



OTTERY FEOFFEE CHARITY

Registered Charity Number 202095

# **RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK**

Revised June 2023



**THE ALMSHOUSE CHARITY OF OTTERY FEOFFEE CHARITY**  
**RESIDENTS HANDBOOK**

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## **Foreword**

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

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

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

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



### **Useful contact information**

Clerk to the Trustees  
Tina Collins  
2 Royal Oak, Stratton, Bude, EX23 9NP  
Mob: 07865 098 253  
Email: clerk.feoffee.osm@gmail.com

Chair  
Di Passey  
14 Claremont Field, Ottery St Mary, EX11 1NP  
Tel: 01404 813 615  
Email: a.and.dpassey@btinternet.com

Warden  
Ed Lamb  
8 Sherman House, Yonder Street, Ottery St Mary, EX11 1HF  
Tel: 01404 814 376

D.S.S.  
Clarendon House, Western Way, Exeter, EX1 2DA  
Tel: 01392 474 700

Housing Benefit Office  
East Devon District Council, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate  
Honiton, EX14 1EJ  
01395 571770

Age Concern  
14 Lace Walk, High Street, Honiton, EX14 1LR  
Tel: 01395 571 770

Citizens Advice Bureau  
Library & Information Centre, 48 - 50 New Street, Honiton, EX14 1BS  
Tel: 01404 44213

Ottery Help Scheme - Emily Lezzeri, Chief Officer  
11 Silver Street, Ottery St Mary, EX11  
Tel: 01404 813 041



## CHAPTER ONE

### History of the Charity and its Management

#### Ottery Feoffee Charity (Founded 1440)

#### History

##### 1. Meaning of "Feoffee"

The word "Feoffee" is of ancient origin being derived from Anglo-French. A Feoffee was a person entrusted to hold land and apply the rents and profits for the relief of poverty in a particular locality.

##### 2. Early History

The earliest record of this charity is a Deed dated 18<sup>th</sup> January 1440, whereby John Lawrence gave four houses and certain lands in the parish of Ottery St. Mary to be held by twelve Trustees upon trust for the benefit of needy people.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 1590, Henry Beaumont vested land near Ilminster, Somerset, in the Feoffees. This has since been sold and the proceeds applied towards the costs of building new flats for the elderly and disabled.

##### 3. Flats

Early in the reign of Elizabeth I, six almshouses were built in Sandhill Street by Robert Hone, whose daughter Joan was the mother of Sir Thomas Bodley, the founder of the famous Bodleian Library at Oxford.

About 1562, William Sherman of Knightstone, Ottery St. Mary, who was a very wealthy merchant, founded almshouses in Yonder Street. This property being in a very dilapidated state in 1837, was rebuilt by the Feoffees at a cost of £410!

Today there are 22 flats, which provide accommodation for 26 needy people.

Sherman House, Yonder Street consists of 12 flats, modernised in 1972.

Nos. 1-6 Yonder Corner, Chapel Lane being 6 ground floor flats, built in 1970 and Robert Hone House, Sandhill Street being 4 flats built in 1974.



#### 4. Ottery Feoffee Centre

The Day Centre in Brook Street was opened in October 1971 to provide recreational facilities for the elderly and disabled of Ottery St. Mary and the surrounding district. Facilities for providing light refreshments are available.

#### 5. Trustees

The present Charity is administered by a maximum of twelve trustees, including two representatives nominated by the Town Council.

#### **Trustees Body**

The charity is run in accordance with schemes prepared by the Charity Commission. A comprehensive scheme was sealed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1980 and subsequent schemes made minor alterations to it.

The Charity is administered by voluntary trustees. Day to day administration is carried out by the clerk.

#### **The Almshouses**

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

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

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



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Health and Safety**

#### **The Emergency Call System**

You will be advised how to use the systems available when you move in. When the warden is available, she or he will take emergency calls. At other times use any individual emergency call system.

