



## **RESIDENTS HANDBOOK**

# **PENROSE & HORWOOD PAIGES ALMSHOUSES**

## **Conditions & Terms of Residency**

March 2020

Penrose Almshouses  
Litchdon Street  
Barnstaple  
Devon  
EX32 8ND

Horwood Paige's Almshouses  
Church Lane  
Barnstaple  
Devon  
EX31 1BH

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## **FOREWORD**

The Residents Handbook is provided to each resident at Penrose and Horwood Paige's Almshouses. It explains your responsibility as a resident and gives useful information about the charity, its general administration and management.

The Trustees of Barnstaple Almshouses hope that everyone will be happy at the almshouses. 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 almshouse provide. The Trustees anticipate that 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 that rumours and gossip are not allowed to develop.

The conditions set out in this handbook form part of your license with Barnstaple Almshouses and supplement the rules and regulations given in your 'Letter of Appointment'. You have signed your agreement to the specifications within the handbook when you accepted your appointment. As a resident it is anticipated that you will abide by the stipulations made in the handbook for your safety and the safety of others.

The handbook is regularly updated for the benefit of the residents and the Trustees to ensure that statutory legislation and methods of best practice are adopted regarding the efficient management and use of almshouses. Each new handbook issued supersedes the previous handbook forming the current conditions of residency.

Please keep your handbook in a safe place. If you are in doubt about its meaning in any part, please ask the Charity Manager.

*Chairman of the Residents Committee*

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Charity Address  
C/o Chudleigh House  
Grange Road  
Bideford  
Devon  
EX39 4AR

[www.barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk](http://www.barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk)

### **Charity Manager**

Mrs Joanna Northridge  
Telephone 07976633528  
Email [joanna@barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk](mailto:joanna@barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk)

### **Caretaker**

#### **Penrose**

#### **Caretaker**

Mark Rogers  
14 Penrose Square  
Telephone 07931730759

### **Caretaker**

#### **Horwood Paige's**

D Evans 7 Horwood Paige's Telephone 01271269866 mob 07510136938

## **HISTORY, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Historical Note**

#### **Origins of Barnstaple Almshouses**

Prior to 1539 monasteries habitually provided succour for the poor and needy of the land. Dissolution of this by Henry VIII led to many town and communities shouldering the responsibility to look after their own local poor and needy. Individual town councillors and sometimes their wives established charities bequeathing funds for almshouses and were noted for their patronage. This was the case for the almshouses in Litchdon Street and Church Lane in Barnstaple. The almshouses were built in the 1600's for occupation by poor folk of Barnstaple with the expectation that they attended church and upheld a strict Christian lifestyle.

In the 1800's the Charity Commission reviewed and oversaw the amalgamation of charities in the country. In 1837 it ordered that twenty-eight Barnstaple charities including the almshouses be brought under a single controlling body called Barnstaple Municipal Charities. The new charity would be governed by an elected unpaid Board of Trustees. In addition to the management of the almshouses, the trustees administer a relief fund for either those in need or requiring support with apprenticeships and education. In March 2020 Barnstaple Municipal Charities changed to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation under the name of Barnstaple Almshouses.

#### **Penrose Almshouses, Litchdon Street**

John Penrose was born in 1575 in the hamlet of Fremington and was a successful cloth merchant. He became the Mayor of Barnstaple in 1620. On his death in 1624 he provided for the founding of the Penrose almshouses in Litchdon Street, Barnstaple which were completed in 1627. The importance of the heritage of these buildings is recognised by the Grade I & II listing.

#### **Horwood/Paige's, Church Lane**

The almshouses in Church Lane known as Horwood Paige's were built in stages between 1629 and 1665. The Mayor of Barnstaple - Thomas Horwood, together with the wife of Gilbert Paige and businessman Thomas Harris provided funds to build initially four almshouses. Later Alice Horwood (wife of Thomas Horwood) made provision for a further eight almshouses. Over the years this group has undergone extensive alterations and today consists of four flats and four houses, which are collectively known as Horwood Paige's.

Detailed history about Barnstaple Almshouses and the Almshouses can be found on the charity website [www.barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk](http://www.barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk)

### **Constitution**

Barnstaple Almshouses is a registered charity governed by a Charity Commission Scheme – registered charity number 1186225

### **Management**

The charity is governed by a board of voluntary local trustees. Day to day management of the charity's affairs are delegated to The Charity Manager assisted by the Caretakers. Please be respectful and courteous to all charity staff.

### **The Almshouses**

The charity manages unfurnished dwellings which are designed for occupation by single people or couples who are capable of independent living.

A resident would become no longer capable of independent living when he or she:

- Becomes a danger to themselves or others
- Is unable to evacuate independently in an emergency
- Loses capacity.

If health deteriorates residents must be willing to accept guidance and advice. The Charity Manager may also consult with the next of kin, Social Services or other agencies if necessary.

Residents may expect to continue in occupancy as long as they need the accommodation providing, they continue to qualify as a beneficiary, are able to look after themselves and their appointment as a beneficiary is not set aside

The principle behind everything that the charity does is that residents should enjoy independence and the freedom to come and go as they please whilst living in comfortable and secure accommodation. Residents should feel comfortable in the knowledge that support is available should the need arise. Above all, the charity respects resident's privacy.

### **Routine Visits**

New residents will be visited by two trustees or representatives of the charity after you have settled in and thereafter from time to time. This is an opportunity to get to know you better and to address any concerns and issues. A mutually convenient time will be arranged beforehand.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **Doctor & Dentist**

If you do not have a General Practitioner (GP) the Caretaker will be able to give you the names of the local GP practices. The name of your GP must be given to the Charity Manager. If you change your GP please make sure that you provide the new information to the Caretaker.

