**WARDEN ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**BACKGROUND**

**What is the Pilsdon Community?**

Pilsdon is an intentional Christian community of members who choose to live together and organise their lives around the principle of a simple, radical welcome that is woven into a daily practice of work and prayer. It is a way inspired by the early church where life is lived in common, and ordered by an Anglican framework.

Pilsdon is a prophetic place; a sign and symbol of something beyond itself, not a solution for our society’s problems. The community represents a way of being that is entirely counter cultural, that cannot be measured or made into a success. It is anchored in a spirituality dwelling in a practice of forgiveness, honesty, vulnerability and acceptance, that all are invited to participate in no matter how we come to be in relationship with it.

The community lies deep in the West Dorset countryside in a Jacobean manor house with a quadrangle of outbuildings, a large fruit and vegetable garden, livestock and meadows, and its own church. Established in 1958 and inspired by the 17th century community of Little Gidding, it offers a place of safety and a healthy pattern for day-to-day life to those who live on the margins of society or who may be recovering from addiction or mental illness or from life trauma. It aims to be a peaceful sanctuary where people can rebuild their lives by sharing in a communal life with others according to their gifts. It is not a “service provider” and does not pursue therapeutic or clinical goals, though individual guests may have their own external support. The approach is always radically inclusive and non-judgmental with a real focus on everyone’s potential; it is a place where people can find health restored, and a renewed sense of dignity and transformation.

Pilsdon can accommodate up to 21 guests and offers short-term accommodation to itinerant homeless people (which are known as wayfarers). It is managed and hosted by a residential community of up to seven Members and residential and non-residential Volunteers. Those who thrive as Members at Pilsdon tend to come with a sense of vocation to serve but also with a willingness to be open and learn from those they share the life with. There is often much enthusiasm and excitement for the *idea* of Pilsdon, and perhaps less understanding of the demands of the life, and what it takes to keep saying “yes” to what is being asked day in and day out. Living at Pilsdon comes with daily personal and spiritual challenges, but living within the economy of God’s Kingdom, there is an abundance of daily grace and gift given in the context of living such a life wholeheartedly.

The Pilsdon Community can be explained today in much the same way as the founders Percy and Gaynor Smith wrote in one of the earliest newsletters from June 1959:

*“It is true that our life here is shared by some who have been in prisons and mental hospitals, and occasionally an old-age pensioner comes here for a break from the strain of being forgotten in a large city. There is healing in the peace and loveliness of Pilsdon. But we are essentially a religious community of a rather unusual kind, a continuation of a thread, never forgotten or quite broken, winding back to that mixed Anglican community, founded in the 17th century at Little Gidding by Nicholas Ferrar […]. There is a social work aspect to Pilsdon. There is also a family aspect, because the joys and sorrows of everyone staying here are laughed over and grieved over, as in an ordinary home. Over and above this, however, Pilsdon is a religious community in the deepest sense, concerned primarily with discovering what is meant by the will of God and trying to do it”.* (June 1959)

Pilsdon contributes something important to the conversation about faith and love in action within the context of the Christian tradition. The liturgically important moments are woven in to the rhythms of the Pilsdon year, and they play a vital role in the health of the community. These moments in the church calendar contain so much opportunity: for remembrance, for lamentation, for thanksgiving, for celebration, and for entering into our woundedness safely. With spiritually mature and grounded leadership, these moments create opportunities for people to get in touch with their vulnerability if they choose; these aspects of life at Pilsdon are always an invitation never a requirement for people.

Pilsdon is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose legal responsibility rests with a board of Trustees to whom the Warden is accountable. Trustees maintain an oversight position of the budget, the welfare of all who reside at Pilsdon, and ensure that all policies are being followed and the livestock and buildings are cared for, and they approve large capital projects*.* Should issues of misconduct or other emergency arise, the Trustees will ensure the community is supported until new leadership is appointed.

There is an Operations Manager post which enhances day-to-day operational capacity and frees the Warden from much of the administration and operational day to day issues as well as project management support. The organisation is currently financially stable and has adequate reserves for the immediate future. It has a mailing list of around one thousand contacts.

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**Overview**

The Warden, an ordained Anglican priest, is appointed by the Trustees and is responsible to them for the leadership of the community. Licensed by the Bishop of Salisbury, with the shared ‘Cure of Souls’, the Warden is the spiritual leader of the community. The role includes the day-to-day running of the community, appropriate use of the Church and all the adjoining farmland, overall pastoral care, and the welfare, safety and discipline of the community; this includes members, volunteers, guests and visitors. They are also responsible for the external links of the community with supporters and friends, with relevant funding agencies and the media.

The role of Warden at Pilsdon offers the gift of being the spiritual leader and priest in a unique and deeply sacramental place. It is a model of leadership that is servant hearted, spiritually mature and comfortable with vulnerability – one’s own, as well as others. The rhythm of life and the paying attention to liturgical seasons at Pilsdon offers opportunities for the Warden to practice what they preach; their willingness to receive the same ashes that they mark on others’ heads, and have their feet washed at the same time they wash others is the mark of Pilsdon leadership.

