Taunton Heritage Trust

New version coming soon



Resident's Handbook

Introduction

The Trustees and Staff would like to welcome you to the Taunton Heritage Trust as a new Resident. We all hope that you will settle in quickly and be very happy here.

The Resident's Handbook sets out useful information about our Charity and its general management and administration. It also explains your responsibilities as a Resident.

The conditions stated in this handbook, together with the regulations set out in your Letter of Appointment, form your contract with the Taunton Heritage Trust, which you sign and accept when you take up your residency. It may be necessary to amend these rules and regulations from time to time, but any significant changes would be discussed with Residents beforehand, when you would be given the opportunity to express any views or concerns.

The almshouse is your home and every effort will be made to enable you to live independently, free to choose your own lifestyle and able to benefit from the quiet enjoyment and dignity that the almshouse setting provides.

I am sure you will appreciate the importance of everyone in the community respecting the wishes of others, allowing them their privacy, if that is what they wish.

The Trustees and Staff have tried to minimise these rules and regulations which have been designed for the benefit of all Residents and to ensure the efficient management of the Taunton Heritage Trust.

Please do not hesitate to speak to your Resident Lead if you need any further information or clarification.

Once again, a very warm welcome.

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Resident's Handbook

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Chapter One: Taunton Heritage Trust

1.1 History

The Taunton Heritage Trust is an Almshouse Charity and dates back to 1635 when Robert Gray founded Grays Almshouses on East Street, Taunton.

Over the years a number of small Taunton charities including "the St James' Almshouses", "Popes & Strickland's Almshouses" and the "Hospital Branch of the Charity of Richard Huish", came together to be known as the Taunton Town Charity. In 2010 the name of the Charity was changed to the Taunton Heritage Trust.

The Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission and is a registered social housing provider with the Regulator of Social Housing.

1.2 Management

The Trust is also a member of the Almshouse Association. A Board of Trustees has overall control of the Trust but the day to day management is carried out by the Chief Officer, supported by Properties Manager, Office Manager, Administrative Assistant, and Resident Lead, all of whom are employed on a part time basis.

A photograph of the Staff team is displayed on noticeboards at each site.

1.3 Accommodation and Support

Taunton Heritage Trust owns five properties which between them provide 66 flats and guest accommodation. These are:

Bernard Taylor Homes, Magdalene Street
Huish Homes, Magdalene Street
Grays Almshouses, East Street
Leycroft Close, Hamilton Road
St James Close, St James Street

These properties offer self-contained flats designed to meet the needs of older people who are capable of independent living. The Trust's objectives in providing accommodation are:

- **To provide affordable, suitable and safe accommodation for people on low incomes aged over 60 years.**
- **To provide Resident Lead assistance to encourage Residents to live their lives as independently as possible.**
- **To work to secure appropriate assistance for Residents from relatives and relevant support agencies.**

- **To provide a community environment which encourages social wellbeing through a range of activities and events.**
- **To maintain the Trust's almshouses to the highest standards practicable.**

The services and level of support that we provide, together with the guidelines that we ask Residents to follow in order to meet these objectives, are explained more fully in the following chapters.

Chapter Two: Services provided

2.1 Resident Lead

Resident Leads support the general wellbeing of Residents without interfering in their lives or intruding on their privacy. Their role is that of "good neighbour". Resident Leads are not trained carers and cannot therefore offer personal care support. Resident Leads are not able to run errands, collect shopping, dispense medicine, change dressings or offer any other medical assistance to Residents. With the Resident Lead will ensure as far as practicable that Residents have appropriate assistance from relatives or relevant support agencies. These outside services might include help with personal care, meal preparation and provision of physiotherapy or occupational therapy aids for use around the home.

When you first move in your Resident Lead will go through an induction process with you, explaining their role and show you how to use the Piper alarm system, which is operated by Deane Helpline, stair lifts and laundry equipment where appropriate. They will introduce you to some neighbours and give you information about any planned social events.

2.2 Contacting the Resident Lead/Piper System

Our Resident Leads work on a part time basis and their working hours are as follows:

- Working - Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 12.30 pm
- On Call - Monday to Friday 8.00 am to 8.30 am and 12.30 pm to 5.00 pm

During **working hours** your Resident Lead visits Residents, deals with any relevant issues and liaises with colleagues in the office. They are available to contact via their mobile phone.

During **on call hours** your Resident Lead is available to contact via mobile phone for any issues that you may have. It is possible that your Resident Lead may be on call but off site, and so there will be times when Deane Helpline service will be used instead of the Resident Lead during on call times.

Your Resident Lead is **off duty** between the following hours:

- Monday to Friday 5.00 pm to 8.00 am
- Weekends
- Bank holidays

During these times, if you require assistance, you **must** use your Piper alarm system and Deane Helpline will respond. In the event of an absolute emergency during non-working hours that requires Taunton Heritage Trust personnel being contacted, the Deane Helpline

staff will have a duty contact telephone number. This number will not be available to Residents and so Residents must use the Deane Helpline as the first point of contact.
If for any reason the Piper alarm system goes down in your flat, you are still able to contact the Deane Helpline on the following number:

01823 257185

Please respect the Resident Lead's off duty time and privacy. Under current employment law, there are limits to the hours that a Resident Lead can work or be "on call" and Health and Safety regulations will prevent them from carrying out some activities. Please respect this too.
The Resident Leads' monthly duty rota is displayed on the notice boards in all properties.

You will be asked to help the Resident Lead complete a Support Plan, which will record details of your next of kin, GP, any medical problems you may have and medication you are taking. It will identify the support you need, if any, how that will be provided or obtained, and will be reviewed at least once a year depending on your personal circumstances. If changes are made to your medication it is your responsibility to inform the Resident Lead.

Each Support Plan is stored electronically on the Trust's secure computer system. Residents are provided with a copy. Any data that the Trust holds relating to you will only be used for the purpose for which it was supplied. Your data is stored and treated in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation. We will not share your data with anyone else without your consent, except when required by law or best practice to do so.

It is essential that you let the Resident Lead know about any changes to your contacts or Support Plan information. This information will be shared in confidence, with the Deane Helpline, which provides 24-hour support.

The Resident Lead holds an Emergency First Aid at Work Certificate, but they do not provide a nursing or medical service.

In an emergency:

a) The Emergency Call System

All flats are fitted with a Piper alarm system, including a pendant that you may wear, which you will be shown how to use.

Please do:

Use the Piper alarm system at any time of the day or night to get help for an accident or incident.

Please do not:

Tie up the pull cords. The Piper alarm system should not be used to make normal contact with the Resident Lead or to report minor maintenance problems.

b) Testing the Emergency Call System

It is an essential part of our Health and Safety procedure that the Resident Leads test the Piper alarm system in every flat and that you become familiar with using it. This will be done regularly and will mean that they call you and ask you to call them back. We ask that you co-operate fully with them in undertaking these essential checks.

2.3 Confidentiality

You have the right to expect that anything of a personal nature you discuss with the Resident Lead and other members of Staff will remain confidential. However, in some circumstances, it may be necessary for them to advise the Chief Officer, Trustees or appropriate statutory bodies.

