



Friends of

The Connection
at St Martin-in-the-Fields

friends news

Summer 2020 Issue 74

Friends Day 2020 goes online!

Friends Day is a valued part of our calendar of events each year, a chance to hear from Executive Committee members and colleagues at The Connection.

This year Friends Day will take place as planned on the afternoon of Saturday 26 September, but because of Covid-19, will be a virtual event, using Zoom videoconferencing software. This will allow many more Friends to participate, especially those who live some way from London, as you can take part from the comfort of your own home, with no need to travel! This will help us all to minimise the risks we face from Covid-19.

The Friends Day event will include a presentation from Pam Orchard, Chief Executive of The Connection, as well as a filmed, narrated tour of the organisation's premises to show the changes that have been made to keep clients and staff safe. We

will also speak with clients about their journeys and their experiences over recent months, as The Connection has supported them through the pandemic. The event will, as usual, include our Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The AGM will include elections to some places on the Executive Committee (whose members are the trustees of the Friends charity). Any members of the Friends who wish to nominate themselves for election, or who wish to find out more about the role, are asked to make this known by contacting the office using the details below or by contacting me, Charles Woodd, at charleswoodd46@gmail.com or on 07962 213494.

We hope that many Friends will be able to participate but for those who cannot, we will record the event and share it later on our YouTube channel, details of which will be publicised.

If you want to join us for Friends Day please confirm this by email to friends@cstm.org.uk or by telephone on 020 7766 5522. When replying please confirm whether you would like the AGM papers by email or post, or both. Those papers and joining instructions for Zoom will be sent to participating Friends two weeks before the event; guidance on using Zoom will be given at the beginning of the event.

I hope to see you at our Friends Day event.

Charles Woodd, Chair

Keep our Doors Open emergency appeal

A big thank you to all of you who responded, directly to the appeal website or to us, to this emergency appeal by all of the charities at St Martin's. This was the first time that all the charities had worked together to raise money for all the services that the site provides. It was a very successful campaign, raising over £825,000 in all. The Connection has received 35% of this sum. The remainder of the funds raised are to support St Martin's itself, which is facing real challenges, and its other charitable activities .

Friends approached by email contributed £10,685 to the total. As some of you know, we also had a postal mailing to those members for whom we don't have email addresses and this raised a further £9120. The Connection have asked us to pass on to you all their thanks for your contributions. These have helped them to support individuals while they were in temporary accommodation, and keep clients safe and well.



Join the Virtual Pilgrimage to celebrate its 30th year!

For the past 29 years The Connection has held a 4-day 74 mile Pilgrimage from their centre in St Martin's to Canterbury Cathedral. Although they are disappointed that they can't walk the event in its normal way, they are excited to be able to launch it virtually – meaning they can still walk, talk and celebrate together, but socially distanced!

They are challenging you to join them as they walk 2,220 miles together over August – the distance of 30 Pilgrimages.

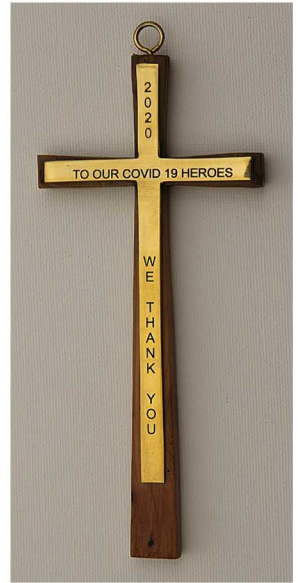
You can sign up and find out more at www.connection-at-stmartins.org.uk/upcoming-events/virtual-pilgrimage-2020/

Above: The red door of The Connection; Right, top: This year's QECR cross, with a special dedication; right,bottom: Last year's cyclists

QECR – With a difference

Like so many local, national and indeed international events, this year's Queen Eleanor Cycle Ride has had to adapt to the requirements of social distancing. To keep faith with our tradition, two or three riders will be covering each leg of the 200-mile route, in their home areas, passing from one to the next a cross, once again beautifully carved by George Dickinson from the branch of a yew tree on the site in Harby where Eleanor died in 1290.

At the same time, teams of cyclists across the country will be riding 200 miles around their home areas over the same August Bank Holiday weekend, returning home each night. And they will all gather for a session in the evening, virtually on Zoom, to share their experiences.



