

GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND

Registered Charity 1199341

Newsletter April 2023

Introduction

The Bethesda Trustees are very aware that we have not been in touch with our supporters for a while. As you will see in this Newsletter, there are a number of 'things' happening and each of these are a prayerful concern to the trustees.

The trustees' desire is to look unto the Lord for all needed help in the responsibility He has placed on us in the stewardship of the GSBF and the provision of the Bethesda Homes and Flatlets. In the Lord's mercies, Bethesda has been a provision for the Gospel Standard churches and even in these times of the decline in the number of chapels and those attending, we have proved the Lord to be "Jehovah Jireh" in sustaining the Homes as a "house of mercy" for the residents under the Charity's care.

Above all, the trustees pressing and prayerful concern is to know and do the Lord's will and purposes for Bethesda and that all might be done to the honour and glory of His Name.

Although the Bethesda Homes are relatively small when compared with other care homes, the challenges faced are the same. Particularly regarding evidencing to regulatory bodies that the underlying documented systems and procedures are of such a standard to demonstrate that the levels of care provided meet external expectations. Allied to this is finding staff who are sympathetic to Bethesda's ethos and ensuring that the resources the Lord has provided are managed appropriately.


Visitors to the homes often comment on the loving care provided to the residents and the trustees would reiterate their appreciation and thankfulness for the commitment of the General Manager, Home Managers and their teams in making a difference in the lives of the residents.

Do pray for Adrian Topping (General Manager), the Home Managers and their teams in the challenges that they face and all needed wisdom and help might be given to them.

As mentioned, Bethesda is the Lord's provision for those in old age amongst the Gospel Standard churches. It is relatively easy for each of us to work out what the Charity should do - might our overriding concern be for the Lord to hear the prayers of His people that He might continue to make provision for those coming to their later years.

Over the years, many Bethesda residents have testified to the answers of their prayers in the Lord providing them with a dwelling place at the end of their time upon this earth. The Lord grant us a prayerful concern that He will continue to provide for those, in the future, who need a resting place that provides for their physical and spiritual needs.

Do pray that the trustees will be given all needed help in the burden laid upon them in serving the Lord in the work of Bethesda.



M. Ridout
Chairman

Applying for Admission to the Bethesda Homes

The Trustees, along with the General Manager, prepared the statement below which may be of interest to anyone who may have loved ones, or themselves, who may be thinking of applying to come into one of the Homes – or the Flatlets. The trustees have also clarified the position of entry into Bethesda, for those who are sympathetic to the truths held Gospel Standard churches and the way of life in the Homes yet maybe unable to comply with the attendance criteria.

The statement is as follows:

“The Charity’s Memorandum and Articles of Association (Trust Deed), provide that primarily the Gospel Standard Bethesda Homes and/or Flatlets are for the benefit of those who are either:

1. A member of a Gospel Standard Church or
2. A regular attender of a Gospel Standard listed chapel.

However, the Trust Deed also makes provision to allow others to be considered for Bethesda. This additional provision is not so well known, and as such, whilst we are not seeking to change the provision, we would like to make potential applicants more aware of it.

Those who may not immediately feel that they satisfy (1) or (2) above, are still welcome to apply for entry. All applications require the completion of an Application Form, which is then considered by the Trustees, with all applications being treated sympathetically and in strictest confidence.

In the case of applications outside (1) & (2) above the applicant will also be asked to explain why or how they consider Bethesda would be suitable for them. The Trustees will be looking to ensure that the way of life in a Bethesda Home, reflects the applicant’s current lifestyle and way of living in their own home, to ensure that they would be comfortable within the Bethesda environment. The application may involve a meeting with two of the Bethesda Trustees, so that they can explain more about Bethesda’s ethos and give both the Committee and the Applicant an opportunity to clarify any points arising. We hope by this process to help ensure that right decisions are made for the applicant’s wellbeing.

The Trustees, have over the years, welcomed a number of applicants who do not qualify under (1) & (2) above, and the individuals concerned have found Bethesda to be a “a House of Mercy”.