##### **PLEASE DO**

- use any call system day or night to get help for sudden illness or accident.

##### **PLEASE DON'T**

- use any alarm to make normal contact with the warden.
- tie up any pull cords or leave any alarm button on your bedside table. If you need help it may be out of reach.

#### **Emergency Contact Details**

If you become ill or are in difficulties, the clerk or warden will make every effort to get in touch with your next of kin, your doctor, or the ambulance or social services on your behalf. Please, therefore, provide the trustees with the written authority to contact your doctor and next of kin directly in the event of an emergency by signing the "GP Authorisation Form" and "Next of Kin Information Form" which may be obtained from the charity.

It is important that you let the clerk/warden have details (names, addresses, and telephone numbers) of these essential contacts. If the details change from time to time, please remember to inform the charity.

#### **Fire Precautions**

The almshouses comply with the appropriate fire regulations. When a fire alarm has been installed, the trustees will arrange with the Fire Officer for a fire drill from time to time and it is in everyone's interest that you should co-operate fully on these occasions, e.g., the warden will show you the assembly points in case it is necessary to evacuate the buildings.

When you hear the fire alarm or notice obvious signs of an outbreak of fire, please evacuate the building by the nearest route to the fire assembly point. Do not attempt to put the fire out or collect personal belongings. Stay calm and help other residents to leave the building.

Please DO ask the warden

- what to do if the alarm rings, or if you discover a fire and





- how to use the fire blankets provided

DO dispose of smoking materials safely

Please DON'T

- wedge fire doors open; they prevent fire and smoke from spreading only when theyshut. shut
- leave pans (especially chip pans) unattended.
- attempt to fight any fire. Leave the premises immediately shutting the door behind you.
- smoke in any of the common areas.

Please make sure you know the location of the Fire Points and can find them in the dark. The Fire Assembly Points are as follows: -

THE ASSEMBLY POINT FOR:

ROBERT HONE HOUSE IS THE AREA BEHIND ROBERT HONE HOUSE BELONGING TO THE DAY CENTRE.

SHERMAN HOUSE IS THE LAYBY TO THE SIDE OF YONDER CORNER IN CHAPEL LANE.

YONDER CORNER IS THE LAYBY TO THE SIDE OF YONDER CORNER IN CHAPEL LANE.

## **Security**

Please bear in mind the following:

DO

- keep your front door locked at all times.
- use any spy hole and chain to identify callers before opening the door.
- The chain should only be used to open the door a few inches when identifying callers and not be kept in permanent use.

DON'T

- allow a stranger to enter your home without proof of identity; if you're in doubt, please contact the Warden or a family member/friend or use an emergency call system.
- Leave ground-floor windows open so that intruders can gain access.
- Keep cash or valuables in your home.



## **The Master Key**

The warden and nominated trustees hold a master key that can open the front door, but it will only be used in an emergency or with your permission. You must not fit locks and chains without the trustees' consent as these may delay helpers in an emergency.

Your privacy will be respected. The warden has strict instructions only to enter your home:

- If you ask her or him to do so
- If you have given permission for work to be done in your absence
- In an emergency

Please do not give out any extra keys without first asking the trustees, as this endangers security.

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

The trustees wish to draw your attention to the need to exercise care when using the footpaths in wet, snowy, or icy weather. Whilst reasonable precautions will be taken to keep them hazard-free residents are reminded to take care.

## **Legionella**

The risk of contracting Legionnaire's Disease from a domestic property where the water services are regularly used is very low, however, the risk increase if the water services have not been used for an extended period. Residents are advised to adopt the recommended procedures:

Any hot or cold tap that is not used within a seven-day period should be flushed through for at least two minutes on a weekly basis. Avoid splashing to minimise the release of water droplets/aerosols.

