

RAVENSTONE HOSPITAL ALMS HOUSES

Ravenstone Court, Hospital Lane
Ravenstone, Coalville LE67 2BX

Handbook for Residents



Charity Number 217605

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Ravenstone Hospital Almshouses

Sheltered Community Housing

Independent Living for Elderly Ladies

Since 1729 Ravenstone Hospital has offered affordable housing for independent elderly ladies. We are recognized for the high quality of our community and for the excellence of our resident services.

We understand that older people can live independently as they age if they are in housing that provides much more than just shelter.

Understanding the key ingredients for a successful community is one that not only offers the safeguard of a warden onsite but is rich with activity and social interaction.

Here Residents can enjoy friends, take part in informal group activities, participate in day trips, go shopping and entertain their own visitors in award winning surroundings.

The Postal Address is

Flat No. --

Ravenstone Court

Hospital Lane

Ravenstone

Leicestershire LE67 2BX

Chapter One

Almshouses

The Almshouses are unfurnished dwellings designed with the needs of single occupants in mind. The aim is to provide convenient and comfortable accommodation in a setting which allows Residents to come and go as they please.

Each of the 25 flats offers the following accommodation:

- Sitting room
- Kitchen with fitted units
- Bedroom
- Bathroom with basin, WC, shower or bath
- Storeroom/Pantry cupboard

Almshouses provide security and Residents are encouraged to make friends and to share a wider social life through the use of the Chapel and gardens.

An important factor in the Almshouses is the provision of heat and smoke detectors in every unit, alongside access to warden support when required. In addition there are many other provisions designed to make life as easy as possible and to encourage neighbours to help and support one another.

Trustee Body

The Ravenstone Hospital Almshouse Charity is run in accordance with the wishes of the founder, as confirmed by schemes approved by the Charity Commission.

The latest scheme ordered by the Charity Commissioners was made in 1960 and revised in 2001 instructing that there should be 2 Trustees nominated by the District Council and ten appointed from the local district from time to time (standing for a period of four years) as recommended by the existing Trustees to administer the Charity. The Scheme defines the area of benefit, the management of investments and cash and other operational matters. The Trustees are responsible for the well-being of the Residents, the upkeep of the buildings and completing an annual report which includes the names of all Trustees, any major works to the property and other important activities.

In this responsibility the Trustees are assisted by the Clerk who is a professional salaried person who carries out the day-to-day administrative role. The Trustees meet formally at least twice yearly and have subsidiary meetings to discuss financial matters and interview prospective Residents.

The Charity's governing terms provide for the appointment of a Chaplain, a role that has traditionally been held by the Vicar of Saint Michael and All Angels Parish Church. The Chaplain is responsible for organising regular services in the Chapel, which are open to both almshouse residents and members of the wider parish community. In the absence of a current vicar, the position remains unfilled, and any future appointment would be extended by invitation in line with the Church's arrangements rather than determined by the Charity.

Chapter Two

Services Provided

1. The Warden

The Warden at Ravenstone Court plays a central role in the safe, smooth, and compassionate day-to-day running of the almshouses. The position directly supports the charity's aim of providing secure, well-managed housing for residents, many of whom may be older or vulnerable.

The Warden provides a reassuring presence, overseeing security, cleanliness, and the general condition of the buildings and grounds. They also act as the main point of contact for property-related matters and general enquiries.

Resident wellbeing is an important part of the role. The Warden offers neighbourly support, which may include informal check-ins with residents who would like them, responding appropriately if someone becomes temporarily unwell, and contacting relatives, medical professionals, or other services if necessary. This preventative and supportive approach helps residents maintain independence while feeling safe and supported.

In an emergency, residents may contact the Warden or the on-call representative if needed. However, residents should first contact their nominated family member or the appropriate emergency services where possible. The Warden's role in such situations is to help summon relatives, a doctor, or other professional assistance if the Next of Kin has not responded.

The Warden is not responsible for providing personal care or day-to-day assistance. They cannot undertake tasks such as shopping, collecting pensions or prescriptions, providing transport, or helping with personal or financial matters. The Warden is not qualified or insured to provide this type of personal support.

Residents are encouraged to support one another with small everyday tasks where appropriate, alongside help provided by family, friends, social services, or other agencies.

During the Warden's annual leave, a nearby Trustee or another designated stand-in will provide cover so that support remains available.

2. Communal Facilities, Chapel

The Chapel is available for the use of the Residents for recreational activities by arrangement with the Warden, who is the key holder.

The Chapel was incorporated into the Almshouses at the express wish of the Founder and, as mentioned above, a Chaplain is appointed by the Church to conduct services there on a regular basis. Individuals are of course at liberty to follow their own spiritual denominations.