If you feel that Bethesda would be a suitable place for you, a relative or a friend to be a resident in a Bethesda Care Home or Flatlet, please contact the General Manager who will be pleased to discuss Bethesda’s entry requirements and provide additional information. ”

In addition to the Statement above, the Trustees have prepared a supplementary document that explains ‘Living in Bethesda’. This gives details of what a perspective resident would expect to find in the daily life of Bethesda and the conduct of the Homes. The document has not been written in a prescriptive way, its purposes is to highlight what it is to live in a Christian care home where the residents desire to walk in the fear of the Lord and according to the precepts of the Bible. The wording of the document is as follows:

“Living in a Bethesda Home

The Bethesda Homes were established 75 years ago (1948) by the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund (GSBF), a Christian charity providing residential care for those older people who have been associated with the Gospel Standard (GS) group of Churches. The Charity’s trustees, therefore, seek to provide an environment in the Bethesda Homes which reflects the lifestyle that the residents had prior to entering Bethesda.

This lifestyle is one that seeks to walk in love to the Lord Jesus Christ in keeping the precepts and commandments of the Word of God together with a desire to keep themselves unspotted from the

world. (Yet feeling their sinnership and that their hope of salvation is through the electing love and mercy of a triune God by free grace alone and not of anything of their own ability.) This also embraces following the Bible teaching regarding marriage between one man and one woman, hair length, head coverings and the distinction between the clothing of men and women.

The following provides examples of how Bethesda seeks to meet this way of living in its Homes:

- Using the AV/KJV version of the Bible for personal and daily communal devotions.
- Using the “Gadsby’s” hymnbook, a collection of hymns that reflect the Christian’s pathway doctrinally, experimentally and their personal walk and conduct. This collection of hymns includes writers such as: John Newton, Augustus Toplady, William Cowper, Joseph Hart, John Berridge, Charles Wesley, Anne Steele, William Gadsby, and Isaac Watts. This does not exclude the enjoyment of hymns and metrical Psalms found in other hymn books and Psalters.
- Using “Thee” and “Thou” in prayer and when speaking of the Lord.
- Keeping Sunday (the Lord’s Day or Sabbath Day) as a day of rest and time for worshipping the Lord. Residents if able will, on the Lord’s Day, either attend a GS chapel or listen to a service transmitted from a local GS cause of truth.
- Limiting access to the Homes on Sundays by acknowledging the residents desire not to participate in the distractions and attractions of those activities undertaken on weekdays. This is not done in a legal sense but in love to the Lord by keeping His commandments.

In addition, daily morning and afternoon devotional readings take place and prayer meetings are arranged. These are regularly conducted, in the Homes, by male members and ministers from Gospel Standard Churches. Members of Home Support Groups, who are volunteers, from local GS chapels, also come into the Homes to assist the residents and additionally organise events and activities such as craft workshops, hymn singing, presentations and outings for the residents.”

Short Stays/Respite Care

This provision is for people who do not yet feel ready to move into a Bethesda Home, but who require a short period of rest from looking after themselves. This is also a helpful provision for people who are looked after in their own home or the home of a family member, but whose carers need a short break and would like somewhere for their loved one to stay in a safe and caring environment during this period.

Although the levels of care and support provided under this service are the same as that for the permanent service, a lower fee rate is charged. The trustees have recently reviewed how funds might be used to help support those in need of respite care in these inflationary times. Consequently, for January - December 2023 and subject to funds being available, Bethesda is able to provide 'Discounted' residents fees for short stay (respite) residents. In a 'rolling' 12-month period the following discounts will apply (compared with the usual 'full' fee rate): Weeks 1 - 6, 50% reduction and Weeks 7 - 12, 25% reduction; thereafter full fees will apply.

If you or a loved one would like to find out more about respite care, please contact the General Manager who will be pleased to discuss this further and provide additional information.

