



Gallard's Close, London Road, Southborough,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 0NB

RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK



C J GALLARD'S ALMSHOUSES

RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK

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Trustees

Mr N Powell (Chair)

Mr G J Coventry (Vice Chair)

Councillor Ms D Hills

Councillor Mrs M Morton

Councillor T Poile

Councillor Mrs J Prance

Reverend R. Wilson

Mrs B Wisdom

Foreword

This handbook provides you with information about your occupation of an almshouse flat, almshouses' arrangements, and about the Charity and its management. It supplements and explains the rules and regulations set out in your licence, a copy of which you have signed to accept appointment as a beneficiary resident. The Trustees hope that this handbook will provide you with information that will help you understand the way the Charity operates and for you to enjoy to the full your life at the almshouses.

The following contact information may prove useful to you:

Clerk to the Trustees:

Mr Philip Grainger
07483 326849

Almshouses' Manager:

Flat 25, Gallard's Close, Southborough.

Miss Maggie McDowall
01892 528437
07748 411568

Assistant Manager:

Flat 10, Gallard's Close, Southborough.
(When covering for the Manager)

Mr David Johnson
07748 411568

Other useful numbers:

Kent County Council, Adult Social Services 03000 416161
(Care Services)

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council: 01892 526121
The Amelia Scott, Mount Pleasant Road,
Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1AW
(Housing Benefit, Council Tax, Universal Credit)

Southborough Town Council: 01892 529176
Southborough Civic Centre, 137 London Road,
Southborough, Kent, TN4 0NA.

Citizens Advice Bureau: 0808 278 7992
Unit 132, Royal Victoria Place, Tunbridge Wells,
TN1 2SR

Age UK: 01892 522591
Wood Street, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2QS

Emergency Services: 999
(Police, Fire and Ambulance)

Police (Routine): 101

NHS 111
(If you need medical help fast but it is not a 999 emergency)

Chapter 1

History of the Charity and its Management

History

The C J Gallard's Almshouses are governed by a Charitable Trust, established in accordance with a bequest in the Will of the late Mr Charles J Gallard (a Tunbridge Wells businessman and Chairman of Southborough Urban District Council who died in 1906) to provide 20 flats for the purpose of housing elderly and needy persons from the Southborough area in Kent.

Construction of the flats commenced in 1911 and they were first occupied by beneficiary residents on 23 October 1912. The flats are located at Gallard's Close, London Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, at the corner of Yew Tree Road and London Road.

The area of benefice was expanded in August 2006 to include the town and parishes covered by the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, but with preference being given to applicants from Southborough and High Brooms.

Following a major redevelopment project, which was completed in 2012, there are now 26 flats and all of the flats were enlarged and refurbished to modern standards.

Trustee Body

The Trust is a non-profit making charity, which is controlled by the Rules and Regulations of the Charities Commission. The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the appointment of beneficiary residents when vacancies occur, ensuring the terms of the Trust, as designated in the late C J Gallard's will, or amended with the approval of the Charities Commission, are maintained.

The Charity is operated in accordance with schemes approved by the Charities Commission. The first scheme was sealed on 19 January 1911 and various schemes have subsequently altered it.

Trust Management

A body of 9 trustees, who give their services voluntarily, administer the Charity. A Clerk to the Trustees and an Almshouses' Manager carry out day to day administration and management of the Almshouses' flats and estate.

Almshouses (Sheltered Housing)

Almshouses are unfurnished dwellings, 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 a measure of security, and residents are encouraged to make friends sharing in a social life through use of the communal facilities. The C J Gallards' Almshouses have a resident manager and an emergency telephone call system in each flat. In an emergency, such as sudden illness or after a fall, residents are able to obtain help quickly.

Chapter 2

Health and Safety

For the formal Health & Safety policy – see Chapter 8.

Emergency Call System

All residents should have a telephone land line for this purpose unless the Emergency Call System has a new digital box ; you will be shown how to use this when you move in. With a duty controller available at all times you can expect a rapid response to an emergency call. In any event you should anticipate that assistance would be obtained for you quickly. The smoke alarm system is directly connected to the call system and this must be checked on a monthly basis to ensure that it is working. The Almshouses' Manager can help you to do this and depending on your telephone provider's tariff a local call charge may be incurred. Should you change your call provider at any time please ensure that you notify the Manager.