This also applies to any shower that is not used with a seven-day period. It should be flushed through for at least two minutes at both maximum and minimum temperatures. Avoid the release of water droplets/aerosols by either securing a plastic bag over the showerhead with a corner cut off to allow water to escape or by removing the shower head and placing the showerhead over the drain outlet.

Any toilet that is not used within a seven-day period should be flushed on a weekly basis with the lid down to prevent contact with the water droplets/aerosol.

Showerheads should be cleaned regularly to ensure no scale or algae build-up.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Services Provided**

#### **The Warden**

The warden supports the general wellbeing of residents without interfering in their lives or intruding on their privacy. She or he will try and ensure regular contact.

Wardens also look after the building. In an emergency, the warden will call for help on your behalf and notify your family and friends. At other times the warden or clerk will try and help you arrange for health care or social services.

The warden is not a trained carer and cannot therefore offer personal care support nor do they usually fetch shopping or prescriptions except in emergencies.

#### **Communal Facilities**

The almshouses do not have any communal rooms, but a Day Centre is available by arrangement with the clerk, for the use of all residents. You are encouraged to maintain with your neighbours any small garden area adjoining the almshouses.

#### **Repairs and Decorations**

The trustees are responsible for both external repairs and decoration and internal repairs to your home and any communal parts. You are responsible for interior decoration. Please report any necessary work to the warden or clerk, who will arrange for it to be carried out. You will be consulted in advance about arrangements for redecoration. Workmen will 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. Please do not let anyone into an almshouse unless you know who they are; when in doubt, call the warden or clerk.

#### **Insurance**

The Charity insures the buildings. You should insure the contents of your home. Please do not keep more cash in your home than you need for your day-to-day expenses. Please put the rest in a bank or building society. Do not ask the warden or clerk to take care of money for you, as he or she is not allowed to.



## **Television**

Residents need a television licence to use any television-receiving equipment including TV set, set-top box, video or DVD recorder, PC or mobile phone to watch, stream or record programmes as they are being broadcast. This includes foreign broadcasts.

Free television licenses are only offered to those who receive pension credits who are aged 75 or over.

Television concessions are also available to:

- Those who are registered blind or severely sight impaired.
- People who are retired or disabled and live in certain types of accommodation.

Trustees must apply for concessionary licences on behalf of their residents. Please contact the clerk for further information.

Please be considerate to your neighbours in the use of TVs, radios, stereos, and musical instruments, particularly between 11pm and 7am.

## **Cleaning**

You are responsible for keeping your almshouse clean. If this is difficult, please tell the warden who will help you arrange for cleaning help.

You are responsible for cleaning the inside of the windows in your almshouse, but the trustees employ a window cleaner who cleans the outside of all windows and the insides of windows in communal parts.

The trustees also arrange the cleaning of any communal and general areas. The cost of this may be included in your Weekly Maintenance Contribution.

## **Routine Visits**

Residents will be visited in their new home by two trustee's or representatives of the charity after they have settled in and thereafter from time to time.

A mutually convenient time will be arranged beforehand.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Terms of Occupancy**

#### **Letter of Appointment**

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

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

Examples of such circumstances are if:

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

It is a condition of occupancy that residents provide the charity with accurate and complete information of their financial circumstances and that residents inform the charity if their circumstance change. The charity may review the residents' financial circumstances from time to time. However, residents are assured that only in the most unusual circumstances would this lead to someone being asked to leave.

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



## **Relatives and Visitors**

The warden 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 social services, if necessary, we hope you will be independent for as long as you wish.

Your home has been specially designed as housing for older or disabled people and is not suitable to accommodate extra people. If you do have a friend or relative to stay with you the warden must be informed in case of fire. Under no circumstances can additional people live with you on a permanent basis.

## **Absence from Home**

If you go away for any period, please inform the warden or clerk in case of emergency. It may be advisable to take precautions against frost by turning off and draining the water system. Please tell the trustees and get their agreement if you plan to be away for more than 28 days.

