please be considerate to your neighbours in the use of TVs, radio, stereos, etc and musical instruments.

### **3.06 Cleaning**

You are responsible for keeping your almshouse clean including the inside and outside of the windows. If you have any difficulties with this you must arrange for the cleaning to be carried out by a helper or contractor.

### **3.07 Communal Gardens**

The communal gardens have been laid out and are maintained for the benefit of all residents. The grass is mowed at the cost of the Charity. Please ensure that your pets do not foul the garden. If they do then you must clean up behind them.

### **3.08 Alterations**

The Charity maintains the property and will carry out any necessary alterations. Residents are not permitted to carry out any structural or other alterations to the property including forming of holes for pipework removing heating panels taking up flooring provided with the dwelling or other work of similar nature. Residents may put up shelves and curtain rails.

Any changes must be made only on the express written permission of the trustees.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Terms of Occupancy**

#### **4.01 Letter of Appointment**

You should keep a copy of your Letter of Appointment, which you signed when you were appointed as a resident. As a beneficiary of an almshouse charity you are not a tenant, the Trustees can ask you to leave in certain circumstances such as, when you cease to be an eligible beneficiary of the Charity or do not comply with the terms of your Letter of Appointment or you fail to pay the Maintenance Contribution.

#### **4.02 Relatives and Visitors**

The Trustees cannot take the place of your relatives or friends. We hope they will give you just the same support as they would if you were living in ordinary housing. With their help and co-operation, and support from home help and home care services if necessary, we hope you will be independent for as long as you wish.

The Trustees recognise that there could be times when a friend or relative would stay overnight with permission from the Charity but they cannot permit any long term joint occupancy. Any notification of this happening will be investigated by the Trustees. If this rule is broken then it will be considered a breach of terms of residency and you may be asked to leave.

#### **4.03 Absence from Home**

If you wish to go away from your home for more than 24 hours then you must notify the Clerk. If you plan to be away for more than 7 days at any one time or for more than 28 days in any one year you must advise the Clerk and obtain the consent of the Trustees. You must advise the Clerk of relevant dates and any arrangements that you have made for temporary key holders, etc. If you are going to be away during the winter, it may be necessary to take precautions against frost by turning off and draining the water system.

When you return after being away from home for several days you will need to ensure that all your services: water, electricity, etc. are working properly and that any time-clocks and other automated equipment are reset.

If you have a shower fitted and it has not been used for a long time, it can be dangerous to inhale the spray that initially issues from the shower head. After a period of disuse, to reduce the risk, a plastic bag should be placed over the shower head before turning on the water flow. This can be removed when the water has begun to flow freely.

#### **4.04 Consultations**

The Trustees welcome the residents' views on matters affecting their quality of life at the almshouses.

The Trustees will consult you:

- before any work is done on your almshouse (except in an emergency)
- before making significant changes to the communal facilities, including the gardens
- before making changes to the amount of Weekly Maintenance Contribution which you pay
- before anyone enters your home
- if you raise a difficulty with them.

#### **4.05 Weekly Maintenance Contributions (WMC)**

The WMC is collected in twelve, equal monthly instalments. Unless a different agreement is reached, when you move into or out of your home you will be charged for the whole of any month in which you occupied the home.

If you receive Housing Benefit, arrangements can be made for this to be paid directly into the Charity's account.

You will be given a month's notice of any increases. Increases will usually take effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> April in any given year.

The amount you pay covers part of the cost of running the almshouses.

You are responsible for the payment of all other utility charges and taxes and for all furnishing.

#### **4.06 Housing Benefit**

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have little or no capital you will almost certainly be entitled to Housing Benefit to help you with your housing costs and may be eligible for Pension Tax Credit. To claim Housing Benefit you should ask for a form at your local Department of Work and Pensions office or Housing Department (telephone number inside front cover). If you do have some income in addition to your basic retirement pension you may still be entitled to some help with housing costs.

Should you decide to apply to Waverley Borough Council for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit you will find it helpful to know the amounts included in the Maintenance Contributions to cover payments made by the Charity that are **not** eligible for the Housing Benefit. Please apply to the Clerk for the latest details.

Whether or not you obtain Housing Benefit, it is your responsibility to ensure that the full Maintenance Contribution is paid to the Charity on time (you may be able to arrange that the Council pay your Benefit directly into the Charity's bank account). If the Housing Benefit that you obtain is less than the amount of the Maintenance Contributions, you will be responsible for paying the remainder.

Where the Council's application form gives you the opportunity to tell them anything else, you should include the following statement in addition to anything else that you want to say.

I have completed this form by interpreting its nomenclature as though it represents my particular circumstances. Actually, my legal status is not that of a tenant but that of a beneficiary of a Charity, I am appointed to occupy an almshouse, consequently, I do not pay rent but am required to pay a Maintenance Contribution, in twelve, equal monthly instalments.

#### **4.07 Heating and Hot Water**

The central heating for almshouses numbered 1 to 5, inclusive, is provided by a communal, gas fired, hot water boiler while almshouses numbered 6 to 16, inclusive, are provided with fitted storage heaters. Paraffin or calor gas heaters are not allowed as these are dangerous. Electric heaters are only allowed if their trailing leads are short and are positioned to avoid being a tripping hazard.

#### **4.08 Meters**

Neither meters nor their locks and fittings may be altered without first asking the Trustees' permission. If the supply is disconnected for any reason, please tell the Clerk immediately.

#### **4.09 Businesses**

Neither the almshouse nor its garden may be used as a place of business, either from where to conduct business or to store items connected with running a business.

#### **4.10 Moving Out**

If you wish to move from the almshouse, you must give the Trustees written notice of at least one month.

