

# GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND

Registered Charity 209376

## **Bethesda COVID-19 Update Saturday, 18 April 2020**

We have included in this Update information on the COVID-19 situation within the Bethesda Homes and other items that may be of interest.

Perhaps some of us looked in our diaries on Friday, 17 April 2020 or your e-diary sent you an alert 'Bethesda AGM'. How this is a reminder that whatever is planned, it is 'If the Lord will' (James 4:15). Who could have thought or imagined a year ago we would be writing to the 'Friends of Bethesda' about COVID-19 and its impact on Bethesda and those involved with our Homes? Yet the Lord knows and we trust that we can echo the experience of the Apostle Paul concerning Bethesda that the Lord has been our help and we are able to continue to this day (Acts 26:22).

### **COVID-19**

We are thankful that currently both the Brighton and Studley Homes are continuing to operate as usual, both residents and staff appear to be free from the virus symptoms at present. We have had one incident of a resident at Studley being unwell through an underlying condition, however, they are now back to normal. Sadly, at Brighton, the Lord's dear servant, Mr Peter Cornwall passed away on Monday, 13 April 2020. Our prayers and thoughts are with the family, the friends at Mount Bures and those at Galeed Chapel, Brighton.

At Harpenden, we are pleased to report that one of the three residents who were confirmed to have COVID-19 has been brought safely through and is now able to come out of her room and enjoy going outside into the garden (whilst maintaining social distancing). The other two are recovering steadily and are regaining their strength. Of the three new cases reported last week, one who was admitted into hospital due to an underlying condition was reported COVID-19 positive, and in the Lord's mercy was able to return to the Home for his last hours upon this earth. Our thoughts are with the family of Mr David Keeling at this time.

Of the other two residents, who we mentioned last week, that do not have any apparent COVID-19 associated symptoms but are showing signs of old-age through tiredness and weariness; one is 'picking up' and regaining some strength the other remains tired and weary.

Mercifully, the other four residents, in the Home, have been kept from any symptoms of the virus and remain asymptomatic.

We would make a special mention of the residents and their loved ones whilst, in this current situation, it is not possible to visit the Homes. We are thankful that means are provided to stay in touch. We do feel for them, as I am sure many of us are praying and looking for that day when we might 'hug' our loved ones once more.

Staffing continues to be particularly challenging at Harpenden. However, in the Lord's mercy, provision continues to be made and we trust there has been a realisation of the experience expressed in the words of the hymn "Thrice comfortable hope":

"My life's minutest circumstance  
Is subject to his eye".

These are challenging times for all our Home Managers and we would encourage you to pray for them and especially for Debbie (Scott) that she might be upheld in the daily challenges faced at Harpenden.

What cannot be expressed fully in writing is the dedication and loving care given to the residents by the Managers and staff in the Homes. When a resident passes away it is very much felt by them. We do trust that we each will be given a concern to pray for the residents, their families and loved ones and the managers and staff in the Homes. Please also remember Adrian (Topping) in his responsibilities as General Manager.

We are also aware of what is happening in other Christian care homes who have suffered high levels of mortality amongst their residents and our thoughts and prayers go out to them at this time.

### **Help still needed**

Debbie (Scott) would be very pleased to hear from anyone with experience of caring who can help at Harpenden and assist with the staffing challenges, God willing, in the forthcoming weeks.

In addition, we are keen to build a 'bank' of staff to call on if there is a change of situation in either the Brighton or Studley Homes. We would urge those, especially in the area of the Studley Home, to make contact with Sammy (O'Dwyer) so that if a change of situation does occur then there are those that could be called upon. We trust we believe the Lord will provide but that does not preclude us from acting prudently.

Also 'pairs of hands' are still needed to help with 'household' duties.

We would thank those who have come forward to help and do pray the Lord will guide others to come and help Bethesda at this time.

Anyone volunteering to help at Bethesda, aged between 16 and 69 years, will be given a full induction to the role that they will be undertaking. We do appreciate there are those over 70 years of age who are willing to help and we look forward, once the current restrictions are relaxed, to welcome you back into the Homes but at the current time this would not be prudent.

In the first instance contact the local Home Manager:

Brighton Home: Miss Sarah Williamson (01273 735735, [sarahwilliamson@gsbf.uk](mailto:sarahwilliamson@gsbf.uk))

Harpenden Home: Mrs Debbie Scott (01582 761359, [debbiescott@gsbf.uk](mailto:debbiescott@gsbf.uk))

Studley Home: Mrs Sammy O'Dwyer (01249 816666, [sammyodwyer@gsbf.uk](mailto:sammyodwyer@gsbf.uk))

Alternatively, Adrian Topping, General Manager ([adriantopping@gsbf.uk](mailto:adriantopping@gsbf.uk) or 07525067708 (m)).

We would also note the kindness of an individual offering us the use of their 3-D printer. The NHS has called on those with 3-D printers to 'manufacture' PPE for them. If you feel you can help in any way, please let us know

### **Morning and evening readings**

We would reiterate our thanks to those who have helped externally (digitally) and internally with the morning and evening readings at the Homes, as this is an important part of the ethos of Bethesda. This is very much appreciated by us all.

The provision of having two 'mixlr' facilities on the website for the Studley and Brighton Homes is working well, although there are the occasional 'technical hiccups' - bear with us.

It has been encouraging to see the number of people listening to the morning readings, in addition to the residents in the Homes, and we do pray that the readings have been a help to them. If you know anyone who might be interested in listening into the morning readings, then do pass the website details to them:

<https://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/Bethesda/Morning-Worship-Livestream>

At both Brighton and Studley, the afternoon readings are taken in-house and we do pray the Lord will help those of the residents and staff (Brighton) who undertake this for us.

At the Harpenden Home, we are thankful that the morning readings are able to be relayed into the home using the telephone link that is used to connect to Bethel Chapel, Luton.

### **Staying in touch**

For the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak, we will endeavour to remain in regular contact with those on this email list. Consequently, please can you forward this email to any of your contacts who may be interested in the contents of this document or may be able to help us. If anyone wishes to be added to the email list then please contact Adrian Topping ([adriantopping@gssf.uk](mailto:adriantopping@gssf.uk))

If you are able to print this Update, please pass it onto someone who does not have access to the Internet. This would be appreciated as it will help keep them in touch with what we are trying to do.

As you may appreciate, it is very much a changing situation in the Homes and when there is an item that needs to be made publicly available immediately, then this is posted to the Gospel Standard Bethesda website homepage:

<https://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/Bethesda/Overview> Access to previous news and announcements can be found at: <https://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/Bethesda/Blog>

### **Finally**

We have been conscious in writing this Update that we have used the word 'our'. This is in the sense of Bethesda belonging to all of us. Although the trustees have the overall responsibility for the Homes and the Charity, they are there to serve the residents and those that have an interest in Bethesda and above all to serve the Lord in the position He has placed us.

We would, once more, acknowledge the Lord's goodness and mercy in answering many prayers enabling the Homes to continue operating in these trying times and that He might put his protecting hand over the residents, Managers and staff. Your continued prayerful interest and messages of support to those, residing or working, in the Homes is much appreciated and valued.

GOSPEL STANDARD  
BETHESDA FUND

We would encourage you to continue to pray for Bethesda that the Lord would hear those cries for help in time of need and grant wisdom in those decisions that have to be made both now and in that way before us.

On behalf of the Bethesda trustees

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Ridout". The signature is written in black ink and has a horizontal line underneath it.

M Ridout  
Chairman GSBF