

MALDON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

**RESIDENT'S
HANDBOOK**

**THE ALMSHOUSE CHARITY OF
MALDON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

FOREWORD

This handbook provides you with information about occupying your almshouse, about the Charity and its management. It supplements and explains the rules and regulations set out in the letter of appointment, a copy of which you signed when you accepted the appointment. The Trustees hope that the information this book provides will help you to be happy here.

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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY OF THE CHARITY, GOVERNANCE AND POLICIES

1.1 History

A Housing Association for Maldon was originally the concept of the WRVS back in 1962 under the Centre organiser Mrs C.M. Blind, J.P. BEM. Sadly she died in 1965 before Maldon Housing Association Limited held its Inaugural Meeting on 5th October 1966. (Then called Maldon Housing Society) when it was agreed that the object would be to “provide housing accommodation for the elderly”. The Chairman appointed at that meeting was Mrs Olive Berridge, BEM who retired as Chairman in 1993.

The Registered office was then at No.6. High Street, Maldon, (the office of Mr Barry Beardall MBE) Barry was Chief Executive of the Association until shortly after his retirement in 1997 but sadly he died in January 1998.

In 1967 after considering various properties, No.15 Victoria Road, a detached house and garden, was purchased and extended to provide 6 flats. This house was named Cecil Mary House after the late Cecil Mary Blind. Cecil Mary House was sold to the Salvation Army Housing Association in April 1995, to provide some of the finance for an extension to Deed House. In 1970 No.21 London Road came onto the market following the death of Mr Sidney George Deed, the former headmaster of Maldon Grammar School. The property was purchased in 1971, following a public meeting and Architects plans. During 1972/73 the house was converted to provide 10 flats. During 1973 the Association was considering the purchase of St. Mary’s Rectory. It was finally resolved in 1975 that Springboard Housing Association would purchase the site and carry out the scheme to include a new Headquarters for the WRVS and Red Cross.

The St. Mary’s Rectory site was completed in 1978 with 21 flats and was named Berridge House. Maldon Housing Association Limited managed the flats for Springboard Housing Association. The freehold of Berridge House was finally transferred from Springboard Housing Association to the Maldon Housing Association Limited in 1981.

In 1980 Maldon Housing Association Limited endeavoured to purchase No.23 London Road which came on the market, but was unsuccessful.

In 1981/82 the former headmaster’s house, 33 Fambridge Road, was made surplus to requirements by Essex County Council and Loan Sanction was approved by the Housing Corporation in 1982/83, our offer to purchase was accepted and work commenced in 1984. This produced 18 flats; the property was named Fairfield House and opened in 1985.

In 1986/87 Maldon Housing Association Limited were unsuccessful in their Bid to the Housing Corporation for funds to purchase the old telephone exchange and land in Tenterfield Road.

In 1993 Maldon Housing Association Limited reconsidered the purchase of 23 London Road. Agreement was reached to purchase and contracts signed. Sadly these had to be rescinded due to lack of Housing Corporation finance.

In 1994 our Architect Clifford Patten and our Quantity Surveyors The Dudley Smith Partnership, were instructed to produce plans and cost the project. Further discussions took place with Maldon District Council who finally agreed to assist with the L.A. / H.A.G.

No.23 London Road was finally purchased in June 1994 and after successful tender the contract was let to F.J. Capon Ltd. and work was completed in April 1995. This work created 11 new flats, making a total of 21 at Deed House and 4 of the flats of the original No.21 London Road extended to provide four 1-bedroom flats. Our Chairman involved with this project, Mr Graham Mott, died suddenly in June 1995 and sadly did not see the Deed House extension scheme completed.

In 2004/05 and 2005/06 work was carried out to convert the bedsit flats at Deed House into one bedroom flats. Maldon Housing Association Limited now has a total of 56 self-contained flats, all of which have really up-to-date accommodation in 3 excellent locations.

In 2006, after lengthy consultation with residents, the Board of Management took the decision to convert from an Industrial & Provident Society to a Company Limited by Guarantee, register with the Charity Commission and join the Almshouse Association.

The Board felt this conversion was necessary to ensure the Association could continue to run as a small independent community based Association.