Please DO use the call system by day or night, weekday or weekend, to seek help, but strictly only in an emergency.

Please DON'T:

Use the call system in an attempt to make contact with the Manager.

Fire Precautions

The Almshouses comply with appropriate fire regulations. In the event of a fire please use the Emergency Call System to contact a controller. Unless the fire is in your own flat remain there if you are aware of a fire elsewhere until the emergency services arrive. If your flat has a lobby with its own fire door this must not be left open. A Fire Risk Assessment was carried out recently and residents and staff must adhere to its findings

Please DO ask the Manager:

What to do if there is a fire alarm or if you discover a fire.

How to use the provided fire blankets.

Please DON'T:

Wedge doors open; they prevent fire and smoke from spreading only when they are shut.

Leave pans, especially with fat or oil in them, unattended on the cooker.

Attempt to fight a fire – if there is a fire in your flat leave the flat immediately, shutting the door behind you.

Block exits or stairways with personal effects as they present a fire hazard

If you have to leave your flat or are told to do so by the emergency services please ensure you know where to go, even in the dark. Do NOT spend time in gathering up personal possessions. The Fire Assembly Point is the Car Park area by the Main Gate leading out to Yew Tree Road. Once there you should make your presence known to the Manager or other representative of the Charity or a member of the Emergency Services – **on no account leave the Gallard's Close area unless, or until, you have been accounted for and someone is available to escort you.**

Security

The Trustees, Manager and residents are encouraged to take an interest in the general security of the site.

Do keep your front and rear doors locked, even when you are close by in the gardens or communal areas. In the ground floor flats, you should always lock the windows at night and when you are away from the premises.

Uninvited Callers

Please DON'T allow a stranger to enter your flat without obtaining proof of identity; if you are in any doubt please contact the Manager for advice.

Master Front Door Key

The Clerk and Manager hold master keys, which can be used to open your front door, but this will only happen in an emergency or with your permission.

You must not fit additional locks or chains without the Trustees' written consent as these may delay helpers in the event of an emergency. The Clerk or the Manager may be able to advise on alternative security arrangements if you consider they are required. A spare key is located in the key box outside the front door of your flat [or outside the communal entry door in the case of those flats with internal front doors] and is accessible to anyone who has the digital combination.

Your privacy will be respected, and staff have strict instructions only to enter your flat:

- If you ask them to do so or if you have given permission for work to be done in your absence.
- In an emergency.

Please **don't** obtain extra keys as this could endanger security.

Slips, Trips and Falls

The Trustees wish to draw your attention to the need to exercise care when using the driveway or paths around the estate in wet, snowy or icy weather. Whilst every reasonable precaution will be taken to keep these areas hazard-free, residents are reminded to stay indoors where possible and to put down salt if they must go out.

Lifting

The Trustees have a Lifting Policy which states that staff are not allowed to lift residents in the event of an emergency. The aim is to ensure that, if for example, a resident falls, he or she is not further injured by being helped to his or her feet in the wrong way and that any helpers are not also injured. When this happens, please call an ambulance and explain that someone has had a fall and requires assistance to stand up again. Ambulance crews are trained in safe lifting techniques and their vehicles carry specialist equipment.

Showers

If a shower is not used for a prolonged period there is a significantly higher risk of inhaling spray containing Legionella bacteria when it is brought into use

once more. A plastic bag of a suitable size should therefore be placed over the shower head before turning on the mixer valve in order to prevent spray entering the atmosphere. Leave it running for two minutes and then remove the bag. It is suggested that it will be easiest to put the plastic bag in place if the shower hose is pulled through the guide rings as far as possible so that the shower head rests on the shower tray by the drain and the plastic bag therefore does not need to be held in place but can just rest on the shower tray. It will then be simple to turn on the water.

Electrical Safety

Except where electrical installations or electrical means of supply belong to, or are operated by, the Trustees, then residents are responsible for all other electrical safety in their flat. They must ensure that all their personal electrical equipment such as irons, vacuum cleaners and microwaves are kept in clean and good condition. Particular attention must be paid to electrical leads and cables to ensure that these do not become frayed or overheated, and microwaves should be checked for the build-up of food as this can cause overheating. If residents have concerns about safety of any particular item, they should contact the Manager IMMEDIATELY who can then arrange for an electrician to attend at the resident's expense. The Trustees will arrange for the fridges and other such electrical goods as are within their ownership or control to be PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) tested annually out of charity funds, where such testing is either desirable or legally required.