2.4 Community room/social activities

A welcome sense of community can result from Residents taking part in social activities together. Friendships grow and there is a greater readiness to support one another through difficult times. We find that some Residents enjoy occasional opportunities to do things together, while others prefer to pursue their interests on their own. There is no pressure therefore to take part in the organised activities.

The community rooms at Bernard Taylor Homes, Leycroft Close and St James Close are available to all Residents and their visitors.

The community rooms are used for a variety of activities including coffee mornings, and Residents are very welcome to use this facility, for example, for birthday celebrations or family lunches at Christmas or other times. Bookings should be made through your Resident Lead and you need to complete a booking form. If your group is made up of representatives of another Charity or organisation, they must have Public Liability Insurance and a risk assessment must be undertaken.

Residents will be responsible for their guests at all times. The Trust reserves the right to refuse a request or cancel a booking without notice should it be against the interest of the Trust or the majority of Residents.

A number of activities and outings for Residents are organised. The Trust provides two free outings per year for all Residents. Information about “in house” events or outings can be put on the notice boards and publicised in our regular newsletter.

2.5 Laundry facilities

Washing machines and tumble driers are provided in communal laundries on all sites. The Resident Lead will show you how to use the machines. **The machines are provided for Residents' personal laundry only** and for the Resident Leads to wash the guest room linen. The laundry facilities can be used between the hours of 7am and 8pm. When using the laundry facilities within these hours, Residents should be respectful of others living close by.

Rotary clothes lines on our sites are owned by the Trust and are for the use of all Residents. They are not for the exclusive use of those flats nearest them.

Washing machines are not permitted in individual flats.

2.6 Overnight visitors/Guest rooms

Guest rooms are available at St James Close, Grays Almshouses and Leycroft Close for a modest price. They are for use by relatives or friends visiting a Resident and may be booked for a maximum of seven days at a time. Should a guest need to stay for more than seven nights, written permission must be obtained from the Chief Officer. Priority will be given to relatives and friends visiting a Resident who is seriously ill.

It may be that you would prefer a friend or relative to stay in your flat overnight and this is acceptable for the occasional night only; but you must provide advance notice to your Resident Lead. The Trustees reserve the right to refuse permission. It is also acceptable for children under 18 to stay for the occasional night.

We have a guest suite protocol, which is displayed in the guest rooms, and ask guests to read and adhere to the following:

- There is **no smoking or vaping** in any part of the guest suite or communal entrance way.
- Respect our Residents and keep any noise to a minimum.
- Ensure you leave the facilities in a clean condition.
- Ensure you take all your possessions with you when you leave, including any fridge contents (if applicable).
- Please strip the bedding after use.
- Ensure you return the key to the Resident Lead.
- Please do not tie up the piper alarm cords.

Visitors are advised that they stay in the Trust's guest rooms at their own risk and any damage, loss of keys etc must be paid for.

2.7 Repairs

The Trust is responsible for all internal and external repairs and maintenance. This work is planned and organised by the Properties Manager and will be undertaken by one of our

regular contractors. For Health and Safety reasons, no other contractors, friends or family members may do this type of work for you.

You will be consulted in advance about arrangements for work to be carried out. It is the responsibility of the Resident and not the Resident Lead to be available for the contractor's appointment. Contractors will not be allowed to enter your home while you are out, unless you have agreed, in advance, to a satisfactory arrangement. An exception will have to be made, however, if an emergency arises.

From time to time, repairs may be necessary outside the planned schedule. Should you identify any repairs or maintenance problems you need to do one of the following:

- If the issue arises within your Resident Lead's working or on-call time (8.00 am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday,) you must either report the matter to your Resident Lead in person, or phone your Resident Lead on their work mobile number.
- If the issue arises outside of the above hours and is <u>not</u> of an urgent nature, then please wait until your Resident Lead is back on duty or on call and contact them in the ways described above.
- If the issue arises outside of the above hours and is of an urgent nature (water pouring through ceiling etc), then you must pull your Piper alarm cord and report the matter to the Deane Helpline.

It is essential that all maintenance issues are reported in this way and not directly to the contractors, Office or the Properties Manager. This system enables you, the Resident, to receive a copy of the reported matter, and to then be logged and prioritised correctly by Trust Staff. This method also ensures that all relevant members of Staff are made aware of the maintenance issue.

No contractors should be admitted unless they can identify themselves.

If an emergency occurs in a flat the Trust reserves the right to enter without notice and to carry out repairs and other necessary preventative measures. We aim to respond to requests for repairs and maintenance as quickly as possible.

2.8 Light bulbs

Residents are responsible for their own light bulbs and these should be energy efficient.

2.9 Internal redecorations

Your flat will be freshly decorated on arrival. All flats are redecorated on a rolling programme by the Trust and you will be consulted with regard to this.

2.10 Cleaning

You are responsible for keeping your own flat clean, including cleaning the windows inside. If cleaning becomes difficult or you cannot clean the windows safely, you may wish to employ a cleaner at your own risk.

If any of the Trust's properties become so unclean, untidy and/or filled with rubbish which could cause a health hazard, the Trust reserves the right to arrange for the flat to be "deep cleaned" and the cost charged to you.

Residents should avoid storage of excess and unnecessary items. Hoarding of excess goods in extreme cases may be grounds for setting aside an appointment.

Cleaning the communal areas is the responsibility of the Trust and the cost of this service forms part of the Weekly Maintenance Contribution.

2.11 Gardens

The communal gardens are for the benefit of all Residents and the cost of maintenance is included in your weekly charges. We hope that you and your visitors will enjoy using them.

2.12 Insurance

The Trust insures the almshouses and its own contents. You are advised to insure your own belongings.

2.13 Television licence & satellite TV

The Trust's current policy is that all Residents under 75 years old pay £7.50 annually. Residents over 75 years old do not pay for their TV Licence.

Communal aerials have been installed on all sites and include satellite TV. Should you want to buy a satellite "package" please ensure it is compatible with the facilities we have installed. **Individual satellite dishes are not permitted at any of the sites.**

Should you experience any problems with your television equipment and an engineer has to be called out but finds no fault with the Trust's equipment, you will need to pay the cost of any call out charge.

2.14 CCTV

The Trust has installed CCTV across its sites for the purpose of monitoring and deterring damage to property and to improve security for the Trust's Residents and Staff. All activity around the premises will be recorded and held by the Trust in full accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. Access to recorded information is restricted and held securely in accordance with the Trust's registration with the Information Commissioners

Office (www.ico.org.uk, telephone 0303 123 1113) as CCTV Operators. Except for law enforcement bodies, images will not be provided to third parties.

Residents are prohibited from having their own CCTV in their flats as this would not comply with the General Data Protection Regulation.

2.15 Appliances

The Trust provides and maintains a freestanding cooker and freestanding fridge in each flat and the Trust's Residents use the communal laundry facilities (see paragraph 2.5).

Chapter Three: Safety in the Home

3.1 Fire precautions

Fire instruction notices must be displayed by your front door. You will be given a Health and Safety induction on arrival. You should ask the Resident Lead if anything is not clear.

