

FRIENDS FOR LIFE BEDFORDSHIRE

England & Wales · Charity number 1165730

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	07951058
Registered	2016-02-24
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Room1 2nd floor 43 Bromham Road Bedford Bedfordshire
Phone	07460575410
Email	hello@friendsforlife.org.uk
Website	www.friendsforlife.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE CHARITY'S OBJECTS ("OBJECTS") ARE SPECIFICALLY RESTRICTED TO THE FOLLOWING:FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT BY RELIEVING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE RESIDING IN CARE HOMES AND OTHER SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN BEDFORDSHIRE BY THE FOLLOWING:(I) PROVIDING TRAINED VOLUNTEERS TO VISIT AND BEFRIEND RESIDENTS, AND(II) DEVELOPING ACTIVITIES FOR PARTICIPATION BY RESIDENTS,IN THE INTERESTS OF RELIEVING LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION AND IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF AND THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THE RESIDENTS.

Activities: To relieve the needs of people in care homes within the unitary boroughs of Bedford, Central Beds. and Luton or any area previously defined as being within Bedfordshire by any or all of the following:(i) developing schemes for befriending residents(ii) assisting care homes in meeting the spiritual needs of residents, in particular to help them in meeting their statutory requirements.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Elderly/old People

Geography

- Bedford
- Central Bedfordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£113,445	£83,831	-	-
2024-03-31	£75,207	£86,535	-	-
2023-03-31	£56,189	£50,409	-	-
2022-03-31	£57,136	£51,768	-	-
2021-03-31	£43,075	£28,008	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
David Alexander Sawyer		2025-12-08
Helen Wheatley		2025-04-14
Michael Ames Ridley		2023-11-13
Peter Vaughan Egner		2025-09-08
Sally Patricia Hopwood		2025-10-13
Sallyann Marie Davies		2025-07-14
Stephen David Bennett		2024-10-22
Titilayo Sharon Majekodunmi		2025-01-13

Accounts



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2024/25

*Promoting wellbeing by reducing social isolation
for care home residents in Bedford and the surrounding area*

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General information

Name	Friends for Life Bedfordshire
Registered Charity Number	1165730
Registered Company Number	7951058
Registered Office	43 Bromham Road, Bedford MK40 2AA
Directors (trustees)	Keyur Bhatt Stephen Bennett (appointed 22 October 2024) Dominic Carter (resigned 10 June 2024) Harjinder Singh Gosal (resigned 9 September 2024) Theresa Harrington (resigned 10 February 2025) Nafiz Hasnat Suneil Khandke Sangeetha Nanda Kumar (appointed 10 June 2024, resigned 10 February 2025) Lisa Lindfield (appointed 22 October 2024) Titilayo Majekodunmi (appointed 13 January 2025) Katalin Petenchi (appointed 22 October 2024) Michael Ridley Sarah Walker (resigned 9 September 2024) Helen Wheatley (resigned 11 November 2024) Theresa Harrington served as Chair between 1 April and 20 November 2024. Suneil Khandke and Michael Ridley were Co-Chairs between 21 November 2024 and 12 May 2025. Michael Ridley was elected as Chair on 12 May 2025.
Patrons	Rt. Rev. Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford Susan Lousada, HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire
Independent Examiner	Ian Farthing, 18 Embla Close, Bedford, MK41 0WR
Bank	HSBC, 12 Allhallows, Bedford, MK40 1LJ
Constitution and governance	The charity is a company limited by guarantee and registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House. It is operated under the rules of its memorandum and articles of association dated 18th January 2012 (as amended on 14 October 2016). It has no share capital.
Charitable purposes	To relieve the needs of people in care homes and other similar establishments within the unitary boroughs of Bedford, central Bedfordshire and Luton or any area previously defined as being within the county of Bedfordshire by any or all of the following: • Developing schemes for befriending residents. • Assisting such homes in meeting the spiritual needs of residents, in particular to help them in meeting the statutory requirements in this field.

Public benefit statement

In carrying out their functions, the trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Friends for Life in 2024/25

74 befrienders
visited **96**
residents



Our volunteers
spent **1,186**
hours visiting
their friends

We were
present in **32**
care homes



We held **7**
training days
for new
volunteers

Activity
volunteers had
461 resident
contacts



We had **8** social
events for
volunteers

Foreword from our patrons



It is a privilege to serve as patron of Friends for Life Bedfordshire and to commend the remarkable work captured in this Annual Report.

At its heart, this charity embodies the values of compassion, dignity and inclusion - reminding us that friendship and human connection are not luxuries, but essentials for wellbeing. The volunteers who give their time to visit, listen and bring companionship to residents in our care homes offer something priceless: a sense of belonging.

In a world where loneliness is increasingly recognised as a challenge to public health, the work of Friends for Life stands as a source of inspiration. Its partnerships with schools, community groups and local organisations show what can be achieved when people come together with kindness and purpose.

My warmest thanks go to every volunteer, trustee and supporter whose generosity ensures that no one in Bedfordshire need feel forgotten or alone.

Susan Lousada

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire



One of the hardest times for me was during Covid. It was challenging enough to regularly visit my mother suffering from severe dementia before then in her care home, but the lack of direct contact for several months was deeply painful. Even if hard to gauge my mother's response, the one thing that did seem to make a difference was the presence of family and friends. A small reminder for me of the importance of Friends for Life as it connects befrienders with residents.

I am honoured to be a Patron of Friends for Life, Bedford and to champion this essential work. I trust you will read this inspiring record of the impact over the last twelve months, and the exciting plans going forward. Not only reaching more people, but extending partnerships, widening wellbeing activities and strengthening governance. It is a story of hope in a society where sadly all too often loneliness is people's experience. Thank you to everyone connected to Friends for Life for your part in this important work.

Rt. Rev. Richard Atkinson

Bishop of Bedford & Acting Bishop of St Albans

Chair's overview

On behalf of the Board, it is a great pleasure and privilege to introduce Friends for Life Bedfordshire's Annual Report and Accounts for 2024/5.

I would like to start this overview with personal reflection. For me, this report coincides with the second anniversary of joining the charity's Board as a trustee and six months since I was appointed as Chair of Trustees. Over that all time, I continue to be amazed, inspired and humbled by the dedicated work of our many volunteers who give up their time to make a difference in their community, helping to tackle loneliness and social isolation amongst residents in our local care homes. Their work exemplifies the recent statement from the World Health Organisation Commission on Social Connection that "social connection enhances life, giving us meaning and a sense of belonging."

It is also pleasing to reflect on how the charity has developed and moved forward over the past few years. Many of those achievements are reflected elsewhere in this report, but I would highlight in particular:-

- the progress we have made in strengthening our governance and the Board
- the development of our small but extremely dedicated staff team under the leadership of Gillian Basnett, our manager
- the progress made in developing our intergenerational activities with schools and colleges, and
- our success in securing grant funding, including from the National Lottery Communities Fund.

Notwithstanding these successes and achievements, much work remains to be done. There is substantial unmet demand for our services, and we know that growing our volunteer numbers (through improving both recruitment and retention) is hard. We also know that to meet that challenge we will need to change the way we work. This will mean improving our systems, providing better support for our volunteers and our staff, and streamlining our processes.

Delivering against our plans, as set later in this report, remains a central focus for the Board. We have a strong foundation to build on, and are already making good progress. But there is still further to go.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with or has supported the charity over the past year. Particular thanks are due, as ever, to our treasurer Mike Elliott, for his commitment in managing our money and preparing the financial statements included with this report.

Finally, I must also thank Theresa Harrington and Suneil Khandke for their huge contributions to the leadership of the Board over the reporting year. As well as their guidance of the charity, I am personally very grateful for the support and advice they have given me.

Michael Ridley, Chair of Trustees

Befriending

At the core of our service is our one-to-one befriending activity.

- We select, recruit and train volunteers to offer friendship and company to residents who would otherwise have no or few visitors.
- We develop and maintain a close relationship with care home managers who identify residents at risk of loneliness and provide us with ongoing guidance, support and feedback on the friendships we provide.
- We carefully match volunteers to residents by considering their backgrounds, interests, health conditions and other factors - this is essential to encourage close friendships to develop.
- We monitor the impact of our befriending through regular surveys and using an impact tool which our volunteers use to record each visit to their resident.
- We support our volunteers with ongoing training, social interaction and by encouraging the development of a strong network. Our coffee mornings, Christmas and summer parties, and training events are all very well attended.

In 2024/5, our befriending service reached 96 residents, with 74 befriending volunteers spending a total of 1186 hours visiting.

Befriending case study: meet Gill and Barbara

Barbara was referred to Friends for Life shortly after moving into care as she was feeling sad about no longer being able to live in her own home and her loss of independence. The care home staff felt some dedicated 1:1 companionship would help lift Barbara's spirits.

Barbara was linked with Gill, who decided to become a befriender after her husband passed away. In the final year of his life he had lived in a care home and Gill had been shocked to find out that only 25% of the residents there had regular visitors.

Gill visits Barbara every 1-2 weeks, often in the afternoon when she prefers spending time in her room. Barbara loves to chat and both Gill and Barbara say they can always find plenty of things to talk about.



"As well as spending time and talking with me, Gill helps me in lots of small ways too, such as picking up bits of shopping or helping me to care for and alter my clothes. I am really thankful for her friendship" (Gill)

Wellbeing activities

Our wellbeing activities provide opportunities for care home residents to building social connections and have fun through a range of volunteer-led activities; they are strengthening links between local care homes in Bedford and schools and colleges, individuals and community groups, and businesses. These activities are usually delivered to groups of residents, rather than on the one-to-one basis of our befriending service.

Examples of the activities we have undertaken include using a variety of themed reminiscence boxes to spark memories and conversation with groups of residents, and musical activities including a saxophone player and singer/guitarist. In total, our wellbeing activities reached 461 residents in 2024/5.

Our last annual report talked about the development of our wellbeing activities as part of a pilot process. We have used the experience to from the pilots to develop a clear set of priorities and principles these activities which we are applying going forward.

Our principles and priorities for wellbeing activities

1. Our wellbeing activities should be fully aligned with our core charitable purpose of reducing loneliness and social isolation amongst care home residents
2. We will deliver our wellbeing activities through a volunteer-based model
3. When working with partner organisations, we will focus on sustainable partnerships, with clear roles and responsibilities and commitment from both sides
4. We will focus our wellbeing activities on a limited number of models that we know work well
5. In all our wellbeing activities, it must be clear how Friends for Life is adding value throughout the whole of delivery

Advocacy and partnership

Our stakeholders and supporters work with partners throughout Bedfordshire to highlight the issues of loneliness and social isolation in care homes in the county. We also publish helpful guidance on our website and in our social media content to support this work, which is critical to obtaining our funding and attracting our volunteers, enabling us to deliver our vital befriending services.