If you have a chronic health problem, we advise that you tell the Caretaker so that appropriate action may be taken in the event of an emergency.

There are a few NHS dentists in Barnstaple, you will be able to find advice of registering with a dentist at The Citizens Advice Bureau.

### **Emergency Call Alarm Systems**

If you have been given an emergency alarm pendant to wear by your GP, please always wear it. If you fall and need assistance you may not be able to reach the help button to gain the help needed.

### **Emergency Contact Details / Next of Kin**

The name, address and phone number of your next of kin, or a nominated representative, should be supplied to the charity at the beginning of your residence. If the details change, please remember to inform the Caretaker or Charity Manager.

If you become ill or are in difficulties, or the trustees have concerns about your welfare the Charity Manager will make every effort to get in touch with your next of kin or your GP, the emergency services or social services. It is a requirement of occupancy that you provide the trustees with authority to support you in the event of a problem or an emergency.

### **Mobility Policy**

It is a requirement of occupancy that all residents live independently in their almshouse. For reasons of safety it is essential that all residents can evacuate the almshouses in the event of an emergency, independently, and without putting others at risk. If mobility is slightly impaired residents are required to purchase their own mobility aids to ensure their own safety. In the event of immobility, the charity will commence the procedure of setting aside an appointment for safety reasons. If this is the case every possible method of working with family and carers will be taken by the charity.

An overview of mobility will form part of the annual inspection by trustees.

## **Fire Precautions**

The almshouses comply with the appropriate fire regulations. The fire policies are frequently reviewed. Fire drills will be held six monthly to ensure that every resident knows what to do and where to go in the event of an emergency.

All the almshouses are fitted with smoke and heat detectors which on sensing heat/smoke will trigger the fire alarm.

The detectors are on a time delay, if your alarm sounds by mistake, you can reset the detector by pressing the button on top of the device. Please familiarise yourself with this procedure. If you are unable to reach the detectors please see the Caretaker who will provide you with an aid.

The detectors are serviced annually and the battery will be checked. If the detector battery starts to chirp it is signifying expiry of the battery life. The Trustees are responsible for changing the battery, please ask the Caretaker for assistance if required.

## **Evacuation Policy**

Due to the age and fragility of the building there is a **TOTAL EVACUATION** policy in the event of a fire. When you hear the fire alarm, you must follow the fire procedure (Appendix I). If it is safe to do so please evacuate the building by the nearest route to the fire assembly point. There are fire escapes on each floor. Shut the door of your almshouse behind you and do not attempt to take any personal belongings with you. Wear warm clothes if possible and leave your almshouse immediately.

The fire alarm is tested every Monday evening between 4pm – 6pm.

## **Avoiding the risk of fire or fire spreading**

Please be conscious of the risk of fire as these building are over 350 years old and are therefore not made of modern materials.

Each almshouse is provided with a fire blanket which must be kept in the kitchen in an available position.

Recommendations to minimise the risk of fire:

- Check that all appliances are switched off at night
- Avoid blocking fire doors and stairs
- Always keep the fire doors closed
- Do not leave chip fryers or frying pans unattended
- Do not place clothes near electric fire



- When charging electronic items such as ipad or iphones, do not leave the item on soft material as the heat from such electrical equipment can cause fire.
- Avoid the usage of multiple electric adapters in a single wall socket. (low amperage connections such as radio, TV and DVD's are the safe exception)
- Avoid covering or interfering with the smoke/heat detectors
- Avoid storing any unnecessary flammable substances or liquids in your almshouse.
- Please avoid storing any flammable items in the external cupboard in the southern entrance passage.

Due to the extreme risk the following are not permitted in the almshouses:

- Smoking
- The use of candles or naked flames for heating or lighting.
- Paraffin oil and portable gas fires.
- Mobility Scooters.

Please ensure that all electric fires comply with modern safety standards.

### **Hoarding**

Hoarding and over cluttering provides a fire hazard in an almshouse therefore creates a fire risk. Residents are asked not to hoard personal effects in the almshouses or maintain unnecessary clutter. If a resident a tendency to hoard the trustees will request that they receive a Home Fire Safety Check by the local fire Services.

It is the responsibility of each resident to ensure that they can evacuate their almshouse independently and swiftly. These provisions may not rely on neighbours or The Caretaker. If Trustees suspect that a resident in unable to evacuate swiftly, they will be asked to make better arrangements for their mobility.

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

The trustees need to draw your attention to the need to exercise caution when using the footpaths in wet, snowy or icy weather.

Please take care when crossing the courtyards as the cobbles are uneven.

### **Security**

Security on site is taken extremely seriously. Please consider the following:

#### **Do**

- Keep your access door(s) locked at all times.

- Use the spy hole in the front door to identify callers.
- Use the chain to open the door a few inches when identifying callers. Avoid the chain being kept in permanent use as this may prevent access in an emergency.
- Be aware of bogus officials or doorstep salesmen. Always ask for proof of identity.

### **Do Not**

- Do not allow a stranger to enter your home without proof of identity and if unsure, direct the person to the Caretaker's house.
- Leave ground floor windows open so that intruders can gain access
- Keep cash or valuables in your residency.
- Give any other person your key.
- Leave your keys in your almshouse door, even for a moment.
- Leave your keys in the lock on the inside of the door, as they may prevent entry in the event of an emergency.

The main doors are closed from 6pm until 7am each day for your security, each resident is provided with a key. Please observe the following during this time:

- When coming and going please ensure that you lock the door after yourself and avoid the door slamming to respect the peace of the other residents.
- Please open the door to your own visitors when they call and escort them off the premises when leaving.

At Penrose, the rear gates of the allotment giving access to Trinity Street are fitted with a Yale type lock. If you use this access, please ensure the gates are ALWAYS SHUT to prevent unauthorised entry during the day.