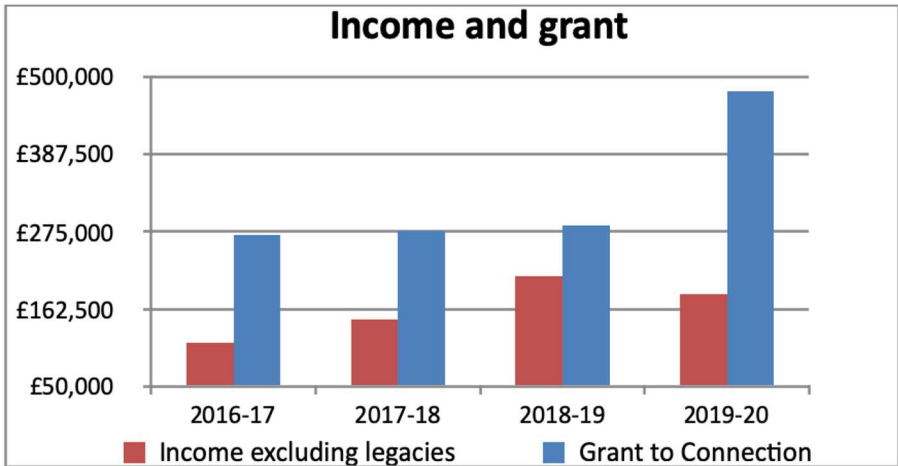
The main purpose, as ever, will be to raise funds to support the work of the Connection. If you would like to show your support for the 24 cyclists (so far), you can do so by making a donation at www.friendsoftheconnection.org.uk/donate/, and specifying QECR, and/or by liking and sharing the QECR's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/QECR2020. And it's not too late to sign up and take part! Go to www.friendsoftheconnection.org.uk/events.



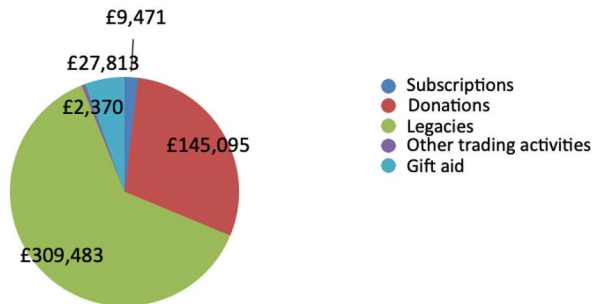
Financial Results 2019–20

On 13 July the Committee took note of draft accounts for the financial year 2019–20, which are now undergoing independent examination. Since the underlying picture is unlikely to change greatly it may be helpful to summarise the main results, subject to the caveat that the detailed numbers may change a bit before the final accounts are presented to the AGM in September.

After two years of substantial deficit, the Friends achieved broad financial balance in 2019–20 – to be precise, a small deficit currently estimated at under £8,000, 1½% of our income, as once again we received additional income accounted for in a previous year. Our net assets remain strong at around £75,000. Our total income, including legacies, was over £150,000 greater than in the previous year, at about £495,000, and consequently we were able to make a much larger grant to the Connection, £480,000. Our costs were essentially unchanged.



The rise in total income was due to a sharp jump in legacies to nearly £310,000, which much more than compensated for slightly lower subscription income and donations. When Gift Aid is included, subscriptions were around £11,000; we remain keen to attract new friends, not just to sustain income but also to encourage awareness and involvement in the Connection’s work. On the same basis, donations were over £170,000, and while this was down on the exceptional outcome in the previous year, it remained around £40,000 higher than two years ago.



Income: £494,232, excluding legacies £184,748

Once again, the Queen Eleanor Cycle Ride made a major contribution to our income (around £18,000 when gift aid is included), as we hope it will also do this year despite a somewhat curtailed format. But other events and local fundraising activities contributed much less in 2019-20 than the previous year; we would welcome ideas from friends about how such events and activities might contribute best in the future.



Surplus: £17,339, excluding gift aid

Overall, it is very pleasing that the Friends managed to contribute such a large amount to the Connection in 2019-20, around 10% of its total spending. This success owed a great deal to income from legacies, and we continue to encourage this as well as to recruit new friends. These are uncertain times, and thankfully donations appear to be holding up well so far this year. Your continuing support is greatly appreciated.

The difference your support made to The Connection's response to Covid-19

The last few months have been tough for everyone, but for homeless people with lowered immunity the coronavirus pandemic could have been catastrophic. Because of the contributions of fantastic supporters like you The Connection supported hundreds of people to stay safe, throughout the lockdown and beyond – taking next steps into housing.

