**Letter to MP - Almshouse Association Guidance**

**How to I find who is my MP?**

Parliamentary protocol dictates that MPs are only able to act on behalf of individuals and businesses located within their own constituency. It is therefore essential that you check who your MP is and then contact them accordingly. You can use your postcode to find your MP [here](https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons).

**How do I contact my MP?**

You can:

* Write a letter to your MP at either their constituency office or their Parliamentary office. The easiest one to use is typically Westminster, using the standard Parliamentary address that all MPs use: [Name of MP], House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
* Email them using the contact details in the UK Parliament’s [Directory of MPs](https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons). All MPs have an email address in the following format, which you can use to get in touch: [firstname].[lastname]. mp@parliament.uk

Ensure that you clearly state who you are and your address within the constituency. If this information is not in your initial correspondence, you will be asked to verify who you are, which can slow the process down.

To check how to address your MP, look at the contact information for each member on the [Directory of MPs](https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons). – For most MPs, simply address them as Mr or Mrs Smith. If your MP has been knighted it is appropriate to address them as ‘Dear Sir John’ not ‘Sir Smith’. Dame Jane Smith would be contacted as ‘Dear Dame Jane’. Some MPs have Rt Hon. Before their name – you do not need to include this in your address to them.

**What do I write?**

When writing to or emailing your MP, it’s best to be as brief, succinct and clear as possible with no more than 3-4 paragraphs. For example:

* An introduction outlining why almshouses are important to you.
* The impact they have on the local community and/or national landscape.
* Finally, what you would like the MP to do.

Avoid using technical terminology as much as possible. It’s great to use your email or letter to raise awareness of almshouses but it’s always best to use it as an opportunity to tell your MP exactly what it is you want them to do - be clear in what you are asking your MP to do, such as visiting your Almshouse or meeting with the Association.

We have provided a draft letter below but do please personalise this - if your letter reads like a template or generic email, MPs will be put off. Write in a personal, professional and friendly manner.

**What happens next?**

Given the high volume of emails MPs receive each day, do not expect an immediate response. If you have not heard back in 10 working days, then we would recommend following-up. You can follow up your email or letter with a phone call or make an appointment to go and see them at their local surgery if you would like.

**Letter to MP - Almshouse Association Template**

[Save onto the Charity’s Letterhead]

*[Name and address of MP]*

*[Date]*

Dear *[Name of MP]*

I am writing on behalf of the community of [name of charity/almshouse], which supports [older people] in your constituency. I would like to personally invite you to visit [name of charity/almshouse] to see firsthand the vital role almshouses play in our community, especially when affordable housing remains a significant issue nationwide.

Almshouses are the UK’s oldest form of social housing, with a rich history spanning over 1,000 years. Whilst many residents are older individuals, almshouses provide homes to people of all ages, in line with their charitable purposes. *You may wish to briefly add details about your own almshouse history here.*

Almshouses like [name of charity/almshouse] continue to play a crucial role in addressing the housing crisis by providing secure, affordable homes to local people within supportive communities. While challenges remain, the commitment and passion of our community in running and maintaining these historic homes offer a hopeful path forward.

However, despite the enduring value of the almshouse model, many are excluded from funding opportunities due to their charitable status and small size, preventing them from accessing resources such as Section 106 housing funds or the Rural Exception Scheme. This limits the potential of these valuable community-based charities, despite the significant benefits they offer to both residents and the wider public.

Your visit would also be most helpful in providing support to The Almshouse Association’s efforts to secure policy changes that will help almshouses continue their vital work. We would greatly appreciate your advocacy in ensuring that almshouses are recognised as affordable housing under the National Planning Policy Framework and exempt from Selective Licensing. It is essential that housing for older people remains a priority for government policy.

I hope you will be able to visit our almshouses or, if not possible, join us for a phone, Zoom, or Teams call. I look forward to your response and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Many thanks for your time.

Yours sincerely

[Name]

[Position in charity]