The Association was incorporated on 19th October 2006, registered as a charity on 7th August 2007 and joined the Almshouse Association on 1st April 2008.

1.2 Constitution

The Charity is run in accordance with its Government Instrument. This is the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

1.3 Trustee Body

The Charity is administered by voluntary Trustees. Day-to-day management is carried out by the Clerk to the Trustees (Chief Executive) , the Housing Manager and Support Staff.

1.4 Almshouses (or Homes)

Almshouses are unfurnished dwellings, usually specially designed with the needs of older people in mind. The aim is to provide convenient and comfortable accommodation in a setting which allows residents to come and go as they please. Almshouses provide security and residents are encouraged to make friends and share a wider social life through use of the communal lounge and other facilities where they are available. The almshouses have Support Staff on duty every day and an emergency call system in each unit. In any emergency, such as sudden illness or after a fall, a resident can get help quickly.

CHAPTER TWO

HEALTH & SAFETY

2.1 Call System

You will be shown how to use this when you move in. When the Support Staff are on duty, they will take emergency calls. At other times someone else will answer and get help to you quickly.

Please DO use the call system by day or night to get help for a sudden illness or accident

Please DO NOT use the alarm to make normal contact with the Support Staff unless they are on duty, tie up the pull cords or leave the alarm button on your bedside table. If you need help, it may be out of reach.

2.2 Fire Precautions

The almshouses comply with the appropriate fire regulations. Where a fire alarm has been installed, the Housing Manager will arrange for a fire drill at least twice a year and it is in everyone's interest that you should co-operate fully on these occasions.

If there are obvious signs of an outbreak of fire:-

Take immediate steps to raise the alarm. Assistance can be summonsed by activating any of the fire call points which are located adjacent to the entrance/exit doors of the building. The call points operate by breaking the glass on the call point which releases the button and activates the system. Operating the call point will also alert operatives in the central monitoring station who, in turn, will contact the Fire Brigade.

If the fire breaks out in your flat, you should leave the flat, closing all doors behind you, and raise the alarm.

If you hear the alarm:-

Remain in your flat with the entrance door firmly closed until help arrives. All of the flats have doors which will resist fire and smoke penetration for 30 minutes by which time help will arrive.

Essex Fire and Rescue are aware that in the event of their being called to one of our properties, they can expect some or all of the flats to be occupied.

In the event of the alarm sounding when you are in the corridors, lounge, laundry room or other common areas, you should leave the building by the nearest fire exit and proceed to the fire assembly point and report to the Scheme Manager or other person in charge.

Under no circumstances should you attempt to re-enter the building until you have been advised by the Fire Officers that it is safe to do so.

Unless the fire is very small and you feel confident to extinguish it using the equipment available on site, **do not** attempt to fight it. Leave the area immediately and raise the alarm.

Please DO ask the Support Manager

if you are still unsure what to do if the alarm rings, or if you discover a fire

Please DO dispose of smoking materials safely

Please DO NOT wedge fire doors open; they prevent fire and smoke spreading only when shut

leave pans (especially chip pans) unattended

2.3 Security

Please bear in mind the following:

DO keep your front door locked at all times

use the spy hole to identify callers **before** opening the door

DO NOT allow a stranger to enter your home without proof of identity; if you are in doubt, please call the Support Staff or control centre.

BE AWARE of other persons in the vicinity of the main entrance door when arriving or leaving and be alert to others tailgating, compromising the security of the building.

2.4 The Master Key

The Support Staff, the Chief Executive/Treasurer and the Housing Manager hold a master key which can open your front door but it will only be used in an emergency or with your permission. You must not fit locks and chains without the Trustees' consent as these may delay helpers in any emergency. Chains should only be used when you wish to identify callers before deciding whether to let them in. The Trustees may be able to advise on alternative security arrangements.

Your privacy will be respected. The Support Staff have strict instructions only to enter your home:-

if you ask her/him to do so, or

if you have given permission for work to be done in your absence, or
in an emergency

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

CHAPTER THREE

SERVICES PROVIDED

3.1 Support Manager and Support Workers

The Support Staff watch over the health and welfare of residents without interfering in their lives or intruding on their privacy. The Support Staff will speak to everyone each morning either through the call system or personally to ensure all is well.

