

Being an Alongsider at Alnmouth Friary



Being an 'Alongsider' at Alnmouth friary.

- Alongsiders live “alongside” the Community.
- The Alongsider will sign the ‘Alongsider Agreement’. The initial agreement is for 3 months. This will be reviewed once a month. After 3 months this agreement can be renewed for another 3 months, by mutual agreement.
- There is an Alongsider Mentor, who is a professed member of the Community. The Alongsider Mentor is the Alongsider’s main point of contact and source of information and support during their time with the Community. They meet regularly (usually weekly) with the Alongsider Mentor.
- Alongsiders join the Community for the Office. The expectation is Alongsiders will make every effort to participate in the daily cycle of prayer in the friary.
- They share meals with the Community, as do our guests.
- Alongsiders are encouraged to observe the times of silent prayer after Morning and Evening Prayer. Alongsiders are also encouraged to pursue personal prayer and study as well.
- They undertake regular work in the friary and the grounds. This includes work in the garden and domestic tasks. You are welcome to talk with the Alongsider Mentor about participating in the life of the chapel.
- They help with other work around the friary. The expectation is about 4 hours of work each day in return for board and lodging.
- The Alongsider Mentor agrees with the Alongsider what commitment to the daily timetable and work schedule is appropriate.
- Alongsiders have Monday off as a rest day each week (as do the members of the Community) and, depending on length of projected stay time away for holiday can be agreed with the Alongsider Mentor. One week is taken as holiday per quarter.

What the Alongsider may expect from the Community

A brother will be available to help those coming to be an Alongsider to help settle in, and for questions and advice after this. Alongsiders are welcome to approach any brother to ask for occasional guidance, spiritual direction and sacramental help; with the main point of regular contact being the Alongsider Mentor. Alongsiders are welcome to seek occasional informal assistance for their studies from any brother

who may have the expertise. The brothers will respect a proper confidentiality towards Alongsiders.

What the Community may expect

- ***Willing to live according to the rhythms of the friary:***

This does not mean attendance at all services and meals, but willingness usually to worship and eat with the Community and to keep the times and places of silence. This is important not only for the brothers and their other guests, but also to enable those living as an Alongsider to make the most of their stay in a religious house.

- ***Respect for the boundaries necessary in communal living:***

Alongsiders will not enter the Brothers' Enclosure. Respecting boundaries also includes recognising the brothers will have need for time apart and time to complete their tasks, as well as respecting the quiet that guests frequently seek. It also includes recognising a proper confidentiality owed to the brothers and guests. Speaking with guests is expected. Ask open questions, not direct or intrusive ones. Alongsiders will not enter the bedrooms of guests or brothers.

- ***Regular but limited help in the grounds and house:***

Alongsiders will help in the various tasks in the house and to help do gardening tasks such as clearing leaves and pruning bushes. Alongsiders may also assist in driving. Alongsiders will share in the allotted cleaning tasks in the friary.

Facilities

- ***Liturgy and Offices:***

The Community celebrates Mass most days and prays four daily offices. The style is an uncomplicated Franciscan one, with regular singing. Alongsiders are welcome to all of these services and will sit with the guests. The Chapel and Sacrament Chapel are always available for prayer.

- ***Accommodation:***

Accommodation will be in a small, simply-furnished but pleasant room. A washing machine is available for use. Alongsiders will check-in with the 'Laundry Brother' before using the washing machine. Those staying as an Alongsider will be expected to clean their own bedroom. Tea and coffee making facilities are available. Toiletries will be provided. Alongsiders will be given use of the friary's wifi.

- **Transport:**

For Alongsiders bringing their own cars, parking is available in a secured, well-lit area, but not garaging. The Community is not able to be responsible for guests' cars.

- **Meals:**

Meals are provided three times a day and are eaten with the brothers of the Community and their guests. Special diets can be catered for by arrangement. Breakfast is silent apart from on Fridays and Sundays. The evening meal on a Thursday is a silent meal. Alongsiders will be asked to let the Community know beforehand if they intend to be absent from a meal.

- **Post:**

There is a postal collection box on site and a Post Office in Alnmouth village.

- **Accommodation for Personal Guests:**

Can be arranged by request to the guest brother.

- **Health, Safety and Security**

Alongsiders have a key to their own room and the main door for the friary. Alongsiders, like all guests and brothers, are not permitted to smoke in the Community's buildings.

Alongsiders are required to inform their contact brother of any serious medical condition.