### **Keys**

Residents are issued with keys to their own almshouses and the front doors. The Caretaker holds a master key which can open your front door. This will only be used in an emergency or with your permission.

You may not fit locks and chains without the trustee's consent as they may delay access by the emergency services.

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

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

Please do not obtain extra keys or pass you keys to friends or relatives as this may lessen security.

Make sure that you and your visitors check that the main front door to your almshouse is securely shut after entry or exit.

### **Water Stopcock**

Each Almshouses has an individual stopcock. Please could residents turn of their water when leaving their almshouse for more than 24 hours. The main stopcocks for the site are: Penrose x 3 located in the road directly outside the almshouses

Horwood Paige's x 1 in Church Lane.

### **Loft Access**

If you have a loft access in your almshouse, please be aware that the ceilings are made of lathe and plaster. No items may be stored in the loft as they present a fire hazard and are a danger to the fragile ceilings.

### **Legionnaires Disease**

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

- Any Hot or cold tap, shower, toilet not used for a seven day period should be flushed through for at least 2 minutes.
- Shower heads should be cleaned and disinfected every three months to ensure no scale or algal build up.
- Before going away please ensure all food has been put away, taps and appliances have been fully switched off and windows shut.

Please consult the Caretaker if you have any difficulties with this.

## **TERMS OF OCCUPANCY**

### **Letter of Appointment**

Your Letter of Appointment, of which you have a copy, is a license agreement between you and the charity, it explains that you occupy the almshouses as a beneficiary of the charity. This means that neither you or any relations or guests 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. In practice, this occurs vary rarely when trustees believe they have no alternative.

Examples of such circumstances are if:

- A resident is no longer able to look after themselves or to live independently, even with the help of family or social services. (Please see page 6 for the limitation of independent living).
- The resident consistently fails to pay weekly Maintenance Contributions (WMC) on a regular basis without good reason
- The resident's behaviour 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 are no longer qualified to live in the almshouse as a beneficiary.
- The resident fails to comply with the rules and regulations made by the charity

It is the 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. However, residents should be assured that only in the most unusual circumstances would this lead to someone being asked to leave.

The charity would only terminate residency as a last resort after every effort had been made to resolve an issue. 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 is set aside the appointment was upheld, they would be given every assistance to find alternative accommodation.

### **Weekly Maintenance Contributions**

Weekly Maintenance contributions are payable in advance on the first of each month (new residents) by direct debit cash or cheque.

If you receive Housing Benefit from the local authority, arrangements can be made for your Housing Benefit to be paid directly into the charity's account. If you are experiencing any difficulties claiming please let the charity Manager know and assistance will be provided.

Weekly Maintenance Contributions are determined by the Trustees. The Trustees ask the Fair Rent Officer from the local authority to come bi-annually and give an indication of a fair market rent. The Trustees then calculate a discount from the recommended market rent to determine the WMC. The amount you pay is a contribution towards:

- Building repairs and maintenance
- Service cost for repair of water, gas and electrical installations
- Cleaning Communal areas
- Decoration Cost
- Management Costs

- Insurance
- Provision of Fixtures and Fittings.

### **Annual Trustee Inspections**

An inspection of your almshouse will be made by two trustees annually. The purpose of the inspection is to give you the opportunity to talk to a trustee about any concerns with your almshouses, for the trustee to assess any maintenance which may need attending and to review that the correct health and safety/ fire precautions are being adhered to.

You will be notified in advance of the inspection date.

You will also be notified in writing of any action that is required on your behalf.

### **Consulting Residents**

The Trustees hold an annual meeting in July to discuss the running of the almshouses with you and your neighbours. Consultation with residents on new policies and procedures regarding the day to day running is a form of participation which will benefit all concerned.

You are welcome to talk to the Charity Manager privately, please ask the Caretaker or Charity Manager to arrange this if you wish.

Trustees welcome the residents view on matters affecting their quality of life at the almshouses

You will be consulted:

- 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 WMC payable
- Before anyone enters your home

Under the charities governing mandate, beneficiaries may not become trustees.

### **Absence from the almshouses**

Residents must live in the almshouse as their permanent residence and not be absent from the dwelling for more than 28 days in any year without the prior consent of the Trustees. Extended periods away during the year may lead the trustees to conclude that you have less need for the almshouse accommodation than others.

If you go away, please inform the Charity Manager/Caretaker of your temporary address and contact phone number.

Should you return earlier than planned please inform the Caretaker immediately you get home as it is important in an emergency to know who is on-site.

Notice required for planned absence from your dwelling:

- Up to 7 days – Please inform the Caretaker
- More than 7 days – Please inform the Charity Manager in writing. This will enable the Trustees to ensure that your almshouse is safe and correctly maintained whilst you are away.

Trustees reserve the right to plan maintenance in your almshouse whilst you are away.

Before going away please ensure that all food has been put away, taps and appliances have been fully switched off and windows shut. If you are leaving your almshouse during the winter months, please discuss with the Caretaker how much heating is required to minimise the risk of burst pipes.

### **Utilities - Central Heating, Electricity and Hot Water.**

The Central Heating is provided by a communal gas boiler on each site. The timing of the heating is agreed by majority consensus from the residents which is the fairest way.

The heating is a basic provision and residents can regulate the heating in their own almshouse by adjusting their thermostat if too hot, or by using electrical heaters if too cold. In this way those that require more heating do not do so at the expense of others and are able to independently regulate and pay for their additional requirements.

In periods of exceptional sub-zero temperatures, the heating is turned on for 24 hours a day.

Radiators are fitted with a valve which enables residents to adjust the temperature as required. All taps are fitted with thermostats to avoid water scalding.