We regularly attend a range of local events to promote the charity's activities, to raise awareness and build valuable connections with other community groups and charities. These events have helped increase our visibility and foster collaboration across the voluntary sector.

Some of the highlights from this year include meetings with our local MP, Mohammed Yasin, and being highly commended in the 2024 Bedford Independent Everyday Heroes Awards. We were also nominated by Bedfordshire Care Group as their charity of the year and have presented to the Bedford Borough Older Peoples Partnership Board, and the Enhanced Health in Care Homes group.



“It was a pleasure to hear about the incredible work that the charity does in promoting wellbeing and reducing social isolation for care home residents in Bedford. Loneliness can have a real impact on our wellbeing, so the kindness shown by Friends for Life in offering company and social activities to care home residents is very touching to see.” (Mohammed Yasin MP)

World Health Organisation Commission on Social Connection

In June 2025 the World Health Organisation Commission on Social Connection published a landmark report, "From loneliness to social connection: charting a path to healthier societies,"

The report identifies loneliness and social isolation as major public health issues that significantly impact health, well-being, and economic outcomes., estimating that around 1 in 6 people worldwide are affected.

Loneliness and social isolation are linked to an increased risk of various diseases, including cardiovascular problems and cognitive decline, and are associated with a higher risk of premature death.

The report calls for action across various sectors and provides a roadmap for governments, including embedding social connection into urban planning and health systems, addressing the stigma associated with loneliness, and investing in research and measurement.

“Social health is a vital but often overlooked pillar of health: It is just as essential as physical and mental health. Social connection can reduce the risk of disease, lengthen life expectancy and strengthen the fabric of communities and society. Social connection enhances life, giving us meaning and a sense of belonging.”

Our impact

To better understand how well we meet the need of residents, and how we support our volunteers, we undertake annual surveys of both our partner care homes, and our volunteers. The surveys also help us to identify how we can improve our services in future years and plan for the charity's future. The surveys covering the reporting year (2024/5) were carried out in June 2025.

Care home survey

Our care home survey was distributed to all the homes we currently partner with. We are very grateful to everyone that completed the survey. For this year's survey, the majority of homes that responded had been working with us for more than 5 years. Most of these homes have more than one befriender visiting residents. All the homes that responded to the survey had also benefited from wellbeing activities, including school visits, and musical performances.

In response to our question about the impact of befriending on residents, 100% of care homes who responded reported that this was very positive. They also said that they would recommend our befriending service and our wellbeing activities to other care homes.

As with last year's survey, we asked about the proportion of residents for whom English is not a first language. All the care homes have residents that fall into this category, including residents whose first language is Punjabi, Serbian, or Hindu. This information helps us to ensure that our services are suitable for a diverse population of residents in local care homes, including through targeting appropriate volunteers that can provide that support.

As expected, the survey confirmed the high incidence of residents with dementia or other significant cognitive impairment. This was estimated to be an issue for more than 50% of residents in four out of five homes. The survey also indicated that the majority of homes we work with have other residents who don't receive visits from family or friends who might also benefit from our befriending service.

"Well done to all involved in FFL from the organisers to the volunteers. You make a difference to others lives!

I would recommend your organisation to all care settings and have discussed the benefits of your services with a CMHT Consultant who was very interested in what you do and is likely to contact you with a view to supporting patients in their care." (Care home survey response)

Volunteer survey

It would not be possible to provide any services to residents without our loyal, committed and hardworking volunteers. Our annual volunteer survey helps us understand how they find working with FFL and whether we are providing the right training and support in what can be an emotionally challenging role.

The majority of volunteers who responded to the survey have been with us for between one and five years. Most volunteer for FFL at least two times every month.

On the support that we provide, 96% of respondents found the initial application process either “easy” or “very easy”, with 100% finding our welcome day training helpful. 92% were happy with the level of support that they were provided in their role. Volunteers also provided suggestions for other topics they would like to be included as part of ongoing training.

A very high proportion of our volunteers (97%) again said they would recommend volunteering with FFL to others. 92% report an increase in their sense of purpose and self worth as a result of their volunteering activity.

“I thoroughly enjoy being a volunteer befriender with FFL and thank you for giving me the opportunity to do so.” (Volunteer survey response)

“FFL is a much needed lifeline for residents who are feeling isolated and sometimes friendless.” (Volunteer survey response)

“The team are there for you when needed. They offer solid practical advice and are highly supportive. One member of the team even came with me to visit my resident to give her a refresher lesson on knitting. The team at FFL are approachable, knowledgeable and very friendly. It's a pleasure!” (Volunteer survey response)

Our trustees

Our board of trustees oversees the running of the charity, working closely with our staff team to optimise the skills and experience across the charity.

In 2024/5 there were significant changes in the membership of the board, with the resignation of a number of long-serving trustees, including our previous Chair, Theresa Harrington. We are most grateful to her for her service to the charity, for her leadership, and support for the transfer of her responsibilities as Chair to Michael Ridley and Suneil Khandke, who were elected as Co-Chairs in November 2024. Following Suneil's decision to step down from that role in May 2025 Michael was elected as Chair, with Stephen Bennett elected as Vice-Chair.

Although we did have to say goodbye to a number of valued colleagues, fortunately we have been able to fill the vacancies with some very strong appointments. These include trustees with backgrounds in communications and marketing, HR, small business, health and social care, and programme management, providing expertise and experience that can be accessed by our staff team. Some of our trustees also volunteer as befrienders, and others have experience of care homes through elderly relatives. All trustee vacancies are advertised with Reach Volunteering.

In our last report we set out a number of improvements to our governance arrangements that had been introduced. These included:

- updating and strengthening the induction process for newly appointed trustees;
- a focus on external training on trustee responsibilities; and
- a formal scheme of delegation; board committees focused on finance, people, quality, communications and marketing; and governance.

In 2024/5 we continued to embed these changes, whilst also making other improvements, including: -

- Introducing a formal trustees' code of conduct;
- Updating our policy on conflicts of interest for board members;
- Reviewing the composition of the charity's Members;
- Agreeing a risk management policy, including regular reviews by the board of the key risks affecting the charity;
- Establishing a clearer and more focused reporting framework through which the board is updated on operational performance;
- Introducing a formal three-month probationary period for prospective trustees, during which they complete their comprehensive induction training;
- Developing a new template for our policies, to support clarity and enable appropriate delegation of operational procedures; and
- Continuing to improve our annual business planning process.

In July 2025, the Board carried out a further self-assessment of its effectiveness, based on the Charity Governance Code. This indicated that we had achieved improvements across all eight of the competencies measured, compared to the previous self-assessment in January 2024.

The full Board continues to meet on a monthly basis, with our treasurer and manager also attending. We also hold two strategy days every year, which provide an opportunity for an extended discussion focused on strategic development and associated themes. At these events in 2024/5 our discussions included business planning and priorities together with the associated risks and mitigations; our model for partnership working; wellbeing activity principles, and key performance indicators. We also had a very valuable opportunity to learn from the experience of Care Home Volunteers, a charity in Wiltshire that provides a similar service to our own.



“Being a trustee for FFL has been a rewarding experience. I have been consistently impressed by the charity’s strong sense of purpose and commitment to delivering high-quality support. As chair of the Quality Committee, I focus on strengthening assurance and improvement processes, ensuring quality and accountability remain central to FFL’s work. I have also led a project to improve how the charity manages its information, aiming to make data more consistent and useful for decision making and oversight. This role has deepened my appreciation of what effective governance can achieve, creating the conditions for a charity to grow, adapt, and continue making a real difference.” (Titilayo Majekodunmi, Trustee)

“Both of my grandmothers spent their later years in care homes. I remember visiting them regularly and was always saddened to see other residents who had few, if any, visitors. It left a lasting impression on me, highlighting how important companionship and connection are in our lives. When I learned about the wonderful work that Friends for Life does, I was inspired to get involved. Serving as a Trustee has been deeply rewarding. It is a privilege to be part of an organisation that makes such a tangible difference to people’s lives, and I am proud to help further its mission of friendship, care, and community” (Steve Bennett, Trustee)



Our staff

To deliver our charitable activities we rely on a small, dedicated part-time staff team who manage our volunteers, set up our group activities, carry out fundraising and undertake our administration.

Our team is led by our manager Gillian Basnett (appointed in July 2024), who has overall responsibility for its work. In 2024/5, she was supported by Beth Parkinson (activities lead), Pauline Carter (volunteer lead), Alison Flashman (administrator), and Kathryn Hughes (fundraising lead).

Our thanks are due to them for their diligence, enthusiasm, and loyalty throughout the year. We remain committed to the professional development of all our staff, ensuring all team members have access to relevant training opportunities. Internally, communication and collaboration have been strengthened through the introduction of weekly team meetings, focused on volunteer recruitment, engagement, and retention.

Our volunteers

FFL could not function without our volunteers. They are the foundation of the charity, and without their dedication and compassion, our work would not be possible. We provide ongoing support through regular phone calls, training and education opportunities, and sabbatical options for those who wish to take a break while remaining connected to the charity. To encourage connection and wellbeing, we host coffee mornings, social get-togethers, and a Christmas celebration to thank everyone for their hard work. We deeply value every volunteer's contribution – their time, kindness, and commitment make a real difference to the lives of those we support.

We continue to work to grow the number of befriending volunteers, as well as recruiting activity volunteers to support our developing wellbeing activities.

Following a detailed review of our data on volunteer recruitment and retention in November 2024 and in response to feedback from our volunteer survey, we have looked into how we work with and support volunteers.

- We now have a new volunteer agreement to ensure that volunteers understand our commitment expectations which helps support volunteer retention
- We are exploring different options for speeding up the on-boarding process for new volunteers to enable the relevant clearances to be completed as quickly as possible, allowing volunteers to start their work
- We are continuing to improve the induction training provided on our welcome days and our refresher and more advanced training for experienced volunteers
- We have appointed a volunteer as a Trustee, to ensure that the Board appreciates the perspective of our volunteers in its discussions and decisions
- A volunteer focus group has been established to ensure that we can harness the experience and insight of volunteers when thinking about how to improve the support we provide

- When volunteers leave us, we now ask for their feedback on reasons for leaving and ideas for improvement.

