

# GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND

Registered Charity 209376

## **Bethesda COVID-19 Update Saturday, 25 April 2020**

Once more we have been spared to write an update on the Bethesda Homes and record the Lord's mercies for watching over the residents, staff, and managers during another week.

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

### **COVID-19**

We are grateful that currently residents at both the Brighton and Studley Homes appear to be free from COVID-19 symptoms

At Harpenden, we are thankful to report that the three residents who were confirmed to have COVID-19 are now recovered from the virus and are out of their rooms. Of the two others who have had symptoms of the virus, one is recovering and regaining strength whilst the other remains poorly.

Of the other two residents, who have been previously mentioned that do not have any apparent COVID-19 associated symptoms, one continues to 'pick up' and is back to their normal self and the other continues to be poorly due to an underlying condition.

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

Although many of our residents are elderly and of a 'good age', we would acknowledge the good hand of the Lord in restoring those who have been poorly and pray, if the Lord will, that those who are still laid aside will be restored to health.

Staffing, as previously reported, has been challenging in the past weeks across all the homes and especially at Harpenden. We are thankful that those staff who have recovered from illness or self-isolating are now able to return to work. There is also a small number who are being furloughed due to the government's self-isolating guidance.

It would be remiss, not to acknowledge the Lord's appearing over the past weeks and also to thank the managers and staff who have ensured that the loving care provided to the residents has not, at any time, diminished.

### **Help needed**

We would thank those who have come forward, over the past weeks, to help Bethesda at this time.

We do not know what is before us, only the Lord knows, however we do pray that if the need arises for further help in the future then individuals may be constrained to "come over and help us".

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)).

### **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.

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 all three Homes the afternoon readings are taken in-house and we do pray the Lord will help those of the residents and staff 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.

### **Meeting to discuss the options for the Studley Home**

As reported, in the Update 28 March 2020, the meeting to discuss the future options for the Studley Bethesda Home that was scheduled for Friday, 3 April 2020 was cancelled due to the implementation of the 'lockdown' as part of the COVID-19 pandemic control procedures.

The trustees are fully aware of the impact that COVID-19 has brought on residents and their families, staff and those in the local area who help, in many ways, in all the Homes.

The trustees are also aware that there is a need to move forward the discussion on the options for the Studley Home, yet are sensitive to the current situation and concern over COVID-19.

Consequently, if the Lord will, it is proposed to hold the meeting to discuss the options for the Studley Home on Friday, 5 June 2020 at 7:30 pm. If for any reason lockdown restrictions are in place, then we would look to hold the meeting on Friday, 26 June 2020 at 7:30 pm and if restrictions are still in place then the meeting would be held electronically. Further details, God Willing, to follow.

### **General information that may be of interest**

You may be aware in the press/media there has been concern expressed over situation regarding funerals during COVID-19.

The government in the last week has published information relating to the management of funerals and this may be of general interest to the Friends of Bethesda.

**Information for the Bereaved Coronavirus (COVID 19):** This four page leaflet, published by the Cabinet Office, shares a range of information to help bereaved families, friends or next of kin make important decisions during this national emergency and explains the next steps, answers some of your questions, and guides you to the extra help and support that is available. This is a useful starting point for anyone bereaved or involved in arranging a funeral and can be found at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/880807/Bereavement-Leaflet-digital.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/880807/Bereavement-Leaflet-digital.pdf)

More detailed information has been published as “**Guidance updated to support the safe management of funerals**”. This guidance provides detail on attendance at funerals and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

The government has a webpage “**What to do when someone dies: step by step**” The webpage provides a flowchart through stages involved when someone passes away and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies>

Although this information may be of help in dealing with the arrangements for someone who has deceased; it is also a solemn reminder of words in Hebrews 9:27 and our own eternal state.

### **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@gsbf.uk](mailto:adriantopping@gsbf.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.

### **Finally**

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.

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. As mentioned, in this Update, we do not know what is before us and what we may yet have to walk through during this COVID-19 pandemic and

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afterwards in our own lives, in our churches, in Bethesda and our nation. The Lord grant us the right spirit of prayer without ceasing.

On behalf of the Bethesda trustees

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Ridout". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

M Ridout  
Chairman GSBF