



THE CHALICE WELL TRUST

LITTLE ST MICHAEL'S RETREAT HOUSE

Information for Group Leaders

Constructed in circa 1600, Little St Michael's is a beautiful Grade II listed house within the tranquil Chalice Well Garden. Inside the house are 6 simple, quaint bedrooms, a quiet, relaxing living room, an inspiring esoteric library, and a well-equipped kitchen and dining area. In the eaves lies the hallowed Upper Room, a holy space kept solely for prayer, reflection, and meditation.

We welcome you as a guest and ask you to help us maintain the **sanctity** and **security** of this **unique and precious place** by ensuring everyone attending your retreat is aware and in agreement with the guidelines for staying with us. We want you to enjoy your stay at Little St Michael's ("LSM") and ask that you take time to familiarise yourself with this "*Information for Group Leaders*" document to be read alongside the "*Terms and Conditions of Hire for Group Retreats*" and the "*Application Form for Group Leaders*". This will help us work together in holding the special energies of this unique and precious place.

Many of the objects in the house have deep significance and are irreplaceable, so we ask you to ensure that the house is always secure by shutting doors and windows properly when you go out.

The retreat house is a place of quiet contemplation and an adult-only space, so we are unable to accommodate young people under the age of 18 years of age.

Chalice Well is a conscious retreat space, and you **may not** consume alcohol, use cigarettes or recreational drugs, or vape anywhere on the site, including the retreat house, meeting room, and garden. The retreat space, including the meeting room are shoe-free areas. Shoe racks are provided to keep the entrance/exit doors clear and tidy. We recommend bringing slippers as the original blue flagstone flooring found in the dining room may be a little chilly on bare feet.

Staying here offers a rare opportunity to leave behind distractions and daily life. For this reason, we ask you to respect our policy of **no electronic devices** in the Retreat House and the garden. If you need to travel with electronics, we ask that they be kept off or on flight mode upon arrival in the retreat house. If you need to make or receive emergency calls, there is a landline in the entrance hall.

We ask you **not to burn** candles, incense, or sage in our retreat house. The Upper Room is the only exception to burning candles, and we provide tealight candles and holders. In the Meeting Room, we allow plug-in or battery-operated candles and provide a candle holder for use with a single tealight candle, which we provide. In the garden, candles are allowed on the purpose-built shelf in the Sanctuary area opposite the Wellhead. Fire ceremonies are not allowed in the garden.

Accommodation Space

The retreat house has 6 bedrooms & sleeps 11 with shared bathrooms and toilet facilities. **Please note** access to one of the bathrooms is via either Holy Thorn or Rowan (please refer to the floor plan attached with this document) so please do ensure that the participants using these rooms are aware of this.

Our **housekeepers** clean the bathrooms, restock toilet rolls, clean the communal areas, including the kitchen floor and stairs, daily, usually between 10.00am – 12.30pm.

Towels and bed linen are provided in each room, as are a hairdryer and fan. There is also a torch for use in the garden. The linen will not normally be changed during stays of less than 7 days. Fresh towels are provided after 3 days. Coloured towels are provided for outside use in King Arthur's Court & healing pool.

The Kitchen & Dining areas

The kitchen is fully equipped for self-catering and is **vegetarian**, so please do not bring meat or fish into the house. A selection of organic teas & coffee, and non-dairy milk is provided which you are welcome to enjoy. The kitchen facilities and dining room caters for a maximum of 12 people.

The Upper Room

Within our retreat house, there is a beautiful meditation space called the Upper Room, which you and your group are very welcome to use during your stay. The special energies in the Upper Room have been preserved and cultivated as a sacred container for silent meditation, contemplation, and prayer. We appreciate your support in helping us hold the energies, and we ask that you and your group only use this space in this way.

For guests in Little St Michael's, the Upper Room is available 24 hours per day with a few exceptions.

- The upper room is accessible 24 hours daily to residential guests except for
 - Thursday between 5:30pm and 6pm which is Companions meditation, and residential guests are welcome to join
 - Daily non-residential Companion meditations between 1 to 2pm and 4 to 5pm in summer and between 3 to 4pm in winter.