The Support Staff also look after the building. In an emergency, the Support Staff will call for help on your behalf and notify your family and friends. At other times the Support Staff will help you to arrange for health or social services such as Home Care or Meals on Wheels.

The Support Staff do not provide personal care themselves, or fetch shopping or prescriptions except in emergencies: however, they will advise you how you can get the help you need elsewhere.

The duty times for the Support Staff are displayed on the notice board in each house and you will also be provided with a copy for your retention. If you require assistance outside these times, please use the call system to summon assistance.

3.2 Communal Facilities

A common room is for the use of all residents and their visitors. It is for you and your neighbours to decide what sort of activities you wish to arrange. There may be a residents' committee to do this. The Support Staff will give help and advice if asked and should be kept informed of future activities as the Support Manager is responsible for the room.

A laundry is available to all residents. The Support Staff will show you how to use the machines and will, if necessary, arrange times at which the facilities are available to each resident. Use of the laundry room may be restricted so that you and your neighbours are not disturbed by noise. The machines are intended for residents' laundry only.

3.3 Guest Room

A guest room is available for a relative or friend visiting you for a short period. A small charge is made for this service. If you wish to make use of the guest room, please let the Support Manager know as far in advance as you can. Sick resident's carer's take priority. Guests are asked to leave the room as they would hope to find it.

3.4 Repairs and Decorations

The Trustees are responsible for both external and internal repairs to your home and the communal parts. Please report all necessary work to the Support Staff or Housing Manager who will arrange for it to be carried out. Workmen will not be allowed to enter whilst you are out unless you have agreed to satisfactory arrangements. An exception will have to be made if an emergency arises or access is required to rectify any urgent problem. Please do not let anyone into an almshouse unless you know who they are; when in doubt, call the Support Staff

3.5 Insurance

The Charity insures the buildings. You are responsible for arranging insurance for the contents of your home.

Please do not keep more cash in your home than you need for your day-to-day expenses. Please put the rest in a bank or building society. Do not ask the Support Staff to take care of money for you as she/he is not allowed to do so.

3.6 Television

For residents over 75 years old, the television licence is free. Those over retirement age and below 75 years old may be entitled to a concessionary television licence (£7.50). If so the £7.50 will be recovered in the Weekly Maintenance Contribution.

There are restrictions on the siting of aerials.

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

3.7 Cleaning

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

You are responsible for cleaning the inside of the windows in your almshouse, if you cannot do so safely please contact the Support Manager. The Trustees employ a window cleaner who cleans the outside of all windows and the inside of the windows in the communal parts.

Cleaning of the lounge and communal areas is also arranged by the Trustees. The cost of this will be included in your Weekly Maintenance Contribution.

3.8 Gardens

The garden has been laid out for the use and benefit of all residents. The major work or grass cutting is the Charity's responsibility; although, in some cases, more active residents often do this themselves. If you would like to help with the gardens, please ask the Support Manager or the Housing Manager how to arrange this.

3.9 Training

When you take up the appointment and move into you almshouse, the Support Manager will arrange training to cover;

Action to be taken in the event of fire and other emergencies

Operation of all equipment in your home including call system, central heating and lift/stair lift.

Further training will be given from time to time to update you.

3.10 Call System

A helpline connects the resident to a call centre which is manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It will handle emergency calls for health, police and fire.

CHAPTER FOUR

TERMS OF OCCUPANCY

4.1 Letter of Appointment

You will have a copy of the Letter of Appointment, which you signed when you were appointed as a resident. As a beneficiary of an almshouse charity you are not a tenant, but the Trustees cannot ask you to leave unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as you do not comply with the terms of your Letter of Appointment. You have agreed to pay a Weekly Maintenance Contribution that includes an amount for the services provided. You must be prepared to accept the provision of Supporting People services and the installation of a call system as conditions of occupancy.

4.2 Relatives and Visitors

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

Your home has been specially designed as sheltered housing for older people and is not suitable to accommodate extra people. This is why a guest room is provided.