### **Utility Charges - Gas, Water and Communal Electricity**

The Gas, Water Rates and Communal Electricity Costs are paid at the time by the charity and passed back to residents on an annual in arrears basis. This sum is added to the Resident's Contributions to make the Weekly Maintenance Contribution figure.

### **Utility - Charges Electricity**

Residents are responsible for paying their own electricity.

### **Extractor Fans**

Residents are advised to regularly clean the extractor fans in the bathrooms. This will ensure the flow of air and avoid the build-up of condensation resulting in mould in the bathroom.

### **Improvements to your home**

Please be aware that maintenance is necessary to retain our beautiful grade one listed buildings to a standard that meets Building Regulations, Health and Safety Regulations and the requirements of modern day living. Maintenance is scheduled according to professional advice during periods suitable to the weather and resident's needs. For all major works, the trustees instruct an architect or surveyor to design and plan work before placing an order with a building contractor. Payment for improvement is the responsibility of the Trustees.

You may not carry out any improvement's, alterations, repairs or decorations to your home without first discussing your plans with the Charity Manager. No shelves, cupboards, locks or fittings shall be fixed without prior consent.

As the trustees have responsibility for the long term maintenance of the almshouses, they must consider individual residents request for alterations alongside their own maintenance programme. If an alteration would be structurally unsound, reduce the amenities for subsequent occupants, or increase future maintenance cost, it will not be approved. Please bear in mind that you live in a listed building and some alterations will have to be approved by the local authority before any work can be carried out. Painting schemes for the almshouses are approved in neutral colours only, your co-operation is appreciated.

Whilst at all times the charity will respect the privacy of residents, it is a condition that residents allow reasonable and regular access to their almshouses for repairs and decoration to be carried out. Representatives of the charity will visit from time to time by prior appointment

### **Employment**

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

### **Additional Occupants**

You are not permitted to allow any person to live within the boundaries of your almshouse without agreement from the Trustees.

### **General Behaviour Policy**

Residents are required to occupy the property quietly and with thought for other residents and/or neighbours. No one should act in a manner which causes nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to the occupants of other almshouses, or to the general public. Clearer guidance of the charity's behaviour Policy is attaches at page 33.

### **Visitors Families and Friends**

Visitors are welcome throughout the day and evening. Please ensure that all visitors are aware of the residential nature of the Almshouses and the requirement not to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the site.

### **Overnight Guests**

Overnight visitors are welcome in accordance with the following criteria:

- Trustees are aware of the number of overnight visitors on site in advance.
- The maximum number of overnight visitors per almshouse is 2 people.
- The maximum length of stay for visitors is 7 nights.
- Residents are required not to request any further visitor for two weeks following each overnight visitor episode.
- The maximum number of overnight visitors on site at any time is 4 people, on a first come first served basis.
- A car parking space is available for one overnight visitor car only and managed by the Caretaker on a first come first served basis.
- Overnight Visitors are unable to bring their pets to the almshouses

If you would like an overnight visitor, please liaise with the Charity Manager via phone or email who will be happy to help.

### **Sick or Convalescing Residents Visitors**

If a resident is seriously unwell or convalescing at home, in need of short term 24-hour care, they may have a single friend or relative to stay for an extended period. Visitor priority will be given to the resident and to car parking on site. Please liaise with the Charity Manager if this is required.

### **Extended Visits**

Under extraordinary circumstances residents may make extended visitor request to the Trustees. A minimum of two weeks' notice is required for such a request.



## **Charges for Over Night Visitors**

There is no charge for overnight visitors.

Charity Manager is available to support residents with all visitor matters, contact details: telephone - 07976633528, email - [joanna@barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk](mailto:joanna@barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk) Extended visits requests should be addressed to: Barnstaple Almshouses C/O Chudleigh House, Grange Road, Bideford, Devon EX39 4AR.

## **Pets**

There is a No Pets policy at the almshouses which extends to visitor's pets.

In exceptional circumstances the policy is relaxed to allow a new resident to retain an existing pet, however no additional or replacement pets will be permitted. In the interest of our residents we would be grateful if you could ensure that visitors do not bring pets to the almshouses.

## **Moving Out**

If you wish to leave the almshouses you must give the Trustees written notice of at least 1 month, you will be given a Residents Moving Information / check notice. During the notice period you are liable for your Residential Contributions, even if you have already moved out.

Residents are responsible for WMC until the premises are cleared of personal possessions and the keys are returned.

If you leave your almshouses dwelling without giving notice you will be liable for WMC payments even if you have already moved out until the end of the notice period. Weekly Maintenance Contributions should be paid up to the departure date, as well as utility bills.

## **In the Event of Death**

In the event of a death, the executors of the will, person with 'probate' or 'letters of administration' are asked to give four weeks' notice which we hope will allow enough time make removal arrangements. Up until and during the notice period the estate is responsible for Weekly Maintenance Contributions and Utility Contributions. Some of this may have already been paid in advance and the Charity Manager will be able to support in this matter. If the executor or person with probate or letters of administration is able to vacate prior to the 4 weeks' notice period, please consult with the Charity Manager as the Trustees may be able to waiver some of the notice costs.

Trustees have the right to start the process of Setting Aside the Appointment in the event of non-payment of WMC.

Please note the following:

- You are responsible for ensuring that the almshouse is clean and clear of all personal furniture and items upon departure. You are liable for clearing and cleaning charges if the almshouse is not left in an appropriate condition.
- During your period of notice, you may be requested to allow admittance of workmen or future residents. Notice will be provided in advance.
- Please leave all electrical appliances safe and secure, electrical cooker cable.
- Please return your keys to the Caretaker upon departure
- The Caretaker will make a note of your electricity meter reading on the day of departure. You will be liable for all charges up to this reading.