Chapter 3

Services Provided

Almshouses' Manager

The Manager watches over the health and welfare of beneficiary residents but without unduly interfering in their lives or intruding on their privacy. During normal Monday to Friday working hours the Manager will be available to deal with administrative matters and/or assist residents in arranging for health care or social services such as carers, temporary nursing, domestic cleaning and/or meals on wheels.

In an emergency the emergency telephone system should be used, and the service provider will arrange for any necessary help on your behalf, notifying an appropriate family member or friend and/or doctor/professional assistance. (Please note the Manager is not on call to deal with emergencies; however, if available, she will assist as best as possible).

Although the Manager is your neighbour, he/she is not allowed to provide personal care, do laundry, fetch shopping or collect prescriptions, except briefly in emergencies if he/she is on site and available. On no account is the Manager authorised to carry out any medical procedures. However, he/she is available to advise on how help can be obtained from other sources.

The Manager also looks after the buildings in cooperation with the Clerk and will make arrangements for any necessary repairs to be carried out or problems investigated.

The Manager is on duty from 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.30pm on Mondays to Fridays but may not be on site throughout that time. Please respect his/her off duty time and privacy in his/her own home. The office at the rear of the Manager's Flat, No. 27, is available for private meetings with the Manager and/or Clerk by arrangement. He/she is contactable on his/her mobile telephone when out of the office.

Communal Facilities

The Ark. This is a Community Room with kitchen facilities which is available most of the time for use by residents and their visitors. It is up to you the residents to decide what sort of activities you wish to arrange. The Manager

will give help and advice, if asked, and should be kept informed of plans for use as he/she maintains a diary to ensure there are no double bookings, and because he/she is responsible for its maintenance. To ensure that best benefit is obtained by all users you are requested to leave the room exactly as you find it, ensuring that unused food and drink is not left in the building.

The Ark may be booked for family and/or friends' parties/functions by arrangement with the Manager or the Clerk. No activities should extend beyond 10.30pm. When not required for use by the Trust The Ark may be let to outside organisations, but they are required to comply with specific rules as displayed in the room.

The Pantiles Room. A guest bedroom which is available for use by family or friends of residents for a small charge; full details are available from the Manager through whom bookings can be made. When not being used by paying guests it may be used by residents as a communal lounge. It has kitchen facilities as well as a disabled friendly toilet and wash basin.

The Foresters Room. A meeting room available for hire by the community which may be used by residents as a communal lounge when not being used for other purposes.

It has kitchen facilities as well as a disabled friendly toilet and wash basin.

Gardens. The gardens are for the use and enjoyment of the residents. Offers of help in maintaining the gardens are appreciated; tools and equipment are provided for communal use and consumables such as general use compost are paid for by the Trust. The greenhouse is available for use by all residents. The raised beds at the north end of the site are for use by individual residents and anyone wishing to take responsibility for one of these should contact the Manager or the Clerk.

Laundry: A laundry room with two washing machines and two tumble dryers is provided next to the rear of flat 25 and is available for residents to use between 8.00am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday (in exceptional circumstances arrangements may be made with the Manager to use the machines in the evening). After 4.30pm and on public holidays, use of the laundry will be restricted to emergencies only so there is no undue noise disturbance.

The Manager will show residents how to operate the machines which are intended only for use of the residents for their own laundry items. No payment is expected for using the machines, but you will have to provide your

own washing powder as recommended by the Manager. Please do not use too much washing powder, as this can cause blockages, and generally take care of the machines leaving them in the state in which you would wish to find them.

Repairs and Decoration

The Trustees are responsible for external repairs and decoration of the flats and the rest of the estate; however residents may be required to pay the cost, or make a contribution to the cost, of repair or re-decoration if required for reasons other than fair wear and tear or as part of the cyclical maintenance programme. You are expected to keep your flat cleaned to the satisfaction of the Trustees.

Any damage or need for repairs should be reported as soon as possible to the Manager or the Clerk so that arrangements can be made for any necessary work to be carried out. You will be consulted in advance about these arrangements. Tradespersons will not be allowed to enter your flat whilst you are out unless you have agreed to satisfactory arrangements with the Manager. However, an exception will be made if a need arises for urgent emergency access such as a water leak or electrical fault, and in such cases a member of staff will be present.

