



THE CITY OF
WELLS
ALMSHOUSES

Residents' Handbook



October 2024

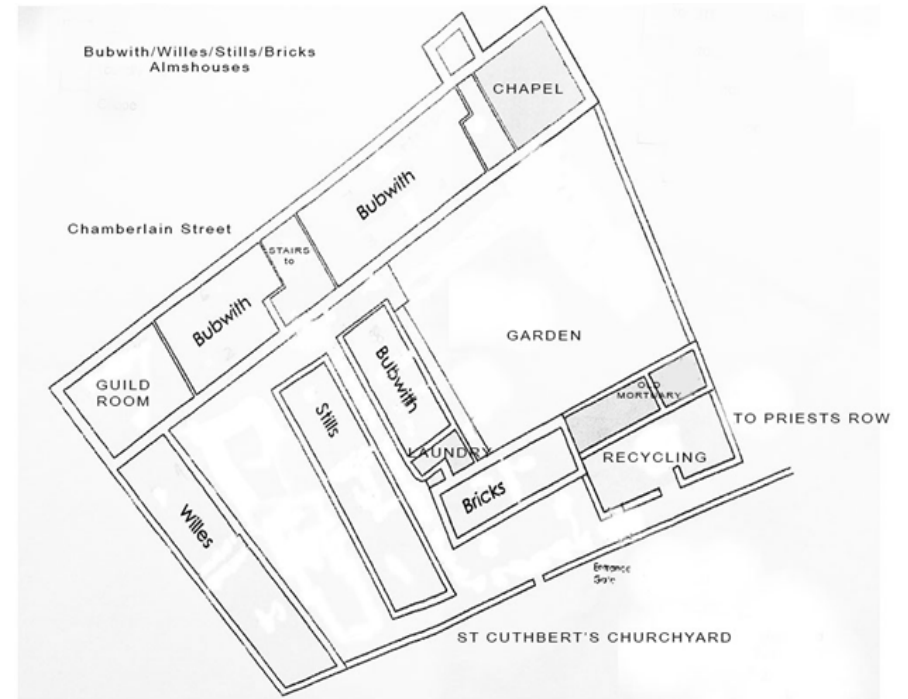


THE CITY OF
WELLS
ALMSHOUSES

Residents' Handbook



Map of Bubwith site



Out and
About In
Somerset



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| Destination | Bus No(s) | Time to Destination |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Bath | 174 | About 1 hr 20 mins |
| Bristol | 376 | About 1 hr 20 mins |
| Bridgwater | 75 | About 1½ hrs |
| Burnham-on-Sea | N/A | About 1hr 20mins |
| Cheddar | 126 | About 25 mins |
| Frome | Wells 174, then Shepton Mallet 162 | About 1 hr 10 mins |
| Glastonbury | 376/75/77/55 | About 15-20 mins |
| Shepton Mallet | 174 | About 20 mins |
| Street | 375/6 & 55 | About 20 mins |
| Taunton | 374 & 55 | About 1½ hrs |
| Weston-super- Mare | 126 | About 1hr 30mins |
| Yeovil | 376 & 77 | About 1½ hrs |

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FOR THE SOUL
Bubwith chapel is located in part of the Almshouses.

Services at Bubwith:
Holy Communion: every Thursday 11am



Services at St Cuthbert's:
Sunday:
8.00 am A short, said Holy Communion.
10.00 am A Sung Holy Communion
Wednesday:



Services at Southover Methodist Church,

Sunday:
Morning worship: 10.30 am
Evening worship: 6.30 pm
See Church notice board for
Holy Communion services.



Services at St Joseph's:
Vigil Mass: Saturday 6pm
Solemn Mass: (with Children in term time) Liturgy
Sunday 10am



Wells Cathedral:
Sundays:
8.00 Holy Communion
0945: Eucharist
11.30 Choral matins
3.00pm: Choral evensong

Local NHS Hospitals

| Hospital | Contact tel. No. | Bus Route No. |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Musgrove Park, Taunton | 01823 333444 | 29 |
| West Mendip Community Hospital | 01458 836 450 | 375/X75/377 |
| R.U.H. Bath | 01225 428 331 | 173 |

Please Note:

The above telephone numbers are for general enquiries only. Information regarding how to find the hospital can be found on their respective web sites.

There is a free wifi hub in the guildroom where you can find maps to each hospital on their own web site and bus timetables.

Agencies for Care

Candlelight Care 01458 831201 Social Services 0300 123 2224

A Message from the Vice Chairperson of the Trustees

This handbook has been produced by a working group of residents, staff and Trustees. We have tried to give you as much information as possible to help you settle in.

