

BERKSWELL CHARITIES

GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTING ALMSHOUSE RESIDENTS

These guidelines have been prepared to inform applicants about the process appointment of residents to its almshouses in the village of Berkswell and Burton Green. The term appointment is used because almshouse residents are not tenants, but beneficiaries of the Charity. Residents are 'licensees' in law but no resident can be required to vacate an almshouse save in accordance with the terms of the licence and following a court order, unless by consent of all parties.

- (a) The Charity is registered and governed by the Charity Commission, Charity Commission Number 1194243 and must adhere to the rules of its Constitution, as approved and directed by the Charity Commission. A copy of the Constitution is available on request.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION

- (a) The Charity provides independent living accommodation for people of all ages who can demonstrate a financial and other need (see below) for requiring accommodation.

(b) You may apply to Berkswell Charities if you are resident in the Parish of Berkswell or the surrounding area. You may also apply if you live outside the area and have connections with the Parish and surrounding area, it is also open to you to apply if these criteria do not apply as the Trustees do have the discretion, subject to the terms of the Charity Constitution, to appoint those from outside the area of benefit.

(c) The almshouses comprise 8 flats at Church Lane, Berkswell (4 upstairs flats and 4 ground floor flats) and 6 bungalows at Burton Green. We seek to match the resident with appropriate accommodation, where possible.

(d) The appointment of all residents is entirely at the discretion of the Trustees of the Charity. In assessing applications received. The Charity will consider, amongst other things, financial need, housing need, immediate care needs and social need.

(e) The Charity will consider nominations made by the Local Authority. Such nominations will not impede upon the Trustees discretionary powers to appoint residents.

(f) Some of the issues which considered are set out below (although this list is not exhaustive): -

- i) **Financial Need**: The accommodation provided for residents attracts a significant subsidy. Every applicant is required to disclose in their application all financial assets and types of income, e.g., Bank and/or Building Society accounts, Investment income, Deeds of Gifts, Government Benefits, and Work Pensions etc. they receive.
- ii) **Housing Need**: Consideration is given to an applicant's current circumstances such as homelessness or inappropriate housing for their current health/wellbeing needs.
- iii) **Care and Support**: Details of an applicant's current health needs are outlined in the application form and a medical questionnaire is completed by the applicant's General Practitioner. The Trustees will evaluate the information provided to ensure that you are capable of independent living. The Trustees do recognise that independent living can include care provision afforded by social services.
- iv) **Social Need**: Due weight shall also be afforded to the social need of applicants, and it is well recognised that almshouse properties provide a sense of social cohesion for the residents.

THE NATURE OF THE ACCOMMODATION AND CARE

- (a) The Charity's almshouses comprise one-bedroom flats and one-bedroom bungalows. The accommodation is suitable for a couple or a single person. Each almshouse comprises a living room, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and large communal gardens.
- (b) The upstairs flats at Church Lane have the use of a stairlift.
- (c) The Charity employs a Clerk who assists a resident in an emergency, or cases of short-term sickness or temporary incapacity. This is in conjunction with her other duties and responsibilities. The Trustees adopt a hands-on approach and are available to the residents upon request.
- (d) The Clerk can advise residents and their relatives about independent care packages which may be available to help a resident remain in their almshouse should they become less able to cope and make the necessary signposting.
- (e) Although support offered is offered by the Charity, they do not provide regular nursing or personal care. New residents must be in sufficiently good health when they enter the almshouses to be able to lead independent lives.
- (f) All the almshouses are centrally heated. The residents pay a weekly maintenance contribution towards their accommodation and repairs and a contribution towards the cost of heating at the Church Lane properties. These costs are reviewed annually by the Charity's Board. The Trustees reserve the right to levy a service charge for services received.

- (g) Given the nature of the accommodation, the Charity has made a rule that no pets are allowed in the almshouses.

THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

(a) All applications for almshouse accommodation must be made on the Charity's application form, a copy of which can be obtained from the address at the end of these guidelines, upon request sent by email to the theclerkatberkswellcharities@gmail.com or by phoning the Clerk, Louise Daintith, on 07305585770.

(b) The personal data supplied on your application form will be held on file. Some details may need to be checked with you, but none will be disclosed for any inappropriate purpose, and we will follow the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (as amended), and the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations from May 2018.

(c) The Charity does not maintain a rotational waiting list as such because they are obliged to assess who is most in need of accommodation when a vacancy occurs. They do on occasions maintain a shortlist of eligible applicants whom they might be able to offer accommodation in the event of a vacancy. Placement on this list does not guarantee that the Charity will be able to offer an applicant an almshouse.

(d) Applicants are asked to give the name of two people who know the applicant well and are willing to supply a reference. Residents are also to name two next of kin whom they consent to the Charities contacting in the event of an emergency.

(e) With the applicant's permission, an approach is made to their GP to provide a medical report for assessment.

(f) All applicants will be offered the opportunity to inspect the accommodation.

(g) No appointment to an almshouse will be made without the members of the Trustee body having had the opportunity of meeting the applicant personally and providing the applicant to ask questions

(h) It should be emphasised that an invitation to attend for a discussion does not mean that accommodation will be offered. The format of the interview is that the applicant will be invited to discuss their application in more detail to understand their needs and assess whether Berkswell Charities can meet their requirements as well as whether the applicant is likely to fit in with the community.

(i) The Trustees will then decide whom to appoint to the flat.

(j) The Charity operates an Equality and Diversity Policy, and all applications will be considered equally and regardless of marital or partnership status, age, disability, race, religion and belief, gender, or sexual orientation. A full copy of the policy is available on request.

(k) The Charity will communicate the decision to applicants as swiftly as possible. If the application is unsuccessful, the applicant can appeal against the decision, or, In the event that an applicant has a formal complaint about the handling of his or her application, this should be lodged with the Clerk. Both an appeal and a complaint will be considered by a panel of Trustees convened by the Chair of the Trustees. If the applicant remains unsatisfied with the adjudication of the Panel, then he or she has the right to refer unresolved complaints to the Housing Association Ombudsman, details of whose service can be supplied by the Clerk to the Trustees.

(l) These guidelines seek to be as comprehensive as possible but if you have any queries arising you should contact the Clerk to the Trustee of Berkswell Charities at 52 Meeting House Lane, Balsall Common, Coventry, CV7 7FX (telephone number 07305585770.)