

*Have you, or are you considering applying to Pilgrim Homes? Is someone you know also doing so? Our procedure includes filling in an application form and this may be something you have not done before, or at least for many years. And the older we get, the less we like filling in forms!*



# Applying for a place in Pilgrim Homes

*John Denman, Vice Chairman,  
Chairman of Applications Committee*

What I would like to do in this article is to set your mind at rest about this procedure; explain what we are looking for and tell you some of the problems we face – and how you can help us, and yourself.

The Applications Committee is made up of trustees who are responsible for looking at your application and seeing whether it fits the Society's criteria of caring for the 'household of faith' as defined by our trust deed and doctrinal basis. If it does, your name is put on the waiting list of the home to which you have applied. When you are ready to come into the home the manager will assess you to see if the home can meet

your needs, and give the type of care you require.

## The application form

The form itself is in two parts: factual information and a separate sheet for you to give your testimony on how you became a Christian and have lived as such. Here is the first problem we are finding nowadays. Some applicants find it difficult to write down their spiritual experiences for a variety of reasons; they may have come from churches where they have not been required as individuals to put them into words, for instance. It may help and encourage you to know that we do not look for any set form or length – some of the most effective testimonies in Scripture were the shortest! What then do we look for? We look for a basic declaration of your conversion and faith in your own words, and we want you to be happy with what you have said. If we feel it would help us to talk to you we will ask two volunteers to visit, and this can be particularly helpful to those who have found it difficult to write down their testimony. In it you could include information on how you came to know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour; memories of services, preachers or incidents that directed you to Him and perhaps, some Scripture texts that have been

significant to you. You might also like to include how, since you came to the Lord, He has led you in your Christian life and enabled you to serve Him. I hope these suggestions will be helpful, but don't forget that we are not concerned with how much you write! Another problem we face is that physical frailties increase with age and illness, and accidents can put us unexpectedly in hospital. The pressure on hospital beds is so great that they are anxious to discharge you, and it is a testimony to Pilgrim Homes that they are so willing to do so into our care. If you find yourself having to fill in the application form in these far from ideal conditions it may mean that we will have to make an urgent decision. By their very nature there is nothing you can do about accidents, but can I suggest that, if your health is deteriorating, you consider writing out your testimony now, and it can be attached to the application form when needed. That way you will receive a very quick response when you need it.

### **Dementia and memory loss**

But perhaps the most rapidly increasing problem we face, in an ageing population, is the rapid rise in dementia and memory loss, and Christians are not exempt from this. More and more we are finding that

applicants suffering this condition are unable to write their own testimony and it is put together, with some difficulty, by a minister, relative or friend. This is quite acceptable, but we like to make personal contact with the applicant by visiting them, always with a relative present. Sadly, this is not always possible and the visitor may not be able to hold a meaningful conversation. How can you help? Again, by writing your testimony while all the details are still sharp in your mind, and it can be attached to the form, as mentioned earlier.

Finally, I would say on behalf of the Applications Committee that we value your prayers as we try to carry out our responsibilities. And to add very sincere thanks to all those volunteers who have so willingly helped by visiting applicants. I would not like you to be left with the impression that we face nothing but problems in our work.

We are constantly cheered and encouraged by the applications we receive and the testimony to God's grace you tell us about. We are amazed and thankful for the great variety of ways in which the Lord calls His people – every one is different. They come from so many different backgrounds and circumstances and we see the Lord's hand constantly at work. We give all the praise and glory to Him.

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