Insurance

The Trustees insure the estate buildings and Trust owned property, and their responsibilities for public liability and as employers. Residents are strongly advised to make their own arrangements for the insurance of personal property and liability; advice on arranging this may be sought from the Clerk.

Please do not ask the Manager or Clerk to take care of money or valuables on your behalf as this is not covered by the Trust's insurance policy, and the Trustees have given instructions that this is bad practice.

Any resident having a mobility scooter must arrange insurance covering not only damage to or loss of the scooter but also the owner's legal liability to pay compensation and costs following accidental bodily injury to other persons, including damage to their property whilst the scooter is in use.

Television

The Trustees purchase a concessionary television licence for residents over the age of 60, and not working for more than 15 hours per week, who are therefore not required to purchase their own. Those residents under the age of 60 are required to hold their own individual licence.

There are a communal television aerial and satellite dish which are linked to all flats but there is no connection for cable TV.

Please show consideration for your neighbours and think about noise nuisance when using your TV – or indeed radio, stereo or any other appliance.

Cleaning

You are fully responsible for keeping your flat and immediate surrounds clean. If this is difficult for you, please seek advice from the Manager who will help you arrange for cleaning assistance, but this will be at your own expense if it is not provided free of charge by the relevant government agency who, to establish the need, may wish to carry out an assessment.

The outside of the windows of the flats and those in the Ark are cleaned under arrangements made by the Trustees. However, the cleaning of the inside of the windows, the doors and, in the case of the ground floor flats, the external window sills, is your responsibility.

The Trustees also arrange for the cleaning of the Ark, the Pantiles Room, the Foresters Room and the Laundry but you are requested to assist by leaving the areas clean and tidy after use.

Vehicle Parking

Space for parking private vehicles is provided at the south end of the estate close to the entrance from Yew Tree Road but there are **no reserved spaces**. At the time of publication of this Handbook there is a weekly charge of £5 for all car owners but this is under review.

Please do not park vehicles anywhere else as they may block the way for emergency vehicles. Residents should ask their visitors to use the adjacent public car park in order to leave space for those residents with cars. It is your

responsibility to advise your visitors of these arrangements and they should not park on site at any time.

Commercial vehicles, other than those being used by contractors employed by the Trust, are not to be parked on the site.

Chapter 4

Terms of Occupancy

Letter of Appointment and Licence to Occupy

On appointment as a beneficiary resident you will be/were given a licence to occupy your flat, both copies signed by you and the Clerk to the Trustees, and an accompanying letter of appointment. As a beneficiary of an Almshouses' Charity **you are not a tenant**, but the Trustees will only ask you to leave in exceptional circumstances, such as if you cease to be eligible as a beneficiary resident of the Charity, you do not comply with the terms of the licence, you obtained your beneficiary residency without being properly qualified, or you fail to adequately cover your financial commitments.

Relatives and Visitors

Whilst the Manager is generally on hand to keep a neighbourly eye on residents in case of accident or illness, he/she cannot take the place of local relatives and friends. It is expected that they will give you the same support and assistance they would give if you were living elsewhere. With their help and co-operation, and support from government agencies if necessary, it is hoped you will be able to remain independent for as long as possible. The Trustees reserve the right to contact your relatives and friends, and/or the relevant government agency if they feel there is a need.

Your flat is only appropriate as accommodation for one or more Beneficiary Residents as appointed by the Trustees and is not suitable for the regular accommodation of anyone else. This is the purpose of the Pantiles Room [see page 18]. If you do wish to have a relative or friend stay with you temporarily, please inform the Manager in writing, so it can be recorded in the diary in the interests of fire safety and/or any other emergency. Their stay may not be permanent and should be for only a short time, but definitely not exceeding 7 days.

Consultation with Residents

The Trustees are responsible for managing the flats but welcome the participation of the residents in putting forward constructive ideas for improvements to the facilities and on the day to day running of the estate.

Beneficiary Residents cannot, under charity law, become Trustees and cannot, therefore, take part in decision making.

In situations where the Trustees and staff consider there is a possible problem(s), relating to the welfare and/or well being of a beneficiary resident, they may invite that resident's attendance at a meeting to consider the matter(s) with a view to recommendations being made for any necessary action needed to improve the situation. In such cases you will be invited to be accompanied by a relative or friend who may act for you or discuss matters on your behalf.