### **Re-Housing**

The Trustees may require you to move to another almshouse if major repair work is to be carried out, or some other unforeseen circumstance. Your views would be considered, the charity will give you as much notice as possible which unless an emergency arises will aim to be a minimum of one months' notice if a move is necessary.

If in the opinion of the Trustees you are unable to continue to live independently (see page 6), the Trustees may require you to move from the almshouses to more suitable accommodation, allowing you to be properly cared for. In this event your family, GP or Social Services will be involved.

### **Transferring Residency**

Cases where residents make a request to move almshouses will be considered on individual merit by the Residents Committee. If approval is granted residents will be expected to accept the new almshouse in its present condition.

### **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 Charity Manager. All such matters are dealt with in confidence.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited in the almshouses and in all common areas, including the entrance halls, corridors and common rooms. Residents must comply with the charity's policy on smoking

## **SERVICES PROVIDED**

### **The Caretaker**

The Caretakers supports the daily site management of the almshouses and the onsite security, as such are authorised to request any person they consider un-invited or a nuisance to leave.

Caretakers support the general wellbeing of the residents without interfering in their lives or intruding in their privacy. The Caretakers are not trained carers and do not therefore offer personal care support.

In an emergency the Caretaker will call for help on your behalf and notify your representatives or next of kin.

Our Caretakers work flexible hours each week to manage the varying duties onsite.

**Penrose Caretaker** is employed for 10 hours per week, Monday to Friday with only emergency provision at the weekend. A volunteer resident managed the door security and waste over the weekend.

**Horwood Paige's Caretaker** is employed for 5 hours each week, Monday to Friday with only emergency provision at the weekend.

Please be aware that when the Caretaker is off site or not on duty, he/she should not be contacted to attend routine matters which may be left until the following morning. In an emergency please call the numbers provided for the caretaker or Charity Manager at the front of the handbook.

### **Laundry Facilities**

Free of Charge Laundry facilities are available on both sites:

Penrose provides a washing machine and a tumble dryer

Horwood Paige's provides a tumble dryer

The Caretaker will show residents how to use the machines, please report any faults or problems with these services to the Caretaker

Clotheslines are available in the gardens at Penrose and in the courtyard at Horwood Paige's.

### **Furniture and Fittings**

The almshouses are offered as unfurnished dwellings. The trustees are responsible for any goods which are considered fixtures and fittings for example: Residents provide and maintain their own cookers, but the cooker

hoods are fittings within the almshouse and maintained by the trustees as are the showers.

Please request consent from the Charity Manager prior to gluing or nailing any items to the interior of the almshouse

Residents are responsible for keeping all carpets and fittings in good order.

Residents provide and maintain their own furniture and white goods.

## **Gardens**

### **Communal Gardens**

The communal gardens are for the benefit of all residents. Management and maintenance of the gardens is the responsibility of the charity. This does not restrict residents for enjoying being part of the general gardening team. If you would like to get more involved with the gardens, please chat to the caretakers.

### **Gardens – Penrose**

Residents of Penrose have the option to use a small plot for personal cultivation. In the event of a resident not wishing to use their allocated garden, it will be offered to a resident at Horwood Paige's.

If a resident wishes to exercise their right to the plot at a future date, please notify The Charity Manager. A plot will be assigned to the resident as soon as one become available.

Almshouse residents are not entitled to collect produce from any garden plots other than their own.

### **Regulations for Penrose Garden Plots**

Residents using allotment plots are requested to:

- Maintain the plot in a tidy condition throughout the year
- Not allow the growth of excess weeds or permit their seeds to spread to other plots.
- Maintain the side paths in a tidy condition.
- Only grow vegetables, flowers, herbs, dwarf rooted fruit trees, or a mixture of these.
- Refrain from grassing any area of the plot.
- Refrain from growing plants deemed illegal by the authorities.
- Refrain from planting trees or bushes that will grow to a large size.
- Carefully remove bindweed, oxalis, dandelions or other pernicious weeds and place the roots in the green bins. Please avoid digging them back into the ground.

- Use the Green wheelie bins provided for garden waste which is collected on a fortnightly basis.
- Limit the number of toolboxes on the allotment to one. The toolbox may not exceed the following measurements:
  - For toolboxes against a wall 180cm (H) x 79cm (H) x 46 cm (D)
  - For mid plot toolboxes 122 cm (H) x 145cm (W) x 80cm (D)

### **Maintenance, Repairs and Decoration**

The trustees are responsible for both external and internal repairs and decoration to your home and communal parts. Please report all necessary work to the Caretaker or Charity Manager. Assessment for repairs and redecoration form part of the annual Residents Inspection by Trustees (page 13) and routine inspections by the Chairman of the Works Committee. Work will be scheduled by The Trustees with approved contractors in order of priority and considering other works which may also be taking place. You will be consulted in advance about arrangements for work to be carried out.

**Please be aware that tradesmen are often not able to give a definite time to attend the almshouses and a more approximate time is likely.**

**If you want to be in when tradesmen are scheduled, please allow a full morning/afternoon or day. If you are not able to be at home, you must make satisfactory arrangements with the Caretaker to provide the tradesmen access to your almshouse.**

The Caretaker will provide emergency access to your almshouse in exceptional circumstances, for example in the event of an emergency such as a water leak when you are not in.

- Please be considerate to workmen whilst in your almshouses
- If you have a complaint against any workmen, please inform the Charity Manager immediately.

### **Insurance**

The charity insures the building and its own contents. Your contents are insured to the value of £6,300. It is important that if you have valuables worth more than the insured sum that you make your own provision for their insurance. Please do not keep more cash in your home than is necessary to meet day to day expenses and keep valuables out of sight.

The Caretaker is not allowed to take responsibility for your money – please do not ask.

