

Applying to live in the City of Wells Almshouses (CWA)

Information for Applicants



Thank you for your enquiry about coming to live at the Wells Almshouses. We hope that the following frequently asked questions may prove helpful and will enable you to decide if you want to apply to us for housing.

Where are the Almshouses?

There are five Almshouses in the City of Wells, all coming under the umbrella name of City of Wells Almshouses. The oldest, Bubwith, founded in 1436, is behind St. Cuthbert's Church. On the same site are Stills, Bricks, and Willes. Another double row of almshouses, on the other side of Priest Row, known as Llewellyn's, were founded in 1636 but mainly rebuilt in 1887. In total there are 33 self-contained flats and cottages, all with one bedroom. The almshouses are all within walking distance of the shops and other facilities of the city.

Can I apply for a CWA property?

The Almshouses were originally built to provide accommodation for local people who found themselves homeless or living in poverty.

The criteria for being accepted onto our waiting list are:

- you must be a resident of Wells or surrounding area or have a strong family or social connection with the city and
- you must have a housing need or be experiencing some other form of hardship, and
- you are in urgent need of living within the city and
- you must be capable of living independently, as no on-site care is provided, and
- you must be at least 50 years of age at the time a property is offered.

We are sometimes able to register someone who does not live locally but who fully meets the other criteria.

We assess each application on its merits and acceptance is based on the individual's circumstances at the time.

Note: It is unlikely that someone who is an owner occupier or who has sufficient savings to be able to pay for their own housing would qualify under the above criteria.

If you are also registered for housing with the local council you can bid for one of our vacancies when they occur as they are advertised on the choice based lettings website – www.homefindersomerset.co.uk

All applications are considered without regard to religion, gender, or ethnic origin. Our properties are only suitable for single occupancy.

What happens when I send my form to you?

When we get your receive your form, we will check to see if you are eligible and if so will ask you to come in to see us. When we meet you, we will go through your form with you. We will need to make enquiries and will ask you for paperwork to confirm the information you have given relating to financial or medical circumstances. We will give you a tour to see if you feel it is the right housing for you.

If you are not eligible for our accommodation, we will write to you as soon as possible to say so.

If we register you on our waiting list this does not mean we can help you straightaway and we would advise you to keep looking at other options, particularly if your housing need is urgent.

When we are in a position to offer you accommodation, we will contact you to make sure you still want to be considered, check all your details are up to date and usually visit you at home. At this time, we will also take up the references you have given us.

How are the Almshouses run?

By a staff of four, who are all part-time. The present staff are:

Caroline Tollworthy	Scheme Manager	9am-1pm Monday to Friday
Michelle Thomas	Chief Executive	Variable working days
Patrick McMahan	Finance Officer	Variable working days
Mike Andrews	Handyman	Monday; Tuesday and Friday.

Our office is at:

4 Bubwith Almshouses, Wells BA5 2QE

Tel: 01749 675813

Email: manager@wellsalmshouses.org.uk

What accommodation is provided?

There are two types of property – flats and cottages. All have a kitchen, bathroom, sitting room and bedroom. The properties are unfurnished, although cookers, fridges, freezers and floor coverings are provided. All the properties benefit from either gas central heating or electric heating.

Communal facilities include the beautiful gardens, the Guildroom, the Chapel, two laundries and a guest room. Llewelyn's has a Pavillion for meeting in, and the Guildroom is used as a residents' sitting room and for residents' events as well as Board meetings.

How much would I pay?

Our residents are not tenants but are beneficiaries of the charity - you would be given a licence to occupy rather than a tenancy agreement. So you wouldn't pay rent but something called a weekly maintenance contribution (WMC). The current WMC is just over £148 per week. This includes all service charges. If you need help with your housing costs, all but water charges are eligible for Housing Benefit, if you qualify. You would pay for all your other bills yourself – electricity; gas; phone and council tax.

Can I bring a pet?

No, unfortunately not.

Is there parking?

There is no provision for parking at the Almshouses. If you have a car you would need to find secure parking elsewhere in the city.

Do I have to join in social events?

Our residents lead completely independent lives and you are free to make choices about which, if any, social events you choose to attend.

Are there lots of rules?

We aim to interfere as little as possible in the lives of residents. However, as with any community we need to have some guidelines as to what is acceptable. A Resident's Handbook is given to each resident when they move in which sets these out in more detail and you would be asked to sign a form to confirm you understand your rights and obligations. You should note that as a licensee your security of tenure is limited and you should bear this in mind and seek advice if you are giving up secure accommodation. We rarely if ever however have to ask people to leave, unless you are no longer able to look after yourself or if you have broken the terms of your licence in a serious way.

Is there a no smoking policy?

Yes, we ask residents not to smoke in the properties and this especially applies to Bubwith House. There are designated smoking areas outside for residents' use and which will be shown to you should you need them.

Can I have friends and relatives to stay?

We have a guest room on site that can be used by a friend or relative for a small payment, with priority given to those who are caring for a resident who is ill.

What happens next?

Please complete the application form available from the office or to download from the website.

We look forward to receiving your application