Our funders

FFL can only provide services because of the income we receive from our generous funders and supporters. We are very grateful for all support we receive as this is fundamental in enabling us to provide our services to care home residents.

The income we received during the financial year 2024/25 allowed us to cover the costs of our dedicated part-time staff team, who are instrumental to the delivery of our service. It has also allowed us to pay for our associated service costs, including office accommodation and IT, publicity, website, volunteer training, DBS compliance checks for all our volunteers, resources and travel. These expenses are essential for the everyday running of our service.

In 2024/25, 91% of our income came from grants awarded by trusts and foundations (of which 64% restricted and 36% unrestricted). Donations, interest, and membership fees accounted for the remainder. We were also successful in achieving our target funding for the year at an earlier point in the year than previously.

Our funding in 2024/25 was donated by the following trusts and foundations:

Bedford and Luton Charitable Fund
The Harpur Trust
House of Industry
Masonic Charitable Foundation
St John's Hospital Trust
Bedford Charitable Trust
John Apthorp Charity

Redrow S. Midlands Community Fund
Connolly Foundation
National Lottery Awards for All
The Wixamtree Trust
Postcode Places Trust
McCarthy Stone Foundation

An important achievement in 2024/25 was securing a multi-year grant from the National Lottery Reaching Communities fund. Draw-down of this grant will start in 2025/26. We also received commitments of support, for 2025/26 and beyond, from the following:

William Butterfield Trust
Allen Lane Foundation
St Johns Hospital Trust

In 2024/5, we also received a one-off donation from the funds of Care Home Volunteers following their winding-up.

Our delivery partners

In 2024/25 we worked with 30 local care homes in delivering our befriending service.

Airedale	Elcombe House	Mantles Court
Annandale Lodge	Elstow Manor	Manton Heights
Baycroft	Henrietta House	Oasis House
Brook House	Highfield	Parkside
Bushmead Court	Kimbolton Lodge	Richmond Manor
Charter House	Ladyslaude Court	Rivermead
The Crescent	Lansglade House	Salvete
Dame Alice Court	Lillibet House	Southway
Danecroft	Lillibet Lodge	Waterloo House
Dial House	The Mallards	Wixams Retirement Village

As well as working with care homes, in 2024/25 we were fortunate to work with a range of partners, including schools, colleges, businesses and other organisations. These included:

Bedford College
Bedford School
Great Denham Primary School
Biddenham International School
Autoglass
The Higgins Art Gallery and Museum

Our strategic framework

Our strategic framework was reviewed in January 2025 and reconfirmed. The framework brings together the activities and focus areas for our charity to deliver our vision and mission, and to define the priorities for the coming years. Further details of the framework are available on our website.

Our priorities

For our 2025/26 business plan, we are focusing on 9 core priorities within our strategic framework. These are summarized in the table below.

	Befriending	Wellbeing	Advocacy
Our Strategic Pillars	Increase the number of residents we can reach, by training and recruiting more new volunteers and improving volunteer retention.	Develop our wellbeing activities by implementing our wellbeing principles, increasing the number of wellbeing volunteers, and developing standardised models for intergenerational work with schools.	Drive advocacy through the deployment of a marketing and publicity programme to improve external visibility, engagement and social media activities to recruit volunteers and attract further funding.
Our Impact	Ensure our services deliver benefit to both residents and volunteers by further developing and utilising data from surveys and impact monitoring.		
Our Partners	Increase the reach across Bedfordshire, by growing the number of care homes we interact with through both our befriending and wellbeing activities.		
Our Funding	Develop personal (legacy) donations and secure matched funding, whilst also strengthening our readiness for future multi-year grants.		
Our Governance	Develop the governance and board effectiveness, including building the capability and contribution of all trustees		
Our Staff	Invest in our staff through appropriate induction, training, and support, and build stronger links between the staff and the Board		
Our Processes	Improve our policies and processes, to increase our efficiency and effectiveness, including bringing new volunteers on board more quickly.		

Our policies

The Board regularly reviews the key policies under which the charity delivers its activities. Our policies cover the following areas:-

- Safeguarding
- Management of volunteers
- Recruitment, employment, and conduct of staff
- Financial management (including financial controls, and reserves)
- Health and safety
- Complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Data protection
- Governance
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Information technology

Risk management statement

The trustees are responsible for managing the risks faced by Friends for Life Bedfordshire and confirming that appropriate systems are in place to manage them effectively.

The objective of our risk management policy is to ensure that risks are managed effectively, enabling the charity to deliver its charitable purposes, achieve its strategic objectives, protect beneficiaries, staff and assets, and ensure business operations and financial sustainability.

We aim to achieve this by ensuring that we have a good understanding of the main areas of uncertainty facing the charity at any time and taking action to adequately mitigate those risks consistent with our risk appetite (i.e. our tolerance for different types of risks). This is built on clear roles and responsibilities in relation to risk management and is supported by a proportionate system for reporting and documentation.

Notes to the Accounts 2024/25

1. Friends for Life Bedfordshire (FFL) is, since April 2012, a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors/Trustees and since 2016 also a Registered Charity.
2. March 31st is the agreed Year-End of this the thirteenth year of the Company's operation. Assets from the Company's forerunner (an Anglican/Methodist joint project) were transferred to the new Company on April 1st 2012.
3. The Accounts have been drawn up on an accruals basis. This is a requirement of Companies House and is applied regardless of turnover. SORP FRS 102 guidelines for charities have been applied where appropriate.
4. The accounts are examined at the end of each year by an Independent Examiner. Being classed as a 'Small Company' no audit is required (Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006) unless requested by the members. The accounts need to be filed with Companies House by 31st.Dec 2025. As our income exceeded £25,000 there is a requirement to also file the accounts with the Charity Commission by January 31st. 2026.
5. Accounts were not filed this year with HMRC due to our 3-year exemption. We may be required to file by March 2026 for this 2024/25 financial year.
6. The Company's liquid assets are held in an HSBC Business style account at 12 Allhallows Bedford MK40 1LJ. Since 1st Jan 2022, this account has incurred a £5 monthly fee plus additional charges for handling cheques, cash and currency conversion. A Business Money Manager savings account is linked to the current account to separately hold the Reserves Fund and any short-term surplus. Interest (currently 1.56%) is paid on this latter account.
7. Major office equipment (e.g. furniture, software and computers) is declared as an asset on the balance sheet if the individual value of the item exceeds £250. Depreciation is linear. Smaller resource or training materials are written off in the year of purchase.
8. FFL insurance cover is provided by Q Underwriting Services Limited (Aviva Insurance Limited). Our broker is Howden UK Brothers Limited.
9. No contract staff were appointed during this financial year and thus all wage costs has gone to our salaried staff. The calculation of the monthly payroll remains in the hands of Haines Watts with National Employment and Savings Trust (NEST) providing employee pension provision. The actual payment of salaries to the staff, and that due to NEST and HMRC, remains the responsibility of FFL.
10. Since 2019 the charity has rented office space in the CVS building at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA. In January 2025 the team relocated to a larger office on the first floor. This is also our Registered Office. As a registered charity this rental is exempt from 80% of Non-Domestic Rates.
11. The Company Directors/Trustees and Treasurer receive no remuneration as result of their office.
12. All income was derived through Grants, Donations, Membership Fees and fund-raising events.

Michael Elliott

Hon Treasurer - Friends for Life Bedfordshire

FRIENDS FOR LIFE BEDFORDSHIRE (FFL)
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF FFL

For the year ended 31 March 2025

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of FFL for the year ended 31st March 2024 which are set out in the Notes to the Accounts and which comprise the Balance Sheet, the Income and Expenditure Account, Reserve Account details and the related notes.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under the Charities Act 2011, s.144(2) (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

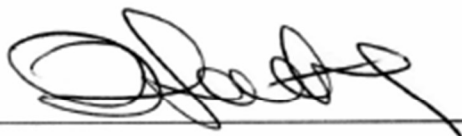
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I can confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the financial statements set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Ian Farthing

18 Embla Close, Bedford, MK41 0WR

Dated: 9 - 10 - 25 .

Balance sheet for the year ended 31st March 2025

Note: Debit balances are shown in parentheses

	<u>2024/25</u>		<u>2023/24</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment	3,790.91		1200.06	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	70.46		53.31	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch.31st.	7,500.91		5,719.79	
HSBC Bus.Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	52,674.41		31,870.89	
Other Assets	0.00		0.00	
	64,036.69		38,844.05	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	0.00		0.00	
Less: creditors and provisions	(39.40)		(4,460.66)	
	<u>63,997.29</u>		<u>34,383.39</u>	

Represented by:

Brought forward from previous year.	34,383.39		45,711.19	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	29,613.90		(11,327.80)	
	<u>63,997.29</u>		<u>34,383.39</u>	

Audit Exemption Statement

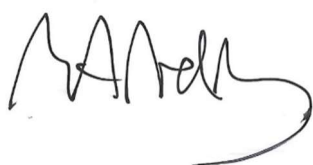
For the year ending 31 March 2025 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies

Directors Responsibilities

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476
The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provision for small companies under part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)

Signed on behalf of the trustees



Michael Ridley, Chair
10 November 2025

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st March 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
	Examined	Examined
	(Accruals Acct.)	(Accruals Acct.)
Income		
Membership Fees (1)	295.00	315.00
Un-Restricted Grants (2)	37,230.00	34,336.00
Restricted Grants (2)	65,739.79	35,822.00
Donations (3)	8,037.39	1,391.90
Gift Aid & GASDS (10)	-	496.60
Fund Raising Events	43.16	187.10
Interest on Reserve Account	1,303.52	506.45
Other Income - (PayPal, Easy Giving etc.)	795.92	2,151.73
Total Incoming Resources	113,444.78	75,206.78
Expenditure		
Contractor fees	-	1,983.75
Staff salaries (Net) (6a)	58,106.55	57,801.18
Employee deductions (PAYE, NIC, Pensions)	6,210.46	9,190.31
Employer costs (Payroll, Pensions, etc.) (5)	2,019.80	2,944.11
DBS & trainer/welcome Day costs (6b)	1,844.27	1,503.50
Publicity / website / IT	1,955.99	3,255.62
Insurance, HSBC Fees & other (4)	1,285.86	1,024.30
Travel	707.75	444.45
Resources & misc. expenses (7)	1,066.37	937.84
Office rent & rates, phones, stationery, etc.	6,236.95	5,366.99
Development	2,309.97	-
Non-budget expenses (9)	-	438.00
Depreciation of assets (8)	1,954.06	1,397.84
Cash withdrawals	132.85	246.69
Total Resources Expended	83,830.88	86,534.58
Income less Expenditure	29,613.90	(11,327.80)

Notes

- 1 Comprised 12 Individual, 3 Church and 1 Corporate Memberships.
- 2 i.e.funds from a grant-making body following an application process
- 3 Usually from individuals, companies, churches, voluntary groups etc.
- 4 Includes NCVO membership and Companies House fees.
- 5 Also includes the payroll company and recruitment fees.
- 6a Less the Welcome Days training & costs.
- 6b Includes the Welcome Days training & costs.
- 7 Includes office equipment, badges, volunteer & trustee expenses.
- 8 There were eight capitalised items in this FY.
- 9 Unused grant repayment and BG funds reimbursement.
- 10 No claim made in this FY.