It may be that you still have questions which are not covered in the handbook. Please do not hesitate to ask the Scheme Manager if you do have any queries or if you have suggestions as to how this handbook could be improved.

We all hope that the information in this booklet will help you to settle in and feel safe and comfortable in the almshouse community.



SECTION 1

ABOUT US AND HOW WE WORK



Somerset Council Mendip District Access Point

Housing/Council Tax Benefit: You need to visit the offices in Shepton Mallett. Cannard;s Grave Road, Shepton. Open 8.30 am—5 pm Monday—Friday

Website: www.somerset.gov.uk
Housing Benefit: ☎: 0300 123 2224
Council Tax Benefit: ☎: 0300 123 2224

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

☎: Helpline **0808 2787 842**
Website: citizensadvice.org.uk

Health Centres

Wells City Practice ☎ Reception 836650

Wells Health Centre ☎ Reception 672137

Both are situated in Priory Park, Glastonbury Road

NHS Dentist

BUPA NHS Dental Practice Northam House

15 New Street ☎ Reception 673053

Admin □ Finance □ Maintenance

Office Contact Information

Office Location: **4 Bubwith House**
Landline: 01749 675 813

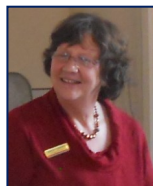
C.E.O. Michelle Thomas

Hours: - Various
Landline: 01749675813
Email address: ceo@wellsalmshouses.org.uk



Scheme Manager Caroline Tollworthy

Hours: Monday to Friday 9 - 1pm
Landline: 01749 675813
Email: manager@wellsalmshouses.org.uk



Finance Controller Patrick McMahon

Hours: Various
Email address: financeofficer@wellsalmshouses.org.uk



Handyman Mike Andrews

Hours:
Monday, 11 am –4 pm
Tuesday, Friday 9 am –2pm



About us and how we work

What are Almshouses?

Almshouses are unfurnished dwellings, established with the aim of providing convenient and comfortable accommodation for people who would otherwise have difficulty finding and affording their own home. Almshouses provide a community where people are encouraged to make friends with their neighbours, while at the same time allowing residents to live independent lives.

The City of Wells Almshouses (CWA)

The City of Wells Almshouses (CWA) consist of several separate buildings: Bricks; Bubwith; Llewellyn's, Stills and Willes. The oldest of the Almshouses was founded under the will of Bishop Bubwith who died in 1424.

Llewellyn's Almshouses are on one side of the road known as Priest Row, while the remainder, known as the "Bubwith site" are on the other side, behind St Cuthbert's churchyard. All the properties are listed buildings and some date back to medieval times. All 33 properties are single occupancy one bedroomed self-contained flats or cottages.

Residents are invited to share a wider social life through the use of communal facilities such as the gardens, the Chapel, the Guildroom, which has broadband and the Llewellyn's Summer House. The Chapel and the Guildroom are both located in the Bubwith House part of the site.

How are the Almshouses run?

Originally the Almshouses in Wells were separate unincorporated trusts. In 2004 these charities were brought together and the five almshouses became one charity, the City of Wells Almshouses Trust (registered charity no: 1040554). In 2014 the City of Wells Almshouses CIO (registered charity no: 1159162) was set up to administer the original Trust. City of Wells Almshouses is also a registered housing association, regulated by the Charity Commission and by the Homes and Communities Agency.

The CIO is administered by a Board of Trustees. A number of the Trustees are appointed by the Chapter of Wells Cathedral and by Wells City Council. The Dean of Wells and the Mayor of Wells are both ex-officio members of the Board.

The Almshouses are managed on a day to day basis by 4 part-time staff: the Chief Executive; the Scheme Manager; the Financial controller/ Charity Secretary and the Handy person. Please see the contacts list at the end of this handbook for details of staff and Trustees.

Who Does What?

Your main point of contact with the staff will be the **Scheme Manager**, who is available every morning, Monday to Friday, to answer any questions you may have. She can also give you advice on things like applying for benefits or will take any repair requests. Her role is to be a good neighbour to residents in the almshouses but she can't administer drugs, do your shopping or provide personal care. Responsibility for all maintenance aspects of the almshouses lies with her.

You will also get to know the **Scheme Handy person**. He can do minor repairs, looks after the maintenance of the grounds and makes sure that everything is working. In addition there is a **Financial Controller** – who looks after the finances and who you would talk to if you have any queries about payments. The **Chief Executive** ensures everything runs well and makes plans together with the Trustees, to make sure the Charity is able to meet current and future challenges and responsibilities. All the staff are based in the office at No 4 Bubwith House.

Policies and Procedures

Should you have any queries or need information about CWA's policies and procedures, please speak to the Scheme Manager.