Vacation of Flat and Moving Out

If you wish to move from your Almshouse flat, you must give the Trustees written notice of at least 4 weeks for termination of your licence. During this notice period you will still be liable for your maintenance payments, even if you have already moved out. Residents, or in the event of their death or incapacity, their personal representative(s), is/are responsible for payment of the weekly maintenance charge and all other expenses such as council tax, electricity, etc, until the flat is cleared of personal possessions, the keys returned to the Manager and the flat being made available in a totally clean and acceptable condition ready for re-allocation.

If you become permanently unwell and are unable to properly care for yourself, the Trustees may suggest you move to more suitable accommodation. If this is a necessary step, the Clerk and Manager will help you and your representative(s) to make suitable arrangements.

The Trustees may set aside your appointment as a beneficiary resident and repossess your home if you persistently, or without reasonable excuse, either disregard the regulations for residents, disturb the quiet occupation of others or otherwise behave offensively or become disqualified from retaining the appointment by no longer being qualified, or you are suffering from an illness or incapacity rendering you unsuited to remain as a resident.

Absence from Home

If you intend to be away for any period of more than 24 hours, including any overnight stay, please advise the Manager or the Clerk in case an emergency occurs during your absence and to avoid concern over not being able to make

contact with you. The Manager will help you to put your heating & hot water system on to a suitable setting.

Absence for more than 7 days at any one time or for more than 28 days in any one calendar year requires the advance approval of the Trustees through the Clerk.

Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC)

The amount of the WMC is set by the Trustees annually and is due to be paid each Monday, or Tuesday if the Monday is a Public Holiday, in advance. Payment is normally required by banker's standing order but in exceptional circumstances, if agreed by the Clerk, you may pay by cheque or cash to the Manager. Payments may be made in advance as far ahead as you wish. You will be given at least a month's notice of any increases, these being made on the instructions of the Trustees, normally at the start of each year.

The amount you pay in WMC covers the major part of the cost of running the Charity and Almshouses' estate, which includes:

- Staff salaries and expenses.
- Repairs, maintenance and minor improvements.
- Gardening equipment and consumables for general use.
- Water and sewerage charges.
- Insurance of the estate and Trust owned property.
- Telecare call system and maintenance.
- Security lighting.
- Office telephone and administration expenses.
- Cleaning and maintenance of the Ark and other communal rooms.
- Upkeep of the gardens.
- Concessionary television licences.

Failure to pay your WMC is a breach of the Charity's regulations and would place your status as a resident in jeopardy.

Housing Benefit

If your income consists only 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, including the weekly maintenance contribution. To claim benefits, you should ask for an application form at the Amelia, Tunbridge Wells. If you have additional income over and above your basic

pension you may still be entitled to some help with your housing costs. The Manager or Clerk will help you if you are unsure of your entitlement or need help in completing the forms.

Payment of benefit is made, to those entitled, by the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Heating and Hot Water

All flats have gas boilers for heating and hot water and the controls can be set to your own requirements. In the event of heating or hot water problems please contact the Manager.

Free standing paraffin or gas heaters are **not** allowed under any circumstances, as they can be a danger to health and safety.

Gas and Electricity

Meters and any electrical connections may not be altered nor added to without the written consent of the Trustees. If the supply is disconnected for any reason or you have a fault in any of the gas or fixed electrical equipment, please advise the Manager.

Cookers & Fridges

All flats were provided with new cookers & fridges as part of the Redevelopment Project. However, breakdowns are a resident's responsibility as is replacement when necessary in line with the unfurnished nature of the accommodation.

Re-Housing

Residents who wish to change their accommodation within the complex may, exceptionally, apply to the Clerk for the matter to be considered by the Trustees. Reasons that would normally be acceptable include problems over climbing stairs and/or a wish to have the use of a second door, the main difference between upstairs and downstairs flats. In some circumstances the Trustees may invite you to move for the sake of your health and well-being, and if considered necessary will insist on such a move.

The Trustees may require you to permanently or temporarily move to another flat, or temporarily to alternative accommodation, when major improvements, repairs or maintenance work are being carried out. In such cases you will be given at least three months notice and the Trust will cover the cost of moving.

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 5

General Information

Council Tax

You are responsible for payment of Council Tax to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council from the date of actual occupancy or, if earlier, use of the flat for preparation to occupy, and until the flat is properly vacated. You may, if you have limited income, be entitled to financial assistance. Single occupants are entitled to a discount on the normal rate.