There are a range of safety devices including electrical smoke detectors, fire alarms and fire blankets in every flat. All are checked or tested regularly to comply with current regulations. You will be shown how to use the fire blanket.

Fire doors are an integral part of the Trust's fire precautions and are designed to minimise the spread of fire. All fire doors, including those within flats, are to be kept closed at all times and are not to be wedged open.

Personal decorative items are not to be placed in the areas immediately outside of Residents' flats. These areas are exit routes and it is essential that they are kept clear of any items. This is not only to protect the safety of all our Residents but has a serious implication on the Trust's insurance.

Residents' possessions must not be stored in the under stairs cupboards at Bernard Taylor Homes and Leycroft Close. Again, these areas form part of the exit route for Residents and the storage of combustible items is not allowed in such areas. This ruling does not apply to mobility aids. It is permissible for Residents of first floor flats to store their mobility aids in these cupboards as long as they do not impede the Trust's access to services.

Mobility aids can occasionally be left outside of flats. This is permissible as long as they do not block access to your flat, or indeed that of your neighbour.

Residents must not store anything in the loft spaces as this is a fire hazard.

3.2 Avoiding the risk of fire

Please be conscious of the risk of fire, for example, regularly checking at night or before going out that appliances have been fully switched off. It is recommended that at night all electrical appliances are switched off at the socket. It is especially important that those who smoke in their own flat do so responsibly and are aware of the risk of falling asleep or getting too close to curtains while smoking. If Residents could close internal doors at night this would protect you for longer and minimise damage in the case of a fire. Residents should ensure that escape routes inside their flats are kept clear at all times to avoid trip hazards when evacuating.

- Do not wedge doors open or leave chip pans unattended and use ash trays if you smoke.
- Do not attempt to fight any fire. Leave the flat immediately shutting the door behind you.

3.3 Evacuation policy

All Residents will have personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs). The PEEPs will be reviewed annually by the Resident Lead and at the same time, they will check the presence of the fire blanket and the emergency plan fire signs. Residents must take responsibility for keeping their PEEP as accurate as possible and for drawing attention to the Resident Leads any change in circumstance that should prompt a review.

Fire drills will be carried out annually.

3.4 Electrical safety

All electrical goods supplied by the Trust will conform to current regulations and will be checked for safety at appropriate intervals. If in the process of checking those items, the electrician notices that any of your personal appliances are defective or dangerous they are obliged by law to condemn them and remove them from your flat. The Trust will not be responsible for replacing them.

Please keep kettle and toaster flexes away from the cooker rings.

3.5 Security

All Residents are individually and collectively responsible for site security. Please help to ensure the security of the communal areas by keeping doors shut.

Do keep your front door locked at all times.

Do use the spyhole and/or security chain to identify callers before opening the door.

Do not prop open or pin back external doors during those times when these are meant to be locked. External doors remain unlocked in the mornings up to 12 noon.

Do not allow strangers to enter without proof of identity. If you are in doubt pull the emergency cord.

Do not ask any Trust Staff or contractors to take care of money for you.

Residents are encouraged not to dead-lock their front door when they are at home. If the deadlock is engaged it is not possible for Trust Staff to enter in an emergency with their pass keys, resulting in having to 'break in' which invariably becomes a costly exercise. If a Resident becomes incapacitated and entry by key is not possible valuable time can be wasted in aiding the Resident.

Trust Staff will only enter a Resident's flat, without permission, in an emergency situation.

Security can be maintained by using the door chains before opening doors to check on the identity of the caller before disengaging the chain. We would encourage that chains are not left engaged which again can hinder access by Staff in an emergency. Only use the chain when answering the door.

3.6 Master key

Key personnel hold master keys which can open your front door but will only use them in an emergency. You must not fit additional locks or chains without the Trust's consent. Your privacy will be respected. Nobody will enter your home unless: -

- You ask them to.
- There is a suspected emergency relating to your health or requiring essential repairs and/or safety checks.
- There is a suspected breach of Licence conditions.

3.7 Heating

Heating is provided by the Trust and recharged to you via the weekly maintenance contribution charges.

Paraffin or portable gas heaters are strictly forbidden.

3.8 Showers

The Trust changes the shower heads on a regular basis. It is advisable to run your shower for a few moments before using it to comply with legionella policy, or if you have been away for a few days.

Should you have any difficulty getting in or out of the shower please speak to your Resident Lead as there may be aids that can be obtained to make life easier for you.

Chapter four: Terms of occupancy

4.1 Disclosure of Criminal Records

If an applicant has an unspent conviction (whether they volunteer it on their application form or whether the Trust learns of it at a later date) the Trust will carry out a Risk Assessment of whether a risk to others would be created by allowing that applicant to reside at one of our sites. If there is any doubt after the Risk Assessment the applicant will not be accepted as a Resident. This is further endorsed in the Conditions of Residency in the Letter of Appointment that you sign when appointed and given below.

4.2 Letter of Appointment

You will be given a copy of the Letter of Appointment that you signed when you were appointed a Resident. As a beneficiary of an Almshouse Charity, neither you, nor any relative or guest will be a tenant of the Trust or have any legal interest in the accommodation you occupy.

Conditions of Residency

1. *The Trust is entitled to terminate an appointment if any answers supplied in a Resident's application form are untrue or misleading in any respect (for example, due to omitting or mis-stating relevant facts).*

2. *If an applicant has an unspent conviction (whether they volunteer it on their application form or whether the Trust learns of it at a later date) the Trust will carry out a Risk Assessment of whether a risk to others would be created by allowing that applicant to reside at one of our sites. If there is any doubt after the Risk Assessment the applicant will not be accepted as a Resident.*

3. *Residents are asked to occupy the property quietly and with consideration for other Residents. For the benefit of all, you are especially asked to ensure that no noise can be heard in neighbouring flats after 11pm.*

4. *Details of your next of kin or nominated representative and GP should be supplied for inclusion in your Support Plan, and if you have made a Will, where it is kept. Details of whether you have Lasting Power of Attorney in place should also be supplied for inclusion in your Support Plan.*

5. *It is the Resident's responsibility to notify the Trust if their circumstances change. However, unless the income of the Resident[s] was to substantially increase to the extent that they no longer qualify as a beneficiary, the likelihood is that they would be allowed to remain in the dwelling. The Trust reserves the right to review Residents' financial circumstances from time to time.*

6. *Residents must inform the Trust of any change in their circumstances that could affect their entitlement to Housing Benefit or a concessionary TV Licence.*

7. *All Residents must be capable of independent living. This capacity can be maintained with the help of additional support from family, friends or a care package. The Trust has a duty of care to all Residents to ensure that they are not putting themselves or other Residents at risk. Therefore, there may be a time when almshouse accommodation is no longer suitable for a Resident.*

   In the case of a Resident experiencing increased frailty, where practical the Trust will consider adaptations to their flat to make life easier. Residents must seek permission before any adaptations are made.

