



**Bedford Morison and Cordery Alms-house
Charity**

Dame Mary Morison Apprenticeship Trust

**BEDFORD, MORISON & CORDERY ALMSHOUSE CHARITY
DAME MARY MORISON APPRENTICESHIP TRUST**

TRUSTEEE ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

***Bedford Morison and Cordery Alms-house Charity, Watford, was established in 1580
England and Wales Charity Registration number: 207042***

Dame Mary Morison Apprenticeship Trust

***Established 6 April 1629 to aid and assist young persons (poor children of the Town and
Parish of Watford) during their educational years***

England and Wales Charity Registration number: 312129

Registered Office: 19 St Mary's Close, Watford, WD18 0EQ

Approved by Trustees, September 2023, Reapproved September 2025

	Introduction	page 2
1.	Trustee role description	page 2
2.	Statutory duties as a Trustee	page 3
3.	Payment and employment	page 4
4.	Delegation of Trustee responsibilities	page 5
5.	Dealing with third parties	page 5
6.	Prerequisites to serving as Trustee	page 5
7.	Trustee Persons Specification	page 5
8.	Declaration of interests	page 5
9.	Code of Conduct for Trustees	page 6
10.	Trustee Declaration	page 6
11.	Confidentiality Agreement	page 7

Introduction

The Bedford, Morison and Cordery Almshouses in the middle of Watford are the oldest inhabited buildings in the town. The Almshouses were opened on *21st February 1580* by Francis, 2nd Earl of Bedford and his wife, Lady Bridget former wife of Sir Richard Morison, as homes for eight poor women from the Ancient Parishes Watford, Chenies and Langley. In 1952 they were nationally listed - Grade II.

In 1960's four Almshouses in Vicarage Road (the Cordery Almshouses) and six in Sutton Road (The Cordery Almshouses) were demolished and in compensation a red brick block of 11 studio flats was erected opposite the eight cottages. In total the site provides 19 units set around a garden space, one of which is used as office space and meeting rooms (Number 19).

Dame Mary Morison also set up an apprenticeship trust by deed dated *6th April 1629* to aid and assist young persons (poor children of the Town and Parish of Watford) during their educational years and grants are awarded to individuals annually.

Trustee Role Description

Drafted from Almshouse Association

The Trustee board is responsible for establishing the essential purpose of the Charities as set out in the objects of its Governing document. The Trustee board is also responsible for guarding the ethos and values of the Charities. There are 12 essential responsibilities for the board of Trustees:

- 1. Set and maintain vision, mission and values**
- 2. Develop strategy**

Together, the Trustee board develop the long-term strategy. Meeting agendas reflect the key points of the strategy to keep the organisation on track.

- 3. Establish and monitor policies**

The Trustee board creates policies to govern organisational activity. These cover guidance for staff and/or volunteers, systems for reporting and monitoring, an ethical framework for everyone connected with the organisation and the conduct of Trustees and board business.

4. Ensure compliance with the governing document

The governing document is the rulebook for the Charities. The Trustees must ensure it is followed. In particular, the Charities' activities must comply with the charitable objects in the governing document.

5. Ensure accountability

The Trustees should ensure that the Board fulfils its accountability as required by law to the Charities Commission and HM Customs and Revenue

The Charities should also be accountable to other groups who are sometimes known as stakeholders: donors, beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and the general public.

6. Ensure compliance with the law

Trustees are responsible for checking that all the Charities' activities are legal.

7. Maintain proper fiscal oversight

The Trustees are responsible for effectively managing the Charities' resources and funding, so it can meet its charitable objects.

The Trustee board:

- secures sufficient resources to fulfil the mission
- monitors spending in the best interests of the Charities
- approves the annual financial report and budget
- protects the Charities against liability by providing insurance
- seeks to manage risk for the Charities and ensures compliance with the law.