During this period of time you will be liable for your Maintenance Contributions payment even if you have already moved out. Residents or, in the event of death, their personal representatives are responsible for Maintenance Contributions until the premises are cleared of personal possessions and the keys returned. Part months shall be charged as whole months. The almshouse must be left in a clean condition. If they are not then the Trustees will have the house professionally cleaned and the bill will be sent to you or your representative.

If you become permanently unwell, the Trustees may have to be firm in deciding that you move to find more suitable care.

The Trustees can set aside your appointment if (for example):

- You do not comply with the rules set out in your Letter of Appointment or elsewhere. (These rules are made for the benefit of all residents.)
- You are no longer qualified to live in the almshouse. It is possible that your circumstances could change to make you no longer eligible. For example, you could win or inherit a significant sum of money.
- You may no longer be able to look after yourself even with all the help of your family and/or care provision. There may come a time when this is putting you or the other residents at risk.

The Trustees will only set aside the appointment after a fair process of investigation and warning. They will give you as much time and help as practicable to find alternative accommodation.

#### **4.11 Re-Housing**

Residents who wish to change their accommodation within the Sampson's estate may apply to the Clerk for the matter to be considered by the Trustees.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **General Information**

#### **5.01 Council Tax**

Each resident is responsible for paying his or her Council Tax.

#### **5.02 Changes / Improvements to your Home**

No changes and/or improvements may be made to the almshouse without the express permission of the Trustees. As the Trustees have responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the almshouses, they have to consider an individual resident's requests for alterations alongside their own maintenance programme. If a proposed alteration would be structurally unsound, would reduce the amenities for subsequent occupants, or would increase future maintenance costs it would not be approved.

#### **5.03 Pets**

If you wish to keep a pet you must first obtain the written permission of the Trustees. Small animals e.g. small dogs, cats or caged birds are usually acceptable but they must not become a nuisance to other residents and you must be able to look after the pet properly. If circumstances change so that a pet becomes a nuisance or it is not receiving proper care, the Trustees will revoke the original permission and insist that it is re-homed.

Please tell the Clerk about arrangements you have made for the care of your pet if you are away on holiday or become ill.

#### **5.04 Parking of Vehicles**

There is limited facility for parking. Residents are allowed to park one car in the car park. Parts of the car park are marked for the use of vehicles of the emergency services and these must be kept clear for use by such vehicles, exclusively. Residents and their visitors must not park vehicles anywhere on the Almshouses' site except the designated car park.

#### **5.05 Doctors**

If your doctor is nearby you will not need to change when moving into the Almshouses (but you will need to notify the surgery of your change of address). If you do not have a doctor, or you are moving from another area, the Clerk will be able to give you the addresses of local doctors. The name, address and telephone number of the doctor with whom you are registered and of his/her surgery must be given to the Clerk so that help can be obtained in case of emergency.

#### **5.06 Emergencies and Sickness**

If you are ill or in difficulties and you notify the Clerk, she will make every effort to get in touch with relatives, friends, the doctor, ambulance, or caring services on your behalf.

To make it possible to act quickly, the Clerk will need up-to-date records of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of your nearest relatives or friends as well as your doctor. Please let them know about any changes to this information.

Please make sure the Clerk is notified if you are ill. This is particularly important if you are going into hospital (also when returning home after hospitalization).

### **5.07 Personal Problems**

Please contact the Clerk in the event you would like to speak with a Trustee regarding any personal problems over money or any other matter. Any advice that they give will be given in neighbourly good faith but neither the Trustees nor the Clerk present themselves as experts in any particular field of knowledge or as having any special expertise.

### **5.08 Wills**

You are strongly advised to make a Will.

A solicitor is the best person to help you make a Will. We suggest you inform the Clerk where your Will is kept and the name and address of your executor.

It is the Trustees' policy that no one involved in the running of the charity should accept any gift or legacy from a resident. Therefore, you should not make a personal legacy to a Trustee or to any employee of the Charity. Any such legacy would be refused without exception and would fall back into your estate.

### **5.09 Complaints Procedure**

If you have a complaint, you should talk to the Clerk or a Trustee. If it is not settled to your satisfaction, please write to the Chairman.

If you have a major complaint about staff employed by the charity, other residents or a serious breach of health and safety regulations, you should put your complaint in writing at the outset to the Chairman, with a formal request for it to be considered by the Trustees at their next Meeting. If you want to, you will, be entitled to attend the Meeting at which your complaint is being discussed, accompanied by a friend, advocate or professional advisor.

It is important that in raising any difficulty or a complaint you do so as an individual. You should not act as a spokesman or spokeswoman on behalf of a number of residents or be cajoled into supporting a particular vociferous or belligerent resident.

Trustees are obligated to write to the resident to advise of the action taken to resolve the complaint or difficulty.

In order to meet regulatory requirements and to assist Trustees in making consistent judgments the Charity develops and maintains appropriate policies and procedures. Copies of the current documents may be obtained from the Clerk.

Residents have the right to refer complaints which cannot be resolved by the charity's own complaints procedure to:

The Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN:  
Telephone number 020 7421 3800 or 0845 7125 973.

### **5.10 Waste Disposal**

Rubbish bins are provided. Please make sure that the rubbish areas are kept clean and tidy. All kitchen refuse should be wrapped before putting it in the bin.

Collection days are as notified by Waverley Borough Council

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**Please complete this information for yourself.**

**Location of Water and Gas Stopcocks**

The water stopcock is .....

This should only be turned off in an emergency.

**Location of Electricity Mains Switch and Fuse Box**

The electricity mains switch is to be found .....

And the fuse box.....

If you are unsure about these then please contact the Clerk.