   The Trust reserves the right to seek medical opinion if concerns have been raised that a Resident's health is deteriorating and could be putting them and other Residents or Staff at risk. This process would involve the Resident, their GP and next of kin. In some circumstances this may necessitate a move from the Trust to a more supported living environment.

8. *The Trust undertakes to carry out all repairs, including internal and external redecoration. Residents are not allowed to make any structural alterations, nor to alter the plumbing or electrical installations without prior consent of the Trust. All defects which become apparent in the flat should be reported to the Resident Lead.*

9. *There may be circumstances, for example during extensive refurbishment, when the Trust will need to ask a Resident(s) to vacate their flat and move temporarily to another flat. The Trust reserves the right to do so, after full consultation with the Resident.*

10. *Whilst at all times the Trust will respect the privacy of Residents it is a condition of residency that Residents should allow reasonable access to their flats for repairs and redecoration to be carried out and for inspection if appropriate.*

11. *The use of paraffin oil and portable gas heaters is strictly prohibited. Please see the Resident Lead if you require additional heating.*

12. *Residents should keep their flats clean and tidy and avoid storage of excess or unnecessary items. Hoarding of excess goods in extreme cases may be grounds for setting aside an appointment.*

13. *Smoking and vaping are prohibited in all common and communal areas. See Section on Smoking and Vaping in the Residents Handbook.*

14. *Residents must live in their flats as their permanent residence and should not be absent from their flat for more than a total of 28 days in any one year without the prior consent of the Chief Officer. Residents should inform the Resident Lead of any short absences in advance. This includes, for safety reasons in an emergency, any overnight absences.*

15. *No pets are allowed except for a caged bird or fish in a tank.*

16. *Neither the almshouse nor its gardens may be used as a place of business either from where to conduct business or to store items concerned with running a business.*

17. *If you have a friend or relative stay on occasion overnight in your flat you must inform the Resident Lead for safety purposes. Guest rooms are available at a modest price for relatives or friends visiting for longer periods but not normally exceeding seven days. While staying in a guest room, or with you, visitors will be subject to the conditions contained in this Letter of Appointment and the Guest Room Protocol that is displayed in the guest room.*

18. *Should a Resident wish to leave his/her dwelling to live elsewhere, not less than two weeks' notice in writing must be given to the Chief Officer. Maintenance contributions remain payable until the notice period expires and the flat is vacated and cleared of furniture and possessions.*

19. *When a Resident vacates their flat for whatever reason, all items belonging to the Resident should be removed forthwith. Weekly maintenance contributions and utility bills must be paid up to the departure date. Should a Resident ask to vacate the dwelling, the weekly maintenance contribution must be paid to the end of the notice period. Piper pendants must be returned to the Resident Lead.*

20. *The cost associated with the removal of any items belonging to a Resident who has vacated their flat will be charged to the Resident.*

21. *The Trust retains the power to set aside a Resident's appointment e.g. in the case of serious misconduct, non-payment of Weekly Maintenance Charges, a serious breach of the regulations, in any of the circumstances described in the Trust's Scheme, or if the Resident is no longer a qualified beneficiary or is no longer able to live independently.*

22. *Taunton Heritage Trust is registered as a social housing provider with the Regulator of Social Housing. Your attention is drawn to the Complaints Procedure set out in the Residents Handbook and to the availability of the Independent Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is available to resolve disputes and complaints that cannot be settled by the Trust's own complaints procedure.*

23. *The only site that has Residents parking is Leycroft Close.*

24. *There is / is no storage/charging facility for mobility scooters at …..* (to be amended according to site).

    Please see information about seeking permission to store and charge a mobility scooter in the Residents Handbook

25. It is a condition of occupancy that a new Resident should sign and return a copy of this 'Letter of Appointment', before taking up residence, to signify agreement to abide by the above and that they have read and agree to comply with the terms set out in the Residents Handbook. The Letter of Appointment, together with the terms set out in the Resident's Handbook, form your agreement with the Taunton Heritage Trust.

4.3 Keys

You will be given two keys to your flat when you move in. A spare key will be held in the office. These are security keys and if you do require more than two keys you will need to send a written request to the office stating your reasons for needing extra keys. They can only be obtained from the supplier by the Trust. The cost of obtaining the additional key will be charged to the Resident.

4.4 Weekly Maintenance Contributions

All charges are payable two weeks in advance. Payment is made by Direct Debit. The Trust reviews the charges annually and when an increase is required you will be given at least one month's notice of the new amount in writing.

The weekly maintenance contribution covers:

- the rent element
- all utility costs (except for Bernard Taylor Homes flats which are metered separately for electricity)
- service charge (covers the cost of repairs and maintenance, internal and external decoration, and the upkeep of communal areas)

The rent and service charge elements are currently eligible for Housing Benefit if Residents qualify (see paragraph 4.6).

Residents can rent a parking and charging station for their mobility scooter (see paragraph 6.3).

If you are struggling to pay your Weekly Maintenance Charges, or any other bills, please do not ignore the problem. The sooner you talk to us the sooner we can help. Please speak to the Chief Officer, who will treat the matter sensitively and in confidence. If appropriate we can put you in touch with other sources of help.

4.5 Council Tax

You are responsible for paying Council Tax and on taking up residence you must inform Somerset West and Taunton Council of your new address. You may be entitled to some relief with the cost of this charge depending on your circumstances.

4.6 Housing benefits

If you are on a low income and have little or no capital, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit to help with your housing costs. Please contact The Housing Benefit Team, Somerset West and Taunton Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, telephone 0300 304 8000 for advice. It is important that you inform your local benefits office if there are changes in your financial circumstances as they have the power to demand reimbursement in the event of an over-payment.

Eligibility for state benefits changes from time to time. If you need advice on state benefits, you should consult Citizens Advice or Age UK.

4.7 Noise

Please be considerate to your neighbours with regard to the use of TV and radios. For the benefit of all, Residents are asked to ensure that no noise can be heard in neighbouring flats after 11.00 pm. Should you find that a neighbour or their visitors are noisy, please speak to them yourself in the first instance as they may not realise there is a problem. If you are unable to resolve the situation, you should inform the Resident Lead who will try to deal with the issue, referring it to the Chief Officer if necessary.

4.8 Problems with neighbours

We hope that living in your almshouse flat will be a positive experience and part of that experience is the normal give and take of everyday life. Everyone has the right to enjoy their life in their own way as long as it does not annoy or disturb others. Although this section and the following sections are about problems and how to resolve them it is important not to lose sight of the benefits of living in a community with a strong sense of identity.

As with all independent living, Residents must take responsibility for resolving any personal disputes with other Residents. Should you encounter a problem where you consider a neighbour is displaying anti-social behaviour, please speak to your neighbour about it first. If you are unable to resolve the matter, speak to the Resident Lead. The Resident Lead will try to resolve the issue with both parties, but if unable to do so, may involve the Chief Officer and consider the involvement of a mediation service. If there is no improvement, the Trustees will be informed and, if the problem persists, the Residents may be given notice to leave.