Houseguests are asked to check the notice board in the kitchen for other bookings that may be taking place during their stay and are asked to avoid the Upper Room at these times.

The Upper Room is the only area in the Retreat House where you are welcome to light tea light candles in the holders provided; the tea lights are provided by the Trust. If you choose to light candles in the Upper Room, please do not leave them unattended and use the snuffer provided to extinguish them when you leave the Upper Room. Please take extra care and do not move the tea lights around once lit.

The Meeting Room

The retreat house is provided by the Trust for groups to stay on retreats of a meditative or contemplative nature. The house is not intended for workshop activities. If you are planning to hold meetings or wish for a dedicated workspace for training or exercises, please consider booking the Meeting Room which is adjacent to Little St Michael's.

As with all other areas of the Chalice Well, the Meeting Room is a smoke free zone and 'no shoe' environment. There is no Wi-Fi and as with all areas of the gardens & retreat house, mobile phones or other electronic devices should be turned off or kept on airplane mode. We provide tealights for use in the single candle holder provided in the Meeting Room; otherwise, candles are limited to battery-operated or chargeable ones.

The Meeting Room is available for a full-day hire (9am – 5pm). If you book the meeting room for consecutive dates as part of your Group Booking, you will have 24-hour access, accessible directly from the Dining Room of the house.

The meeting room can be booked as part of the initial application process for the retreat house, or any time before your group's arrival date. Please be aware that we accept direct meeting room bookings continuously throughout the year, so cannot guarantee or reserve the meeting room if not booked at the time of application.

If your Group is part residential (staying in LSM) and part non-residential (staying off-site), the non-residential guests are welcome to join the residential group for group activities in the meeting room if it is booked as part of your Retreat booking. Access for non-residential guests is limited to the meeting room only and does not extend to communal areas, bedrooms or The Upper Room within the retreat house or the gardens. Site access for non-residential guests is during public opening hours only and access to the meeting room is via the meeting room main door and not via the house.

Visitors & non-residential members of your group

Non-residential visitors are not allowed access to Little St Michael's Retreat house, the Meeting Room, or into the gardens unless by pre-arranged agreement in writing with Chalice Well Office Staff. If, as part of your retreat, you will be employing a chef, caterer, or other ceremonial practitioners, please make a request to us in advance.

Use of Chalice Well Gardens

One of the benefits of staying at our retreat house is 24-hour access to the beautiful Chalice Well gardens. As with all our spaces, we hold the gardens in a way that respects the special energies and the needs of other visitors. Ceremonies and group activities within the garden should be performed outside of public opening hours. We also ask that groups stay in small groups while in the garden during opening hours and be sensitive to other visitors. Little St Michael's residents benefit from the use of a large private garden with tables and chairs directly behind the retreat house to enjoy and use during their stay.

During your stay there may be Private Access bookings, these are groups who have requested to use the garden out of hours whilst you are with us. The private access bookings will be displayed on the notice board in the kitchen.

We ask that you respect private access groups use of the garden and refrain from joining them and instead your group continue enjoying the private garden to the rear of the retreat house during these times. Private access bookings are restricted to a maximum of 3 per week and are booked for either an 8am start or 8pm finish

The Private Access booking timings are:

January – March 16.45 – 18.30

April – September 8.00-10.00 or 18.15 – 20.00

October – December 8.00 – 10.00

If your retreat itinerary includes events or activities planned in the garden during the designated Private Access booking times, and these activities cannot be arranged outside of those hours mentioned above, you must request a Private Access booking to ensure exclusive access.

The fee for exclusive access to the garden during the designated private access times is discounted when booked as part of your Group Retreat booking. It is equivalent to the deposit charged for private access bookings. This fee covers attendees who are staying on-site at LSM. If you would like to book a private access visit, please let us know your preferred date and time (please see PA timings listed above).

There are Chalice Well residents on site who may also occasionally use the garden out of hours. They will, of course, give you and your group space in the garden.