8. Respect the role of staff / volunteers

The Trustee board recognises and respects the domain of staff and / or volunteer responsibility. At the same time, it creates policy to guide staff and/or volunteer activities and safeguard the interests of the Charities and its beneficiaries.

9. Maintain effective board performance

The board keeps its own house in order. It engages in productive meetings, effective subcommittees where appropriate, with adequate resources, development activities and regular reviews of its role. The board is also responsible for overseeing Trustee board recruitment.

10. Promote the organisation

Through their own behaviour, governance oversight and activities on behalf of the Charities, Trustees enhance and protect the reputation of the Charities. They are good ambassadors for the Charities.

11. Set up employment procedures

The Trustee board creates comprehensive, fair and legal personnel policies. These protect the Charities and those who work for it. They cover recruitment, support, appraisal, remuneration and discipline.

12. Select and support the Charities Officers

The Trustees select and support the Charities' officers and review their performance.

Statutory duties of a Trustee

As a Trustee your primary task is to Safeguard and Promote the reputation of the Charities. You will make important decisions about the organisation and, in some instances, enter into legally binding contracts and commit money to be spent in specific ways. All Trustees have a legal duty to ensure the Charities can meet any commitment made. This is particularly important where financial matters are concerned. Trustees must act reasonably and prudently in all matters relating to the Charities and must always bear in mind that their prime concern is the Charities' interests. The Charities' income and property must be applied only for the purposes set out in the governing document.

As a Trustee you will need to:

- Take legal responsibility for the organisation and ensure it is solvent, well-run and doing what it was set up to do.
- Ensure that the Charities comply with Charities law, and with the requirements of the Charities Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the Charities prepare reports, Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.
- Make sure the Charities operate within the rules and guidelines set out in the Charities' governing documents and remain true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there.
- Ensure that the Charities do not breach any relevant legislation including charity, company and employment law.
- Comply with the requirements of other legislation and regulators which govern the activities of the Charities.
- Act with integrity and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of funds or assets.
- Put the interests of the Charities above your personal or business interests.
- Be aware of any problems and ensure they are being dealt with, and get professional advice where necessary.
- Give an account of the activities of the Charities to the Charity Commission - ensuring that any changes to the registered details are kept up-to-date.
- Submit the annual report and accounts to the Charity Commission

Other duties

In addition to the above statutory duties, each Trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions: This may involve:

- Scrutinising board papers
- Attendance at meetings
- Participating in discussions
- Constructively challenge proposals from within the Board
- Focusing on key issues
- Providing guidance on new initiatives
- Other issues in which the Trustee has special expertise
- Taking responsibility for a specific area of work where appropriate
- Day-to-day management, in conjunction with staff as time allows.

Payment and employment

- Trustees are unpaid and not allowed to gain financial benefit, directly or indirectly, from the work of the Charities.
- Trustees can not usually become an employee of the Charities, and employees of the Charities can not usually become Trustees.
- Trustees must not benefit, either directly or indirectly from the Charities by, for instance;
 - taking a lease of the Charities' property.
 - borrowing money from the Charities; or
 - making contracts to do business with the Charities.

This is a legal rule and any Trustee who breaks it may have to make good any loss that results to the Charities out of their own pocket. Even if there is no loss, a Trustee who makes a profit from breaking the rule may have to pay the amount of any profit to the Charities.

Delegation of Trustee responsibilities

Trustees may delegate certain powers to agents or employees but will and must always retain the ultimate responsibility for the Charities.

Dealing with third parties

Someone acting as a delegate or agent of the Trustees should always make clear in dealings with third parties that they are acting in that capacity (particularly if they are not an employee of the Charities).

Prerequisites to serving as a Trustee

For someone to be considered as a Trustee they must:

- be willing to act as a Trustee of the Charity and understand the organisation's purposes (objects) and rules set out in its governing document
- not disqualified from being a Trustee by an order of the Charities Commission under sections 178 or section 181A of the Charities Act 2011
- not disqualified under any provisions with the Company Trustees Disqualification Act 1986.