3. Heating

The flats are centrally heated from a communal boiler system. Each radiator has a thermostatic radiator valve by which the degree of heat can be locally controlled. The cost of running the heating is covered by a regular charge paid by each resident. Heat loss can be minimised and economy improved by avoiding open windows during cold weather.

4. Repairs and Decoration

The Trustees are responsible for external and internal repairs. They are responsible for external decoration and internal decoration of communal areas.

Please report all necessary work to the Warden or Clerk who will arrange for it to be carried out. Workmen should not be admitted unless they can identify themselves.

Decoration is put into order at the beginning of occupation but residents may arrange to carry out decoration to the interior of their flat at their own expense, subject to Clerk approval.

5. Insurance

The Trustees hold an insurance policy to cover the buildings and liabilities arising from their ownership. **Residents should make their own arrangements regarding insurance of their personal possessions.**

You are strongly advised not to keep more cash in your home than you need for your day-to-day expenses. Any additional cash should be placed in a bank or building society.

Please do not ask the Warden to take care of money for you as she has been instructed by the Trustees not to do so.

6. Television

As sheltered accommodation Ravenstone Court holds a Concessionary TV Licence covering residents aged over 60 at a cost of £7.50 per annum met by the Trustees. Residents younger than 60 or employed for more than 15 hours per week require a normal licence for which they are responsible.

Advice is available from the Clerk.

7. Cleaning

You are responsible for keeping your own flat clean. If you have any problem doing this, please tell the Warden who will see if help can be arranged for you.

8. Gardens

The grounds are maintained by the Trustees. The individual plots around the perimeter of the building are the responsibility of the various Residents and may be laid out and maintained to individuals' preferences.

9. In an Emergency

The Warden is not on call 24 hours a day but will normally respond to emergencies if contacted by telephone. The Warden may occasionally be absent; however, if they are away for an extended period, alternative cover will be arranged and residents will be informed of the temporary arrangements.

Residents are encouraged to consider installing a personal emergency call or alarm system if they feel this would be beneficial. A number of companies provide this type of equipment. The Clerk can discuss the available options but is unable to recommend a specific provider.

Support may be available through schemes operated by Leicestershire County Council to help residents remain independent at home. Some grants are available following an assessment of need and may contribute towards equipment, home safety measures or adaptations, subject to eligibility criteria such as income and savings limits.

10. Fire Alarms

Communal Halls and Landings are fitted with Smoke Alarms connected to a Call Panel at the Warden's Flat. These are tested regularly. Individual Smoke and Heat Alarms are fitted inside flats and the Warden will assist with change of batteries or any maintenance required.

In the event of fire, no matter how insignificant, press a Fire Alarm button and leave the premises. If possible, take with you your medication and warm clothing.

Evacuation Plan

Our **Evacuation Plan** is that you must go to the designated **Fire Assembly Point** adjoining the **Alms house Car Park** exit. Please

wait there until greeted by the Warden. The Warden will operate an **Evacuation Test** every quarter.

Do not re-enter the building until advised to do so either by the emergency services, the Warden or other person in charge of the situation.

Please DON'T

- Wedge doors open, they prevent fire and smoke spreading only when they are shut.
- Leave pans unattended
- Attempt to fight any fire. Leave the premises immediately, shutting the door behind you. The fire alarm system will warn other residents and the Warden / Fire Service.

Please note

- That as a general precaution naked flames such as candles, night-lights etc are not permitted.
- Chip pans are not permitted.
- The Warden will have a list of whether individual residents are away from home to assist the emergency services. It is important that you inform her of any absences.
- If you see a potential fire risk, then please inform the Warden.
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Additional Fire Prevention Advice from Leicestershire & Rutland Fire Officer

- Keep all fire exits free from obstacles.
- Do not store flammable items near heat sources.
- Never store flammable materials in Hall Ways or Fire Exit routes.
- Check cabling on all electrical items for damage and repair / replace.
- Avoid using trailing extension leads and adapters where possible.
- Please do not overload adapters.
- Please unplug items when not in use.
- Please check portable electric heaters regularly for safety.
- Do not disable or cover smoke alarms or heat detectors.

- Do not use gas or propane fires in the almshouse.

11. Keys

The Warden holds a key to each flat which can open your front door but it will only be used in an emergency. Additionally, there is a key safe for use by the Emergency Services to access a flat key in the absence of the Warden. You must not fit locks and chains without the Trustees' consent as these may prevent access in an emergency. The Trustees may be able to advise on additional security arrangements

Your privacy will be respected. The Warden has instructions only to enter your home:-

- If you ask them to
- If you have given permission for work to be done in your absence
- In an emergency or to undertake regulatory works

Additional keys should not be cut without the Trustees' consent as this might endanger security if they were to be lost.

