

**(Oxford Pastorate Housing Association)**

4-8 and 11 Pembroke Street, Oxford, OX1 1BP, UK  
Telephone: Warden +44(0)1865 793132 E-mail: commonwealthhouse@gmail.com

Commonwealth House was set up in 1965 by local Christian churches to provide accommodation in a welcoming, friendly community for international visitors to Oxford. The staff and management committee are all members of nearby churches.

We welcome residents from all over the world and from many different cultures and faiths.

***We ask you to respect the cultures and faiths of other residents and also the Christian principles on which Commonwealth House was founded.***

These rules are part of your licence agreement to stay in Commonwealth House. Please read them carefully.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

- MAKE SURE THAT YOU KNOW WHERE THE NEAREST EMERGENCY EXIT IS.
- IF YOU HEAR A HIGH PITCHED SMOKE ALARM, WAKE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AND LEAVE THE HOUSE.
- DO NOT DELAY TO COLLECT PERSONAL BELONGINGS
- DO NOT STAY IN YOUR ROOM
- DO NOT RETURN UNTIL IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.
- GO TO 40 PEMBROKE STREET (PARISH CENTER )

## HOUSE RULES

1. **No smoking in Commonwealth House**

*Smoking injures personal health and the health of others. It also leaves an unpleasant smell and is a fire risk. You must not smoke in your room or in the communal areas. If you smoke in your room the Warden will ask you to leave the house.*

2. **Do not use incense candles or any open flames.**

*Candles and open flames are a fire risk and must not be used.*

3. **Please do not make a noise by playing loud music, TV and radio, or talking loudly especially after 10pm.**

*Your neighbours need quiet to study and sleep. If you are disturbed tell the Warden.*

4. **If you invite in visitors you are responsible for the way they behave. They should leave by 11pm. You must inform the Warden if a visitor is to stay in your room overnight.**

*Visitors at night may disturb your neighbours and make them feel unsafe. It is necessary to know who is likely to be present at night in case of fire. Only your husband or your wife and direct family members can stay in the room overnight.*

5. **You must not keep animals in your room.**

6. **Please act in a way that respects other residents and do not commit any act that is against the law.**

7. **You must not carry on a business from your room.**

*We are licenced for residential use only*

8. **Please pay your licence fee on time. The licence fee is normally paid in the first half of each month for the whole month. Breakfast is complimentary and offered only at the advertised times.**

*If you cannot pay the licence fee you must tell the Warden your problems in confidence, so the situation can be managed. Sometimes there are problems in getting money from home, and you may not be used to handling money in a foreign culture. If you do not pay we may ask you to leave the House. We are a non-profit making association and depend completely on the licence fee you pay.*

9. **Please look after your keys and ensure that your room door and the outside House door are tightly shut when you leave.**

*We must keep everyone in the House safe. We are in a busy city-centre location, and in the evenings a thief may look for a way to enter. Please tell the Warden immediately if there are problems.*

10. **Please help us to look after the House and keep it clean and tidy.**

**10.1. Please keep your room clean and tidy and the toilets and the kitchens in the clean and tidy condition in which you would wish to find them yourself. Remove any hairs and leave the shower cubicle clean for the next person.**

*We employ part-time cleaners. They are not employed to wash dishes, etc. Problems arise because not all residents are careful and wash up and put away cooking equipment or to leave shower and toilet rooms clean and dry.*

**10.2. Please do not alter or damage the decoration of your room.**

*Sticky paper will damage the walls of your room. Buy Blu-tack or ask the Warden if you want to put some pictures on the wall. Please do not alter the building or furniture in any way. If you damage anything, please inform the Warden.*

**10.3. Melt the ice off your refrigerator at least once a month.**

*This makes it more efficient and costs you less.*

**10.4. Do not leave clothing or towels or any other object directly on the electric storage heater or other heaters.**

*It will over-heat, melt its safety fuse or stop working.*

**10.5. Please be careful with the use of gas or electricity. It can be dangerous.**

*Please do not attempt to open or adjust electrical appliances if they do not work or may be unsafe. In Britain only qualified personnel are allowed to do this by law.*

**Please help us to look after the House and keep it clean and tidy**

**Please wash clothes in the laundry only and dry them there.  
It is not allowed to dry clothes in your room.**

### **Other information**

1. The Warden is normally in his office of House No.11 Pembroke St. from Monday to Friday usually 8am to 4pm.
2. There are coin operated washing and drying machines in the basement of Houses 5 and 7.
3. There is a Common Room (club room) in the basement of No.11 Pembroke Street for relaxation with television and newspapers.
4. We run a social programme such as visits and parties run by residents. Details are posted in the hall of No.11 Pembroke St.

### **Frequently asked Questions**

**a. What happens if I lose the keys?**

*Please tell the Warden as soon as possible and he will get replacements. You will have to cover the cost of this. Do not lend your keys to others or have copies made. **Keep in mind the security of the House at all times.***

**b. How long can I stay?**

*The Licence to occupy the room is normally on a monthly basis. We aim to provide short term accommodation of up to a year and not long term residence. Normally students stay to the end of the academic year or the end of their course. The Warden has discretion whether he lets you continue to stay. If you want leave before you have to give 28 days' notice or pay for the time you are leaving earlier.*

**c. How can I complain?**

*If you have a difficulty such as a noisy neighbour or the window will not open or the shower is dirty, see the Warden or Warden's Deputy as soon as possible. We employ someone who fixes most things to do with the building. However if the Warden is unable to solve the problem you may write to the Chairperson of the Housing Association whose name and address are on the notice board in the hall of No.11 Pembroke Street.*

**d. Can the Warden come in my room when I am not there?**

*Yes he can to see about repairs and to check the electric coin meter.*

**e. Do I have to pay Council Tax?**

*The House covers any Council Tax costs.*

**f. Can I let my room to other people?**

*Yes with the written permission of the warden, limited to 4 weeks for personal holidays only e.g going home. Please do not carry on a business from your room. The room is for living only.*

**g. Can I keep my bicycle here?**

*Yes, as long as there is enough room in the shed at the back of No.11 or outside on the south side of the House. It is best to lock your bicycle to something solid and remove the lights if possible.*

**h. Do I need to insure my belongings?**

*The Association cannot take responsibility for your personal possessions so you should insure them. Ask at your college student advice centre.*

**A little bit about us**

The Oxford Pastorate Housing Association, known as Commonwealth House, is a 'Friendly Society'. It is an English legal form rather like a limited company but any profit it makes is used for the benefit of the customers – in this case the residents of Commonwealth House. It is not a charity: although we do have a very similar status to a charity. The members of the Management Committee give their services free. They are members of nearby churches. The buildings belong to St Aldate's Parochial Charity to whom Commonwealth House pays a rent. This Charity, of which there are many in Britain, uses its income to look after this building and that of the church next door. We have one full time employee – the Warden and some part-time paid workers.

Commonwealth House was started by a former rector (senior person) of St Aldate's Church next door in about 1965.

We welcome residents of all faiths and none. For further information, please read the information booklet in your room, or look at the notice board in the entrance of House No.11.

Our registered office is at 40 Pembroke Street and we are registered with the Financial Services Authority, Friendly Society No 17175R.

This guidance should be read alongside the Licence to occupy your room.