BMM Account - balance and transfers for the year ended 31st March 2025

(This account is classed as Designated but Unrestricted)

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
	Examined	Examined
	(Accruals Acct.)	(Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Net Transfers from General Acct. (1)	79,000.00	5,000.00
Interest Added (2)	1,303.52	506.45
Other income.	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	80,303.52	5,506.45
 <u>Expenditure</u>		
Net Transfer to General Acct.	59,500.00	0.00
Total Resources Expended	59,500.00	0.00
Income less Expenditure	20,803.52	5,506.45
Previous Balance Brought Forward	31,870.89	26,364.44
Total Funds	52,674.41	31,870.89

Notes

- 1 Average balance over the year was £67.3k
- 2 Average of 1.94%
- 3 Includes the 2024/25 designated Reserves (£20,000)

hello@friendsforlife.org.uk

www.friendsforlife.org.uk



Accounts



Friends for Life
— Bedford —

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2023/24



*Promoting wellbeing and reducing social isolation
for care home residents in Bedford and the surrounding area*

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General information

Name	Friends for Life Bedfordshire
Registered Charity Number	1165730
Registered Company Number	7951058
Registered Office	43 Bromham Road, Bedford MK40 2AA
Directors (trustees)	Keyur Bhatt, Dominic Carter, Harjinder Singh Gosal, Terri Harrington (Chair), Nafiz Hasnat, Neil Khandke (Vice Chair), Sangeetha Nanda Kumar, Michael Ridley (Vice Chair), Sarah Walker, Helen Wheatley, Paul Wilson
Patrons	Rt Rev Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford, Rt Rev Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans and Susan Lousada, HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire
Independent Examiner	Ian Farthing
Banker	HSBC
Governance and Management	The charity is a company limited by guarantee and registered with the Charity Commission. It is operated under the rules of its memorandum and articles of association dated 18th January 2012. It has no share capital.

67 volunteers reported visits to 83 residents		We received 55 resident referrals	
Our volunteers recorded 1083 visits in 2023/24	82% of residents were actively involved in their visits	93% of residents were happy to see their friend	Our volunteers visited 30 care settings
5 volunteers were involved in wellbeing visits		41 new volunteers were trained at 7 induction (Welcome) days	
22 wellbeing visits were recorded	270 residents were present at wellbeing visits	We hosted 7 coffee meetings for volunteers	We had a Christmas party and put on a specialist training day

Chair's Overview

I have been privileged to lead the charity since 2022, and in this time have seen some significant changes to the way in which we operate and the effectiveness of our partnerships with our stakeholders.

As a small charity that evolved gradually since its inception in 2007, some of the rigour of robust governance, evaluation of service provision and good data management was not as present as it is in larger charities. Since becoming Chair, I have therefore worked with my talented board and exceptional staff to make these areas a real focus and am now confident that our policies, processes and ways of working are more than adequate to ensure safe oversight and management of our services.



Due to the multi-year grants provided by funders, we have been able to bring on new staff, including a manager, and this has enabled us to form stronger partnerships with, and increase our understanding of, the care homes and residents we support. This in turn means we have tailored our service provision to better suit their needs.

Our work with schools and colleges especially excites me because bringing together the elderly and young benefits both groups and ensures our youngsters understand the importance of respect and community contributions. This will continue to shape their lives as they get older and take their place in society.

As the demand for our service continues to grow, we have ambitious plans to recruit more volunteers and form new partnerships to meet the need and ensure we can alleviate loneliness and social isolation for as many residents in our care homes as possible. It is very pleasing that the response to our recent survey has been so positive, demonstrating the significant impact our service has on elderly residents.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our funders and the ongoing commitment of our existing volunteers, staff, trustees and partners.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved with or supported FFL in the last year and who continue to do so.

Terri Harrington, Chair

History

Friends for Life Bedfordshire (FFL) works to support residents in local care homes (primarily in Bedford Borough). We aim to help meet their needs by providing friendship for residents at risk of social isolation and facilitating activities to improve wellbeing. We achieve this through a programme of volunteer one-to-one befriending relationships and a wellbeing programme that brings volunteers, local schools, community groups and businesses into care homes to engage with residents.

From small beginnings in 2007 as a charitable project organised by local churches, FFL became a charitable company in 2012 and was registered with the Charity Commission in 2016.

What is special about Friends for Life?

FFL is well known in Bedford as the provider of a unique and valued service to socially isolated residents in care homes for the elderly. Since its inception in 2007, we have demonstrated resilience and flexibility by adapting our provision as required (particularly when face to face visits were not allowed during Covid) and our more recent development of wellbeing activities is being well received.

We are the only befriending service supporting residents in care homes for the elderly in Bedfordshire and there are few equivalent services elsewhere in the UK. We have an ever-growing team of trained and dedicated volunteers who we match to residents ensuring a tailored and personalised service. We match residents to befrienders as closely as possible by considering background, interests and language, this supports the building of real friendships which is of mutual benefit to both residents and volunteers.

Our developing wellbeing programme supplements our befriending service by bringing together volunteer individuals and organisations to provide activities within care homes for groups of residents.

In a recent survey one of our partner care homes summarised this well:

"FFL are wonderful! They provide an invaluable service to combat loneliness and spread positivity.

All the volunteers that have visited us have been kind, caring and respectful. The residents receiving the visits have been engaged and animated during the visits.

Matching people to their cultural needs has really supported the residents' sense of self and promoted their identity.

Providing volunteers who can speak the native tongue of the resident supports them to engage in a meaningful way and allows the Care Home to address any concerns or requests that the resident may have effectively.

Our FFL volunteers have helped create a mini allotment, supported with language difficulties, acted as interpreters for formal meetings, brought pets in, brought home-made Irish treats in and, generally, reduced distress and agitation in those they visit.

We would like to thank FFL and our visiting volunteers for the care and dedication they show to the people we look after." Care Home Manager

Our strategy

In the last 12 months the board of trustees has focussed on reviewing our strategic aims and values as well as developing a strategic framework to help support the delivery of activities of the charity into the future. Having a clear strategic framework is fundamental to delivering the charitable purposes set out in our articles of association.

Our Charitable Objectives (as defined in our articles of association) are:

To relieve the needs of people in care homes and other similar establishments within the unitary boroughs of Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton or any area previously defined as being within the county of Bedfordshire by any or all of the following:

- Developing schemes for befriending residents.
- Assisting such homes in meeting the spiritual needs of residents, in particular to help them in meeting the statutory requirements in this field.

FFL recognises the negative impact loneliness has and the harm isolation can cause to physical and mental wellbeing. As part of the development of a strategic framework the Board has developed a vision for the charity to complement our existing mission statement which was reconfirmed.

Our vision

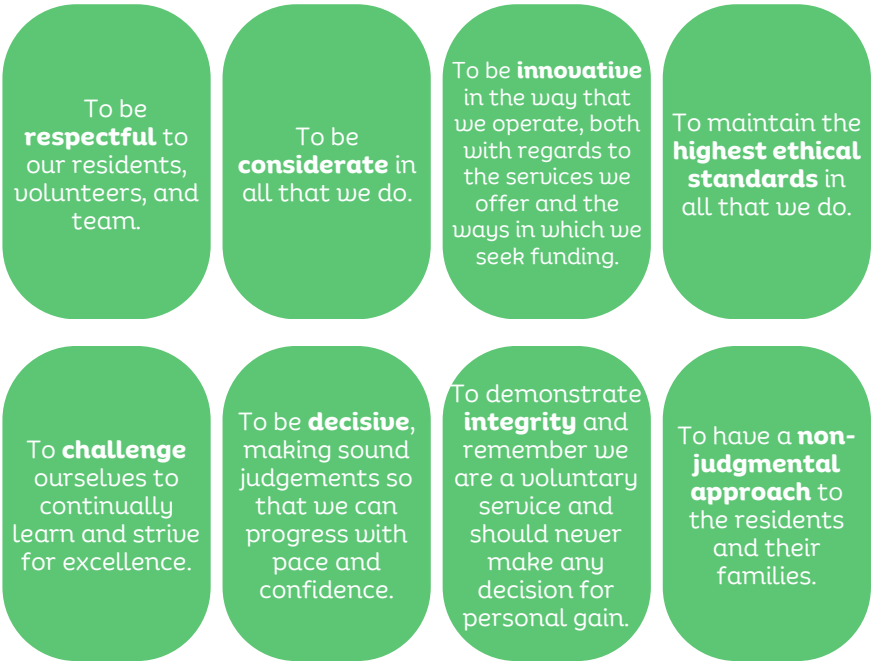
To shine a light on the impact of loneliness in care home residents in Bedford and ensure we enhance their wellbeing by keeping them connected to the community

Our mission

Friends for Life works in partnership with care homes in Bedford providing ongoing friendship and improving the wellbeing of otherwise socially isolated residents.