## **Consulting Residents**

The trustees will hold meetings from time to time to discuss the running of your almshouses. You can also talk to a trustee in private by asking the Clerk to the Trustees to arrange this. Consultation and involvement of the residents in the day-to-day running of the charity's almshouses is a form of participation that will benefit all concerned. Residents cannot, under charity law, become trustees and do not, therefore, take part in decision making but trustees welcome their views on matters affecting the 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, including the gardens.
- Before making changes to the amount of weekly maintenance contribution payable.
- Before anyone enters your home.
- If you raise a difficulty with them.

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



## **Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC)**

WMC is due each Monday in arrears, and we would be grateful if you could please pay by standing order. If you receive Housing Benefit, arrangements can be made for it to be paid to the Charity's account. You will be given a minimum of a month's notice of any increase.

The amount you pay covers the cost of running the almshouse and includes:

- Heating and Hot Water
- Water and sewerage charges
- Repairs and maintenance
- Insurance
- Cleaning of communal areas

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

## **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 with your housing costs. To claim Housing Benefits, you should ask for a form at your local Benefits Office or Housing Department. If you do have some additional income to your basic retirement pension you may still be entitled to some help with housing costs. Again, forms to claim this are available as above.

The clerk will help you if you are unsure of your entitlement or need help in completing the form.

## **Background Heating and Hot Water**

Heating is provided by electric storage heaters and wall-mounted electric fires. Free-standing electric heaters and paraffin or calor gas heaters are not allowed as they pose a fire risk.

Some additional heaters have been installed in some properties, which will be the responsibility of the resident.

## **Electricity 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 warden or clerk at once.



## **Employment**

With the permission of the charity, residents may be allowed to work from their almshouse, however they must guarantee that this will not be disruptive for other residents and that it will not involve delivery or storage of items and/or visitors to the buildings.

## **Moving Out**

If you wish to move from the almshouse you must give the trustees written notice of at least four weeks. During this notice period, you will be liable for your WMC payments even if you have already moved out. Residents, or in the event of death, their personal representatives, are responsible for WMC until the premises are cleared of personal possessions and the keys are returned.

If you become unwell, the trustees may suggest you move to more suitable accommodation, and they and their clerk will help you and your family to make suitable arrangements.

## **Re-Housing**

Residents who wish to change their accommodation within the complex may apply to the clerk for the matter to be considered by the trustees.

The trustees may require you to move to another of the Charity's almshouses when major repair work is being carried out. Where possible you will be given at least three months warning.





## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **General Information**

#### **Council Tax**

Each resident is responsible for paying his or her Council Tax. You will be told how to pay and about available benefits.

#### **Improvements to your Home**

You must first discuss proposed improvements with the trustees. In some cases, the Charity will pay for the work. Permission may be refused if the trustees consider that the alteration is structurally unsound, will reduce the amenities for subsequent occupants, or will increase future maintenance costs. If you live in part of a listed building, some alterations will be forbidden by law.

#### **Pets**

The trustees will explain their policy on pets to you when you move in. If you wish to keep a pet, you must first obtain the written permission of the trustees. Small animals, e.g. cats or caged birds may be acceptable but must not become a nuisance to other residents. Please tell the warden about arrangements you have made for the care of your pet if you are away on holiday or become ill.

#### **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited in all common areas including hallways, corridors, and stairwells.

#### **Parking of Vehicles**

There are no spaces for visitors' cars. Please do not park in any space adjoining your almshouse block, or allow your visitors to do so, as they may block the way for ambulances or fire engines in an emergency.

#### **Next of Kin**

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



### **Lasting Power of Attorney**

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 make welfare and healthcare decisions on your behalf in the event of your mental incapacity. Again, you should seek legal advice from a solicitor.

### **Doctor**

The name of your doctor must be given to the warden or clerk so that help may be obtained in an emergency.