Improvements to a Flat

If you have thoughts on making improvements to your flat, you must first discuss your proposals with the Clerk to the Trustees. Permission may be refused if the Trustees consider the proposed alterations are structurally unsound, would have a long-term detrimental effect on the home or would result in increased maintenance costs. In some cases, where permission is granted, the Trustees may agree to pay for all or part of the cost of the improvements.

Pets

Problems can easily arise over pets, especially in flats and where a communal garden is shared. For this reason, if you wish to keep a pet you must first obtain the written permission of the Trustees. Permission will normally be given for a caged bird or fish in a tank, but cats and/or dogs or other freely mobile animals would not normally be acceptable. If you are authorised to keep a pet in your flat, you must advise the Manager of the arrangements made for its care when you notify him/her that you are going to be away from home overnight or for a longer stay.

Doctor(s)/Medical Affairs

If your doctor is nearby you will not need to change, however, you should advise the doctor of your new address. If you do not have a local doctor, the Manager will be able to provide you with the names of medical practices in the neighbourhood who are interested in the care of older people. The name and telephone number of your doctor must be given to the Manager or the Clerk so that appropriate help can be obtained in an emergency.

You have every right to see your doctor, nurse, social worker or other carer alone and to keep your medical affairs entirely to yourself if you wish. However, if you have a chronic health or incapacity problem, you may feel it prudent and safer if the Trustees and Staff are made aware so that appropriate action can be taken in the event of an emergency. Anything you tell the Trustees or Staff will be kept confidential.

Emergencies and Illness

If you are ill or in difficulties, the Manager, or in an emergency the Care Line Duty Controller, will make every effort to contact, as appropriate, your relatives, friends, doctor, the ambulance service or social services on your behalf. To make this possible, the Clerk and Manager require to know the names, addresses and telephone numbers (including mobiles) of three of your nearest, preferably local, relatives and friends, including your next of kin, who have previously consented to assist if required, and of your doctor. Residents may wish to include a Gallard's Close neighbour. Please let the Manager know of any changes to the information, especially telephone numbers, as soon as they occur. Make sure the Manager is notified if you are ill, a particularly important requirement if you are going into hospital or returning home after admission.

You are invited to advise the Manager if you have a non-routine medical appointment at your doctor's surgery or at a hospital. In the event you are likely to be kept in hospital overnight, you must arrange for him/her to be advised.

If you have a disability or become disabled while living in your almshouse flat, it may be possible to obtain specialist equipment or make alterations to your flat to help you continue to live an independent life. If this is the case, please ask the Manager or the Clerk for assistance. Do not make, or have made, any structural alterations to your flat (e.g. built in furniture, ramps or stair lifts) without the written approval of the Trustees.

Personal Problems

If you have personal problems regarding any matters, including medical and/or finances, and have no members of your family or friends who you feel you would be able to consult, the Trustees, through the Clerk or an appropriate Trustee, will be pleased to offer you help and/or advice as best they can. If you

wish to discuss a problem with one of them, please ask the Manager to make contact on your behalf.

If you consider you are suffering abuse, either physically, financially or mentally, from any member of your family, a friend or other contact, you are invited to discuss the matter with the Clerk. who will provide appropriate advice and or generate any appropriate action. For more information go to Chapter 11 on “Safeguarding”.

Wills

You are strongly advised to write a Will. If you wish to leave money or personal property to relatives and/or friends, a will is essential. Please advise the Manager or the Clerk of the location of your will, and its copies, and who is/are your executor(s); also, the identity of anyone appointed by you under a power of attorney. A solicitor is the best person to help you make a will, but there would be a charge. If you require assistance in finding an appropriate solicitor, it is suggested you contact the local Citizens Advice Bureau. The Clerk is prepared to assist you, if required.

Rubbish and Unwanted Furniture

Bins are provided at the rear of the flats near to the Ark which are emptied fortnightly. Please follow the new regulations regarding waste which came into effect on 30th September 2019. Separate bins are provided as follows:

- Large green bins for ordinary household waste
- Black bins for biodegradable waste such as vegetable and plant material
- Large brown, clearly marked, bins for plastic, tins and glass
- Large, clearly marked, brown bins for card & paper

Please ensure that all rubbish of an unpleasant nature is securely wrapped before putting it in a bin and assist by keeping the bin areas clean and tidy.