The Warden is the person who leads many of the services, teaches and guides others to do the same. A pattern of daily prayer and worship underpins the life and enables the Warden and Members to accompany people on their journeys. The post-holder will need to be comfortable with the precept that the Pilsdon Community is a place that lives out the Gospel in apostolic ways and does not engage in overt evangelism with the guests of the community. The warden is encouraged to engage in activities that help support the vocation and pastoral care they are providing to others; this will include Spiritual Direction and personal supervision.

The next Warden will be someone who will want to take time to build trust and come with a willingness to learn from the Members, the people who have made their home here, and those who come to live this life with us while they find a way to rebuild their lives. A ‘power with’ rather than ‘power over’ natural leader, the Warden is someone who can hold firm boundaries when it comes to keeping the few rules we have, a dry and drug free safe community where an inherent respect for everyone is expected.

**Responsibilities:**

The leader has overall responsibility for six key areas of the Community’s activity:

1. **Spiritually**: To ensure that the community’s inclusive and contemplative spirituality and the daily and liturgical seasonal cycles of prayer and Eucharist remain at the heart of its life.
2. **Community:** To inspire, lead and manage members, volunteers, and guests. To ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of all, evoking the potential in all who come to stay at Pilsdon. To enable people to join and move on from the community in healthy ways.
3. **Team**: To recruit and support a sufficient number of members and volunteers, and to induct and develop all newcomers with experienced Members and the Operations Manager. To work closely with the Operations Manager to manage the day-to-day running of the community, for its overall good and thriving.
4. **Strategy:** With the Trustees, to inspire the Community with a clear vision and priorities for the future, building on its strengths, reducing risks and making best use of assets. Developing projects which may include building renovation, rewriting forms and procedures, or working with other agencies for joint projects or enhancing services.
5. **Management**: To ensure that the organisation is well-managed, complies with governance responsibilities, and is appropriately-networked externally. With overall responsibility for: the small holding (including land and animals); buildings, equipment and furnishings; catering; gardens; relationships with the extended community, the Golden Cap Team of churches, the Diocese, and immediate neighbours; and external publicity and communications.
6. **Ecology**: To ensure Pilsdon maintains and expands its practices of caring for the natural world as an underlying principle in all of its activities. Enabling the Community becomes as self-sufficient as possible, and able to maximise its biodiversity and carbon neutral potential

**Person specification**

We are seeking someone who feels a calling to this life and will bring their own gifts, ideas and experience into the community. We expect that such a person will have many of the following qualities:

**Character**

* An open, warm and inviting personality
* A mature, broad and open spirituality
* An aware, insightful person who gives their heart to their own ongoing spiritual transformation
* Capacity to live with uncertainty
* A commitment to a personal and regular spiritual “practice”, and ability to support the personal and spiritual development of Members without taking the role of spiritual director
* Able to take difficult decisions, maintain boundaries and hold people to account to maintain safety and stability
* Pragmatic, practical and dependable; willing to participate in all aspects of the community’s daily life
* Awareness and interest in psychological process; and will readily commit to regular personal supervision and appraisals
* Physically and mentally robust
* Environmentally aware and progressive
* Capacity for self-care and ability to model this for others

**Skills**

* A cooperative approach to leadership with the ability to inspire and support others and delegate effectively
* An organised and strategic approach to management
* Sufficient financial acumen to keep the community financially secure
* Excellent inter-personal skills and ability to form and maintain constructive relationships
* Good communication skills with a wide variety of audiences
* Deep listening skills

**Experience**

* Experience and insight into living life in Christian community
* Experience of pastoral care with adults who have experienced problems of mental health, addiction or homelessness
* Understanding of the policy and statutory contexts relevant to a charitable company in the social care, housing/homelessness and mental health fields
* Successful working with a board of Trustees or similar
* Someone for whom liturgical rhythms have been a part of their formation.

Whilst it is impossible to predict the future it is expected that the Warden will encounter some of the following **challenges**:

* Preserving the safety and security of the community in a rapidly changing world
* Leading the search and discernment process for those who offer to serve the community as residential members and volunteers
* Responding to environmental, financial and social changes – provision/sustainability
* Spiritual vision in the context of a changing Christian landscape and conversation – the capacity to communicate its treasure

**Terms and conditions**

The range of responsibilities and demands of this post are exceptional and it can only be filled by an unusually experienced individual with a sense of calling who is prepared to work outside traditional terms of employment. Our new leader will bring their own gifts and perspectives and we expect them to make the life their own.

The hope is, that a commitment of five years is made, renewable after 4 and in exceptional circumstances the warden may continue in the role for more than 10 years. There is an annual review with the Chair of Trustees. It is a fulltime role. There are no fixed hours of work. The postholder will need to find an appropriate balance between the needs of the work and needs for rest, recreation and a private life. You will be requested to sign an opt-out from the requirements of the Working Time Regulations 1998. Remuneration, holiday entitlement, expenses are in accordance with those for all Community Members and are set out in the “Community Members Terms and Conditions”.