4.9 Anti-social behaviour

The Trust has a zero-tolerance policy regarding anti-social behaviour. This means any behaviour that is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance and which directly or indirectly relates to or affects Trustees, Staff, Residents, visitors and external neighbours. It is imperative that we all treat each other with respect.

Any Resident who wishes to complain about anti-social behaviour that affects them should speak to the Resident Lead who will investigate it. If it transpires that a Resident is in breach of their Letter of Appointment or the guidelines in this handbook, warnings will be given and if ignored, this could result in an appointment being terminated.

Should the complaint be about visitors or other outside bodies then an anti-social behaviour order may be sought on behalf of one or all of the Residents. Should the complaint be about a member of Staff or Trustee, the Trust's disciplinary procedures may be followed.

4.10 Preventing abuse of Residents

No Resident should have their dignity or quality of life damaged through abuse or fear of abuse. Abuse can take a number of forms e.g. physical, sexual, emotional, discriminatory, neglect or financial. Should you consider that a member of Staff or another Resident or a visitor has abused you in any way, you should contact the Chief Officer immediately, who will investigate your complaint. Should someone outside the Trust's control abuse you, we will help and support you as necessary through any appropriate investigation.

4.11 Absence from home

If you go away for any period, please inform the Trust of your temporary address and contact phone number. Should you return earlier than planned, please inform the Resident Lead immediately you get home as it is important in an emergency to know if any Residents are away.

You are expected to be in full time occupation of your almshouse and extended periods away during the year might lead the Trust to conclude that you have less need for almshouse accommodation than others. If you plan to be away from your dwelling for a period of more than 28 days in any one year, please would you explain the circumstances to the Chief Officer and ask permission.

4.12 Residents consultation

The Trust aims to seek your comments on any important changes that may affect you. Your views will be considered as part of any consultation process. If the change is due to a statutory compliance Residents will be advised but not consulted. Should you wish to raise any points you should speak to the Chief Officer. Coffee mornings are held at which members of Staff and Trustees attend on a regular basis.

4.13 Pets

We understand that pets can provide a lot of pleasure and company, but problems can often arise from having them in flats. For this reason, Residents are not allowed to have a dog or cat, although a caged bird or fish in a tank is permitted.

The Trust's Policy on Residing and Visiting Pets is given below.

TAUNTON HERITAGE TRUST
Policy on Residing and Visiting Pets

1. ***Residing pets***
   Taunton Heritage Trust recognises the health and well-being benefits that owning a pet can bring to its Residents but has a duty to consider the nuisance and noise impact that some pets could have on other Residents. For this reason, the only pets that the Trust will allow is one or two birds in a cage or fish in a small tank, provided the Resident meets the following legal requirements:

   All pets must have:

   - *Adequate access to food and water*
   - *Protection from suffering and disease*
   - *A suitable environment to live in*

   Pets are the responsibility of the Resident. Taunton Heritage Trust is not responsible for caring or making arrangements for the care of Residents' pets. Residents must make arrangements for pets to be cared for in the event of ill-health, hospitalisation, holidays and emergencies.

   If the Trust receives an application from a potential Resident with an assistance dog the application will be considered on its merit.

2. ***Visiting pets***
   The Trust welcomes visiting pets, but they must be healthy, well-behaved, quiet and supervised at all times, so that they do not disturb other Residents.

   The following conditions must be observed:

   - *Visitors' pets are permitted in flats as part of a visit only, and with the owner present. Visiting pets are not to be kept in flats overnight*
   - *Residents will be responsible for the control and behaviour of any pet that visits them, and Staff, contractors and other visitors must not be at risk when entering a flat which has a visiting pet*
   - *Visitors' dogs must be kept on a lead at all times, when walking through the site*
   - *Visitors' pets must not be let out on their own. This includes the communal landings, stairwells and gardens*
   - *Visitors' pets must not be allowed to damage property. The cost of repairing any damage to Trust property caused by a visiting pet will be recharged to the Resident*
   - *All animal faeces must be picked up and disposed of immediately*

- *Animal food must not be left outside the property as this could attract vermin*

3. ***Contractors' dogs***
   Under certain circumstances and following consultation with staff, the Trust will allow a contractor to bring a healthy, well behaved and quiet dog on to the site. It is the contractor's responsibility to supervise the dog at all times and keep it under control. It must not be allowed to roam freely. All dog faeces must be picked up and disposed of immediately and dog food must not be left out, as this could attract vermin.

4.14 Smoking and vaping

Smoking and vaping are allowed inside your flat but is not permitted in the following areas of the Trust's premises: office, laundry rooms, communal corridors, stairways, community rooms, communal toilets, entrances/exits and communal gardens, at any time. We ask that you do not smoke or vape in your flat when members of Staff, Trustees or contractors visit as the Trust has a duty of care to protect these people from passive smoking/vaping.

4.15 Transfers

A request for a transfer to an alternative Trust flat will only be considered on the grounds of mobility/health reasons. An application should be made in writing to the Chief Officer. Any removal costs will be met at your own expense.

4.16 Moving out

If you wish to move out of your flat you must give the Trust two weeks written notice. During this period you will be liable for your weekly payments in full even if you have already moved.

You or your representatives will be responsible for clearing the flat of all your personal possessions. This includes any mobility aids that you introduce to the flat. Please ensure that your pendant alarm is left behind or given to your Resident Lead as it is programmed exclusively for your flat. A charge will be made if the pendant is not left.

Subject to usual wear and tear, it is expected that any vacant flat would be left in the condition in which it was found. The Trust reserves the right to charge for any expense unnecessarily incurred for any work required or the clearance of any items/rubbish left behind.

Should the Trust require you to move to another flat while major repairs or alterations are taking place, you will normally be given a period of notice unless it is as a result of an emergency. Any moves of this nature will be at the Trust's expense.

All Residents must be capable of independent living. This capacity can be maintained with the help of additional support from family, friends or a care package. The Trust has a duty of care to all Residents to ensure that they are not putting themselves or other Residents at risk. Therefore, there may be a time when almshouse accommodation is no longer suitable for a Resident.

In the case of a Resident experiencing increased frailty, where practical the Trust will consider adaptations to their flat to make life easier. Residents must seek permission before any adaptations are made.

The Trust reserves the right to seek medical opinion if concerns have been raised that a Resident's health is deteriorating and could be putting them and other Residents or Staff at risk. This process would involve the Resident, their GP and next of kin. In some circumstances this may necessitate a move from the Trust to a more supported living environment.

4.17 Repossession

The Trust can only repossess your home by setting aside your Letter of Appointment if:

- A Resident persistently and without reasonable excuse disregards the terms of occupancy contained in their letter of appointment/Residents' handbook.
- A Resident's circumstances change so that you cease to be eligible to be a Resident.
- A Resident's circumstances mean that the Trust is no longer able to exercise its duty of care.

4.18 Gifts

Staff may accept small gifts such as chocolates, wine, flowers etc.

It is the Trust's 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 Chief Officer. All such matters will be dealt with sensitively.

If on the death of a Resident their family wishes to make a gift, it should be made to the Trust and not to a member of Staff or a Trustee.

All personal gifts will be recorded in the gifts register held in the office.

