

COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY CROSS, COSTOCK GUIDELINES FOR ALONGSIDERS

The Community invites women who wish to have a deeper experience of the religious life to spend a longer period of time as an 'Alongsider', living in the enclosure and joining in the various activities of the community.

Before beginning a period of living alongside the Community potential 'Alongsiders' will normally have made at least one visit of a few days during which they will meet with some of the Community to explore overall objectives for the proposed period and giving an idea of the hoped for length of stay—not less than one month and not more than 12 months. NB the commitment on both sides will be for a month at a time, and there will be a review during Week 3 of each month. This will normally be with the Reverend Mother and the Pastor. An agreement will be signed each month.

Each Alongsider will have a professed member of the Community as a Pastor, and will normally have a weekly meeting [which may be brief!] with their Pastor during which issues may be raised and experiences reflected on.

To be an 'Alongsider' is not to be confused with postulancy or expectation of proceeding to test a possible monastic vocation –though this may emerge as the months pass.

Expectations after the first two weeks [during which the Alongsider may need time to adjust to a very different timetable] Alongsiders work out with their Pastor a daily regime which will include some participation in the Offices of Lauds, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline, and attendance at the daily Eucharist and meals. They will observe the times of solitude, personal prayer and study as well as times of corporate reflection and study. Alongsiders may be rostered for domestic and other work [normally c4 hours a day] in return for board and lodging.

Free time: One free day a month and, depending on length of projected stay, roughly three weeks holiday for 12 months [i.e. 1 week for every 4 months]to be agreed with the Reverend Mother. Provision of free time during the daily round is worked out with the Pastor.

Visits to and by families and friends –apart from holidays and free days –to be arranged with the Reverend Mother.

Alongsiders are encouraged to use 'non-work' time creatively or for study, but are also invited to participate in the on-going development and care of the convent grounds. Wellingtons/boots and suitable clothing for working outside will be required!

Alongsiders will be invited to take part in the Community's corporate study sessions, corporate 'lectio divina' and other appropriate events. They may also be invited to participate [though not 'as of right'] in certain novitiate and inter-novitiate events. They will also be aware that there will be times when members of the Community will need to meet together without the presence of Alongsiders.

Broadband internet access is provided, and Alongsiders will need to be aware of and respect the Community's download limit. Sensitivity in the use of mobile phones is important –the 'cells' are not completely sound-proof and all residents are expected to observe the Greater Silence and periods of solitude. Alongsiders may bring their bicycle or car, and these will be parked within the secure compound.

Finance: The Community agrees to provide free board and lodging and insurance cover for all possessions kept in the monastery. Alongsiders are normally expected to provide their own clothing, toiletries, postage, stationery and telephone costs as well as financing their free days and holidays. Any difficulty in this area is to be discussed with the Reverend Mother. Any expenses incurred on Community business will be reimbursed, and if Alongsiders bring their own car they will be expected to keep a record of mileage on Community business, and this will be reimbursed.

Alongsiders will be responsible for their own Taxes and National Insurance.

Anyone interested in becoming an Alongsider should contact the community by accessing the email page via the 'Contacts' tab on the website Homepage.

or phone Reverend Mother: 01509 852761

or write to Reverend Mother, Holy Cross Convent, Nottingham Road, Costock, Loughborough, LE12 6XE

Website: holycrosschc.org.uk