Trustee Person Specification

- Commitment to the organisation
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- Ability to think creatively
- Willingness to speak his or her mind
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Willing to work under the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, openness, honesty, collaboration and leadership of the Trust

Declaration of Interests

Before discussing or voting on a particular subject a Trustee must declare pecuniary interest and, if applicable, withdraw.

Code of Conduct for Trustees

Probity

Trustees must comply with any rules agreed by the Board including those relating to the acceptance of gifts and hospitality and the avoidance of activities which might compromise The Trusts political neutrality.

Openness and accountability

Trustees must be open, responsive and accountable to each other, members of staff and other stakeholders about their decisions, actions and work, including their use of The Trusts resources.

Trustees must disclose anything in their past which could bring The Trusts into disrepute e.g. removal from any previous governance role or membership of organisations which may conflict with the aims, principles and values of The Trusts.

Confidentiality

Trustees must respect the status of confidential issues they read and discuss. They are bound to maintain the status of this material and any discussions.

Integrity

Trustees are required to use their knowledge, expertise and experience to take the best decisions they can in the interests of the charity. They are equally responsible for all decisions of the board or committee. Trustees should also promote and support the principles of good governance by leadership and example and should act in an individual capacity and not as a representative of any group, organisation or individual.

Trustee Declaration

Trustees should be asked to confirm their eligibility:

- I am over the age of 18 years
- I am not disqualified from acting as a Trustee
- I have not been convicted of any offence involving deception or dishonesty (or any such conviction is legally regarded as spent)
- I have not been involved in tax fraud
- I am not an undischarged bankrupt
- I have not made compositions or arrangements with my creditors from which I have not been discharged
- I have not been removed from serving as a Trustee, or been stopped from acting in a management position in a company
- I have not been disqualified from serving as a company Trustee
- I will at all times ensure that the Charities funds are used only for charitable purposes.

Confidentiality Agreement

The Trustee must always be aware of the confidentiality of information gained during the course of his/her duties, which may include access to personal information relating to residents, employees, volunteers and donors. It is expected that the Trustee understands the importance of treating information in a discreet and confidential manner, and his/her attention is drawn to the following:

1. *All documentary or other material including any downloaded data onto a laptop or PC, USB drive or any other storage device containing confidential information must be always kept securely when not being used and must be returned to the Trust at the time of termination of your time as a Trustee, or at any other time upon demand.*
2. *Information regarding Trustee activities must not be disclosed either orally or in writing to unauthorised persons.*
3. *Conversations relating to confidential matters affecting the Trustee, residents, employees, volunteers and donors should not take place in situations where they can be overheard (i.e. in public spaces, in stairwells close to accommodation units etc.).*

4. Trustees are reminded that all information that:
 - a) is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of, your time as a Trustee or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence;
 - b) relates particularly to Trustee activities, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort; and has not been made public by, or with our authority;
5. The Trustee must exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information and shall at the time of termination of your voluntary work with us, or at any other time upon demand, return to us any such material in your possession.
6. Any breach of confidentiality may be the subject of a legal action by the Trust and/or by the Data Commissioner.
7. **Duration** The restriction shall continue to apply after the termination of your voluntary work without limit in point of time but shall cease to apply to information ordered to be disclosed by a Court of competent jurisdiction or otherwise required to be disclosed by law.
8. For the purposes of clarity, you shall not at any time (save as required by law) before or after the termination of your voluntary work, disclose such information to any person without our prior written consent.
9. **Governing Law and Jurisdiction** This agreement and any dispute or claim (including non-contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with it or its subject matter or formation shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of England and Wales.
10. Each party irrevocably agrees that the courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim (including non- contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with this agreement or its subject matter or formation.

This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees:

Name: Felicity Evans MBE, Chair of Trustees

Date: 16 September 2025