- 16. No resident is permitted to let or part with the possession of the dwelling or any part thereof.
- 17. CWA reserves the right to ask a resident or residents to vacate their home and move either temporarily or permanently to another almshouse belonging to CWA, or another almshouse or commercial accommodation
- 18. Door keys are for the sole use of the resident to whom they have been issued. The resident will be responsible for the duplicate key and replacement cost if it is lost.
- 19. It is a condition of occupancy that a new resident should sign a copy of the Licence to Occupy signifying agreement to abide by these terms and conditions of occupation and acknowledging receipt of the appropriate door keys and pendant alarm (if applicable). A second copy is provided for the resident's retention.
- 20. Weekly Maintenance Contributions (WMC) are payable monthly in advance and are reviewed annually. Failure to make regular contributions and/or to fall into arrears may result in the Trust setting aside the appointment. If a resident feels that his/her circumstances have changed, then they should contact the Finance Officer as soon as possible.

I have read and understood these terms and conditions and agree to abide by them

Signed.....

Date.....

Name.....

12. Residents may expect to continue in occupation for as long as they can look after themselves. CWA may consult with the next of kin, Social Services, GP etc. to assess a resident's ability to continue to live in their home and to help make more suitable arrangements if needed.

: CWA may set aside the appointment (this means terminating their licence to occupy) of any resident who in their opinion

(a) Persistently or without reasonable excuse either disregards the Terms and Conditions of Occupation or disturbs the quiet occupation of the almshouses, or otherwise behaves vexatiously or

(b) Fails to pay their WMC on time, each month,

or

(c) No longer meets the required occupancy qualifications

or

(d) Has been appointed without having the required qualifications

or

(e) Is suffering from a physical or mental health condition rendering him or her unsuited to remain as a resident.

13 Residents may expect to continue in occupation for as long as they can look after themselves and the property. The Trust may consult with the next of kin, Social Services, GP etc. to assess a resident's ability to continue to live in their home and to help make more suitable arrangements if needed.

When it becomes necessary to set aside an appointment, CWA will give at least one calendar month's notice in writing of their intention, following which the Trust will require and take possession of the dwelling, according to the legal processes available to it.

14. Visitors are permitted to stay for a maximum of 7 days or may use the Guest Room provided

15. Pets are not allowed.

SECTION 2

MOVING IN



5. Due to the risk of fire, the use of paraffin oil, candles or calor gas heaters is strictly forbidden. Please consult the Scheme Manager before you use any additional heaters.
5. In order to comply with fire regulations the Trustees reserve the right to limit the amount of furniture/belongings to be brought into the Almshouse and to remove any excess furniture/belongings should it constitute a fire hazard or a fire escape hazard.
6. Residents should not vacate their dwellings for more than a total of twenty-eight days at any one time without prior consultation with the Scheme Manager and should inform her if they will be away for more than one week at a time. If you intend to be away overnight please let the Manager know and also inform the monitoring control centre.
7. Residents should occupy the property with consideration for the other residents as well as for the fabric of the property and the safety of all who live in the Almshouses.
8. CWA has a No Smoking policy for all the Almshouses. This means that there should be no smoking inside any of the properties although residents and visitors are free to smoke outside their back doors in Llewellyn's and at the end of the garden in the Bubwith complex. This is both as a fire precaution and to ensure that the properties are kept in good condition for future resident.
9. Residents should not cause any obstruction in any communal area or passageway by leaving any equipment, belongings or rubbish there, or do anything which may cause a fire or safety hazard.
10. Neither the residents nor any relation or guest of the resident will be a tenant of the Charity nor have any legal interest in their almshouse.
11. The name and addresses of the next of kin of each resident must be supplied to the Scheme Manager and residents must notify her of changes to this information promptly.

APPENDIX C

The City of Wells Almshouses

Terms and Conditions of Occupation (a copy of this has been signed by you as the incoming resident and as your acceptance of these conditions)

1. The Trustees undertake to carry out all repairs, including internal and external decoration. Residents may wish to suggest any alterations, including decorations, to their home. Please speak to the Scheme Manager who will give you a request form to complete. Alterations may include: putting up/taking down shelves, painting and decorating (all wall, floor and ceiling colours must be neutral), putting up pictures, curtains or blinds. Please note: all fittings provided by CWA including, for example, white goods, fireplaces and flooring must not be removed without prior permission. Following the submission of your form your request will be considered. If approved, we will note this on the property file for future reference and you may be asked to restore your property back to the condition in which you found it, when you leave the Almshouses. Please note, that since all the buildings are listed, it may not always be possible to agree to your request. Anything over ten years' old will be replaced by CWA if necessary. Residents are not permitted to make any structural alterations to the dwellings nor are they permitted to alter the plumbing or electrical installations.
2. Residents are responsible for keeping their dwellings clean and adequately heated and ventilated. This includes the cleaning of the inside of the windows and for treating with care the fixtures and fittings installed by CWA (specified difficult to access windows are excluded).
3. Residents are required to maintain any area of garden allocated to them. If they fail to do so CWA reserves the right to undertake any necessary work and charge the resident.
4. Residents are to permit reasonable access for regular inspection of their almshouse and for repairs and redecoration to be carried out.

