



Guidance Notes for Almshouse Applicants

Introduction

These notes are intended to assist you in completing an application form to become a beneficiary of the Ewelme Almshouse Charity. They provide information about the almshouses and detail the Charity's eligibility criteria and the application process.

Our Almshouses

The Charity provides almshouse accommodation in The Cloisters, Ewelme, Oxfordshire (OX10 6HU), Suffolk House, Ewelme, Oxfordshire (OX10 6HL) and in Suffolk Court, Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire (OX27 0HS) for people of pensionable age and of limited means. Each almshouse consists of a sitting room, fitted kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. The size of rooms may vary slightly depending on the particular location and sometimes within each complex. The Charity owns allotments adjacent to both The Cloisters and Suffolk House in Ewelme. Plots may be available to residents as and when they become vacant.

There is a guest room available at both The Cloisters, Ewelme and at Suffolk Court, Marsh Gibbon. Residents are permitted to make use of the Guest Room for short stays by relatives or *bona fide* guests. A Warden lives adjacent to The Cloisters at Ewelme, and also attends at Marsh Gibbon twice a month. Each Almshouse is equipped with a 24-hour Call Care system.

Eligibility Criteria

The Charity is only able to appoint residents who meet its eligibility criteria, which are:

- a. Applicants must be of state retirement age or over. Where a couple is applying, both applicants must be at or over state retirement age.
- b. Applicants must have limited means both in terms of income and capital – there is an expectation that applicants should be in receipt of, or eligible for, Housing Benefit.
- c. Preference is given to those who are in immediate need of accommodation, or who live in inadequate or remote accommodation.
- d. Preference is given to those who live in, have spent an extended period of time in, or have strong connections to, the vicinity of the Charity's estate in Ewelme, Oxfordshire, Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire or Ramridge, Hampshire.
- e. Preference is given to those who are tenants on the Charity's estates.
- f. Applicants must be able to live independently.
- g. Applicants should have two representatives, family or friends, living within an hour of the almshouses, who can be contacted in the case of an emergency.

Application

1. It is important that you understand that the Trustees reserve the right to exercise absolute discretion on whether to accept or reject an applicant and the decision of the

Board of Trustees remains strictly private and confidential. The Trustees will not enter into discussion with unsuccessful applicants about the reasons for their decision.

2. The information you provide on the application form will be used by the Trustees to decide as to your eligibility to become a beneficiary of the Charity. Please provide as much detail as possible and answer **ALL** questions. If the Trustees feel that further information or clarification is required, this may delay the processing of your application.
3. The Charity asks you to identify two representatives, who can be family or friends, that it can contact if you are unwell and need assistance of any kind. These representatives need to be within a 60-minute radius as they may not be able to help in a timely fashion if they live further afield.
4. If you own property, have disposed of property in the past, or have sufficient funds to rent a property comparable to an almshouse, you are highly unlikely to be considered by Trustees. If you fall into this category, but feel you still qualify to be a beneficiary, please provide as much detail in your Application Form as possible.
5. The Ewelme Almshouse Charity offers independent living accommodation, normally to applicants over retirement age, and it is important that you complete a Medical Questionnaire so the Charity is assured of your ability to live independently. We are unable to process your application form without a completed Medical Questionnaire. You are responsible for sending the Medical Questionnaire to your doctor and asking that it be forwarded on to the Trust Manager.
6. If a resident becomes unable to look after themselves, the Charity may request that the resident's representatives assist them in finding more suitable accommodation.
7. As a Christian charity, it is desirable that residents are sympathetic to the Christian Faith. All residents are asked to attend an annual Residents' Service in St Mary's Church, Ewelme.
8. The Application Form gives you the opportunity to provide *Supporting Information*. In this section, do explain why you wish to become a resident of the Ewelme Almshouse Charity and emphasise how you meet one or more of its charitable criteria. You may attach extra pages if you wish.
9. Residents are beneficiaries of the Charity not tenants. They pay a Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC), which is currently set at £55 per week (to be paid monthly at £238.33). This is reviewed on an annual basis.
10. In addition to the WMC, Residents pay a weekly Utilities Charge (UC). This is currently £50 and it is reviewed on an annual basis in line with energy tariffs.

Application Process

On receipt of your application form, it will be shared with those Trustees responsible for appointing residents. They will use the information you have provided to assess your eligibility

and decide whether to accept or reject your application. If your application is accepted the Trustees may invite you to interview or place you on the Waiting List if there is no almshouse vacant.

If you are invited to an interview, it will normally be with two Trustees and the Warden. If you are offered an almshouse it will be subject to adequate references. The Trust Manager will also contact your representatives to ensure they are aware of what this role may entail. Once satisfied with the references and representatives, the Warden and Trust Manager will visit you in your home to assess your ability to live independently and to complete the application process.

If you need any assistance with the Application Form or require it in another format, please do not hesitate to contact Angharad Saunders, the Trust Manager on 07518 297138 or via trustmanager@ewelmealms Houses.org