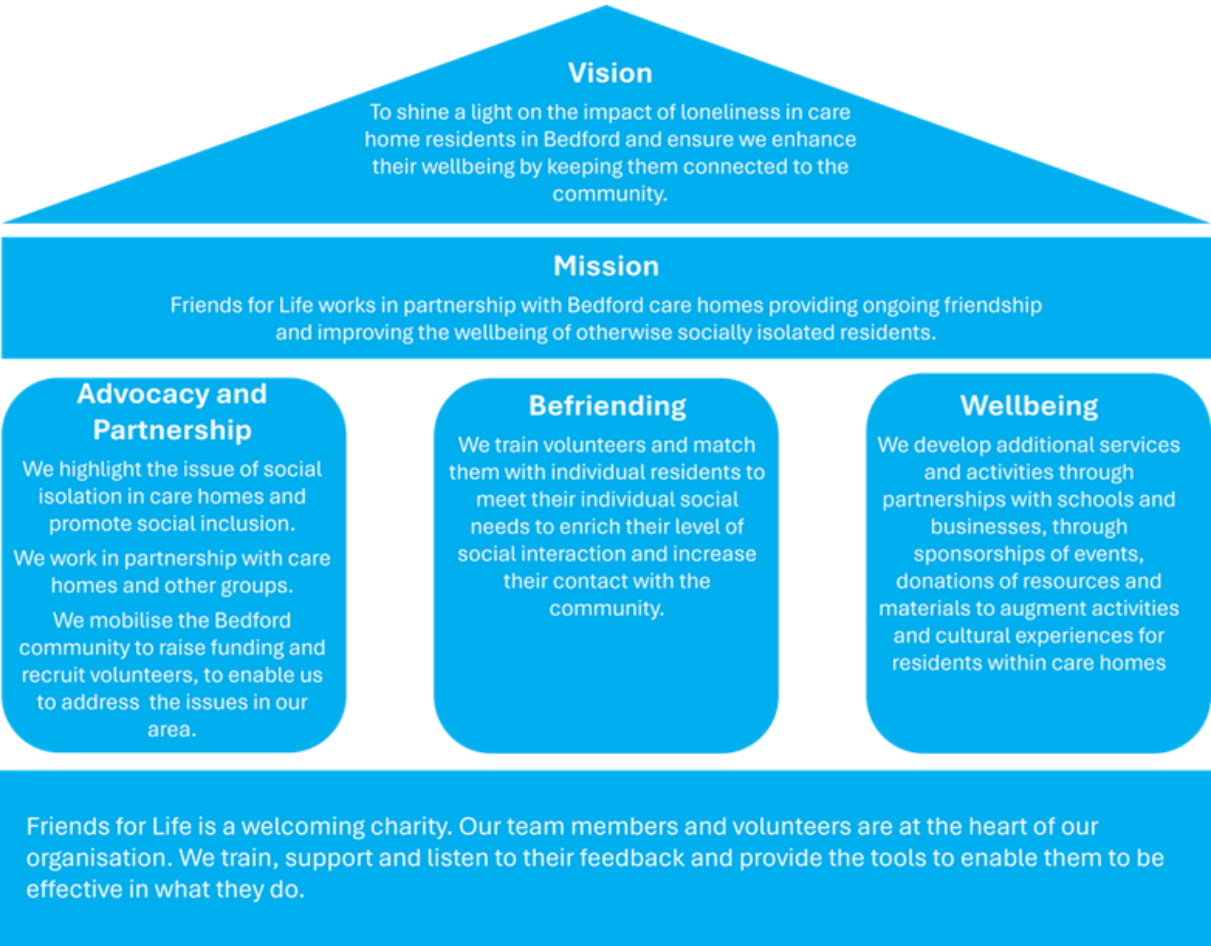
Our values

In 2024, the Board reaffirmed our values which are:



Our strategic framework

Our vision and mission are delivered through three strategic work areas defined in our strategic framework.



Befriending

At the core of our service is our unique befriending activity.

We develop and maintain a close relationship with care home managers who identify residents at risk of loneliness and provide us with ongoing guidance, support and feedback on the friendships we provide.

We vet, recruit and train volunteers to offer friendship and company to residents who would otherwise have no or few visitors.

We match volunteers to residents by considering their backgrounds, interests, health conditions etc – this is essential to encourage close friendships to develop.

We monitor the impact of our befriending through regular surveys and using an impact tool which our volunteers use to record each visit to their resident.

We support our volunteers with ongoing training, support, social interaction and by encouraging the development of a strong network. Our coffee mornings, Christmas and Summer parties and training events are all very well attended.

In 2024 we carried out a survey across the care homes we support to evaluate the impact of our services, the results of which are presented later in this report.

Advocacy and partnership

By working with partners across the borough, our stakeholders and supporters and through our website we aim to highlight the issue of loneliness and social isolation in care homes. This activity is critical in obtaining the required funding and attracting the volunteers who are at the core of delivering our vital services.

Impact of Loneliness on the Elderly

To better understand the likely impact of our service provision on the residents we serve, during 2023/24, we commissioned a review of all published literature relating to loneliness and social isolation in the elderly and the observed impact of a range of interventions including befriending and group activities on improving wellbeing.

The resulting paper which is entitled “Understanding Loneliness in the Elderly: An Overview” has proven to be extremely helpful in the Board’s strategic planning for the development of our service. The paper has been posted to our website and can be found at [Impact of Loneliness on the Elderly: An Overview](#).

Our research confirms that “Loneliness significantly impacts both physical and mental health later in life, leading to an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, depression, dementia, anxiety, and cognitive decline, which in turn can raise the likelihood of mortality” (Ong et al., 2015; Luanaigh, 2008)”. This is what we aim to combat with our befriending and wellbeing services.

In considering the impact of moving into a care home, our research finds “Elderly individuals transitioning to nursing homes often confront emotional challenges, particularly when this move follows the loss of a partner. This significant change in their living environment can result in decreased family support and fewer visits from friends, leading to a decline in the intimacy of these relationships. Consequently, these individuals may experience heightened

feelings of stress, vulnerability and loneliness” (Sya’diyah et al., 2020; Russell et al., 1997; Pitkälä, 2016).

The research also highlights that individuals with dementia are particularly prone to loneliness and, when this is linked to our survey data which shows c 75% of residents in our care homes suffer from some sort of cognitive impairment, this further highlights the hidden crisis in our community and the need for our services to reduce the impact of loneliness in care homes.

The research on befriending interventions has shown promising results across a range of studies, including elderly people in care homes, individuals living with dementia and diverse older populations. The key benefits identified in these studies include enhancement in overall wellbeing, reduction in feelings of loneliness, and alleviation of social isolation. Additional benefits include regular social interaction, breaking up daily monotony, enhancing life purpose and community connectivity. It also usefully highlights some ways to enhance the benefit of befriending which have helped us consider how we ensure our befriending relationships have the optimal positive impact.

The overall conclusion of the research is unsurprisingly that a varied provision of interventions aimed at reducing loneliness is likely to be more successful than just focussing on one area. This supports FFL’s plans to continue to develop our range of wellbeing activities including intergenerational engagement, to ensure we can meet the needs of a wider proportion of care home residents at risk of loneliness and social isolation.

Wellbeing

During the year we have piloted several approaches to delivering wellbeing activities to residents in our care homes. We have been evaluating each of these pilots as we have delivered them to enable us to identify those which have the most positive impact on the residents involved.

The pilots include:

- Individual volunteers visiting care homes to play instruments or read poems to groups of residents. This has proven very popular with increasing numbers of residents taking part in the activities as the weeks have progressed.
- Corporate volunteering where a group from National Highways visited a care home to do some gardening went down well.
- A “Drop In” project ran from July to August where pairs of volunteers visited short-stay residents weekly. This engagement with those residents only expected to stay temporarily in the home and hence have limited time to form close relationships was very successful.
- The Schools Project: during the period we worked with several schools and colleges:

Almost 100 students from Bedford College worked in groups to nurture a peace lily for an individual named resident in a care home. The students sent the residents letters, pictures and cards using the knowledge they had of the residents’ interests and past lives, and then visited the resident to present the plant and chat to them. This was an extremely successful pilot, and we have already begun planning a successor, including opportunities for students to have much greater ongoing engagement with residents.

Around 40 boys from Bedford School visit residents in 3 care homes on a weekly basis where they took part in organised activities/played music and generally engaged with the residents. This pilot has also been very successful with positive feedback from the care homes involved – for instance one care home staff member said: *“The home is extremely impressed by the maturity of the boys. Their communication skills are very good, they have*

high levels of empathy and can tune into the needs of the residents. They are very respectful and portray themselves as keen to give back to the community and are prepared to get stuck in. The residents enjoy their visits, and it is evident that residents and students find the engagement a positive experience”.

This pilot is being expanded from January 2025 and we are also looking to train and match 3 pairs of boys with individual residents as “befrienders”.

Biddenham School – a visit was organised for one group of students to a local care home. This went very well with positive feedback from both the school and the care home. We are now developing a much broader opportunity for 6th formers from the school to visit local care homes weekly and for one group of students to have regular engagement with a home to support their Health and Social Care curriculum.



“There was a great deal of excitement when receiving letters and gifts and the fact it was for them was very positive and made them feel valued. One resident said he couldn't believe how many letters he got and it provides a window to the outside world”. Care Home Manager

“How nice it was to be able to converse with people of a different generation. It was nice to hear the differences between our lives and our resident but also that after all those years between there were still similarities. It was enjoyable to watch how different groups interacted with their pen pals and how connections can be made through simple conversations”. Student

“There way everyone connected on the visit was lovely – residents really benefited from the students visiting. They were surprised the younger people would want to come and spend time with them – one of the residents said “so kind the younger generation took the time out to visit”. Activities Co-ordinator

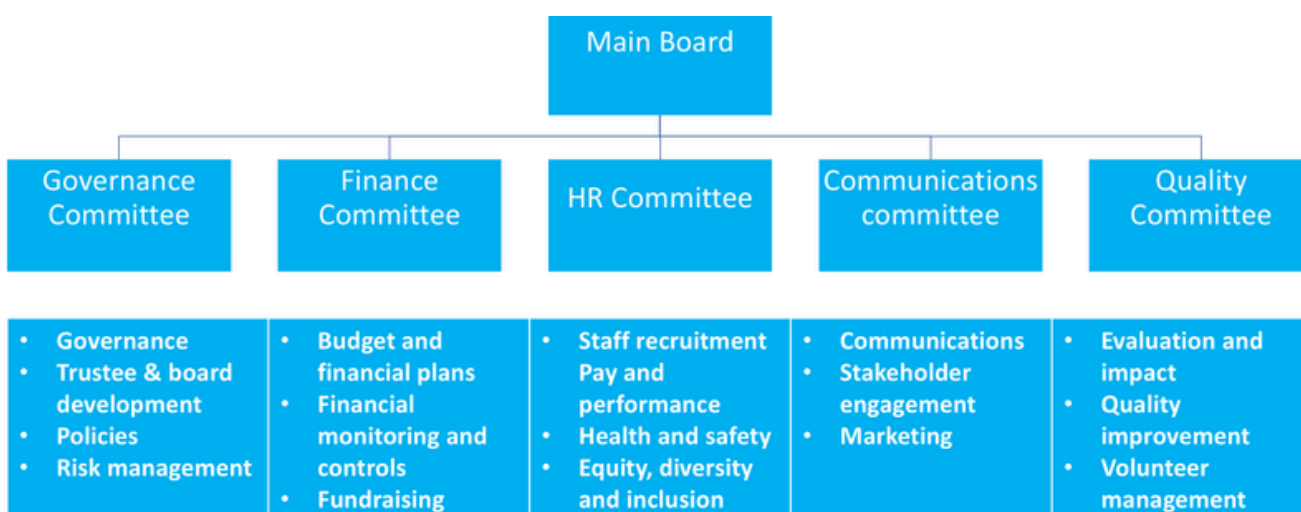
- We have ambitious plans for expanding our wellbeing activities including a collaboration between FFL, Tibbs Dementia Foundation and The Place Theatre. Our joint aim is to alleviate loneliness and social isolation through a programme of “Music for Memory” and “Timeless Tales” for residents in at lead 6 care homes per year. We are currently seeking funding for this activity.