Requirements and Process

- Those wanting to be Alongsiders make an initial enquiry with the Community. They are invited to visit the Community at least once before application to be an Alongsider is considered. This gives members of the Community a chance to meet the potential Alongsider and for the Alongsider to have some idea of what they are joining.
- Alongsiders complete an Application Form. We require 2 references.
- They enter on a date agreed with the House Guardian and confirmed in writing.
- Alongsiders should be able to demonstrate that they have an address to go to should they be asked to leave at any point.

Things important to note:

- The commitment of Alongsiders to the Alnmouth friary and to the Alongsiders is initially for 3 months and may be renewed for a further 3 months. The relationship may be terminated on either side, in which case the Alongsider is normally expected to leave within a week.
- The brothers at Alnmouth friary have no financial responsibility for Alongsiders. They remain financially independent. Alongsiders will be provided with a modest monthly stipend.
- Alongsiders have no tenancy rights but have chosen freely to participate in the life of the Community. They sign an agreement to this end.
- Alongsiders must not be involved in any legal action, and DBS check is required.

Structure of a 'typical' day

7.00am Morning Prayer *followed by Prayer time*

8.05am Breakfast

9am-12noon To be agreed up with the Alongsider Mentor

12noon Midday Office *followed by Mass* (not on Fridays)

1.00pm Lunch

2pm-4pm To be agreed up with the Alongsider Mentor

4.30pm Afternoon Tea

5.00pm Evening Prayer *followed by Prayer time*

6.15pm Supper

9.00pm Compline

The Greater Silence begins after Compline and continues until 9.00am

Some practicalities

- A list of Brother's phone numbers is on display in the Kitchen, Library and Guest Lounge.
- If you want to be absent from the Friary in order to meet someone or go somewhere that is absolutely fine; please let the Brothers know in advance.
- You are invited as a guest to work with the Brothers in their home. Respect that how they want things done is their decision.
- If you interact with other guests, only ask open questions, let them volunteer information. They are here to be looked after by the Brothers with your support.
- Do work in common areas, when possible, do not disturb Guests or Brothers.
- Let the brother lead the chapel life and guide other guests.

Fridays in the friary

- On Fridays the brothers say Midday Prayer in the refectory at 12.45pm followed by lunch. You are welcome to join us.

Sundays in the friary

- On Sundays Evening Prayer is at 5pm, followed by 30 minutes of Adoration. After this the brothers will have a 'Recreation Evening' in the Brothers' Enclosure. Alongsiders will not be part of this meeting.

Please remember to have some time off every day and do not feel guilty for doing so; the Brothers will be attempting to follow suit!

Registered charity number: 236464

The European Province of the First Order Brothers of the Society of St Francis

ALNMOUTH FRIARY

Document of common understanding and mutual commitment

Alnmouth Friary has been home to an Anglican Franciscan community since 1961. Known as the Society of St Francis the community now consists of brothers and sisters in five separate provinces around the world. From the beginnings at Alnmouth friary there have always been others living alongside the Franciscan brothers – homeless men (wayfarers), people staying for rehabilitation after personal crisis, and those who have come to share in the life and work of the Friary – as well as short-term guests.

Alnmouth Friary is an intentional community of brothers of the First Order of the Society of St Francis (an Anglican Franciscan religious order with life-vowed members) who commit themselves to the Franciscan way of life. It is a community with Jesus Christ at its centre and, following the example of St Francis, they seek to satisfy these community aims. By coming to live Alongside the brothers you are agreeing to live by the following principles:

- To live in simplicity, humility, and peace with each other
- To welcome others who come to visit, especially the marginal and the stranger
- To have care for and delight in the environment
- To work for justice and peace in the world
- To witness to the abundant generosity of God in the common life
- To share the vision of living peacefully and sustainably in the world
- To join in the song of all creation in praise and thanksgiving

Those who come to live alongside the brothers commit to support the above aims and agree to abide by this ethos and pattern.

Alongsiders receive accommodation without charge and are supported by the resources of the community for their food, personal and spiritual needs. Alongsiders are not employees and receive no wages though they may (according to personal need) choose to receive a small standard weekly subsistence allowance. Alongsiders who have financial means sometimes choose to make regular or periodic donations toward the life and work of the friary. Such donations are without qualification and freely made and are not deemed to be rent. Alongsiders do not have protected occupier or tenancy rights. Being an Alongsider means living in the brother's home. Because of this there will be an initial six week probationary period. This will be reviewed again at the end of the initial 3 months, and if mutually agreed upon a further 3 month stay will be offered.

I for my own development through seeking to further the aims above in line with the community governance adapted from time to time, commit myself as an Alongsider of the Alnmouth Friary Community for a period of..... months, unless released from this commitment by mutual agreement or at the discretion of and decision by the Guardian upon such notice as shall be considered by him just and equitable according to the circumstances.

Signed

Guardian

Date