IMPORTANT : DON'T leave your key in your lock on the inside as it might prevent the Warden from using her key in an emergency.

Outside doors to communal Entrance Halls are locked permanently to deter intruders and you will be provided with a key if required.

Chapter Three

Terms of Occupancy

1. Licence to Occupy

You will have a copy of the Licence to Occupy (“Letter of Appointment”) in the form of the letter which you counter-signed when you were appointed a resident. As a beneficiary of an almshouse charity you are not a tenant, but the Trustees cannot ask you to leave unless there are exceptional circumstances (see “Moving Out” later in this chapter).

You have agreed to pay a Monthly Maintenance Charge which may include an amount for some of the services provided and a Heating Charge towards the running cost of the communal system.

2. Relatives and Visitors

Whilst the Warden will keep a friendly eye on residents in case of accident or illness, they cannot take the place of relatives or friends who we trust will continue to support you. With their help and co-operation, and support from the Social Services if necessary, we hope that you will find it possible to remain independent for as long as you wish.

Your home has been designed as sheltered housing for one person, and is not suitable for the accommodation of anyone extra. Overnight stays by visitors are not permitted.

3. Absence from Home

If you go away for any period please inform the Warden or Clerk in case there is an emergency.

In the event of *any* overnight absence from home, every effort should be made to notify the Warden or the Clerk to prevent forced entry to account for your whereabouts in an emergency.

It may be advisable to take precautions against frost by turning off the water to prevent possible damage. Absence for more than 28 days requires prior approval from the Trustees unless in a Medical Emergency.

Please also advise the Warden when you return from holiday.

4. Residents' Consultation

The Trustees welcome your comments on the general management of the Almshouse.

5. Council Tax and Other Charges

Residents are responsible for payment of Council Tax on their own home to North West Leicestershire District Council. All flats are classed as Band 'A' for calculation of the charge.

Water Rates are paid by the Trustees.

6. Housing Benefit

If your income comprises only the basic state retirement pension and you have little or no capital you may be entitled to Local Housing Allowance to help with your housing costs. To claim Housing Allowance, Council Tax Benefit or apply for any future schemes you should ask for a form or go online at the North West Leicestershire Council Housing Benefit office (please see list of contact numbers later in this booklet).

If you have some income in addition to your basic retirement pension you may still be entitled to some help. The Warden will assist you to complete the form if you wish but cannot advise you on your entitlements.

7. Central Heating and Hot Water

The property has a central boiler house and all flats are heated from this. You will pay a flat rate monthly Heating Charge to contribute to the cost of running the central heating as determined from time to time by the Trustees.

The individual radiators are fitted with thermostatic radiator valves which are adjustable to suit your preferred temperature. Please use these to reduce the temperature in your flat rather than opening the windows.

Additional heating may be provided but in the interests of safety paraffin or portable gas heaters are forbidden. Electric fires with trailing leads are discouraged, but a fixed focal point electric fire may be installed in the living room.

Hot water is supplied from individual electric immersion heaters and paid by the resident.

8. Electricity

Electricity consumed is individually metered and quarterly accounts will be sent to you by the electricity supplier. The preferred supplier is E-On. If you make any change of supplier you must inform the Warden so that the trustees have a record of the details.

9. Telephone

You may arrange for the installation of a phone line or broadband service. Please inform the Warden and Clerk which supplier you contract with so that the trustees have a record of the details.

10 Smoking Policy

The Trustees have resolved to amend the Smoking Policy to prohibit anyone smoking in or around the buildings from 1st September 2026.

Smoking will only be permitted in the designated Smoking Area shelter. Maintaining the aesthetics of this shelter is the responsibility of those smoking to ensure it is kept clean and tidy, with any ash or cigarette butts taken to the refuse bins for disposal after every use. The trustees reserve the right to withdraw this facility in the event it is misused and not kept clean and tidy.

11 Moving Out

If you wish to move from the almshouse you must give the Clerk to the Trustees written notice (28 Days). During the notice period you will be liable for your Accommodation and Heating Charge and for payment of Council Tax even if you have already moved out.

In the event of prolonged ill-health, the Trustees may advise seeking alternative suitable accommodation, in consultation with your relatives and the Social Services.

The Trustees will only repossess your home if you persistently and without reasonable excuse disregard the conditions of occupancy, behave offensively, or become mentally or physically incapacitated.