Board of trustees and governance

To be effective in our work we rely on a small, dedicated part time staff team who carry out fundraising, manage our volunteers and residents, set up our group activities and undertake our administration. Our dedicated board of trustees helps to oversee the running of the charity and work closely with our team members to optimise the skills and experience across our combined team.

In January 2024 the board conducted a self-assessment of its effectiveness against the Charity Governance Code. This was used to identify priorities for actions to help develop and strengthen our governance. Reflecting those priorities, we have:

- Updated and strengthened the induction process for newly appointed trustees, including revising our Trustee Induction Guide, and offering support through mentoring. New trustees also undertake our volunteer training and shadow a volunteer on a befriending visit.
- Ensured that all trustees have recently undertaken external training to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities, through training offered by CVS Bedfordshire and ICAEW.
- Arranged two strategy days for trustees, to provide additional time for more in depth strategic reflections and discussions
- Introduced a formal scheme of delegation, empowering and enabling timely and effective action by trustees, volunteers and staff working in partnership for the benefit of the charity and its beneficiaries.
- Established five committees of the Board with delegated powers to oversee and support specific functions, working closely with staff. The committees are:
 - Finance, Budget, and Resources
 - Quality, Training and Evaluation
 - Communications, Marketing, and Stakeholders
 - People and Human Resources
 - Governance, Risk, and Policies



Funding

FFL can only provide services in Bedford because of the income we receive from our generous funders and supporters. We are very grateful for all support we receive as this is fundamental in enabling our befrienders to provide company to socially isolated care home residents and to fund the development of our wellbeing activities.

94% of our income comes from grants (48% Restricted and 46% Unrestricted), awarded by Trusts and Foundations. Membership fees, individual donations (including GiftAid) and online Giving Funds, such as, PayPal Giving Fund, also contribute.

During 2023/4 we were supported by the following Trusts and Foundations:

William Butterfield Trust	Souter Charitable Trust
St John's Hospital Trust	Bedfordshire Charitable Trust
Wixamtree Trust	Albert Hunt Trust
Prince of Wales Charitable Fund	Allan Lane Foundation
Gale Family Charity Trust	The Harpur Trust
Marsh Charitable Trust	The House of Industry Estate
Municipal Charities	Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation

During 2023, we also took part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge which raised £2000.

We are also grateful for more recent funding from:

The Connolly Foundation	McCarthy Stone Foundation
Postcode Places Trust	The John Apthorp Charity
National Lottery Awards for All	Care Home Volunteers
Wixamtree Trust	

The income we received during the financial year 2023/24 allowed us to cover the costs of our dedicated part-time staff team, who are instrumental to the delivery of our service.

It has also allowed us to pay for our associated service costs, which includes office accommodation and equipment, publicity, website, volunteer training, DBS checks, resources and travel. These are essential for the every-day running of our service.

The continuation of multi-year grants in 2023/24 enabled our Manager and Activities Lead to continue developing their new roles within the charity. This has allowed FFL to become more robust in its working practices and governance, refine its service delivery and increase its partnership working with local schools, further education colleges and other local services.

To secure longer term sustainable sources of funding and secure our financial future our fundraising strategy includes:

- Submitting applications for larger amounts of multi-year funding.
- Examining how our fundraising can be expanded into other areas of giving.
- Looking at ways in which FFL's profile can be raised further within the local community to allow more people to become aware of our services and hopefully support us with fundraising initiatives.

Challenges

Friends For Life is a small charity which has a big impact on those its supports. Our small, dedicated team work tirelessly to ensure we are able to help as many residents as possible through both our befriending and wellbeing activities, and our volunteers are supported in carrying out their roles.

The tough economic conditions make fundraising hard and also impact the availability of volunteers to support us. However, we were successful in obtaining the required funding for 2023/4 and in obtaining sufficient funding for 2024/5 early in this year.

Currently we have a waiting list of residents requiring a befriender because we have insufficient volunteers to meet this need. We continue to attract and train volunteers because of natural wastage, but with almost 70 volunteers we are at the limit of what our team can manage. We are, therefore, exploring routes to obtain further multiyear funding to cover the costs of a Volunteer Coordinator to work with our volunteer lead, utilising new ways to recruit volunteers, expanding the capacity of our volunteer management capability and enabling a step change in the scale of support we can offer.

Evaluation of our service

We take our need to demonstrate the effectiveness of our service very seriously and to better understand whether they meet the need of the residents we serve we have undertaken 2 surveys of care homes since the last Annual Report.

Initially we focussed on a small number of care homes with our Needs Survey and more recently we issued a more general survey to a broader range of care homes and all our volunteers.

Care home survey

In response to our question about the impact of befriending on residents, 100% of care homes reported that this was either positive or very positive as shown below. 100% of care homes also said that they would recommend our service to other care homes.

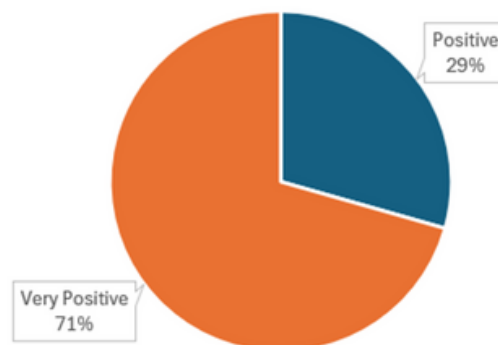
For the homes where we are currently providing wellbeing activities, 100% said they would recommend this service to other care homes. All homes were very keen on FFL working with Tibbs Dementia Foundation and The Place Theatre to enable us to offer "Music for Memory" and

"Timeless Tales" sessions. It is evident from their responses that this type of specialist, tailored intervention is understood to be extremely beneficial to residents but some of the care homes do not have sufficient funding to directly pay for its delivery.

For the first time we enquired about the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents and those for whom English is not a first language. This is to enable us to target appropriate volunteers to support the diverse population of residents in local care homes.

As expected, we confirmed that the proportion of residents with dementia was more than 75% in most care homes and that at least 15-20% of residents are at risk of loneliness and social isolation as they are without family or friends to visit them.

Impact Befriending has on residents



FFL are wonderful! They provide an invaluable service to combat loneliness and spread positivity

FFL is an amazing voluntary service - befrienders make a real difference to the lives of the residents.

All the volunteers that have visited us have been kind, caring and respectful. The residents receiving the visits have been engaged and animated during the visits.

Volunteer survey

It would not be possible to provide a service to residents without our loyal, committed and hardworking volunteers. The purpose of their survey was to establish whether they find working with FFL rewarding and if we provide the training and general help and support, they need in what can be an emotionally challenging role. The survey provided the following information:

- The majority of individuals volunteer to “give back” to the community and help others.
- 84% of the volunteers find that working with FFL and the residents increases their feeling of self-worth.
- 100% find the training provided by FFL helpful or very helpful.
- Most volunteers would recommend volunteering to their friends.



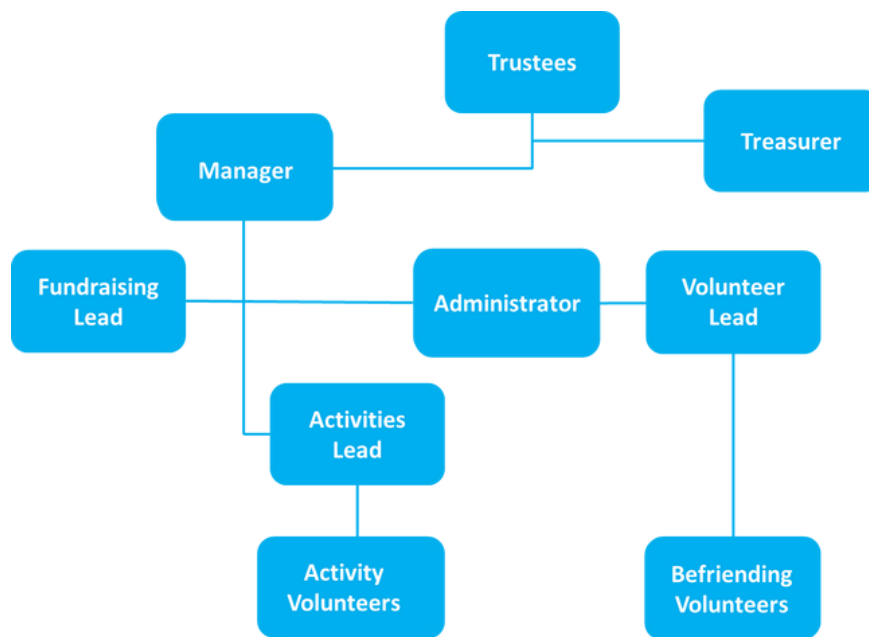
I know this is such an important service for people in residential care and in my experience, it can make a real difference.

There's always support at the end of the phone - it's easy to communicate and find support if needed.

Being able to speak to a knowledgeable staff member about any concerns or issues and knowing that they will respond, support, advise, and take action.

Our people

Organisation



Volunteers

FFL could not function without our volunteers. We continue to grow the number of befriending volunteers and are also recruiting individuals to support our developing wellbeing service. During 2023/24 we recruited and trained 41 new volunteers, but still need more to keep pace with the ever-increasing demand for our services.

It is important to FFL that our volunteers also feel the benefit of working with us. This is an example of feedback we have received from our volunteers:

"Thank you for the amazing work that you do and for providing me with an opportunity to be part of Friends for Life. I have been very fortunate to have been well matched with my residents and built friendships with them that have affected my life as much as made small improvements to theirs." FFL volunteer

Volunteers have fed back that they would appreciate further training beyond the induction training they all take part in. As a result, we recently ran a session on dementia, which was well attended and received. We are planning additional training sessions in the coming year.