## **Refuse Collection and Recycling**

**Penrose** - Household bins are collected on a Tuesday morning by the front entrance.

Residents place their black bin bags into the large black wheelie bin in the southern entrance on Monday evening, please use this system to avoid unpleasant smells and seagull destruction.

The almshouses operate a recycling policy as follows

- Food waste – each almshouse has a mini caddy to collect food waste, the mini caddies are emptied into medium green caddies stored by the allotments. (collected fortnightly)
- Cardboard – Is collected in brown bags (collected fortnightly)
- Bottles and plastic – Are collected in green boxes (collected fortnightly)
- Allotment waste – Is collected in the large Green Wheelie bins

Recycling is stored by the allotments. The Caretaker will ensure that the recycling is placed for collection at the correct time.

**Horwood Paige's** – Household bins are collected by the bin operators on a Tuesday morning from Church Lane prior to 8am.

Residents are responsible for the collection of their own waste. All waste and recycling (cardboard, plastic and glass) are collected on the same day.

Please see the Caretaker if there is a problem with waste management.

## **Television**

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

There are television licence concessions available to the following almshouse residents:

- Residents aged between 60 – 75 years may join the almshouse concessional license scheme which costs £7.50 per year. Please see the Charity Manager to join. Annual payment is due in April for this scheme
- Those who are blind or have severe sight impairment
- People who are retired or disabled and live in certain types of accommodation

Television licences are currently free to all people over the age of 75, however if this changes residents will be entitled to join the concessional license scheme.

## **Cleaning**

You are responsible for keeping your own almshouse clean, including the windows. If cleaning becomes difficult or you cannot clean the windows safely please advise the Caretaker who will make alternative arrangements for which you may have to pay.

Cleaning the communal areas is the responsibility of the charity and the cost of this service will form part of your WMC. You will be advised if contractors are coming to clean the outside of the windows of your almshouse.

## **Training**

When you move into your home the Caretaker will ensure that you are familiar with:

- Action to be taken in the event of a fire
- How to operate all the equipment in your home
- Central heating and front door entry system.

## **Telephones**

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for the provision and maintenance of telephone and broadband in your almshouse with your chosen provider.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Council Tax and Council Tax benefit**

You are responsible for paying your own Council Tax and will receive the annual Council Tax notice from the council in March each year. People living alone are entitled to 25% discount.

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you only have modest savings, you may be entitled to Council Tax Benefit. Depending upon your precise circumstances, this 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 will almost certainly be entitled to Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance to help with your housing costs. Even if you do have income in addition to your basic retirement pension, you may still be entitled to some help with housing costs. To claim Housing Benefit/ Local Housing Allowance you should ask for an application for from your local Housing Benefit office (DWP) or Housing Department. It is important that you inform your local benefits office if there are changes in your financial circumstances

as they have the power to demand reimbursement in the event of over payment.

Eligibility for state benefits change from time to time. If you need advice, please ask the Charity Manager in the first instance as he/she will have some experience of entitlement and benefits. Other sources of information are the Citizens Advice Bureau and Age UK.

It is the policy of the charity to provide two authorised signatures on any required benefit documentation initiated from the charity.

### **Electricity Meters, Mains Switches and Fuse Box**

The following are located in your almshouse, in a cupboard by the entrance door:

- Your electricity Meter.
- The electricity mains switch
- The fuse box

Residents can apply for a smart meter if they so wish.

### **Parking**

There are no parking facilities on either almshouse sites, however there are local authority parking permits available and car parks nearby.

There is a policy of allowing overnight visitor parking for one guest at Penrose which is managed by the Caretakers. Priority for parking will be given to relatives visiting to support a convalescing resident.

### **Wills**

We strongly advise all residents to make a will and notify the Charity Manager where it is deposited. There is plenty of advice available from services such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and local solicitors. The lack of a will causes all sorts of problems and may result in your wishes not being taken into consideration.

For more information please contact the Charity Manager

### **Lasting Power of Attorney**

You may consider it wise to set up 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 mental capacity diminishing. You should seek the advice of a solicitor on this matter.



## **Newsletter**

A Residents newsletter is published twice a year by the Charity. This provides information on events both at the almshouses and within the area. Residents are welcome to contribute articles and will find useful information and advice about living at the almshouses and changes in policy when necessary.

## **Social Activities**

A welcome sense of community can result from residents taking part in activities together. Friendships grow and there is a greater readiness to support one another through difficult times. We find that some residents enjoy occasional opportunities to do things together, whilst others prefer to pursue their own interests on their own. There is no pressure therefore to take part in the organised activities, however the trustees organise an annual Christmas Carol Service in the Chapel, occasional day trips and Afternoon Tea events.

## **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.

## **PROBLEMS**

### **Personal Problems**

If you have any personal problems over money or any other matters and you have no family or friends whom you feel able to consult, the trustees will be pleased to help or offer advice if they can. You can ask to see the Charity Manager or any trustee and your concerns will be treated in the utmost confidence.

### **Complaints**

If you have any concerns, please bring them to the attention of the Charity Manager who will do his/her best to resolve them. In most cases, minor issues can be dealt with informally, quickly and efficiently and to the resident's satisfaction. The Trustees and the Charity Manager can only resolve problems and improve the service if you speak up when things go wrong.

If you have a complaint or a problem arises that cannot readily be resolved by discussion, the following complaints procedure shall be followed.

- Minor matters, such as small maintenance items should be referred to the Caretaker as they arise. These should be dealt with within a reasonable time and if not, you should inform the Charity Manager.
- If the Caretaker is unable to resolve the issue or there is a persistent problem e.g., loud noise or matters affecting health and safety, you should refer these in writing to the Charity Manager. The Trustees wish to emphasise any communication will be treated as confidential.

