



## **MASONIC HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

The Association provides rented accommodation of a high standard for elderly persons who can generally lead an independent life, but would benefit by the help of a Resident Warden in an emergency.

As every Lodge will have elderly brethren and widows who find house maintenance becoming more difficult and costly, every Lodge Almoner, Secretary and Master should become familiar with this alternative housing option, so that timely advice may be given.

### **HISTORY**

The Masonic Housing Association [MHA] was formed in 1975 as an exempt charity to take advantage of the financial provisions made available to registered Housing Associations by the Housing Act 1974, and its objective is to build and manage sheltered housing schemes for the elderly.

As a consequence of receiving Government grants, some lettings must be made to nominees of the Local Authority and therefore MHA cannot restrict occupancy only to those qualified through freemasonry. Half of the tenancy allocations are to nominees of the Local Authority and half to the MHA waiting list. In this way the Craft is demonstrably reaching out into the community to provide benefits to non-masons. In that respect it differs from the RMBI, which is bound by its constitution to support only those qualified through a masonic connection.

Grant alone is insufficient to build these affordable homes. Generous donations of land and financial support have been received from individual masons and the Provinces. Financial support has also been received from the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons.

*The Masonic Housing Association is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 (No. 21444R) and with the Tenant Services Authority (No. L0673)*

### **MHA & SCHEME MANAGEMENT**

MHA has 178 flats spread throughout England in five schemes at [Prebendal Close](#) in Buckinghamshire, [Palmer Court](#) in Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire, [Hamilton Court](#) in Essex, [Reading Court](#) in Warwickshire, and [Wilson Keys Court](#) in Staffordshire. Each flat is self contained and each scheme has a residents' lounge with kitchen, a laundry, Warden's office, usually a guest room and sometimes a hobbies room.

MHA is controlled by a Board of Management of ten members under the chairmanship of Martin Clarke. Financial and consultancy services are provided to the Board and House Committees by Eldon Housing Association.

The management of each scheme is delegated to voluntary House Committees whose members are nominated by the Provincial Grand Master of the Province in which a scheme is situated. Some members' ladies serve on these Committees. The Chairman of each house committee sits on the MHA Board. Each scheme is managed locally with resident involvement. The Committees also rely upon volunteer support from local masons and their family & friends. Strong support is given by local Lodges, which have been extremely

generous in providing funding for additional amenities and social activities for the residents. This adds enormously to the comfort of about 200 residents.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

All are self-contained one or two person flats. Every flat has a living room, kitchen and bathroom. Accommodation is under one roof, with one protected main entrance door for security, but each resident has a front door to his or her own flat within the scheme.

The MHA Board treats personal safety and security as being of paramount importance to elderly people so every scheme has a resident warden and emergency call system.

There is a residents' lounge and adjoining kitchen, used extensively by the tenants and the local house committees for social functions. There are well-equipped communal laundries and a guest room where relatives can stay overnight for a very nominal charge. The newer schemes are provided with assisted bathrooms.

## HAMILTON COURT

Hamilton Court has 43 flats at South Woodham Ferrers. It offers sheltered accommodation for eleven elderly married couples and thirty-two single persons in self-contained unfurnished flats, each with a bedroom, a lounge, a bathroom and a fitted kitchen.

These specially designed homes are ideal for active retired persons who wish to retain their total independence, do their own shopping, cook their own meals and have their own front door, but who find the presence of a warden and stable housing costs, of reassurance and comfort.

In addition, the building has a Common Room, used regularly for coffee mornings, bingo evenings and other regular events, equipped with colour TV, VCR, music centre and library. There is also a guest room for overnight visits by relatives; a free laundry room; a disabled shower room, and attractive gardens with ornamental fishpond.



The Hamilton Court House Committee is chaired by Tony Littleford and is supported by volunteer Essex Masons. A fund has been established to provide for the entertainment and additional comforts that make Masonic sheltered accommodation unique. This is a registered charity called Hamilton Court Charitable Association No. 294862, and relies upon donations from Lodges, Chapters and other orders within the Province, as well as from individuals.

Contact Mrs Sue Walters, the Resident Warden.

01245 323743

Nelson Place,

South Woodham Ferrers,

Essex CM3 5FJ

## **PALMER COURT**

Palmer Court is a sheltered housing scheme in the town of Wellingborough.

There are 21 single and 3 double flats, each having a small lounge, bedroom bathroom and kitchen, and the resident Scheme Manager lives in separate accommodation attached to the main building.



There is a pleasant lounge with television and video, an attractive conservatory financed by local donations and an ornamental enclosed garden.

