



## Trustees' Report to Annual Assembly 2020

Brenda Griffiths

Chair

Thank you Master.

I am very grateful for the opportunity on behalf of my fellow Trustees to report briefly to you and our Freemen on the activity of the Company's Charitable Trust and I welcome the inclusion of such a report into our future Annual Assemblies. Charitable giving and endeavour is fundamental to our Livery journey and it is, most importantly, integral to our values as the Company of Nurses.

This has been a year both of consolidation and growth for the Trust. These turbulent times have been a challenge to us all and not least to our investment managers who have achieved a creditable return on our monies, despite the volatility of the markets.

From the outset we have sought to ensure that our money is used to offer benevolent support to nurses when and where it is needed; and contribute to the professional development of nurses today and tomorrow through scholarship and bursary. You will know that we have also made it clear that we will offer a safe repository for funds held by other organisations and donated by benefactors for the nursing profession. The generosity of the Nightingale Fellowship has allowed us to build up substantial benevolent funds and the Ann Campbell RBNA Memorial Fund is a sound foundation for educational endeavour. The Chantry Robinson Fund has continued to enable us 'to make a difference'.

This year, the Royal British Nurses Association has entrusted us with their charitable funds to ensure that they can be used for nurses as intended by their original benefactors. The RBNA has a unique place in our profession's history. Founded in December 1887 by Ethel Bedford-Fenwick, it fought for nurse training of at least three years duration incorporating national standards and the RBNA campaigned for the establishment of a register of nurses. Mrs Gordon Fenwick became SRN 1 in 1919 and is recognised as the first registered nurse. It is fitting that in this year that is so special to us, that the RBNA has trusted its legacy and memory into our safe keeping.

Master, I would like to give the Assembly a flavour of the Trust's activity over the last year:

- Our Educational Funds continue to sponsor a prestigious Leadership Scholarship allowing a nurse leader of the future to benefit from the renowned programme run by the Florence Nightingale Foundation.
- The London Air Ambulance Service in conjunction with Queen Mary University London runs an MSc degree course in pre Hospital Medicine for doctors and para medics. Nurses have been invited to join this course for the first time this year and the Company of Nurses will sponsor a nurse to undertake this critical care training.
- Following the success of last year's award, in conjunction with the Queens Nursing Institute, The Chantry Robinson Fund has allowed a further two nurses to undertake the Health Inclusion Course at UCL allowing them to develop their skills in Homeless Health – an often neglected but very specialist and challenging area of nursing practice.

This year has presented challenges beyond many others. COVID has hit the planet in ways that are perhaps as yet unknown and still to evolve. The Trust was swift to respond to the pan Livery call for support and contributed to the NHS Livery Kitchen Initiative. This arose out of a need identified by the Royal London Hospital which at the height of the crisis had approximately 1000 members of staff working on site on any one day. With only one canteen on the fifth floor, social distancing resulted in large, long, slow-moving queues with staff having to wait up to 45 minutes for food. The Worshipful Company of Drapers together with The Grocers and Merchant Taylors

worked with volunteers from City caterer, Party Ingredients to come up with a solution. They produced nutritious, individually packaged meals for daily distribution to front line staff in hospitals. This rapid response identified a current need, made best use of existing resources by keeping catering staff active and in work when City dining is not happening and The Company of Nurses Charitable Trust, along with other Livery charities was very pleased to contribute to the ongoing costs.

We work closely with partners in nursing organisations who share our aim to support nurses in time of need. We are very pleased to work with the Cavell Trust and the Queen's Nursing Institute who share our values and desire to help. Both organisations have seen an upturn in applications for help. We have made financial payments and I would like to share a couple of examples:

- A Learning Disability Nurse working in a Nursing home for adults with complex needs was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and underwent surgery and chemotherapy. She was then diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism. She has also had to have part of her bowel removed and now has a stoma, so she has been very unwell. The Nursing home (in common with many others) does not pay their nurses sick pay and SSP ran out after 28 weeks. We were able to help her with rent and some living costs at such a challenging time
- We were also able to help a community psychiatric nurse with a young son aged 10. Last year she was violently attacked by her ex-partner after he was released from prison for domestic violence. She and her child had to flee in the night and were homeless for 8 months, staying with friends and family. She and her young son have suffered through the trauma and are both very anxious, now diagnosed with PTSD. They have both had some therapy. They are now in a new council house but it is completely unfurnished. Her partner used her name for phones and other purchases on credit, now she cannot get any credit. Our contribution towards furnishings – including a bed – has helped them settle into a new home and life.

These sad examples show the importance of support being given when needed. We are pleased that the Company of Nurses Charitable Trust can help in some small way – financial support will not heal all wounds but can alleviate some of the pain.

I am, as always, indebted to my fellow Trustees who bring a wealth of experience and expertise to our work and do it all with a smile. Whilst we have identified strategic plans for the medium and longer term we also aim to respond very quickly to urgent requests for help. These are usually discussed, and a decision made within a couple of days. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to our Secretary, John Allen, whose wise counsel and efficient administration is without measure. Thank you John – we are enormously grateful for all you do.

And finally, a plea to our Freeman. The Trust can only give support to nurses in need with your help - we are required to demonstrate that our membership understands that benevolent giving is part and parcel of Livery inclusion. To that end we are enormously grateful to those who already give on a regular basis and I would encourage everyone to make a Standing Order – large or small – to help us. The price of a coffee or two – or a glass of wine - once a month can make all the difference.

Thank you Master. I commend this report to you.