You have every right to see your doctor, nurse, or other carers alone, and to keep your medical affairs entirely to yourself if you wish. However, if you have a chronic health problem, you may feel safer if the warden knows about it so that sensible action may be taken in an emergency. Anything you tell the Warden will be kept confidential.

### **Emergencies and Sickness**

If you are ill or in difficulties, the warden or trustees will make every effort to get in touch with relatives, friends, the doctor, ambulance, or social services on your behalf.

To make it possible to act quickly, the warden or the trustees will need a note of the names and addresses of your nearest relatives or friends and of your doctor. Please let them know about any changes of address or telephone numbers of your relatives or friends and of your doctor.

Please make sure the Warden is notified if you are ill. This is particularly important if you are going into the hospital or returning home after admission.

If you have a disability or become disabled while living in the almshouse, it may be possible to obtain equipment or to make alterations to your home to help you live an independent life; ask the Warden or Clerk about this. Please do not make any structural alterations to your home (e.g. fitting ramps or stair lifts) without consultation with the charity.

### **Personal Problems**

If you have any personal problems over money or any other matter and you have no family or friend who you feel able to consult, the trustees will be glad to give you whatever help or advice they can. Let the warden or clerk know if you wish to see a trustee at any time.



## **Wills**

You are strongly advised to make a Will. If you wish to leave personal property to a relative or friend a Will is essential. Please tell the clerk where the Will is kept and who is the executor.

A solicitor is the best person to help you make a will, and if you require assistance in finding one, we suggest you contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau. Ask the clerk if you find this difficult.

## **Gifts and Legacies**

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

## **Social Media**

Those residents using social media such as Facebook and Twitter are asked to respect the fact that no views should be expressed via social media about the charity, its trustees, other residents or staff.

## **Rubbish**

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

The Warden will inform you of the Rubbish and Recycling collection day.

## **Location of Water Stopcock**

The location of the water stopcock for your property is

## **Location of Electricity Mains Switch & Fuse Box**

The location of the electricity mains switches for your property is  
The location of the fuse box for your property is



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Complaints Procedure**

#### **Complaints**

If you have a complaint or a problem has arisen which cannot be readily solved by a discussion with the other party or the warden or clerk for example, the following complaints procedure should be adopted.

Under the Housing Act 1996 all almshouse charities which are, or were, Registered Social Landlords with the Housing Corporation, have a regulatory obligation to maintain a Complaints Procedure. It is recommended good practice for all almshouse charities to have a Complaints Procedure available for residents.

Many people are reluctant to complain. Your trustees can only resolve problems and improve the service they offer if you speak up when things go wrong. Set out below is a procedure to be followed if any resident wishes to raise a complaint in connection with the occupation of his or her almshouse or about services provided by the charity relating to the almshouses.

Minor matters, such as small maintenance items, should be referred to the warden and clerk when they arise. They should be attended to straight away. If not, please write to the clerk.

If the warden is unable to resolve minor matters; or if there is a persistent problem with pets, loud noise or matters affecting health and safety, the resident should refer this to the Clerk to the Trustees. You should be prepared to put your complaint in writing at this stage. The trustees wish to emphasise that all communications about complaints will be treated as confidential.

If the clerk is unable to deal with your complaint satisfactorily; or, if you have a complaint about staff employed by the charity, other residents or a serious breach of health and safety regulations for instance, you have the right to put your complaint in writing to the Chairperson, with a formal request for it to be considered by the trustees at their next meeting. You will, if you wish to exercise that right, be entitled to attend when your complaint is being discussed, accompanied by a friend or professional advisor.

Trustees will write to the resident to advise of the action taken to resolve the complaint and to notify the decision made.

As the charity is not a registered social landlord, it is not obliged to progress your complaint further.



## **Housing Ombudsman**

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

Housing Ombudsman Service  
81 Aldwych  
London  
WC2B 4HN  
Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

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

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## **NOTES**