You are reminded of the terms of your Licence to Occupy as set out in the letter sent to you at the start of your occupation and amended by any other conditions imposed subsequently by the Trustees.

12 Behaviour

As stated in your License to Occupy you must not do anything to or on the property or any common parts which may reasonably be considered a nuisance or annoyance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

The Charity's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure confirms that the Warden will identify any vulnerable residents so that communication/contact can be tailored to meet their needs and risks.

As stated in the Charity's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure fellow residents who are found to have caused abuse will be found NOT to be of good character and in serious cases may have their licence.

To help ensure harmony amongst our residents and employees we operate a **Good Neighbour Agreement** which all new residents will be asked to agree and sign as part of your licence to occupy.

Chapter Four

General Information

1. Improvements and alterations to the accommodation

If you want to make any improvement or alteration to your flat you must first discuss the work with the Trustees. Structural alterations are unlikely to be permitted. Permission may be refused if the Trustees consider that the alteration will reduce the amenities for subsequent occupants. You may carry out internal decorations subject to Clerk approval.

2. Pets

No pets are permitted apart from guide dogs.

3. Parking of vehicles

Limited space is available in the parking area on a first come first served basis. Please park considerately to allow the maximum number of cars to take advantage of the limited space. Note that the Warden has a reserved space and observe the reservation for Blue Badge holders. Alternative parking is available along Hospital Lane. Please ensure that access is available for emergency vehicles in an emergency.

Please note that parking within the premises is at the resident's own risk. The Trustees accept no responsibility for any theft or damage.

4. Doctor

If you already have your own Doctor in the locality, there is no need for you to make any change providing you are still within their catchment area. If you do not have a local GP, the Warden will be able to suggest local practices.

If you have a serious health problem, you may feel safer if the Warden knows about it, in confidence, so that action may be taken in an emergency.

5. Emergencies and Sickness

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

To make it possible to act quickly, the Warden or Trustees must have a note of the names and addresses of your nearest relatives or friends and of your doctor. It is important that you should also let the Warden know about any changes of address of emergency contacts.

6. Personal Problems

If you have any personal problems and you have no family whom you feel able to consult, the Warden will make an arrangement for you to meet one of the Trustees on the Pastoral Group.

7. Privacy

As stated, the Charity necessarily holds some personal information about each resident. Please be assured that the Trustees take your privacy with utmost care and are registered under the General Data

Protection Regulations This information will be deleted should you vacate the almshouse.

8. Wills

You are strongly advised to make a will. Please see your own solicitor for advice, or consult the local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

9. Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint, you should talk to the Warden and try to resolve the issue informally.

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction then please contact the Clerk in writing to raise a formal complaint.

In the event that it is not settled to your satisfaction, you should refer directly to the Chairperson of the Trustees.

10. Rubbish

Rubbish bins are provided for recyclable (Glass, Plastic, Paper, Cardboard and Green garden waste) and non-recyclable material. All kitchen refuse should be disposed of in accordance with NWLDC policy. Rubbish is collected weekly (on Fridays) alternating between sorted recyclable waste and other refuse. Please use the appropriate bins.

The black bins are cleaned once a month by a private arrangement with the handyman for which residents contribute a small charge.

APPENDIX 1

History of Ravenstone Hospital

The Ravenstone Hospital Almshouses owe their existence to the beneficence of John and Rebecca Wilkins who lived at Ravenstone Hall. Their only son, Francis, died in February 1711, aged 21 years. Shortly after this Rebecca made a will and on her and her husband's death certain property was to be used for the building of a Hospital for 30 poor women. The title of Hospital refers back to the original mediaeval description of almshouses as "a place of hospitality" and was never a direct medical reference.

Following the death of Rebecca in 1718 and John in 1725, building commenced. There were only sufficient funds to accommodate 25 women and 2 servants. Each resident was to receive 3s 6d per week and wear a gown of grey serge. Material for renewal of the gown was given annually. Two wagon loads of coal were given to each, annually.

The Residents had to attend the on-site Chapel for prayers each morning. Their Chaplain was resident in 'The Chaplains House' which was originally part of the whole establishment.

The Hospital was to be managed by Trustees, who were to meet at least twice yearly. Preference was given to women residing in Ravenstone, Swannington and Coleorton. Income was derived from farms and land owned by the charity.

In the 1950s the last farm was sold and income derived from modest rents paid by the Residents.

The accommodation was upgraded in the 1960s to self-contained flats on one level – either upstairs or downstairs – with central heating replacing the coal fire. Water rates are paid for by the Trust.

Today each apartment is occupied separately. The warden lives on site and regular services continues to be held in the Chapel. The beautiful grounds are well maintained for the enjoyment and benefit of Residents,

and also used for garden functions by the Church and other charities supported by residents.