4.19 Business activities

Neither the flats nor the grounds may be used as a place of business either from where to conduct business or store items relating to a business.

4.20 Complaints

Should you have a complaint about any of the services we provide, you should contact the Office in the first instance, who if necessary will take the matter to the Chief Officer. Your complaint will be investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you feel the complaint has not been handled appropriately, you have the right to put your complaint in writing to the Chairman of the Trustees and ask to see him or her. You will, if you wish to exercise that right, be entitled to be accompanied by a friend or another person. The Trustees will be informed of all formal complaints made and their outcome.

If after raising the issue with the Chairman, you consider that your complaint has not been properly handled, you may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at PO Box 152, Liverpool L3£ 7WQ. Telephone number: 0300 111 3000, email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk. The Ombudsman will only be able to consider a complaint if they are satisfied that the Trust's complaints procedure outlined above has been fully exhausted and that the complaint falls within their jurisdiction.

Chapter five: Health

5.1 Doctor and Dentist

If you do not have a General Practitioner (GP), the Resident Lead will be able to give you the names of GP practices in the neighbourhood. The name of your GP must be given to the Resident Lead as part of your Support Plan.

You have every right to see your doctor, nurse or other carer in confidence and to keep your medical affairs entirely to yourself if you wish. However, if you have a chronic health problem, it would be advisable, and you might feel safer, for the Resident Lead to be made aware of it so that appropriate action can be taken in an emergency. Anything you tell the Resident Lead will be kept in confidence within the Trust. However, in some circumstances, it may be necessary for them to advise the Chief Officer, Trustees or appropriate statutory bodies.

5.2 Information for Health Professionals and Care Providers

All residents are given a copy of a laminated sheet which they must give to a health professional or care worker if they receive medical treatment or are hospitalised. The sheet is given below for your information. Please ask the office if you need a copy of the laminated sheet.

Taunton Heritage Trust

Huish Homes Magdalene Street Taunton Somerset TA1 1SG

Tel: 01823 335348 (9am – 12 noon)
E: info@tauntonheritagetrust.org.uk

Information for health professionals and care providers

Residents
Our Residents live independently in their own homes. They are responsible for obtaining their own care package to enable them to maintain independence. Every flat is provided with a piper alarm system for 24-hour support.

Resident Leads
Our Resident Leads are on duty from 8.30am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday and provide a "good neighbour" role only. They DO NOT provide personal care or medical support. The Resident Leads do not run errands for Residents.

Medication
Our Resident Leads are not allowed to give or supervise medication. If there is any doubt about the Resident's cognitive function, professional support must be provided at pill-taking times.

Risk of Falls
Resident Leads are not qualified to pick up Residents who have fallen. If the Resident Lead is aware of a fall, the emergency responder will be called. If a fall occurs and the Resident Lead is unaware of it, the Resident may not be found until the next weekday morning.

Care Quality Commission
We are NOT registered with the CQC

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT WHEN A RESIDENT OF THE TAUNTON HERITAGE TRUST HAS RECEIVED MEDICAL TREATMENT OR BEEN HOSPITALISED, THAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF LIVING WITHOUT SUPPORT WHEN THEY RETURN HOME OR HAVE THE APPROPRIATE CARE PACKAGE IN PLACE BEFORE GOING HOME. THIS IS FOR THE HEALTH & SAFETY OF ALL RESIDENTS AND STAFF OF THE TRUST.

5.3 Medication

Taunton Heritage Trust Staff are not allowed to assist you with taking medication or assist with any medical care as outlined in our Health and Safety Policy.

5.4 Mobility problems

There are a number of causes of reduced mobility and it is advisable to discuss these with your GP. There are many aids available to help make life easier and the Resident Leads can give you information about them.

Should you require any adaptations to your flat to help you with your mobility, please speak to your Resident Lead in the first instance.

5.5 Mobility aids

All Residents are responsible for the loan/purchase and return of their mobility aids.

5.6 Independent living

It is a requirement of almshouse Residents that they are capable of independent living (See paragraph 4.16 for more information). It is possible to maintain this with the help of a care package. All Residents are responsible for organising and funding their own care package if necessary. The Resident Lead can advise you or your family on how to apply for this.

5.7 Medical opinion

The Trust reserves the right to seek medical opinion if it is considered that you are no longer coping independently (See paragraph 4.16 for more information).

Chapter six: General information

6.1 Alterations to accommodation

If you want any minor alterations to your flat made you must discuss the work first with the Properties Manager. Only approved contractors may do the work. Permission may be refused if the Trust considers that the alteration will reduce the amenities for subsequent occupants. However, if you live in part of a listed building some alterations may not be possible.

6.2 Car parking

Resident car parking is only available at Leycroft Close in clearly designated areas.
At Bernard Taylor Homes and Huish Homes there is **no Resident parking**. The limited parking on site is reserved specifically for:

- Health and care workers visiting our Residents
- Emergency vehicles coming to the site
- Taunton Heritage Trust contractors
- Staff and Trustees

Residents are permitted to park on site for up to 30 minutes to pick up and drop off.
Resident's visitors are also permitted to park on site for up to 30 minutes to pick up and drop off.

There is no car parking at Grays Almshouses and St James Close.

Visitors must not block access for emergency vehicles.

All vehicles are parked at the owner's risk.

6.3 Battery operated mobility scooters/wheelchairs, motorbikes and bicycles

Covered storage areas have been built to store mobility scooters at Bernard Taylor Homes, Leycroft Close and St James Close. Mobility scooters are not allowed to be stored in individual flats. Designated spaces are allocated to Residents as appropriate, for which an additional weekly charge will be made. Residents who are thinking of buying a scooter must consult the Office staff in advance to ensure the availability of a parking space. For safety reasons the Trust will not allow mobility scooters, wheelchairs or mobility aids to be parked in corridors or other communal areas. Scooters must be fully insured, and parking will be at the owner's risk.

You will only be able to store your scooter when you have received and signed a formal agreement outlining the terms and conditions for doing so and provided the office with a

copy of the insurance document. On annual renewal of your policy please supply a copy to the office.

Residents may be able to park motorbikes on some of our sites, if space permits, but must seek permission in advance from the office, who will advise where you may park it. Motorbikes will be parked on site at the owner's risk and must not block emergency access/exit, pathways or cause a nuisance to other Residents.

There is a dedicated safe storage shed at Leycroft Close for bicycles, where they can be chained up by Residents, using their own locking devices. Bicycles parked in the storage shed are stored here at the owner's risk. If a bicycle is to be parked at one of the other sites the Resident should ask their Resident Lead for advice on where they can safely leave it, and must secure it with their own locking device. Again, bicycles left on any site will be at the owner's risk.

6.4 Wills/Power of Attorney

The Trust strongly encourages you to make a Will if you have not already done so. If you have furniture and other items you wish to go to specified people or places these should be included in the Will. You will be asked in the Support Plan whether you have made a Will, where it is lodged and whether you have made arrangements to appoint someone as Power of Attorney. The Trust also strongly recommends that Residents arrange for a Power of Attorney to be put in place. Unfortunately, statistics show that one in five of the over 80s is diagnosed with some form of dementia, making the need for a Power of Attorney to be executed of increasing importance. Papers relating to your financial affairs should be easily accessible to the person who has Power of Attorney. You should consult a Solicitor to advise you on these processes. Trust Staff are not able to sign any part of these documents as witnesses.