In this section we outline all the things you need to know when becoming a resident of the Almshouses for the first time. There is always a lot to remember and the Scheme Manager will be happy to help you with information during your first few weeks as a resident.

Monitoring Service

All the properties within the site, including the communal areas in Bubwith House, are protected by smoke alarms and connected to a central control service. Residents have the opportunity to access this service free of charge, within their properties. This means that if they are ill or need help, say as a result of a fall, the control centre will contact named relatives, a GP or the emergency services. This can be reassuring for individuals, particularly out of hours, when there are no staff on site.

Television

Residents over retirement age or those receiving disability benefits and below 75 years old may be entitled to a concessionary television licence. Please discuss this with the Scheme Manager. If you are over 75 years old and in receipt of benefits, you may be entitled to a free licence. Please be considerate to your neighbours in the use of TVs, radios, computers etc., and musical instruments as sound travels, particularly in the summer when windows are open.

Cleaning

You are responsible for keeping your own almshouse clean and for cleaning the inside of the windows in your home. CWA employs a window cleaner to clean the outside of all windows and the inside of the windows in the communal areas. CWA is responsible for the cleaning of the Guildroom and the communal areas, You are also responsible for cleaning all the carpets in your property.

Green living

We encourage residents to be aware of water and electricity usage, in the interests of the community and the Planet.

The Licence to Occupy

When you were offered accommodation you were asked to sign a Licence to Occupy. You will have a copy of this for your records. We suggest you keep the licence with this handbook for future reference. The licence does **not** grant you a tenancy or any other right to the property. Instead it makes you a beneficiary of the Charity. This means that if the rules of the Charity are broken you could be asked to leave. However, such action would not be taken lightly and would be a last resort. More details about your rights and responsibilities and ours to you are set out later in this handbook.

Absence from home

We need to look after the fabric of the buildings and the welfare of our residents so we ask that where anyone is going to be away overnight the Scheme Manager is notified. If you subscribe to the emergency alarm service you should notify the control centre too. This is not us being nosy – if we do not know that you are away and there is a fire, for example, we would not be able to account for you.

If you are likely to be absent for more than 28 days we ask that you notify us in advance, with the circumstances surrounding this absence. If you are away in the winter months you should ensure your heating is left on a sufficient setting to protect against burst pipes etc. We can give you more advice on this – please ask.

Utility Bills – who pays?

All residents are responsible for their own electricity bills and Llewellyn's residents for their gas heating bills. There are also electricity costs, for example for communal areas, which are included in the Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC).

The cost of water is included in your WMC with a few exceptions, as there are currently few individual water meters on the site.

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE LAUNDRY BY RESIDENTS

- When you arrive, you will be shown how to use the machines and advised of the times that they are available.
- The laundries are provided by CWA for the use of the residents and there are washing machines and dryers available – we ask residents not to dry clothes in their homes, due to the damage caused by condensation.
- Each resident should have reasonable laundry use; we request that washing machines are used to their full capacity in the interests of the environment. We also encourage the use of the “Economy” and “Quick Wash” cycles.
- A rota timetable to suit individual timing requirements is available on the Bubwith site and is on the notice board in the laundry.
- The use of the laundry is between the hours of 8 am to 7 pm to avoid any noise/inconvenience to those who live nearby.
- There are instructions on how to use the machines on the notice boards in the laundries.
- It is important that you use detergent “Pods” or liquid in the machines, rather than powder, to avoid blockages.



Out of Hours Emergencies

If an emergency occurs out of hours, residents must call the Monitoring Centre via their intercom and they will deal with the issue.

The death of a resident

In the event of the death of a resident the monitoring centre will call the Chief Executive and give her/him the contact details of the next of kin and she/he will make contact with them.

A major fire or flood

Following the attendance of the fire service to deal with a major fire or flood they will call one of the three individuals listed below for whom they have contact telephone numbers:

The Chief Executive.

The Financial Controller

The Scheme Manager

Note: during working hours the Scheme Manager will be contacted by the Monitoring Centre.

Council Tax

You are liable to pay any Council Tax that is due.

Pets

Problems can sometimes arise over pets, especially in flats. For this reason the Charity does not allow any pets.

Health issues

To make it possible to act quickly, you are asked to provide a note of your nominated contacts for both the Scheme Manager and for the personal monitoring service. It is important that you also let her/him know about any changes of address or telephone numbers of your nominated relatives or friends and your doctor.