4.3 Absence from Home

If you go away for any period please inform the Support Staff in case of emergency. Should you decide to return home earlier than expected please also advise the Support Staff.

4.4 Consulting Residents

The Trustees will hold meetings from time to time to discuss the running of the almshouses with you and your neighbours. You can also talk to a Trustee in private by asking the Clerk to the Trustees to arrange this. Consultation and involving the residents in the day-to-day running of the charity's almshouses is a form of participation which will benefit all concerned. Trustees welcome the residents' views on matters affecting their quality of life at the almshouses.

The Trustees will consult you:

- Before any work is done on your almshouse (except in an emergency)
- Before making changes to the communal facilities, including the gardens
- Before making changes to the amount of Weekly Maintenance Contribution which you pay
- Before anyone enters your home (except in an emergency)

4.5 Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC)

WMC is due on the 1st day of each month by Standing Order. You will be given a minimum of one month's notice of any increase.

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

- water and sewerage charges
- heating
- repairs and maintenance
- support staff salaries
- buildings insurance
- upkeep of the garden
- cleaning of communal areas
- call system

4.6 Housing Benefit

If your income consists of the basic retirement pension and you have little or no capital you will almost certainly be entitled to Housing Benefit to help you with your housing costs. To claim Housing Benefit you should ask for a form at your local Benefits Office or Housing Department. If you do have some additional income to your basic retirement pension you may still be entitled to some help with housing costs. Again, forms to claim this are available as above.

Your Support Manager or Chief Executive/Treasurer will assist if you need help in completing the form. Part of the WMC is for the support provided by the Support Staff and call system. This is not eligible for Housing Benefit but will be paid direct to the Association on your behalf from Essex County Council every four weeks if you are eligible. This is called Supporting People Grant.

4.7 Central Heating and Hot Water

A weekly heating charge covers the cost of central heating [and hot water – Fairfield House and part of Deed House]. Each house has its own thermostat set at a temperature to suit you.

4.8 Electricity Meters

Neither meters nor their locks and fittings may be altered without first asking the Trustees' permission. If the supply is disconnected for any reason, please tell the Support Staff or Housing Manager at once.

4.9 Businesses

Under the Terms of your Letter of Appointment, you are not permitted to use the almshouse as a place of business, either from where to conduct business or store items connected with running a business.

4.10 Moving Out

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

In certain circumstances the Trustees may ask you to find alternative accommodation. These are:-

- You do not comply with the rules set out in your Letter of Appointment or elsewhere. These rules are made for the benefit of all residents. Please comply with them.
- You may no longer be able to look after yourself even with all the help of your family and Social Services. There may come a time when this is putting the other residents at risk.

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

4.11 Re-Housing

Residents who wish to change their accommodation within the complex may apply to the Housing Manager for the matter to be considered by the Trustees.

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

4.12 Gifts and Legacies

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

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL INFORMATION

5.1 Council Tax

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

5.2 Improvements to Your Home

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

5.3 Pets

No pets shall be kept in the flats.

5.4 Parking of Vehicles

Parking spaces for cars are provided at all sites. Please do not park elsewhere, or allow your visitors to do so, as they may block the way for ambulances or fire engines in an emergency.

5.5 Doctor

If your doctor is nearby you will not need to change. If you do not have a doctor, or you are moving from another area, the Support Manager will be able to give you the names of other doctors working in the neighbourhood who are interested in the care of older people. The name of your doctor must be given to the Support Manager or clerk so that help can be obtained in an emergency.

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

5.6 Emergencies and Sickness

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

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

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

If you have a disability or become disabled while living in the almshouse, it may be possible to obtain equipment or to make alterations to your home to help you to live an independent life; ask the Support Manager about this. Please do not make any structural alterations to your home without the Trustees' permission.

5.7 Rubbish

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

Collection is on each week.

5.8 Stopcocks

The water stopcock is

These should only be turned in an emergency.

5.9 Location of Electricity Mains Switch and Fuse Box

The electricity mains switch is to be found

and the fuse box

If you are unsure about changing a fuse, ask the Support Manager for assistance.