Brighton and Hove Bethesda Home

Hymn singing

Now that the Covid restrictions have lifted since January 2023, monthly Saturday Hymn Singing for the residents has resumed in the lounge at the Brighton Home. This takes place at 3.15pm and friends are welcome to join the residents in the lounge. We are looking for volunteers to cover the following vacant months: July, August and November. This is also broadcast on the Bethesda Website Mixlr for those wishing to listen but unable to attend.

Morning readings

The morning readings at the Brighton and Hove Bethesda Home continue to be broadcast each weekday morning at 10:15 and there are a number of individuals who listen into the devotionals on a regular basis.

Further details can be found at the following website link:

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

Harpenden Bethesda Home

Job vacancy: Team Leader

At the time of writing there is a vacancy for a Team Leader at the Harpenden Home.

The Harpenden Home is looking for an experienced, caring person to join them and lead the care team in providing help and support for elderly people with varying care needs including dementia.

Please contact Debbie Scott (Harpenden Bethesda Home Manager) for further details by using the following contact details: Tel: 01582 761359 e mail: debbiescott@gsbf.uk or visiting:

<https://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/Bethesda/Careers>

GSBF Charitable status

We have included (condensed) details relating to the change of the legal status of the Charity. In 2019, the Trustees identified the need to review, in the fear of the Lord, the status of the Charity which was at that time an unincorporated one. In December 2022 the change to an Incorporated Charitable Company was finally completed. With the consent of the Care Quality Commission and the Charity Commission all assets and liabilities were transferred, as a going concern, to a Private Charitable Company and registered with Charity Commission. Further details will be included in the Annual Report.

The 'day to day' running of the Homes is unaffected by these changes in the status of the Charity.

Property updates

The following brief updates have been provided to keep people informed of developments relating to property for which Bethesda is responsible.

Swavesey

The trustees believe that they have seen the Lord's hand going before them in relation to the Swavesey project in seeking to overcome the difficulties with the Planning Authorities. We are pleased to report that revised plans have now been submitted in line with discussions held with the Area Planning Officer and we hope, if the Lord will, to be able to move forward in the coming weeks.

If the Lord will, we would hope to provide a more detailed report on how the Lord has led us and made a way through the 'impossibilities', as they seemed to us, at the GSBF AGM later in the year.

We have attached to this Newsletter pictures of the site at Swavesey and copies of the proposed rear and front elevations together with a photograph showing the proximity of the Swavesey Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel.

Moden Hill Chapel

The Trustees of the, now closed, chapel at Moden Hill are now taking steps, God willing, regarding the disposal of the site. The GSBF is the named beneficiary of the proceeds as/when the site is sold.

It is sad when a chapel closes and the Moden Hill Chapel Trustees are endeavouring to handle this matter sensitively in view of the connections with the chapel in the Sedgley area.

Studley Bethesda Home

The GSBF Committee made the decision on 6th January 2023, after many prayers and seeking views of those in the local area, to dispose of the former Studley Bethesda Home site. A selling agent has been instructed and is preparing to put the site on the market for sale imminently. This Home was the Lord's provision for many of His people over a number of years but, sadly, it became clear that in the Lord's purposes that there was a need to close the Home.

Bethesda – a reflection

This year is the 75th Anniversary of the commencement of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund when the first Home at Redhill was purchased. The Lord has maintained Bethesda to the present day and although the number of Homes have been reduced owing to the decline in numbers in our churches we would nevertheless acknowledge the dear Lord's goodness to Bethesda. The Committee value your prayers at this time – particularly as both of the Homes have now less than 50% occupancy. The Committee members regularly meet for prayer early each Monday morning to seek the Lord's help, wisdom and guidance in the many concerns as they prayerfully look to the Lord to supply the present and future needs of Bethesda.

Issued on behalf of the GSBF Trustees

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Photographs of the Swavesey Independent Living Accommodation (ILA) Development

The proximity of the ILA site to the Swavesey Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel



The site as purchased 63 Middle Watch, Swavesey



Proposed elevations of the development subject to planning permission