Your Responsibilities

As a resident of the Almshouses your responsibilities are to:

- Keep your home adequately heated and ventilated to avoid damage to the structure of the building and to avoid burst pipes in winter
- Report damage and repair needs as soon as possible
- Keep your carpets clean
- Ensure that fat is not poured down the drains
- Maintain and repair fixtures and fittings that are listed as your responsibility or which you have paid for, such as curtain rails and sink plugs.
- Supply light bulbs / strip lights / halogen bulbs
- Furnish your home
- Keep your home clean and free from accumulated rubbish
- Maintain any area of garden allocated to you (Llewellyn's) and to keep communal areas tidy
- Look after the security of your home and the keys provided
- Allow access to Almshouse staff and contractors to undertake inspections or assess/undertake repair work
- keep your shower heads clean and free from limescale. This is to comply with regulations to prevent legionnaire's disease. If you are unable to do this, you will be expected to arrange for someone to do it on your behalf.

INSTRUCTIONS IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

Bubwith Complex (Bubwith, Stills, Willes and Bricks)

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HEAR THE ALARM:

1. **LEAVE THE BUILDING BY THE NORMAL ROUTE IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO – OTHERWISE STAY IN YOUR FLAT UNTIL YOU ARE COLLECTED**
2. **DO NOT WAIT TO COLLECT PERSONAL BELONGINGS. DO NOT WAIT FOR NEIGHBOURS**
3. **GO TO ST. CUTHBERT'S CHURCHYARD AND STAND BY THE GATE OPPOSITE BRICKS ALMSHOUSE**
4. **DO NOT RETURN TO YOUR FLAT UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD THAT THE BUILDING IS SAFE**
5. **DO NOT USE THE LIFT**

Llewellyn's complex

The same instructions as above apply but make your way to the main gate. If the fire spreads or the weather is inclement move to the Guildroom in Bubwith House.

IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE:

- 1. DIAL 999**
- 2. BREAK THE GLASS IN ONE OF THE FIRE CALL POINTS TO SOUND THE ALARM**

THESE ARE LOCATED IN:

- THE CHAPEL**
 - THE LAUNDRY**
 - BUBWITH HOUSE**
 - 2&3 WILLES LOBBY**
 - THE GUILDROOM**
- 3. FOLLOW THE PROCEDURE OPPOSITE.**

SECTION 3

SERVICES & FACILITIES IN YOUR HOME



Health and safety

The Scheme Manager is responsible for the general security of the complex, oversees tradesmen when they are present and takes a general interest in the welfare of the residents. However, residents are encouraged to lead independent lives and take responsibility for their own personal health and safety.

Please note

There is a first aid kit in the Laundry at Llewellyn's Almshouses and in the Bubwith laundry, as well as the Guildroom and the chapel.

Message in a Bottle

The Message in a Bottle is an emergency information scheme which includes a Personal Information Form (PIF) containing accurate relevant medical and other information relating to you. You place the bottle in your fridge and put green stickers (provided with the bottle) on your back and front doors and your fridge, so that emergency services can be directed to your bottle. We recommend their use – they are provided free of charge by the Lions Club, please see the Scheme Manager if you would like one.

Fire Precautions

The Almshouses comply with Health and Safety and fire regulations and smoke and heat detectors are installed in each Almshouse.

We have a strict "No Smoking Rule" which applies to all of the accommodation within the Almshouses. This is very important as Bubwith House is a building of major historic significance. The no smoking rule also applies to all visitors.

In addition:

- where fire doors are fitted, they should be kept closed.
- due to our smoke detector system and insurance policy we request that no naked flames, such as candles, be lit.

There is a copy of the Instructions in the Event of Fire at Appendix A. Please read them carefully and adhere to them.

Transferring to another home in the Scheme

The Charity operates an internal transfer scheme. This enables any resident who has lived in their home for more than 6 months to register for a move to another property within the scheme. Application forms are available from the Scheme Manager.

When a vacancy arises CWA staff will look at everyone on the transfer list and also any waiting list applicants from elsewhere and decide on the successful person based on the degree of need .

Registering on the transfer list does not guarantee re-housing within a given time.

Bubwith complex only

From time to time the Scheme Manager arranges to have a fire drill. This requires everyone to evacuate the buildings and assemble in St Cuthbert's churchyard – our official Assembly Point. Immediately on arrival, give your name to the person with the clipboard. See appendix A.

Security

Security is important for everyone living in the Almshouses.