Meet Pat and Clare

Resident, Pat, and befriender, Clare, enjoy time together every week. They have kindly agreed to share their befriending story with us.



Pat was referred to Friends for Life by her Care Home. She was matched with trained befriender, Clare, who decided to volunteer with Friends for Life because she befriended two older people who lived alone when she was a teenager, and enjoyed the experience.

Clare visits Pat weekly and Pat is always pleased to see her. They sit and talk in the care home lounge. Pat has a weekly newspaper delivered and they look through it together, whilst enjoying a cup of tea and biscuit.

Pat is happy to share memories of her life with Clare and they look up places of interest on Clare's phone, such as pictures of Dagenham where Pat grew up. They also enjoy completing jigsaw puzzles, whilst chatting. Most of the jigsaws take them just over an hour to complete.

"Clare is so kind and looks for the smaller jigsaws to bring in for me, as she knows they will fit on the table next to my chair." Pat

"Clare's visits mean a lot to Pat. She really values the time they spend together." Manager at Pat's Care Home

Meet Toby



Toby has become a friend of Leroy. He visits Leroy once a week for 30 minutes or so, and they endlessly reminisce about the Bedford of old (driving the younger care staff from Leroy's room). The indulgent nostalgia brings back good memories for Leroy and leaves him feeling cheered at the end of the visit.

"As Leroy gets more chipper, it raises my own spirits, and with each visit I feel that I am making a small, but positive difference to another man's life."

Treasurer

FFL has a very longstanding Treasurer, Mike Elliott, whose contribution to the charity cannot be overstated. He has worked tirelessly for many years preparing accounts, budgets and financial reports as well as ensuring all our returns to the Charity Commission, HMRC etc are fully in order. He also brings to the board significant historical knowledge of FFL's development which is invaluable in our business planning and strategy development.

Staff

We are extremely fortunate to have a dedicated and highly professional part time team to run our operation. This comprises of Manager Gillian Basnet (appointed in July 2024), Activities Lead Beth Parkinson (appointed in August 2024), Volunteer Lead Pauline Carter, Administrator Alison Flashman and Fundraising Lead Kathryn Hughes.

Our thanks are due to them for their diligence, enthusiasm, and loyalty throughout the year.

Meet our fundraising lead



Kathryn Hughes has been our Fundraising Lead since 2014. She is passionate about working for organisations which make a difference to the lives of people living in the local community. She finds a real sense of fulfilment in her fundraising role, helping to support the work of Friends for Life. Prior to working for Friends for Life, Kathryn worked as a Family Worker for Action for Children supporting children aged 0-5 and their families.

Kathryn has a BA (Hons) in Primary Education and, through life circumstances, unexpectedly found her way into fundraising. It turned out to be the perfect job for her!

Outside work Kathryn enjoys crafting, baking, interior design and spending time with her young family.

Meet our manager

Gillie joined Friends for Life as Manager in July this year. She comes to us from a nursing background, having previously worked as a clinical nurse specialist and Matron. After leaving nursing in 2016 she moved to the Dordogne in France and ran her own gite business. Now living in Stewartby, she has spent the last year renovating her home and enjoys making wedding cakes, gardening, and playing with her grandchildren.



Gillie's initial priority has been to grow our volunteer numbers and expand our wellbeing activities, enabling us to interact with more residents in Bedford's care homes.

Trustees

The trustees of FFL oversee the governance and strategic direction of FFL, attending both board and committee meetings. They each bring a unique set of skills and experience to the charity which they apply in hands on voluntary support to the staff team. This support includes stakeholder management, fundraising, HR, financial oversight etc.

Special thanks are due to our outgoing Trustees during this period – Paul Wilson, Dominic Carter, Sarah Walker and Harjinder Singh and we extend a grateful welcome to our new Trustees who are working hard to ensure their excellent work is continued.

Meet our vice chairs



Neil Khandke is married with 3 children and 3 grandchildren. He had a career in Quality Assurance/technical management, working for some of the biggest brands such as Unilever, Cadburys and Dairy Crest, where he led large global teams. Most of his roles have involved driving significant change.

Having had to spend a lot of time away from home during his working life, Neil now enjoys spending time with his grandchildren and on his hobby of photography. He has a guilty pleasure, which is playing PC games! Neil also enjoys building and upgrading PCs with his 2 sons.

Michael Ridley has lived with his family in Bedford for over 20 years. He brings with him 27 years of experience within the civil service, most recently at the Department for Education where his policy responsibilities included governance within the further education sector.

He has previously been a trustee at a local academy trust, and is looking forward to new challenges and opportunities in his role as a trustee with Friends for Life, improving the quality of life for residents in local care homes. Outside of his trustee responsibilities, he enjoys cycling, sailing, and swimming, and is also trying to improve his French.



Partners, supporters and patrons

We are very fortunate to have established excellent relationships with a range of partners and local businesses including:

Tibbs Dementia Foundation

Bedford Academy

The Place Theatre

Older People Partnership Board

National Highways

Queens Park Community Organisation

Bedford School

Bedford College

Biddenham International School

Great Denham Primary School

With these partners we are developing new approaches to reducing loneliness and facilitating intergenerational engagement which is of benefit to both young and old. One example of a very successful partnership is with Bedford College where we have been trialling ways to support the development of students whilst benefiting our elderly residents.

Meet a partner

Nicola Shortland is Head of Department for Care, Childcare, Access and Counselling at Bedford College. She has collaborated with Friends for life on community projects aimed at bringing together young people and the service users that Friends for Life support.

We have had huge success in the projects so far and have plans for the growth of the community project to have a breadth and depth that will positively impact all those involved.



"Terri and team have been supportive and beyond accommodating in helping to shape and mutually drive our vision of engaging our young people with community responsibility and direct involvement. We are excited about where our collaboration will take us and our students in the coming year."

Patrons

We are grateful for the support of our Patrons, the Rt. Rev. Alan Smith the Lord Bishop of St Albans, Rt. Rev. Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford for their support and for highlighting the important work of FFL across the Bedford Deanery and Susan Lousada, the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, for championing our work wherever possible.



Our plans

The staff and trustees of FFL have updated the existing 3-year business plan to create a 5-year plan covering budget forecast, targets and key priorities. This will help us to deliver against our commitments to funders and service users.

We have set ourselves targets for both our befriending and wellbeing activities to extend our reach to more residents at risk of loneliness or social isolation. We are focusing on 7 core areas across our strategic framework to enable the delivery of our business plan.

Advocacy

1. Drive advocacy using FFL research and insights through improved external visibility, engagement and social media activities to recruit volunteers and attract further funding.
2. Further Develop our fundraising strategy to build upon current successes and by focusing on applications from national Trusts and Foundations for multi-year grants which provide certainty and stability for ongoing activities.
3. Continuous improvement of service delivery through monitoring the impact of the work we do to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
 - Regular surveys to seek feedback on service provision from volunteers, care home managers and staff.
 - Volunteer and partner records of their visits using the FFL impact tool.
 - Working with care homes to ensure we capture other input from residents as appropriate (including case studies).

Befriending

4. Extend our one-to-one befriending service, reaching more residents through the recruitment and retention of more volunteers.
5. Develop our volunteering opportunities and standards to cover a broader range of activities.

Governance

6. Further develop our governance and board effectiveness, embedding our five new committees.

Wellbeing activities

7. Further develop our group activities by developing new partnerships with schools, colleges and other organisations to reach more residents through the deployment of a range of activities in care homes.

Targets

Befriending

Our target for 2024/25 is to increase our volunteer numbers by 10% to 77 and to have 67 active befriending partnerships. If we are successful in sourcing funding to recruit a Volunteer Co-ordinator, we plan to increase this target as this role will allow us to manage additional volunteers as well as having an increased focus on marketing and recruitment to find them.

Wellbeing activities

With our developing programme of wellbeing activities we plan to support 300 residents during 2024/25 but hope that this number will be greatly exceeded as our partnerships continue to grow.

Accounts 2023/24

Notes to the Accounts

- 1) Friends for Life Bedfordshire (FFL) is, since 2012, a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors/Trustees and since 2016 also a Registered Charity.
- 2) March 31st is the agreed Year-End of this the twelfth year of the Company's operation. Assets from the Company's forerunner (an Anglican/Methodist joint project) were transferred to the new Company on April 1st 2012.
- 3) The Accounts have been drawn up on an accruals basis. This is a requirement of Companies House and is applied regardless of turnover. SORP FRS 102 guidelines for charities have been applied where appropriate.
- 4) The accounts are examined at the end of each year by an Independent Examiner. Being classed as a 'Small Company' no audit is required (Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006) unless requested by the members. The accounts need to be filed with Companies House by 31st Dec 2024. As our income exceeded £25,000, there is a requirement to also file the accounts with the Charity Commission by January 31st. 2025.
- 5) Accounts were not filed this year with HMRC due to our 3 year exemption. We do not have to file until March 2026; for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 6) The Company's liquid assets are held in an HSBC Business style account which, hitherto, had been free of charges. From 1st Jan 2022, the account has incurred a £5 monthly fee plus charges for handling cheques and cash. An additional savings account, Business Money Manager, is linked to the current account to separately hold the Reserves Fund and any short term surplus. A small amount of interest (currently 1.93%) is paid on this latter account.
- 7) Major office equipment (e.g. furniture, software and computers) are declared as assets on the balance sheet if their value exceeds £250. Depreciation is linear. Smaller resource or training materials are written off in the year of purchase.
- 8) FFL insurance cover is provided by Q Underwriting Services Limited (Aviva Insurance Limited). Our broker is Howden UK Brothers Limited.
- 9) At the start of the year there was some payment to Contracted Staff but the majority of wage costs has gone to our salaried staff. The calculation of the monthly payroll remains in the hands of Haines Watts who in turn use the National Employment and Savings Trust (NEST) for employee pension provision. The actual payment of salaries to the staff, and that due to HMRC, remains the responsibility of FFL.
- 10) Since 2019 an office has been rented in the CVS building at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA. This is also our Registered Office. As a registered charity, which met certain financial criteria, it was exempt from Non-Domestic Rates.
- 11) The Company Directors/Trustees and Treasurer receive no remuneration as result of their office.
- 12) All income was derived through Grants, Donations, Membership Fees and fundraising events.