Residents should be aware that if they die without making a Will, all keyholders will be asked to return their keys to the office. Staff will use all reasonable endeavours to find the person who is to have legal responsibility for administering the estate under the laws of Intestacy. This may include involving the Trust's solicitor, the cost of which will be borne by the Resident's estate. Until legal responsibility has been established no access will be allowed to the flat.

6.5 Rubbish

Communal rubbish bins are provided for you. The Resident Lead will show you where they are located and tell you the collection arrangements. Please make sure that the rubbish area is kept clean and tidy and that all kitchen refuse is wrapped before putting it in the bin.

The refuse service will not dispose of large items such as furniture, ornaments etc. Please therefore do not leave these items at the bins and instead make your own arrangements to

take them to the Taunton (Priorswood) Recycling Centre or to pay Somerset Waste Partnership to collect the items www.somersetwaste.gov.uk, telephone 0300 3048000. Please do not deposit anything other than refuse at/in the bins.

To avoid a build-up of fat blocking drains you must make sure that you are careful when disposing of fat, and that it is not poured down your kitchen sink.

6.6 Recycling

There are different recycling arrangements on each site. Your Resident Lead will explain the arrangements to you. Please note that some types of materials cannot be recycled because of restrictions imposed on us by Somerset Waste Partnership.

6.7 Winter gritting in freezing and snow conditions

The Trust has salt/grit bins on all sites and Residents are welcome to clear snow and/or apply the salt/grit at their own risk.

The Trust will endeavour to grit the footpaths using our contractors, but their availability cannot be assured. Due to time constraints, their efforts will be confined to the priority areas.

It is important that if Residents wish to apply the salt/grit they confine the gritting to areas within the boundary and not to treat the highway pavements. Please do not treat by applying warm or hot water.

If Residents notice the salt/grit bins are running low please inform your Resident Lead, who will notify the Properties Manager.

When areas are gritted Residents should refrain from using untreated routes and take extra care when moving about the site. You should be aware that, even when areas are treated, there may still be a slip hazard.

6.8 Policies and Procedures

The Trust has a range of detailed operating Policies and Procedures. Should you want to see any of these please ask the Chief Officer. The Trust's Health and Safety Policy Statement is shown below.

Health and Safety Policy Statement

1 Introduction

This is a statement of policy by the Taunton Heritage Trust about its intentions, organisation and arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of its employees, residents, visitors and contractors, whilst in the offices, communal areas and residents' accommodation.

Supplementary to this general policy statement, there will be specific policies and procedures describing in detail health and safety provisions in each part of the Trust.

2 Statement of intent

It is the policy of the Trust to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees while they are at work, and of others who may be affected by the Trust's undertakings, and to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other allied relevant legislation, as appropriate.

3 Objectives

In order to achieve compliance with the statement of policy the Trust has the following objectives:

- To set and maintain high standards for health, safety and the protection of the environment at its offices and in the residents' almshouses
- To identify risks and set in place programmes to remove or reduce these risks
- To ensure that these standards are communicated to all employees, residents and visitors
- To ensure that all personnel are given the appropriate equipment, necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to work in a safe manner

- To ensure that the appropriate resources are made available to enable the policy to be implemented.

4 Responsibilities

To ensure the prevention of ill health, the avoidance of accidents and the promotion of safe and healthy workplaces, the following responsibilities have been established:

4.1 Board of Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for establishing the overall Health and Safety Policy for the Trust and have ultimate responsibility for all health and safety matters.

This involves:

- The promotion of good practice within health and safety
- The allocation of necessary resources
- The monitoring of the implementation of health and safety practice.

4.2 **The Chief Officer,** authorised through the board of Trustees, has personal responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy and will:

- Keep the Health and Safety Policy under review, bringing to the Trustees' attention any faults or areas of weakness in the policy and ensuring that it is revised as and when necessary
- Monitor the Policy's implementation, set targets or objectives where appropriate and report progress to the board
- Ensure the dissemination and discussion of relevant information on health and safety
- Report details to the board of Trustees where an accident/incident has occurred which may result in prosecution
- Make annual reports to the board of Trustees on the management of health and safety at the Trust.

4.3 **The Properties Manager**

Is responsible for:

- The practical implementation of the Health and Safety Policy, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other relevant legislation
- Ensuring that the operations under his/her control, so far as is reasonably practical, are conducted without detriment to the health and safety of employees or others who may be affected by their activities
- Ensuring that his/her area of responsibility is subject to risk assessment, regular inspections and audits
- Ensuring that all accidents, incidents and near misses, within his/her area of responsibility, are reported to the Trustees reviewing all such reports and ensuring, where appropriate, that a full investigation is carried out and appropriate remedial action taken, where necessary.

4.4 **Individual Responsibilities**

All employees are required to:

- Co-operate in implementing the requirements of the Health and Safety Policy, legislation, related codes of practice and safety instructions
- Refrain from doing anything which constitutes a danger to themselves or others
- Bring to the immediate attention of their line manager/supervisor any situations or practices that are noted which might lead to injuries or ill health
- Ensure that any equipment issued to them, or for which they are responsible, is correctly used and properly stored
- Be responsible for good housekeeping in the area in which they are working
- Report all accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses, in accordance with the Trusts guidance.

5 Contractors

All contractors working in the Trust's property are required to comply with appropriate rules and regulations governing their work activities. Contractors are legally responsible for their own workforce and for ensuring that their work is carried out in a safe manner.

6 Communication

The name of the person designated with the responsibility for health and safety is to be prominently displayed for the information of all employees. The policy statement will also be prominently displayed for the information of all employees, residents and visitors.

7 Consultation and Training

The Board of Trustees and the are committed to involving employees at all levels in the maintenance of health and safety standards and to provide them with adequate information, instruction and training. External health and safety consultants will be used to provide professional health, safety, environmental and occupational advice, as required.

8 Policy Review

The effectiveness of this general policy statement and other specific policies in use throughout the Trust will be subject to annual review by the Trust.

9 This policy has been approved for issue by the Board of Trustees of the Taunton Heritage Trust

Name ..... J R. Ruff .....

Signature ..... J Ruff .....

Date ..... 06/03/2018 .....

POLICY APPROVED DATE: 06/03/2018

NEXT REVIEW DATE: 05/03/2019

6.9 Photographs

On occasion the Trust may want to take photographs which may feature some of our Residents. The photos may be used for our newsletter or for promoting the Trust via our website or Social Media. Photographs will not be published without the consent of all individuals in the photo. Any photos that the Trust holds relating to you will only be used for the purpose for which it was supplied. Your photos will be stored and treated in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation.

6.10 Social Media

Those Residents using social media, such as Facebook and Twitter are reminded that no defamatory, derogatory or discriminatory views should be expressed via social media about the Trust, its Trustees, other Residents or Staff.