We recommend that you:

- keep your door (s) locked at all times
- use your spyhole to identify callers before opening the door
- don't allow a stranger to enter your home without proof of identity
- notify the police or the Scheme Manager of any suspicious behavior that you see (see useful contacts list)

In the interest of your safety additional keys cannot be cut and locks and chains can only be fitted by our registered contractors. Should you lose a key, please contact the Scheme Manager who will organise a replacement one for you, at a cost of approximately £25.00.

We strongly advise you against giving access to your bank accounts and financial resources to anyone but your most trusted relatives.

The Trustees are concerned that your privacy should be respected. The Trustees, staff and contractors would only enter your home if:

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

Services and utilities cont....

The “Master Key”

The Master Key can open any door within the Almshouse complex, including the key to your door. The staff who hold master keys are: the Scheme Manager, the Chief Executive and the Handyman. There is also a resident on each site who holds a master key. These keys are used to gain access only in an emergency or with the resident’s permission.

Key safes

There are key safes outside the door or beside the post box of each property. These are for the use of relatives or friends or emergency services. Our handyman will help you to enter your own personal code into the safe, and we ask that when this is done, you give the number to the Scheme Manager who will keep it securely stored in your file.

Communal Facilities

The Guildroom and Llewellyn’s Pavilion are available by arrangement for the use of all residents for social activities, such as birthday parties, celebrations, or entertaining friends and relatives. We recommend that you book in advance; You can phone the Scheme Manager to arrange an event.

Laundry Facilities

There is a laundry on each site. Please refer to Appendix B of this handbook for further information.

Guest Room

Your home is only suitable for single occupancy. A guest can stay with you for up to seven nights. However, a Guest Room is available for a relative or friend visiting you for a short period (normally up to 7 days). A small charge is made for this service, payable in advance. If you wish to book the Guest Room, please let the Scheme Manager know. Guests are asked to provide bed linen and towels and to leave the room as they would hope to find it.

Giving Notice

When you are moving out, you are required to give us at least one calendar month’s written notice. During this period you are still liable for your WMC, even if you have already moved out. The Finance Officer can tell you how much, if anything, you will need to pay.

During the weeks before you leave, the Scheme Manager and/or Handyman will conduct a pre-termination inspection with you to identify anything that may need to be put right that would be your responsibility. During this time we may also show a potential new resident around your property. We will agree this with you in advance.

When you go

After you have vacated your property, the Charity reserves the right to dispose of any belongings which have been left by you. If we incur a cost for this we may charge you.

Please make sure you have read your meters, notified the Post Office to re-direct your mail and contacted the Council Tax office at Mendip District Council to inform them that you are moving home. If you have any difficulty with any of these procedures please ask the Scheme Manager. CWA will forward post for a maximum of one month only.

You must return your key to the Scheme Manager and provide a forwarding address.

Re-housing

If major repair work has to be carried out, you may be asked to move temporarily to another almshouse or to other accommodation for your convenience and safety. You would be given as much notice as possible. Under these circumstances only, CWA will cover any moving expenses.

SECTION 8 MOVING



Services and utilities cont...

Insurance

CWA insures the buildings and fixtures and fittings in your home but **not** your furniture or personal possessions. Therefore you should arrange your own contents insurance. We would also advise you not to keep more cash in your home than you need for your day to day expenses.

Gardens

The gardens are for the use and benefit of all residents and their visitors. We welcome offers of help from residents, their relatives or friends in keeping the gardens looking attractive. CWA provides tools and equipment in the shed in Llewellyn's and in the shed in the Bubwith complex. The gardens are an important asset to the almshouse community and to the City of Wells. Everyone is therefore encouraged to support them in any way that they can. Any resident who has problems with the upkeep of an area of garden which is allocated to them should contact the Scheme Manager who will offer solutions. If a resident has taken responsibility for an area of garden and then is unable or fails to keep up maintenance, CWA reserves the right to undertake any work necessary and charge the resident. Although specific areas of the gardens may be allocated to individuals it is important that each plot fits in with the overall design of the gardens – if you are planning something different for your plot please speak to the Scheme Manager first.

Repairs and Decorations

CWA is responsible for both external and internal repairs and decorating, including the periodic redecoration of all homes and communal areas of both complexes. You will always be consulted in advance about any work to be undertaken in your home and no workmen will be allowed to enter your home unless you have agreed to this in advance. As a general rule you should never admit any workmen to your home unless they can identify themselves. See Appendix C.

Services and utilities cont...

Rubbish

Communal rubbish bins are provided; they are kept by the shed in the Bubwith complex and at the end of each back garden path in Llewellyn's complex.

There are large brown wheelie bins for gardening waste and large green or black ones for non-recyclable waste. In Bubwith there are black, labelled wheelie bins for paper, tins and glass. Green and black boxes are for recyclable waste. Please make sure that the refuse collection area is kept clean and tidy.