Do not, on any account, put food scraps out for wildlife.

The Manager can arrange with the Council for the collection of unwanted furniture/equipment, but a small charge is made; for those on benefit this service is free.

There are compost heaps near the greenhouse for suitable garden waste.

Location of Electricity, Water and Gas Master Switches/Taps

The water stopcock is located under the kitchen sink.

The gas tap is in the meter box located in the passageway in the case of Flats 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 and on the wall outside the front door in the case of the other flats.

The electricity meters are situated on the outside rear wall of the flats in groups and the main switches and fuse boxes are located inside the flats, generally on the wall of the bedroom.

Services should only be turned off for an emergency or by a tradesperson carrying out repairs or routine maintenance. If you need advice about these matters or about utility services generally please ask the Manager.

Chapter 6

Complaints Policy & Procedures

The Trust has a complaints procedure for the use of its beneficiary residents.

Many people are reluctant to complain and a decision to make a formal complaint should not be taken lightly, however, the Trustees can only resolve problems and improve their service if you speak up when things go wrong.

If you have a complaint or a problem has arisen which cannot be readily resolved by a discussion with the other party involved, or with the Manager or Clerk, the complaints procedures should be used.

Set out below are the procedures to be followed for submission of a complaint in connection with the occupation of an almshouse flat, or about any of the services provided by the Charity in relation to the almshouses' flats.

- Minor matters such as small maintenance/repair items should first be referred to the Manager when they arise. They will normally be attended to within a few days. If they are not you should write to the Clerk giving details of the problem.
- If the Manager is unable to resolve minor matters; or, if there is a persistent problem with pets, loud noise or any other matters affecting health and safety or the enjoyment of the environment, the resident should refer this to the Clerk. In the absence or unavailability of the Clerk you should contact a Trustee. You must be prepared to put your complaint in writing at this stage. The Trustees emphasise that all communications about complaints will be treated in confidence. Your attention is also drawn to the Good Neighbour Policy at Chapter 7.

If the Clerk is unable to deal with your complaint satisfactorily, or if you have a complaint about the Clerk or another member of staff employed by the Charity, other residents or a serious breach of health and safety regulations, or similar, you have the right to put your complaint in writing directly to the Chairman of Trustees, with a formal request for it to be considered by the Trustees at their next meeting. In the event of the matter being extremely serious or very urgent, the matter can be considered at a meeting called specially for that purpose. You will, if you wish to exercise that right, be entitled to attend when your complaint is being discussed, accompanied by a

relative, friend or professional adviser, however we cannot guarantee confidentiality for information imparted at these meetings.

- The Trustees will write to the resident to advise what actions have been taken to resolve the complaint and to notify the decision taken.
- If you remain dissatisfied with the decision, following consideration of your complaint by the Trustees, you have the right to take it to the Independent Housing Ombudsman whose address is Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square, London E14 9GE [Telephone 0300 111 3000]. When writing to the Ombudsman please state your full name, address and telephone number, setting out details of your complaint. The Ombudsman will only be able to consider it if he/she is satisfied that the Charity's own Complaints Procedures have been fully exhausted and that it falls within his/her jurisdiction.

Chapter 7

Good Neighbour Policy & Procedures

The Trustees will not tolerate anti-social behaviour that affects the quality of life of its beneficiary residents, staff or management. Its Good Neighbour Policy and Procedures will be applied if and when required for their benefit.

The Trustees would prefer that the consumption of alcohol be limited to residents' flats. If any resident wishes to take their drink into the garden this must be confined to the back garden. No alcohol may be consumed in the part of the garden alongside London Road or Yew Tree Road.

Beneficiary residents and staff are encouraged to report to the Trustees, through the Clerk, any behaviour considered to be un-neighbourly and/or anti-social by or to any person. The Trustees will investigate such reports (in confidence) and take action as deemed necessary to resolve the situation.

The Trustees will not hesitate to act on behalf of a beneficiary resident or member of staff affected by anti-social behaviour. If this is caused by another beneficiary resident in contravention of the letter of their appointment, after a due process of verbal and written warnings, the beneficiary resident's appointment to an Almshouse flat could be set aside. In the event of anti-social behaviour by visitors or neighbours, the Trustees may seek an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

Chapter 8

Health & Safety Policy

The Trustees are committed to ensuring a safe living and working environment for all those who have access to the Charity's premises.