Candles are only allowed in the Garden on the purpose-built shelf in the Sanctuary area opposite the Wellhead. Please do not leave candles, nightlights, incense, or sage in any other areas of the Gardens, including at the Wellhead. Fire ceremonies are not permitted in the gardens.

Enquiry & Booking

Once your application has been accepted, the payment schedule is as follows:

An initial deposit, equal to 10% of the total cost of your booking, is required to confirm the booking. The second payment, equal to 40% of the total cost of your booking, is due 9 months before your arrival.

The final payment, equal to 50% of the total cost of your booking, is due 3 months before your arrival.

All payments are non-refundable and non-transferable

All accommodation prices are stated in pounds sterling and include V.A.T.

We strongly advise you to take out appropriate insurance to cover any eventuality of cancellation. As a group leader, you are also advised to take out Public Liability Insurance.

Day of arrival

On the **day of your arrival**, we ask that as group leader you arrive, 30-45 minutes ahead of your group, so that we can complete the **check-in** process with you. We complete the check-in process every time even if you have visited us before. An important part of the check-in process is the transfer of guardianship from the Chalice Well Trust to the Group leader as a holder of the retreat.

Check in for Group Leaders is between 2.00pm and 5.00pm. Once the group leader has checked in, group participants can go straight to the retreat house when they arrive and do not need to come to the office.

Once check-in is complete, we will provide you with written copies of the usage guidelines and terms and conditions. As the Group leader **your responsibility** is to share this information with your group attendees and bring their attention to the health and safety information throughout the site. Please remember that as Group leader you must ensure that your attendees respect and support the guidelines and terms and conditions to benefit the most from their stay.

We do not offer **late arrival** but can try to accommodate last minute travel emergencies. If you are unable to arrange travel to arrive before 5pm on the first night of your stay please arrange alternative accommodation. In the event of unavoidable delay, resulting in arrival after 5pm, please contact us immediately by email info@chalicewell.org.uk or by office phone 01458 831 154 or on our emergency number after 5pm 07442 041 714

Day of departure

Check out from the house on the day of your departure is by 10am. This applies even if you have booked the Meeting Room for the same day. Luggage can be taken to the Meeting Room if it is booked as part of your retreat.

Any belongings left in the house will be kept in **Lost Property** for one month and then disposed of. Please do your best to ensure all items are taken with you when you check-out. We can post any items left at a cost to you or you can collect them from the office.

Should you wish to leave any dried foods, there is a **communal food cupboard** in the kitchen for this use.

Parking

Only **Blue Badge Holders** (Registered Disabled) guests can park onsite – we only have 3 spaces for Blue Badge Holders. As part of the booking process, we will ask you to advise us of any attendees who would benefit from a Blue Badge parking spot. We cannot, however, guarantee a spot and will advise you accordingly.

We will issue a permit for use in one of our designated spaces for the **Group Retreat leader** only. Group leaders are welcome to unload in the Chalice Well car park, then you must move your vehicle to one of our designated parking areas off-site. During busy times, we cannot guarantee a space, and we operate a first-come, first-served system.

Parking for attendees is **not** included as part of the Group Retreat House booking. Please advise your attendees that they will need to pay for parking, and the closest venue is Drapers Factory, a 2-minute walk from Chalice Well. Payment to Drapers can be made either via their reception or in their honesty box on the front door of the Drapers building.

Health and Safety Advice

The entire Chalice Well site is consciously eco-friendly and conservation focused. We are blessed to attract a wide range of creatures including badgers, squirrels, cats, dragonflies, bees, wasps and bats. We work hard to encourage the wildlife and ask you to respect their home. We do provide basic first aid kits in the retreat house but ask that you ensure that you have all necessary medication should you have any allergies. In the case of an accident there are first aid kits located throughout the site, and you will be advised on their locations during check-in.

The Chalice Well gardens also include open water features, including two waterfalls, the healing pool and the rill on the bottom lawn. Please advise your group that the waterways will be slippery and ask members of your group not to drop/place items in the Well or Waterways. They are welcome to take a therapeutic paddle in the shallow bathing pool in King Arthur's court but not in any other areas. Drinking water can be collected from the Lions Head and is for ceremonial use.