In Llewellyns there are blue bags for thick plastics, aluminum, tin. Tetrapacs and corks and aerosols go with the bottles in the boxes.

All food refuse should be wrapped in newspaper or compostable bags before putting it in the appropriate small brown food waste bin. Rubbish collection is on a day designated by the Council (currently Tuesday). Please ensure that your rubbish is put out the morning before collection day. The bins and boxes will be taken out by the handyman.

Recyclable items:

plastic bottles and trays and tins – in the Bubwith black wheelie bins or Llewellyn's blue bags

Glass, paper and Tetra pac cartons, aerosols in the Bubwith black wheelie bins or in the boxes

Food—In the brown buckets

Garden waste—In the brown wheelie bins

Annual property reviews

These will be carried out by the Handyperson in order to ensure early detection of any problems with the interior of the property or fixtures and fittings supplied by CWA. During your first year at least two reviews will be carried out. In subsequent years a review will be undertaken at least once in a twelve month period.

If you break your Licence Conditions

In these circumstances CWA could ask you to find alternative accommodation. These circumstances include:

- **You do not comply with the Terms and Conditions of Occupancy** (see Appendix C later in this handbook).
- **You are no longer qualified to live in the Almshouses.** It is possible that your circumstances could change to make you no longer eligible, for example, you could win or inherit a substantial sum of money.
- **You are no longer able to look after yourself**, even with the help of your family and/or Social Services.

CWA will only set aside the appointment (i.e. ask you to find alternative accommodation) as a last resort, after a fair process of investigation and warning. We will give you as much time and help as possible to find alternative accommodation.

What are Almshouses?

Almshouses are unfurnished dwellings, established with the aim of providing convenient and comfortable accommodation for people who would otherwise have difficulty finding and affording their own home. Almshouses provide a community where people are encouraged to make friends with their neighbours, while at the same time allowing residents to live independent lives.

The City of Wells Almshouses (CWA)

The City of Wells Almshouses (CWA) consist of several separate buildings: Bricks; Bubwith; Llewellyn's, Stills and Willes. The oldest of the Almshouses was founded under the will of Bishop Bubwith who died in 1424.

Llewellyn's Almshouses are on one side of the road known as Priest Row, while the remainder, known as the "Bubwith site" are on the other side, behind St Cuthbert's churchyard. All the properties are listed buildings and some date back to medieval times. All 33 properties are single occupancy one bedroomed self-contained flats or cottages.

Residents are invited to share a wider social life through the use of communal facilities such as the gardens, the Chapel, the Guildroom, which has broadband and the Llewellyn's Pavilion. The Chapel and the Guildroom are both located in the Bubwith House part of the site.

How are the Almshouses run?

Originally the Almshouses in Wells were separate unincorporated trusts. In 2004 these charities were brought together and the five almshouses became one charity, the City of Wells Almshouses Trust (registered charity no: 1040554). In 2014 the City of Wells Almshouses CIO (registered charity no: 1159162) was set up to administer the original Trust. City of Wells Almshouses is also a registered housing association, regulated by the Charity Commission and by the Homes and Communities Agency.

- A complaint is made to a member of staff (can be verbally or in writing)
- It is logged in the Complaints Register and action is taken
- If it is resolved, confirmation will be made in writing. If not, go to the next step
- A meeting is held with the Chief Executive and a Complaints Form is completed
- The Chief Executive investigates and replies in writing within ten days
- If still not resolved, the Chief Executive will convene a panel of three Trustees to meet with the resident
- The Panel will decide whether to uphold the Chief Executive's decision or amend it
- A decision will be given in writing within ten days
- If the complaint is not resolved the resident will be informed of the options for referring the complaint to outside organisations, for example, to the Housing Ombudsman
- If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, the complaint will be dealt with by the Chair of Trustees

Complaints Procedure

CWA recognises that sometimes mistakes can be made or that we may act in a way that is unfair. Changes may also need to be made to the policies and procedures that guide how we make decisions, in the light of feedback from complaints.

CWA has a Complaints Policy with procedures for making sure any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively.

This policy also covers work undertaken by personnel from contractors or volunteers working on our behalf in CWA property. It does not cover contractors or agencies directly employed or arranged by a resident.

This policy also covers the way in which we deal with complaints between residents but not where there is a dispute between individuals, although we may intervene in the interests of good management.

