

# Pilsdon at Malling

The Pilsdon at Malling Community  
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## **The Ethos of Pilsdon**

The Pilsdon at Malling Community seeks to provide an environment where people can rebuild their lives after experiencing a crisis, whether sudden or progressive. We also welcome people who wish to find a time to reflect on their lives before making a change in direction, or just want time out to live as part of a Community. It is not necessary to have a specific reason or illness to come to Pilsdon. Most people who come and stay here find that with time and the routine and friendships developed, they can move on to live more independent lives; or they discover that living in community is the way of life for them. This can take as long as seems mutually appropriate, whether months or years. Stays are usually between six months and two years, with a few people staying much longer. Those aged between 18 & 25 years are usually encouraged to limit their stay to a maximum of a year.

Responsibility for the running of the Community is carried out by 4-6 resident, unpaid Community Members (there are no paid staff). Everyone who stays at the Community: guest, visitor, wayfarer, volunteer or community member participates fully in the life of the Community and some may find the Christian foundation of the Community an assistance, though there is no religious requirement for guests. People of all races, cultures and faiths are welcome.

## **How to apply for consideration as a guest**

- a) An enquirer or their referrer may request information by letter, phone or email. We will send information about Pilsdon at Malling and an application form (which is also available on the website). Having read the information, if the enquirer is still interested in coming to live in the Community, then he/she is asked to fill in the application form and send it to the Guardian of the Community.

Those with reading or writing difficulties are welcome to telephone to discuss their application.

- b) Providing references are satisfactory a date is fixed for a visit – two to three nights stay at no cost other than transport. We prefer people to make their own way to us by public transport. West Malling station is a ten minute walk away & the bus stop just five minutes away.

## **References**

- a) References are required before the preliminary visit – an appropriate medical reference and one other. If the person is on prescribed medication this should be described giving the reasons for the medication. A diagnosis and prognosis are also required as well as reasons why the sheltered, community life of Pilsdon would be appropriate.
- b) Those giving references are also asked if the person being referred has any history of Schedule 1 Sex Offences, arson or violence not related to alcohol consumption.
- c) Towards the end of the visit a mutual decision will be made about whether the enquirer feels that they will fit into the Community and be able to contribute to its life and whether it would be beneficial to stay here for a length of time. If the conclusions are positive on both sides an offer of a place at Pilsdon will be made. The person may be able to take up the place immediately or it could be up to several weeks, depending on whether a room is available.

## **Willingness to live in community**

This involves:

- a) Accommodation in a single room with shared bathrooms & toilets (most rooms have a washbasin).
- b) All meals are eaten together in the dining room. Everyone is expected to have lunch and dinner and encouraged to share in all the other meal and refreshment times.
- c) Limitations on privacy.
- d) Respect for own and others' space in bedroom, house and grounds.

- e) Gates are locked from 9.15 pm to 7.30am to ensure security.
- f) Respect for quiet in house and grounds between 11.00pm and 7.00am.
- g) No TVs in bedrooms. There are two Community TVs and a video/ dvd. Only radios & sound systems with headphones in bedrooms.
- h) Willingness to accept others as they are.
- i) Smoking restricted to outside only (not in bedrooms).

### **Willingness to participate in a ‘working community’**

This involves:

- a) Up and available for work by 8.45am (Breakfast 8 – 8.30am).
- b) Being self-motivated to work towards sustaining a regular routine.
- c) Willing and able to participate in the variety of work and activities offered in sustaining a Community of 15-20 people (e.g. chores, kitchen, laundry, a working farm, animals, garden, building and maintenance). Everyone is encouraged to develop old and new skills and to use the creative and recreational facilities.

### **Self-reliance and motivation**

The Pilsdon at Malling Community tries not to be institutional; rather it is a way of living as an extended family. Pilsdon is an independent charitable company. We call on the services provided by GPs, Community Mental Health Teams, Dentists, Drug and Alcohol Advice Centres and therapists in the normal way. The Guardian is an Anglican priest and there are other community members who have experience in pastoral care. However we have no medical or psychiatric expertise on site. No-one earns a salary.

If someone is referred to us from hospital or any care in the community scheme then we would usually request that the referring organisation continues having responsibility until it was felt appropriate to refer formally to local support agencies.

### **Respect for restrictions of living in a dry house**

That means:

- a) No alcohol or non-prescribed drugs may be consumed on or off the premises while resident and sleeping at the Community.
- b) Transport is available for appointments and there is access to public transport if necessary.

- c) Limitations to times away from the Community.
- d) People are responsible for administering their own medication and are expected to co-operate with their support workers.
- e) Pilsdon is not a detoxification or rehabilitation centre. It is not suitable for people on alcohol or drug compensatory prescriptions, e.g. methadone.

### **General**

- a) The Community comprises of all ages (children to pensioners), male and female, married and single, and of diverse ethnic backgrounds. The 15<sup>th</sup> century Barn Chapel is open all the time and services are held four times a day. Attendance is voluntary.
- b) Pilsdon at Malling is a 6 acre site adjacent to West Malling Abbey, which is home to Benedictine contemplative Anglican nuns. It is an historic site dating back to the 11th century. It has a very peaceful atmosphere.
- c) The Community is 5 minutes walk from West Malling High Street, with shops, bank and post office (and pubs & off licences!) and 10 minutes walk from West Malling Station.
- d) The Community has a regular flow of visitors daily and to stay.
- e) There is an annual programme of events such as concerts or open days, when we welcome sometimes quite large numbers of the general public.