### **Handling Complaints**

If you are not satisfied by the procedure above and you have a complaint about a member of staff employed by the charity, trustee, other residents, a charity policy, or about a serious breach of health and safety regulations, you should put your complaint in writing to the Chairman of Trustees, with a formal request for it to be considered by the Trustees at their next meeting.

The Residents Committee will formally meet to discuss your complaint. You will be notified of the date that your complaint is being heard and be entitled to attend, accompanied by a friend, advocate or professional adviser if you wish.

The chairman of the committee will write to you afterwards to advise you of the trustees' decision and to inform you of any action taken to resolve your complaint.

### **Complaints Made Against you**

The Trustees take all complaints seriously. If a complaint is made against you that has not been resolved by discussion or intervention from the Charity Manager the following procedure will apply.

You will be informed of the complaint and The Residents Committee will formally meet to discuss the issue. You will be notified of the date that your complaint is being heard and be entitled to attend, accompanied by a friend, advocate or professional adviser if you wish.

The Trustees will consider all aspects of the complaint and you will be able to present your own case.

After the Trustees have investigated the circumstances you will be asked to withdraw whilst they conclude their findings. In the event of the trustees requiring additional time you will be notified in writing of their decision within seven working days.

You be notified of the Trustees decision as swiftly as possible.

In rare circumstances where a complaint is severe or unresolvable the resolution may be that you are requested to find alternative accommodation.

### **Appeals**

For all complaints if you remain dissatisfied after your complaint has been referred to the residents Committee, you are entitled to request that the complaint be heard again by the Appeals Committee. You will be notified of the date that your complaint is being heard and be entitled to attend, accompanied by a friend, advocate or professional adviser if you wish. The decision of the Appeals committee is final, and you will be informed of any action taken.

### **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 trust's own procedure for handling complaints has been exhausted.

## DATA PROTECTION / PRIVACY POLICY

<b>1</b>	<b>Purpose of our Privacy Policy/ Data protection statement</b>
<b>1.1</b>	Under the Data Protection Act 1998 (the Act) Barnstaple Almshouses is required to explain to you why we asked for your information when you became a resident, how we intend to use the information and whether we share this with any other parties.
<b>1.2</b>	The information that you provided to us when becoming a resident is required for us to support your needs as a resident and provide our basic service to you as beneficiaries of our charity. It provides a further understanding of your needs and the ability for us to provide improved support to you.
<b>1.3</b>	Information provided will be stored and used by Barnstaple Almshouses in accordance with this privacy statement and with your rights under the Act.
<b>2</b>	<b>What we are going to do with the information</b>
<b>2.1</b>	Barnstaple Almshouses will collect and use the information you provide fairly and openly for providing our service to you. An understanding of your personal situation and individual needs will allow us to provide a tailored service that meets any physical, cultural or financial needs that you may have. The passport information that you provide (new residents) is required as part of an assurance process in place to prevent and identify tenancy fraud.
<b>2.2</b>	We appreciate that some of the information you provide, for example about your ethnic background or any disability, is especially sensitive information. Barnstaple Almshouses will use this information to determine how we can improve our provision to benefit you. By providing this information, you consent to our use of this information for this purpose.
<b>2.3</b>	This information will also allow us to contact you in the most appropriate way. For example, we can provide literature in large print if you have difficulty reading smaller print
<b>2.4</b>	We want to make sure that the personal information we hold about you is accurate and up to date so please do contact us if your circumstances change by emailing Joanna Northridge on <a href="mailto:joanna@barnstaplealmshouse.co.uk">joanna@barnstaplealmshouse.co.uk</a> , writing to Chudleigh house, Grange Road, Bideford EX39 4AR or phoning on 07976633528. If you would like a copy of the information held about you by Barnstaple Almshouses, you can send your request to the details above.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Who we will share this information with?</b>
<b>3.1</b>	Barnstaple Almshouses will share your information with trustees and staff only where necessary and to provide services to you.

<b>3.2</b>	We will share only relevant information necessary to address your individual needs with our contractors and sub-contractors. This will ensure that they are able to provide a high level of service.
<b>3.3</b>	Our contractors and subcontractors will not share your information with any other parties and will only be able to use the information when completing work on behalf of Barnstaple Almshouses
<b>3.4</b>	We may also need to share your personal data and sensitive personal data with our regulators who are permitted access to this information by law and with other organisations where we have a legal obligation to share the information with them
<b>3.5</b>	We may from time to time share your information with other organisations, including utility companies (so they can provide a service to you and contact you in respect of utility charges) the police (for the purpose of detection and prevention of crime), and organisations such as local authorities with a function of auditing and/or administering public funds (for the purpose of assessment and collection of taxes, detection and prevention of fraud, provision of Housing Benefit and other allowances, your GP and Social Services to support you in the event of failing health or the requirement to find alternative housing.
<b>3.6</b>	We will provide personal and sensitive information to emergency fire or medical services, GP's attending onsite appointments or other agencies providing onsite support to you.
<b>4.</b>	<b>What we are doing to ensure the security of your personal information</b>
<b>4.1</b>	The information that you provide will be stored securely on our electronic systems and the form that you completed will be kept securely locked until 6 years after you have vacated your almshouse. Our security measures and procedures reflect the seriousness with which we approach security and the value we attach to your information
<b>4.2</b>	Only relevant members of staff or trustees will have access to the information you provide Barnstaple Almshouses
<b>4.3</b>	We will only store your information for as long as we need it for the purpose explained in this privacy statement or as required by law or any regulatory authority.

## **IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE POLICY - FOR RESIDENTS**

In the event of a fire please leave your own building and proceed to the muster site.