Generally complaints or disagreements are best resolved in an informal way, namely, dealing with them on a face to face basis and before they escalate into something more serious. However, if a resident wishes to make a more formal complaint the procedure is as follows:

SECTION 4

WEEKLY MAINTENANCE CONTRIBUTIONS (WMC)



Weekly Maintenance Contributions (WMC)

As you are not a tenant of the Charity you don't pay rent. Instead you pay a weekly contribution to the upkeep and maintenance of the property—this is called the Weekly Maintenance Contribution or WMC for short. WMC is paid calendar monthly in advance. It is calculated by taking the weekly amount, multiplying it to work out a year's costs and then dividing it by 12 to calculate a calendar month amount. Payment is by Standing Order and arranged with the Finance Officer. You will be given notice in writing of any proposed increase to the WMC (normally once a year).

The amount you pay goes towards the cost of running the Almshouses and includes:

- repairs and maintenance
- maintenance of the grounds, laundries and communal facilities, e.g. the lift and fire alarm systems
- heating and lighting in communal areas
- water and sewerage charges
- staff costs
- cleaning of communal areas
- the property monitoring system.

If you need help to pay your WMC you can apply for Housing Benefit, details of who to contact are in the Useful Contacts section. The Scheme Manager can also help you with advice on how to apply.

Arrears of WMC

If you find you are falling behind with your payments you should talk to the Finance Officer as soon as possible who will work out a payment plan with you. Failure to pay your WMC could lead to the Charity terminating your residency so it is important to seek help immediately.

SECTION 7 WHAT IF THINGS GO WRONG?



A list of the policies and procedures held in the office

- Applications and allocations
- Arrears
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Complaints
- Property and utility checks
- Health & safety
- Data handling
- Communications
- Terminating occupancy
- Volunteering
- Guest room use
- Dealing with neighbour complaints & anti-social behaviour
- Internal transfers
- Chapel collections and expenditure
- Independent Living
- Guidelines for the use of the Guildroom
- Mobility scooter

SECTION 5



REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Improvements and alterations to accommodation

If you wish to suggest any alterations, including decorations, to your home please speak to the Scheme Manager who will give you a request form to complete.

Alterations may include: putting up/taking down shelves, painting and decorating (all wall, floor and ceiling colours must be neutral), putting up pictures, curtains or blinds.

Please note: all fitments provided by CWA including, for example, white goods, fireplaces and flooring must not be removed without prior permission.

Following the submission of your form your request will be considered. If approved, we will note this on the property file for future reference and you may be asked to restore your property back to the condition in which you found it, when you leave the Almshouses.

Please note, that since all the buildings are listed, it may not always be possible to agree to your request .

Repairs to accommodation

CWA has set timescales for undertaking reported repairs.

We aim to complete these repairs as follows:

- **Emergencies – within 24 hours.**
Examples would be leaking pipes, boiler breakdown, no electricity.

- **Urgent - responded to within 7 working days.**
Examples would be lock repairs, leaking windows/ceilings.

- **Routine - completed within 1 calendar month.**
Examples would be damaged kitchen cupboards, broken gates or slipped tiles.

Having Your Say

It is important that you feel you are involved in the decisions that CWA makes about your home. There are a number of ways in which you can participate in the running of the Charity, these include:

- **Regular residents' meetings:** these are held wherever possible after the Trustees' Board meetings, in the Guildroom. These meetings are informal and generally include refreshments and an opportunity for residents to discuss issues together. They are attended by the Scheme Manager and wherever possible by the Chief Executive.

- **Resident Trustees:** There are two places on the Board of Trustees for residents. If you are interested, please contact the Scheme Manager

- **Newsletters:** the Scheme Manager delivers a newsletter approximately once a month to all residents. This gives residents an update on what is going on; staff Annual Leave dates or where contractors are coming to work on site. Residents are encouraged to also make contributions to this.

- **Working Groups:** from time to time CWA will ask for volunteers to form a group to work on a particular issue. For example, this handbook was redesigned and redrafted with the help of a residents/ staff/Trustees' working group.

- **Surveys and opinions:** also from time to time we may ask residents to fill in a survey form or they might be interviewed about what they like (or dislike) about living in the almshouses. This kind of feedback helps us to make plans for improvements.

- **Residents' Resource Rooms :** These are situated in the Pavilion in Llewellyn's and the Guildroom in Bubwith House. Both are available to residents whenever they wish to use them for social events or private parties.

- **Events:** The Charity hosts various events to which all are invited.

If you have any ideas to improve the way CWA and residents work together please talk to the Scheme Manager .

SECTION 6

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION



Out of hours emergencies

This means serious water leaks or electrical faults. If these happen, press the red button on your careline unit and the call centre will contact an out of hours technician.

We always plan for non urgent repairs or alterations to be batched together, wherever possible. For example, if new doors are to be installed in more than one property, this would be done all together as one contract to save on materials and labour costs.

CWA also has a programme of major repairs and improvements, for example, refurbishment to roofs or outside painting. We always make sure residents are informed of the programming of this work to reduce disruption.