The response

Following guidance from Public Health England, The Connection closed our day centre and night accommodation on March 20th. The people that we work with, particularly people sleeping rough, often have long term conditions and poor physical health which means that they are at a greater risk should they become ill. For those without a home, it is also very difficult to self-isolate. In both our day and night centres, large numbers of people spend time in close proximity, which posed the risk of extensive spread of Covid-19. By closing our regular services, and working towards alternative ways of supporting clients on an individual basis, we aimed to do all that we could to keep people safe. Those early days saw some extraordinary work

taking place and by the end of the day on Friday 20th March we had accommodated 80 people in hotels and other suitable locations, and given out 45 phones to those who did not have one. Due to your support as a Friend, we were able to act fast getting people off the streets and into temporary accommodation.

After the initial push to move people off the streets, we then ensured people were accommodated appropriately and had everything they needed. Our staff continued to conduct case work in order to support individuals in temporary accommodation and offer them any help they needed.





We moved our kitchen team to work at The Passage alongside the Passage chefs, where they had space for people to work safely, and in collaboration with them we provided meals throughout the period of supporting our clients in temporary housing. We cooked and delivered 21,572 hot meals and distributed 18,903 sandwiches keeping people fed for three meals a day.

The future

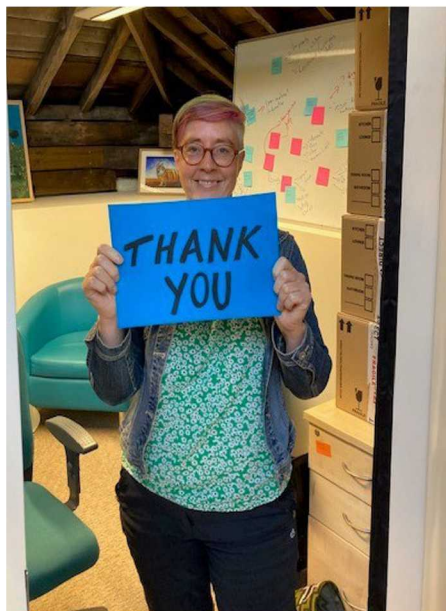
The Government funding for the hotel provision came to an end on July 3rd. During the period of March – July we saw relatively few Covid cases in the hotel population, which is testament to the hard work and measures put in place to keep our clients safe. In addition, many people placed in hotels were offered accommodation for them to move to once the funding for the hotels came to an end. Across Westminster over 260 people have been helped into more permanent housing – a fantastic achievement!

We are now working out what our services will look like in the future and how / when our services can safely re-open. Because of Covid our services will look different for the foreseeable future, due to the restrictions in place in order to run our services safely. We have to balance the critical and acute needs of our clients and the safety of both them and our staff.

Thank you to the Friends for their support during this time.

From the Team at The Connection

P.S: Sign up for this year's virtual Friends Day to hear the latest developments!



Left: A delivery of fresh fruit; Top: Packed lunches; Above: Pam Orchard, CEO of The Connection, thanks the Friends for their support

Forthcoming Events

This year, many of our events are taking place virtually, or with social distancing in place. We hope many of you are still able to join us.

Virtual Friends' Day 2020 – Saturday 26 September

Join us via Zoom for a virtual tour of The Connection and our AGM

Queen Eleanor Cycle Ride – 28–31 August

Cycle 200 miles over the weekend and meet fellow cyclists on Zoom to share your experience.

Virtual Pilgrimage – Throughout August

Help The Connection's pilgrims reach their target of 2,200 miles

For more information about the Friends and what we do, and how you can help, please see our website www.friendsoftheconnection.org.uk.

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS MAILING BY POST, PLEASE READ ON . . .

If you are on email, we would like to be able to email you periodically with information about the Friends and the Connection, which may include requests for funds. This will not normally replace our regular postal mailings. If you are happy to consent to this, please email friends@cstm.org.uk simply saying 'I give my consent for the Friends of The Connection at St.Martin-in-the-Fields to email me with marketing information' and remember to include your name and postal address. We will only share your email address within the terms of our Privacy Policy, which is available on our website (www.friendsoftheconnection.org.uk/privacy-policy/) or from the Friends' office. You may withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Friends' office. Thank you.

Friends of
The Connection
at St Martin-in-the-Fields

Contact Details:

Email: friends@cstm.org.uk

Tel: 020 7766 5522 (Mon, Wed, Fri 10 am – 4 pm, or leave a message)

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