This commitment has four elements:

1. Full compliance with current and future Health and Safety legislation and regulations. An additional policy is included with that of Health and Safety to meet the requirements of the HM Government Smoke Free Law introduced with effect 1 July 2007 which is shown below.
2. An assessment of the risks faced by all (residents, staff, visitors and agents/contractors) having access to the Charity's premises and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks.
3. Provision of appropriate and suitable training and information to ensure that everyone is aware of the risks and knows how to respond. Training will be provided for staff with a recommendation that a minimum level of health and safety training should be achieved within six weeks of starting in post. There will be a mechanism for annual refresher training, to ensure that knowledge is kept up to date.
4. Regular Quinquennial Inspections of the properties and subsequent maintenance programmes will be carried out giving high priority to health and safety issues. Any defects with health and safety implications are normally corrected within 24 hours.

When the Clerk/Trustees are selecting contractors, it is their good practice to ensure they have sight of the contractors' health and safety policies. Trustees, or a suitably qualified representative on their behalf, will also carry out annual health and safety inspections, and make recorded risk assessments.

The Clerk to the Trustees is responsible to the Trustees for the implementation of health and safety matters affecting the Charity. However, everyone has a part to play. Anyone who is concerned about a health and safety issue must bring it to the attention of the Trustees as soon as possible. Contact details are shown at pages 5 and 6 of this Residents' Handbook.

Smoke Free Areas

The Smoke Free policy has been developed to protect staff, trustees, contractors, residents and visitors from exposure to second-hand smoke and to assist compliance with the Health Act 2006. Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses. It is the policy of the Charity that Gallard's Close provides a smoke free environment for all its staff, trustees, residents, visitors and contractors who have the right to work or carry out their responsibilities in a smoke free environment. Smoking is therefore prohibited in all enclosed areas including residents' flats, the Ark Community Room, the Pantiles Room, the Foresters Room, communal halls, stairs & landing areas, offices, laundry and storage rooms. The policy applies to all staff, trustees, contractors, residents and visitors. Smoking is allowed in the garden area but consideration for others is expected.

Any resident who does not comply with the smoke free policy may be subject to the addition of a redecoration levy to their WMC and the setting aside of their status as a beneficiary resident with resulting loss of their flat.

Chapter 9

Data Protection

We have recently reviewed our Data Protection processes and procedures to keep in line with the new General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Law 2018, which was amended on 1st January 2021 by regulations under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act .

With this in mind both the Almshouses' Privacy Notices and Data Protection Policies have been updated. These are available for you to read on the Residents' noticeboard in the Ark or in the Manager's office; we recommend you do so.

Chapter 10

Equality & Diversity Policy

The Trustees of the C J Gallard's Almshouses' Charitable Trust are committed to developing a way of working that respects differing ideas, cultures, abilities and needs. The C J Gallard's Almshouses' Charitable Trust is restricted under its Governing Document to providing homes for married couples and single men and women of limited means and of good character who are not less than 55 years of age and who have resided in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells in Kent, with priority given to applicants from Southborough. In addition, applicants must be individuals able and willing to live independently in a sheltered housing complex. Subject only to these restrictions, the Trustees do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, age, race, religion, colour, ethnic or cultural origins, nationality, disability, marital status or sexual orientation and aim to make the Trust's services accessible to people from all sections of the community and to value the contribution each individual can make to its work, whether as a user of its services or as a member of staff or volunteer.

Chapter 11

Safeguarding

The Trustees of Gallard's Almshouses take the safeguarding of residents very seriously and it is vital that you don't disregard or explain away signs of possible abuse. Although the signs you observe may indicate illness or depression, they could indicate that abuse, mistreatment or neglect is taking place. **These signs should never be ignored. Please bear in mind the following**

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- **You don't need cast-iron proof – suspicion is enough**
- **You must act immediately if you suspect abuse**
- **Make a note of your concern and what you have witnessed and report it immediately to the Lead Trustee or other members of the Safeguarding Team whose contact details can be found on the noticeboard in the Ark**
- **If you think a crime has been committed contact the Police on 999 or 101**

This Handbook was prepared by Philip Grainger, Clerk to the Trustees, and issued with the agreement of the Trustees, which was given in October 2022.