In 2011 the Charity celebrated 300 years since its founding with a Royal Visit by HRH Princess Alexandra, a Church Service and other events. Many of the historic features of the original buildings have been restored and the almshouses, now known as Ravenstone Court, offer an attractive and comfortable setting for peaceful living.

The Almshouse Association

There have been almshouses in the United Kingdom for more than 1000 years, with the oldest almshouse charity foundation still in existence being the Hospital of St Oswald in Worcester founded in 990. Many are old, often beautiful historic buildings, others are more modern and some are newly built. What they all have in common is their provision of affordable housing and support for the needy or vulnerable, often older people. They are usually managed by local trustees.

The Association traces its roots back to February 1946 when, at a meeting held in the Chapter House of Southwark Cathedral, representatives of London's almshouses formed a committee to safeguard the interests of almshouse buildings and the welfare of residents.

In 1950, the committee extended its remit, and the National Association of Almshouses (The Almshouse Association) was born. The objects of the Association are to assist charity trustees to manage their resources effectively, to support them in providing good quality housing for those in need, to promote the welfare and independence of residents and to preserve the historic tradition of almshouses for future generations.

Today, The Almshouse Association is an essential component of the almshouse movement; it continues to provide support, advice and guidance on a broad range of general and specific issues, to over 1600 independent almshouse member charities that provide around 35,000 dwellings across the United Kingdom.

Over the years its services have extended to include guidance manuals, policy documents and model templates, training seminars, interest-free loans and funding, as well as providing a platform for members to

advertise resident vacancies, discuss best practices and share knowledge at local meetings and via our members' forum.

The Association meets regularly with the Charity Commission (the regulator for almshouses), Homes England, and has set up an All Party Parliamentary Group for Almshouses (APPG). As regulation and housing standards and expectations change, there is a need for almshouses to meet those changes by updating policies and procedures and modernising dwellings where possible and to ensure modern standards are provided in new buildings. The Almshouse Association is on hand to ensure its members are kept up to date with changes in legislation and give advice on all aspects of a building project.

Almshouses are managed by volunteer trustees and are often built in relatively small groups that become an enduring and important part of the fabric of their local community; local craftsmen and materials have traditionally been used. Trustees (or governors) of almshouse charities are usually people who want to become involved in their local almshouses in order to provide good quality accommodation for people in need in their area.

The Association has its own Board of Trustees, based in different areas of the UK with local knowledge that permits them to advise and assist charities in their given counties.

Members pay a subscription fee which covers around 50% of the annual running costs of the Association. For the remainder, to ensure it continues to provide all these services it raises funds and seeks sponsorship. 80% of almshouse charities are small, providing fewer than 20 dwellings and the volunteer trustees rely solely on weekly maintenance contributions from residents to remain viable. With voluntary support, as well as providing advice and guidance, The Association can assist almshouse charities by way of interest free loans to cover the cost of ongoing repairs as well as remodeling and modernisation. If you would like to donate or leave a legacy, your support and generosity would be gratefully received.

APPENDIX 2

Useful Contacts

Clerk to the Trustees

Mr D. Ross

Email: rhac.org@gmail.com

Warden

Mrs Elaine Hill

07941 371184

Chairperson of Trustees

Gareth Braithwaite

Gareth@normantonleheath.co.uk

North West Leicestershire District Council including Benefits and a range of leisure activities for older people

Customer Services

Whitwick Road, Coalville LE67 3FJ

Tel: 01530 454545

www.nwleics.gov.uk

Leicestershire County Council for help with Adult Social Care, Meals on Wheels, Bus passes, disabled parking badges, adult learning courses etc

Customer Services Centre

County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8ST

Tel: 0116 305 0001

www.leicestershire.gov.uk

Whitwick and Coalville Leisure Centre, Whitwick Swimming and leisure activities including sessions for over 50's

Tel 01530 811215

<https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/whitwick-and-coalville-leisure-centre>

Hood Park Leisure Centre, Ashby Swimming and leisure activities

Tel 01530 412181

www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/hood_park

Age UK

Leicester and Rutland

Tel 0116 299 2233

www.ageuk.org.uk

Citizens' Advice Bureau

for help on a wide range of issues including health and financial matters

Council Offices Whitwick Road, Coalville LE67 3FJ

National Tel 03444 111444

www.citizensadviceleicestershire.org.uk

Diabetes UK

Tel: 0345 123 2399

www.diabetes.org.uk

Alzheimer and Dementia Alzheimer's Society

Tel: 0300 2221122
www.alzheimers.org.

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