6.11 Frequently asked questions

The following section has been compiled by the Trust to provide quick, concise answers to questions that are frequently asked by Residents.

Can I have a pet in my flat?
We understand that pets can provide a lot of pleasure and company, but problems can often arise from having them in flats. For this reason, Residents are not allowed to have a dog or cat, although a caged bird or fish in a tank is permitted.

Is the Resident Lead able to collect my prescriptions?
No, we are sorry, but the Resident Lead is unable to do this.

Is the Resident Lead able to do my shopping?
No, we are sorry, but the Resident Lead is unable to do this.

Who is responsible for replacing the light bulbs in my flat?
Residents are responsible for replacing the light bulbs in their own flats. If a Resident is unable to change their lightbulb safely, please speak to the Resident Lead.

Who arranges for a telephone line for my flat?
Residents are responsible for making their own arrangements for a telephone in their flat, through their chosen provider.

Who is responsible for cleaning the windows of my flat?
The Trust is responsible for cleaning the outside of windows. Residents are responsible for internal window cleaning.

Does the Trust provide mobility aids?
The Trust does not provide mobility aid. Residents are responsible for the purchase/loan of their own mobility aids and for returning them when they are no longer needed. The Resident Leads can help you source these items.

Are Residents allowed to store items in the communal cupboards?
Some of our sites have communal storage cupboards. These are for the storage of mobility aids for those Residents living in first floor flats. This is on a first come first served basis, and property is stored at your own risk. Please ensure that items do not impede Trust access to services.

What white goods are supplied by the Trust?
The Trust provides and maintains the following white goods – freestanding cooker and freestanding fridge. Some kitchens have a space which may allow you to purchase your own freezer or you might like to consider a small, counter top model.

How do the communal laundry facilities work?
There is no rota system and you are welcome to use the laundry facilities for your own personal laundry between the hours of 7am and 8pm. When using the laundry facilities within these hours please be respectful of others living close by. Where there are rotary clothes lines these are for the use of all Residents.

Who is responsible for the gardens?
The Trust is responsible for the upkeep of all communal grounds and gardens. There are some areas where Residents can do some gardening, and this is by prior agreement with the Trust.

Who is responsible for internal redecoration of flats?
All flats are refurbished before a Resident moves into their flat. The Trust is responsible for the internal redecoration of the flat, including upgrade of kitchens, flooring etc, and this is done on a rolling programme.

Are Residents allowed to make alterations to their flats?
Residents are not allowed to make any alterations to their flats. If a Resident needs to make a change to ease mobility (introduce grab rails etc), they must speak to the Properties Manager who will organise this for you.

Are residents allowed to put up satellite dishes?
The flats are wired for the basic Sky package only. The Trust does not allow satellite dishes on individual flats.

How many keys are Residents allocated with?
Residents are issued with two keys to their flat on arrival. If a third key is required, please apply in writing to the Office stating the reason. An additional key will be ordered, and the cost charged to the Resident.

Can I have someone to stay over in my flat?
It is possible for a friend or relative to stay in your flat overnight and this is acceptable for the occasional night only; but you must provide advance notice to your Resident Lead. The Trustees reserve the right to refuse permission. It is also acceptable for children under 18 to stay for the occasional night. For longer stays your visitor can use one of our guest rooms.

How do I book one of the guest rooms?
Guest rooms are available at St James Close, Grays Almshouses and Leycroft Close for a modest price. They are for use by relatives or friends visiting a Resident and may be booked

for a maximum of seven days at a time. Please book through your Resident Lead. Should a guest need to stay for more than seven nights, written permission must be obtained from the Chief Officer. Priority will be given to relatives and friends visiting a Resident who is seriously ill.

Are there any social events for Residents?
Coffee mornings are held on a weekly basis in the community rooms at Leycroft Close and Bernard Taylor Homes. Residents from all sites are welcome to attend either coffee morning. The Resident Leads also arrange events such as fish and chip suppers, race nights, bingo and raffles. Please notify your Resident Lead if you have a suggestion for an event. Please speak to your Resident Lead to find out what events are currently planned. The Trust organises and pays for two outings a year.

Can Residents use the community rooms for their own personal events?
Our community rooms, where provided, are for the use of all Residents and their visitors, for social and recreational activities or simply as a place to meet and talk at any time. If you would like to book one of the community rooms for a private party or event you will need to complete a 'Request for Resident's booking of Community Room' form which your Resident Lead can supply you with. Residents will be responsible for their guests at all times. The Trustees reserve the right to refuse a request or cancel a booking without notice should it be against the interest of the Trust or the majority of Residents.

Can I book one of the community rooms for an outside group/organisation in which I am involved?
These rooms are not available to outside bodies, but meetings of groups/organisations may be organised provided that at least one Resident is involved, and the office has given approval in advance. Please ask the Resident Lead for advice. Residents will be responsible for their guests at all times. The Trustees reserve the right to refuse a request or cancel a booking without notice should it be against the interest of the Trust or the majority of Residents.

Does the Trust get involved in personal disputes between Residents?
The Trust provides a friendly, community environment. As with all independent living, Residents should take responsibility for resolving any personal disputes with other Residents. The Trust would only get involved in a Resident's personal dispute as a last resort.

Will a Resident ever have to leave their flat due to ill health?
The Trust will do everything to support a Resident during a period of ill health, however it is a condition of residency that Residents must be capable of independent living. This can be maintained with the help of a care package. If a circumstance arises where the Trust considers a Resident's health is putting them and other Residents at risk, we do reserve the right to seek medical opinion, to ensure the best possible outcome for the individual. In some circumstances this may necessitate a move to a more supported living environment.

What should I do if I am struggling to pay my Weekly Maintenance Charges or any other bills?

Please do not ignore the problem. The sooner you talk to us the sooner we can help. Please ask to see the Chief Officer who will treat the matter sensitively and in confidence. If appropriate we can put you in touch with other sources of help.

Do Residents have the opportunity to feedback their views or suggestions to the Trust?

There is a suggestion box in the office, which you are most welcome to use at any time. The Staff will attend Residents' coffee mornings on occasion, with other members of Staff, to discuss any issues raised via the suggestions box. If there is something we have done well please let us know as it nice to know when we get things right! We sincerely hope that you do not have any complaints about the Trust but if you do there is a complaints procedure which you can read about in paragraph 4.20.

Is there a newsletter?

The office produces a quarterly newsletter with information, articles and news. Residents are most welcome to suggest content that they would like to see included.

What do I do if I have a friend who is interested in living at Taunton Heritage Trust?

Please let the office know and we will speak to your friend and send them an application pack.

Will Residents get to meet the Trustees?

All our Trustees are volunteers. There are plenty of opportunities to meet them. The Trustees attend two coffee mornings a year at Leycroft Close and Bernard Taylor Homes, to which all Residents are invited, and attend when the Mayor visits in December to give out the annual gifts to residents. Some of our Trustees attend our social events and outings.

We hope this section covers any questions that you may have. If you have any other queries or concerns please speak to your Resident Lead in the first instance.