

# GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND

Registered Charity 209376

## Bethesda COVID-19 Update Saturday, 16 May 2020

Once more we would acknowledge the Lord's merciful Hand in watching over the three Bethesda Homes during the past week.

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

At the Harpenden Home we are thankful to report that of the ten residents, currently in the Home, two are continuing to recover from COVID-19 like symptoms - one resident has tested negative for COVID-19 and the test results are still awaited for the other. Three who tested positive for the virus have recovered and are back to normal; one who was poorly due to an underlying condition has continued to improve; and the four who have been unaffected by the virus are still free from any symptoms.

Mrs. M. Crowter who passed away peacefully on Sunday, 3 May 2020 was laid to rest on Friday, 15 May 2020 at Oasten Road Cemetery, Nuneaton. The funeral service and committal was conducted by her Pastor – Mr. T.J. Parish. A recording of the funeral services available on the Jireh Particular Baptist Chapel, Attleborough website. See:

<https://jirehchapel.squarespace.com/sermons-2020>

We are thankful that the staffing situation at the three Homes is more stable than previously, although we do not know what the future might bring. Where possible, the Homes are using the COVID-19 testing facilities, as they become available, to help in the management and control of the virus

Our continued appreciation goes to all the Managers and staff within Bethesda, for their continued dedication in ensuring the well-being of the residents.

Although COVID-19 has impacted significantly on Bethesda's budget, we are mindful that as the Lord has supplied the daily needs of Bethesda during the COVID-19 outbreak, He is able to supply all our need to continue the work of the Charity. (Philippians 4:19)

## Access to the Bethesda Homes

The much heralded announcement that the Prime Minister was going to set out the way forward for raising the lockdown restrictions, perhaps created an expectation that there might be more 'freedom' for families and friends to meet albeit in a responsible way. It was perhaps also an expectation/hope that the restrictions on visiting care homes might also be addressed - this sadly was not proved to be the case.

The message from Her Majesty's Government's "OUR PLAN TO REBUILD: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy" is very clear regarding those over 70, this is been expressed as follows

*"Protecting the clinically vulnerable"*

It remains the case that some people are more clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 than others. These include those aged over 70, those with specific chronic pre-existing conditions and pregnant women. **These clinically vulnerable people should continue to take**

**particular care to minimise contact with others outside their households, but do not need to be shielded.**

Those in the clinically extremely vulnerable group **are strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact**; this is called 'shielding'. It means not leaving the house or attending gatherings at all, with very limited exceptions. **Annex B** sets out more detail on the guidance applicable to different vulnerable groups at this time."

In view of the importance of continuing to protect the clinically vulnerable from COVID-19, Bethesda will need to continue with restricting access to its Homes to only those essential visitors required to either protect the health of our residents, or to ensure that buildings remain safe and essential supplies are delivered.

Additionally, for the time being, Bethesda will continue to suspend all visits from relatives and friends, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The guidance that is currently in place (see link below) will continue.

This has not been, in view of our attachments to the Homes and particularly the residents, an easy decision to make but a necessary one for the continued safety and security of the residents and staff within the Homes.

We look forward, if the Lord will, to the day when the Homes might once more be open to the residents' families and friends together with those who assist in the Homes in so many ways.

Sources:

"OUR PLAN TO REBUILD: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy" See: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/884760/Our\\_plan\\_to\\_rebuild\\_The\\_UK\\_Government\\_s\\_COVID-19\\_recovery\\_strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884760/Our_plan_to_rebuild_The_UK_Government_s_COVID-19_recovery_strategy.pdf)

Response of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Homes during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) epidemic See: [https://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/GospelStandard/media/Bethesda/2020-03-26\\_Guidelines-and-response-to-the-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\).pdf](https://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/GospelStandard/media/Bethesda/2020-03-26_Guidelines-and-response-to-the-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf)

### **Thinking of the elderly**

On Saturday, 4 April 2020, we wrote a short note about remembering the Lord's elderly people at that time. It does not seem possible that that was six weeks ago and there is very little likelihood, in the near future, of the limitations on the movement of the over 70s being lifted.

Although the Lord is able to come where His People are; loneliness is a very real issue for those living on their own and has been exacerbated by 'lockdown'.

We would, again, encourage you to take a few moments to think of those we know and perhaps give them a call, text or send a letter and/or card that may be a timely help to them and a reminder that they are not forgotten - a few loving words means such a lot, and an envelope on the doormat from a friend can be a real lift. (Matthew 25:40)

### **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 pray that if the need arises for further help in the future then individuals may be constrained to “come over and help us”.

### **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. We have heard from some of those who listen and who have found the morning readings helpful at this time.

The trustees are prayerfully considering what can be done, if the Lord will, to continue to provide access to morning readings after the ‘lockdown’.

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>

### **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 anyone who may be interested in being kept up to date on Bethesda. If anyone wishes to be added to the email list then please contact Adrian Topping ([adriantopping@gsbf.uk](mailto:adriantopping@gsbf.uk))

### **Finally**

We would also acknowledge the Lord’s goodness and mercy in answering many prayers, over the past weeks, enabling the Homes to continue operating in these trying times. Your continued prayerful interest and messages of support are 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.

On behalf of the Bethesda trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Ridout". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a simple horizontal line.

M Ridout  
Chairman GSBF