



Pilsdon Manor, Pilsdon, Bridport, Dorset. DT6 4NZ 01308 868306. www.pilsdon.org.uk

A NEW LEADER FOR THE PILSDON COMMUNITY

BASIC INFORMATION

OPPORTUNITY

- Pilsdon is seeking an ordained minister to join the residential community and lead it as Warden. This is a valuable opportunity to develop and exercise a very practical and pastoral leadership within a lively and changing household of some 25-30 people.

OUR PURPOSE

- Pilsdon is an Intentional Christian Community of members who choose to live together for several years and organize their lives around the principles of worship, work, and hospitality.
- Based in a Jacobean manor house, surrounded by outbuildings, and buried deep in the lovely West Dorset countryside, Pilsdon offers a place of safety and a healthy pattern for day to day life to those who live on the margins of society.
- The community provides a safe and caring environment for those who may be recovering from addiction or mental illness or are in need of a place to recover from life trauma. It provides a sanctuary where people can rebuild their lives.

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1958 by Percy and Gaynor Smith and inspired by the 17th Century Little Gidding Community, Pilsdon is an ecumenical Christian community rooted in the Anglican tradition. We offer a life of prayer, work and a welcome to a rich variety of people.

The community is led by the Warden and a group of up to six or seven other Community Members, who lead the prayers, organise work and maintain the boundaries of community life. They are made up of a mixture of single, civil partnered and married people (some with children) who live in simple accommodation and come from all walks of life.

We have room for up to 21 long term guests of the community, many of whom come looking for a safe, peaceful and disciplined environment in which to find hope and restoration amidst their struggles (recovery from alcohol/drug addiction, poor mental health, homelessness and other life crises). We have further accommodation for those coming for short respite visits, for holidays or retreats.

Morning prayer/Eucharist, midday prayer, evening prayer and compline, underlie everything we do and, along with meals eaten together, bring a rhythm, structure and

sense of order to long, exciting and sometimes chaotic days. On Sundays our evening service welcomes people from the neighbourhood.

We run a small, 13 acre farm, keeping dairy and beef cows, sheep, pigs, ducks and chickens and have a large vegetable garden. Everybody living in the community takes part in the daily rhythm of work. The simple manual labour – whether hand-milking cows, carrying out household chores, digging in the garden or preparing meals – enables everyone to experience a sense of belonging and self-respect, to develop skills and to have confidence restored.

The Community is in good order financially, with a strong, committed and supportive group of trustees, many local volunteers and a mailing list of c.1,000 and social media followers. We have just completed a major refurbishment of some of the outbuildings to improve the quality of the accommodation we can offer.

Registered as a Charity (“Charitable Incorporated Organisation”) our purpose is defined as:

*“the relief of financial need, the relief of sickness and the preservation of good physical and mental health by offering accommodation, hospitality and spiritual refreshment to those who by reason of poverty, disability, mental or spiritual incapacity or inability to manage their own affairs are in need of such refuge without regard to race, gender, or creed: and
the practice of the Christian religion by the formation and maintenance of a community of people who from time to time will endeavour to live together as one household in order to welcome people in need and be united in love and prayer according to the precepts of the Christian gospels”*

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY LEADER (WARDEN)

*(For further information about the personal qualities needed and the lifestyle that the role involves please see the accompanying document, “**Being Warden**”).*

- The Warden is appointed by the Trustees and is responsible to them for the leadership of the community and for its day-to-day running.
- This includes the overall discipline and welfare of the Community (Community Members and Guests), and also the buildings, furnishings and equipment owned by the Charity. (A part-time Administrator is employed to provide office support.)
- He/ she also oversees the appropriate use of the Church and all the adjoining farmland, and is responsible for the external links of the community with Supporters and Friends, with relevant funding agencies and the media.
- The Warden is responsible for recruiting and appointing new Community members after consultation with existing Members and the Trustees.
- Being rooted in the Anglican tradition the Warden needs ideally to be Anglican themselves or to have understanding of this to be able to minister to the pastoral needs and faith development of the Community Members amongst others. Hence an active interest in theology and vocational development would be desired. As an inclusive community, he/she needs also to be comfortable with ecumenism and interfaith dialogue.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

These are the sorts of qualities that we seek in our Warden:

- Mature, broad and open theology/spirituality
- Empathetic, good with people (and good at living with people). A good listener.
- “Gets” what Pilsdon is about
- Leader and encourager
- Energy, enthusiasm and a confident approach
- Able to initiate outreach and new projects
- Physically and mentally robust
- Good manager and delegator
- Able to maintain strong and appropriate boundaries and able to hold people to account
- In touch with their own vulnerability
- A sense of humour!

FURTHER INFORMATION

Terms of Appointment

The Warden’s appointment is normally for an initial period of 5 years which is renewable after periods of 4 and 7 years’ service. Only exceptionally, and at the request of the trustees, will a Warden serve for more than 10 years. There are no fixed working hours but each member has a period of 36 hours off each week, 6 calendar weeks holiday per year and 1 further week for a personal retreat.

Spouses/Civil Partners

Given the nature of the Community it is essential that an applicant’s spouse/civil partner is fully supportive of the application.

Depending on a spouse’s/civil partner’s own circumstances, it may be that they would themselves feel called to be either a Community Member or a volunteer within the Community. Alternatively they could also work outside the community.

Children

Over the years children of Community Members and Wardens have been brought up within the Community and greatly enriched it. There are good primary and secondary schools in the neighbouring towns and villages.

Accommodation

Accommodation is provided within the Community according to need, but usually includes the appropriate number of bedrooms, a lounge/study with kitchenette, and a bathroom.

Allowances

All living expenses are met. Community Members currently receive about £290 per month, and up to £350 p.a. for a retreat. The Community may also consider paying pension contributions, depending on personal circumstances. Family members and volunteers also receive appropriate allowances.