The management of the scheme is delegated to a voluntary committee consisting mainly of representatives from local Lodges with some co-opted ladies. As well as overseeing the day-to-day organisation of the scheme and providing regular essential contact with the residents, the House Committee contributes many additional amenities. The present chairman, John Rivett,

has been in post since 2008.

In addition, frequent social events are organised by a separate sub-committee of residents, chaired by a member of the House Committee. These include coffee mornings and Keep Fit classes and a popular bingo session on Friday evenings.

The scheme is grateful for continuing donations from Lodges throughout the Province, which are all used for the benefit of the residents. Such funding has recently made it possible to install Sky television and make it available to anyone who may wish to have the facility.

Contact Mrs Jill Lett, the Resident Warden  
01933 273140  
Hatton Avenue,  
Wellingborough,  
Northamptonshire.  
NN8 5UZ.

## **PREBENDAL CLOSE**

Prebendal Close is situated in the conservation area of Aylesbury, convenient for town centre shops and leisure facilities.

It comprises of 34 flats - 1 two bedroom unit, 30 one bedroom flats, 2 bedsits/studios and a guest room for family visitors when required. While all Residents have the benefit of their own front door, they do enjoy communal facilities, including lounge, laundry room, library/quiet room, hobbies room, patio and garden - all in a secure gated environment.

During 2008/9 MHA spent a considerable amount of on extensive improvements, mainly in converting 18 bedsits into one bedroom flats. A substantial conservatory/garden room was added alongside the lounge at that time.



The facility is managed by a full time Warden who lives on site and a part time Deputy and they provide a wide daily coverage for Residents. Each unit is linked to a control centre which operates 24 hours a day. The Wardens, emergency services and nominated Local House Committee members remain in contact.

The House Committee, which is chaired by John Mould assisted by mainly local Masonic volunteers, is responsible for overall management and also provides additionally for the welfare of the

Residents, including a wide variety of social activities, funding for which derives in the main from Buckinghamshire Masonic Lodges.

Contact Mrs Margaret Farrow, the Resident Warden.

01296 433511

Castle Street,

Aylesbury,

Buckinghamshire.

HP20 2RY.

## READING COURT

Reading Court is situated in Stratford-upon-Avon and has 32 single and 13 double flats, each with a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. There is a communal lounge, kitchen, laundry, lift and a guest bedroom for relatives and friends to stay. The building is surrounded by large maintained gardens.



Residents are encouraged to maintain their own independence and also to participate in the many events organised by the Warden and residents' committee including coffee mornings, bingo, race evenings, computer lessons and many excursions; there is a regular bus service to Stratford-upon-Avon for shopping.

The Provincial Grand Master of Warwickshire nominates the Chairman, presently Charles Dyer, who is responsible for the management of the scheme and appoints a Committee to help him in that task. An important committee role is to raise money and support from Warwickshire Freemasons with which to provide extra "comforts" for the well being of the residents, in particular lunches in the summer and at Christmas.

There is a waiting list of prospective tenants and when a vacancy occurs, the list is checked and a place offered taking into account the overall needs of the prospective tenant.

Contact David Bateman , the Secretary of the Committee.  
01386 792856.  
Tiddington Road,  
Stratford upon Avon,  
Warwickshire.  
CV37 7SA.

## **WILSON KEYS COURT**

Wilson Keys Court is a sheltered housing project consisting of 34 flats (23 single-person flats and 11 two-person flats) in Rugeley, Staffordshire. It is successful in providing affordable, comfortable housing for those who are active and wish to remain independent.

The day-to-day management and selection of tenants is undertaken by the local House Committee, chaired by Alan Walker. The House Committee meets quarterly or at such times as is necessary and is always followed by a Residents' Meeting in order that everyone is informed of any changes. Consultation in the running of the House is very much encouraged.



Nominations for tenants are made alternately by Cannock Chase District Council and the Province of Staffordshire. The major requirements for applicants is that they should be of retirement age and capable of

looking after themselves, since there is no nursing care. If assistance is needed "Care Plans" are worked out with the Scheme Manager and local service providers.

Residents pay a rent and service charge, which includes Heating, Lighting, Hot Water and full use of the available facilities and a 24 hour "Call Facility" for all residents.

There is a wide range of activities, organised by the residents and the Scheme Manager, with the help and assistance of local Masonic Lodges. Residents take a great pride in their garden.

Wilson Keys Court is usually fully occupied and there is a waiting list for vacancies. If anyone would like an application form then this can be obtained by telephoning the Scheme Manager below. Visits by members of Lodges and their Ladies, groups or individuals are most welcome and can be arranged with the Scheme Manager by telephoning her during weekdays.

Contact Jayne Thacker, the Scheme Manager.  
01889 576544  
Deanery Close,  
Rugeley,  
Staffordshire.  
WS15 3JX.