If the fire started in your almshouse please locate the Caretaker and give an account of the fire if possible to do so or **ring 999**

**Please do not:**

- **Re-enter your own building.**
- **Delay your evacuation by removing your belongings**
- **Attempt to help any other residents unless it is safe to do so**

For the safety of all our residents our method of safety management is **total evacuation in the event of a fire.**

### **Muster Sites**

#### **Penrose - Car Park next to Brannam's GP Surgery**

##### **Evacuation**

Upon hearing the fire alarms all residents should evacuate as follows:

**Option 1.** If the fire is at the back of the quad - Through the front turning right along Litchdon Street, right up the alley to Brannams GP Surgery and into the Car Park

**Option 2.** If the fire is at the front of the quad, - Through the back allotment gate, left along trinity street and left again into the Car Park.

#### **Horwood Paige's – Outside the Parish Church**

##### **Evacuation**

Upon hearing the fire alarms all residents should evacuate as follows:

**Option 1.** Turn right at the main entrance towards the Parish Church

**Option 2.** Exit through the gardens, past The House of Prayer and to the Parish Church.

Once evacuated, residents should all re-group at the designated muster site for a roll call to be taken by the Caretaker to ensure that everyone is accounted for.

The Fire crew will advise when it is safe to re-enter the buildings.

**Alternative Emergency Shelter.**

The Caretaker will have a list of all residents' next of kin and contact details. If any resident wishes to take shelter with local friends and family once the roll call has been completed, please notify the Caretaker **before** leaving the area.

Arrangements have been made for immediate **Emergency Alternative Shelter** for those residents who do not have friends and family nearby. On completion of the roll call the Caretaker will lead the remaining residents to the emergency shelter.

In the event of the Fire Services declaring a Major Incident, residents will not be able to re-enter their almshouses. The Fire Services and Devon County Council will implement an emergency plan. Trustees/ Secretary/Caretakers and Residents will be advised on the availability of prolonged shelter and transport at the scene.

# Anti- Social behaviour Policy

Anti-Social behaviour is defined as:

- Behaviour which can cause nuisance or annoyance to any other person and which directly or indirectly relates to or affects the almshouse functions
- Behaviour which can cause nuisance or annoyance to any of the following
  - Other almshouse residents
  - Almshouse trustees
  - Almshouse staff employed by the charity either wholly or partly in connection with the charity's management functions
  - A person visiting the almshouses or otherwise engaged in lawful activity at the almshouses

## **Barnstaple Almshouses Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.**

The trustees of Barnstaple Almshouses take anti-social behaviour extremely seriously. Anti-Social behaviour covers any kind of nuisance, unreasonable behaviour or harassment (See Appendix A for definitions).

The trustees of Barnstaple Almshouses will not tolerate any anti-social behaviour that affects the quality of life of a resident or the management of the charity for the benefit of all residents.

The Barnstaple Almshouses will respond to anti-social behaviour quickly and effectively and will try where possible to resolve such situations at the earliest opportunity. The Barnstaple Almshouses will aim to deal with anti-social behaviour in a consistent, sensitive and objective manner.

Residents are encouraged to report to staff and trustees any behaviour considered by them to be anti-social by any person. The trustees will investigate such reports (in confidence when this is appropriate).

The residents of Barnstaple Almshouses are required, as per their letter of Appointment, to occupy the property quietly and with thought for other residents and/or neighbours. Visitors should be made aware of this condition of occupancy.

If a resident wishes to report anti-social behaviour, they should contact either the Caretaker or Charity Manager.



Should mediation be appropriate, the trustees may wish to refer the matter to an independent, external mediation service. This will enable an impartial person to view the matter from an unbiased perspective in order to help find a solution to the problem.

If the matter cannot be resolved by mediation the trustees will not hesitate to act on behalf of a resident affected by anti-social behaviour. If this is caused by another resident in contravention of the Letter of Appointment, the charity will follow its internal procedures. After a due process of verbal and written warnings the resident's appointment to the almshouses may be set aside.

In the case of anti-social behaviour by visitors or neighbours, the trustees may seek an Anti-Social Behavioural Order on behalf of one or all residents.

Whenever possible Barnstaple Almshouses, will try to resolve disputes informally and help the people involved to resolve their differences.

Upon receiving a report of anti-social behaviour, trustees will decide whether appropriate to:

- Resolve the matter within the charity
- Refer the matter for external mediation
- Seek an anti-social behaviour order

If trustees conclude anti-social behaviour has been committed by a resident they will:

Consider setting aside the appointment in accordance with the resident's letter of Appointment.

If necessary, refer the matter to other agencies to resolve the problem, e.g. criminal proceedings by the police.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Harassment**

Any behaviour that intimidates, dominates or harms an individual or a family or group of individuals. The actions can be either physical or verbal. Harassment differs from nuisance and ASB in that it is targeted against individuals, households, staff or groups of people. For example:

- Abusive or insulting behaviour – written or verbal
- Violence and threats of violence

- Vandalism
- Repeated or unfounded complaints against other residents or groups
- Abusive telephone calls.
- Uninvited visits to someone's home
- Placing rubbish or offensive materials near someone's home.
- Abusive social media posts, shares or comments

### **Hate incident / crime**

Any kind of behaviour that causes fear, alarm or distress where the victim or any person feels that they have been targeted because of their racial, religion or beliefs, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation. If a criminal offence has been committed a hate incident becomes a hate crime.

### **Nuisance**

Is more likely (but not always) to affect more than one individual or household. Nuisance also covers behaviour that unreasonably interferes with other people's rights to use and enjoyment of their home and community.

For example:

- Noise nuisance including parties
- Intimidating behaviour from residents or groups of people
- Drug & alcohol related incidents
- Car Parking and abandoned vehicles
- Vandalism and damage to communal areas
- Nuisance caused by pets and other animals.