



Trustees' Report to Annual Assembly 2021

Brenda Griffiths

Chair

Master, Wardens, Honoured Guests, Freemen, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of my fellow Trustees I am pleased to report to you on the activity of the Company's Charitable Trust. 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 another year both of consolidation and growth for the Trust. 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. 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 Royal British Nurses Association Memorial Fund is a sound foundation for educational endeavour. The Chantry Robinson Fund has continued to enable us 'to make a difference'.

You will recall that the Royal British Nurses Association (RBNA) has entrusted us with their remaining charitable funds to ensure that these funds can be used for nurses, as intended by their original benefactors. It should be remembered that 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. The RBNA has now entrusted its legacy and memory into our safe keeping. The funds received date back to the early origins of the RBNA and as such come with ancient covenants and restrictions on their use. The Trustees have instructed experienced solicitors to work with us to petition the Charity Commission to lift these constraints so that monies can be used to address issues which confront nurses today. This is an ongoing and complex process. An investment for the future to allow our Trust to support nurses for generations to come.

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

- Our Educational Funds sponsor two Company of Nurses Scholars. One, a nurse leader of the future is benefiting from the renowned Leadership Programme run by the Florence Nightingale Foundation. The other is to study acute pre-hospital medicine on a post-graduate MSc course at Queen Mary University London, in conjunction with the London Air Ambulance service.
- Building on the success of last year's awards, 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 so as to develop their skills in Homeless Health. The positive feedback from our previous awardees is such that this year, we are funding three more nurses to develop their practice. This little-known course now has a waiting list and growing kudos within this often neglected but very specialist and challenging area of nursing practice. The Company can be very pleased that we have, in some small way, helped get it off the ground.
- The Trust has continued to assist the pan Livery call for support and contributed to the NHS Livery Kitchen Initiative. You will recall that the Worshipful Company of Drapers' lead this call to arms with the Grocers' and Merchant Taylors', working with volunteers from a City caterer, Party Ingredients. They produce nutritious, individually packaged meals for daily distribution to front line staff firstly at the Royal London Hospital and other hospitals in the Barts Group, and now also into the local community. Nutrition

is proving to be very important as a genuine morale and immunity booster. This rapid response identified a current need and makes good use of existing resources by keeping catering staff active when City dining is not happening. The Trust is very pleased to a part of this perfect mix of ancient and modern.

We also 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 give support. Both organisations have seen an upturn in applications for assistance. We have made financial payments and I would like to share a couple of examples:

- A community nurse who has severe mobility problems due to complex medical health difficulties. The Trust funded an automatic fold up scooter and a car hoist to enable more independence.
- A nurse who developed Covid last year but is still unable to work due to symptoms of Long Covid. She has a family to support and is waiting to see a specialist. Bank shifts along with night rates of pay would normally supplement her income so added to her illness, she is suffering from financial insecurity with mounting debts. The Trust has awarded a financial grant to help the family through this difficult time.
- A practice nurse currently studying Advanced Clinical Practice to become a Nurse Practitioner changed surgeries last year. Her husband died unexpectedly, aged 41. He had worked in construction and his work had been a bit slow since Christmas because of Covid. The couple have two children. Because she had been at her current workplace for less than 12 months she is not entitled to sick pay whilst off work after the death of her husband. We awarded a grant to help her at this difficult time, to cover rent and some bills whilst there is no income.

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 thank-you to our growing number of Freemen who demonstrate that benevolent giving is part and parcel of Livery inclusion and who donate to the Trust on a regular basis. This allows us to budget efficiently and effectively and to help our colleagues at time of need. A huge thank you to you all.

Thank you Master. I commend this report to you.

Brenda Griffiths

5th May 2021