Michael Elliott

Hon Treasurer – Friends for Life Bedfordshire

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of FFL

For the year ended 31 March 2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of FFL for the year ended 31st March 2024 which are set out in the Notes to the Accounts and which comprise the Balance Sheet, the Income and Expenditure Account, Reserve Account details and the related notes.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under the Charities Act 2011, s.144(2) (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I can confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the financial statements set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Signed:

Name: Ian Farthing



Dated:

11/10/2024

Balance sheet for the year ended 31st March 2024

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis

	2023/24		2022/23	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment, furniture & computers	1,200.06		2,098.90	
Non-tangible Assets				
Cash in hand	53.31		0.00	
HSBC Business Current a/c March 31st	5,719.79		17,643.30	
HSBC Business Money Manager a/c March 31st	31,870.89		26,364.44	
Other Assets	0.00		0.00	
	<u>38,844.05</u>		<u>46,106.64</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	0.00		0.00	
Less: creditors and provisions	(4,460.66)		(395.45)	
		<u><u>34,383.39</u></u>		<u><u>45,711.19</u></u>
Represented by:				
Brought forward from previous year	45,711.19		39,931.04	
Plus: excess of income over expenditure	(11,327.80)		5,780.15	
		<u><u>34,383.39</u></u>		<u><u>45,711.19</u></u>

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st March 2024

	2023/24 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2022/23 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
Income		
Membership Fees (1)	315.00	340.00
Unrestricted Grants (2)	34,336.00	24,450.00
Restricted Grants (2)	35,822.00	28,072.00
Donations (3)	1,391.90	2,916.90
Gift Aid & GASDS	496.00	-
Fundraising Events	187.10	337.29
Interest on Reserve Account	506.45	73.31
Other Income – Big Give	2,151.73	-
Total Incoming Resources	75,206.78	56,189.50
Expenditure		
Contractor Fees	1,983.75	10,641.25
Staff Salaries (net)	57,801.18	24,272.25
Employee Deductions (PAYE, NIC, Pensions)	9,190.31	1,578.26
Employer Costs (Payroll, Pensions, etc) (5)	2,944.11	1,373.63
DBS and Trainer/Welcome costs (6)	1,503.50	937.00
Publicity/Website/IT	3,255.62	913.90
Insurance, HSBC Fees and Other (4)	1,024.30	1,268.67
All Travel	444.45	484.50
Resources and Miscellaneous Expenses (7)	937.84	1,151.42

Office Rent, Phones, Stationery, Postage etc	5,366.99	4,616.17
Non Budget Expenses (9)	438.00	1,829.20
Depreciation of Assets (8)	1,397.84	1,343.10
Cash withdrawals	246.69	0.00
Total Resources Expended	86,534.58	50,409.35
Income less Expenditure	(11,327.80)	5,780.15
	75,206.78	56,189.50

Notes

1. Comprised 13 Individual, 3 Church and 1 Corporate Memberships.
2. i.e. Funds from a Grant making body following an application process
3. Usually from individuals, companies, churches, voluntary groups etc.
4. Includes NCVO and Companies House Fee.
5. Also includes payroll support and recruitment fees.
6. Includes the Trainer salary & costs.
7. Includes - Office equipment, Badges, Volunteer & Trustee expenses.
8. Only one Capitalised item in this FY.
9. Unused grant repayment and BG funds reimbursement.

BMM Account - balance and transfers

for the year ended 31st March 2024

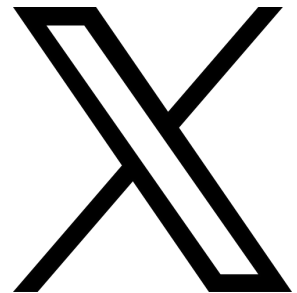
(This account is classed as Designated but Unrestricted)

	2023/24 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2022/23 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
Income		
Net Transfers from General Account (1)	5,000.00	10,000.00
Interest Added (2)	506.45	73.31
Other Income	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	5,506.45	10,073.31
Expenditure		
Net Transfer to General Account	0.00	0.00
Total Resources Expended	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Income less Expenditure	<u>5,506.45</u>	<u>10,073.31</u>
Previous Balance Brought Forward	<u>26,364.44</u>	<u>16,291.13</u>
Total Funds (3)(4)	<u><u>31,870.89</u></u>	<u><u>26,364.44</u></u>

Notes

1. Comprising one long term and two short term transfers.
2. Currently 1.93%
3. Includes designated Reserves (£16,384)
4. Includes temporary funds from the Current account earning interest.

hello@friendsforlife.org.uk



www.friendsforlife.org.uk



Friends for Life
Bedford

Patrons

Susan Lousada – Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire
The Rt. Reverend Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St. Albans
The Rt Reverend Richard Atkinson, OBE, Bishop of Bedford

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS – 2023/24

- 1) Friends for Life Bedfordshire (FFL) is, since 2012, a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors/Trustees and since 2016 also a Registered Charity.
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- 8) FFL insurance cover is provided by Q Underwriting Services Limited (Aviva Insurance Limited). Our broker is Howden UK Brothers Limited.
- 9) At the start of the year there was some payment to Contracted Staff but the majority of wage costs has gone to our salaried staff. The calculation of the monthly payroll remains in the hands of Haines Watts who in turn use the National Employment and Savings Trust (NEST) for employee pension provision. The actual payment of salaries to the staff, and that due to HMRC, remains the responsibility of FFL.
- 10) Since 2019 an office has been rented in the CVS building at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA. This is also our Registered Office. As a registered charity, which met certain financial criteria, it was exempt from Non-Domestic Rates.
- 11) The Company Directors/Trustees and Treasurer receive no remuneration as result of their office.
- 12) All income was derived through Grants, Donations, Membership Fees and fund-raising events.

Michael Elliott
Hon. Treasurer – Friends for Life Bedfordshire.
12-May-2024

FRIENDS FOR LIFE BEDFORDSHIRE (FFL)
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF FFL

For the year ended 31 March 2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of FFL for the year ended 31st March 2024 which are set out in the Notes to the Accounts and which comprise the Balance Sheet, the Income and Expenditure Account, Reserve Account details and the related notes.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under the Charities Act 2011, s.144(2) (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

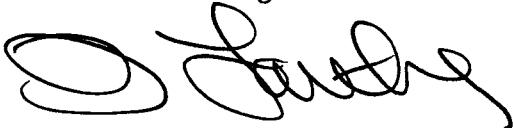
I have completed my examination. I can confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the financial statements set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Signed:

Name: Ian Farthing



Dated:

11-10-24



Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st. March 2024

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2023/24</u>		<u>2022/23</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment	1,200.06		2098.90	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	53.31		0.00	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.	5,719.79		17,643.30	
HSBC Bus.Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	31,870.89		26,364.44	
Other Assets	0.00		0.00	
	<u>38,844.05</u>		<u>46,106.64</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	0.00		0.00	
Less: creditors and provisions	(4,460.66)		(395.45)	
		<u>34,383.39</u>		<u>45,711.19</u>

Represented by:

Brought forward from previous year.	45,711.19		39,931.04	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	(11,327.80)		5,780.15	
		<u>34,383.39</u>		<u>45,711.19</u>

Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31 March 2024 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies

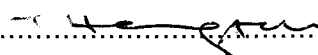
Directors Responsibilities

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provision for small companies under part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by : -

..... 

Theresa Harrington (Chair)

Dated 11-11-24

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Income & Expenditure Account **for the year ended 31st March 2024**

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
	Examined	Examined
	(Accruals Acct.)	(Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Membership Fees (1)	315.00	340.00
Un-Restricted Grants (2)	34,336.00	24,450.00
Restricted Grants (2)	35,822.00	28,072.00
Donations (3)	1,391.90	2,916.90
Gift Aid & GASDS	496.60	-
Fund Raising Events	187.10	337.29
Interest on Reserve Account	506.45	73.31
Other Income - Big Give	2,151.73	-
Total Incoming Resources	<u>75,206.78</u>	<u>56,189.50</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Contractor Fees	1,983.75	10,641.25
Staff Salaries (Net)	57,801.18	24,272.25
Employee deduct's(PAYE,NIC,Pensions)	9,190.31	1,578.26
Employer Costs (Payroll,Pensions,etc.) (5)	2,944.11	1,373.63
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Depreciation of Assets (8)	1,397.84	1,343.10
Cash withdrawals	246.69	0.00
Total Resources Expended	<u>86,534.58</u>	<u>50,409.35</u>
Income less Expenditure	<u>(11,327.80)</u>	<u>5,780.15</u>
	<u>75,206.78</u>	<u>56,189.50</u>

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- 3 Usually from individuals, companies, churches, voluntary groups etc.
- 4 Includes NCVO and Companies House Fee.
- 5 Also includes payroll support and recruitment fees.
- 6 Includes the Trainer salary & costs.
- 7 Includes - Office equipment, Badges, Volunteer & Trustee expenses.
- 8 Only one Capitalised item in this FY.
- 9 Unused grant repayment and BG funds reimbursement.

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



BMM Account - Balance & Transfers **for the year ended 31st March 2024** **(This account is classed as Designated but Unrestricted)**

	2023/24 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2022/23 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Net Transfers from General Acct. (1)	5,000.00	10,000.00
Interest Added (2)	506.45	73.31
Other income.	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	<u>5,506.45</u>	<u>10,073.31</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Net Transfer to General Acct.	0.00	0.00
Total Resources Expended	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Income less Expenditure	5,506.45	10,073.31
Previous Balance Brought Forward	26,364.44	16,291.13
Total Funds (3)(4)	<u>31,870.89</u>	<u>26,364.44</u>

Notes

- 1 Comprising one long term and two short term transfers.
- 2 Currently 1.93%
- 3 Includes designated Reserves (£16,384)
- 4 Includes temporary funds from the Current account earning interest.

FRIENDS FOR LIFE BEDFORDSHIRE (FFL)
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF FFL

For the year ended 31 March 2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of FFL for the year ended 31st March 2024 which are set out in the Notes to the Accounts and which comprise the Balance Sheet, the Income and Expenditure Account, Reserve Account details and the related notes.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under the Charities Act 2011, s.144(2) (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

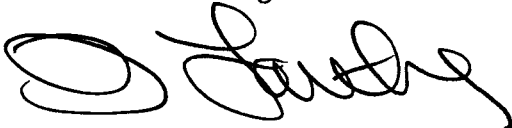
I have completed my examination. I can confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the financial statements set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Signed:

Name: Ian Farthing



Dated:

11-10-24

Accounts



Friends for Life
— Bedford —

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022/23



***Promoting wellbeing and reducing social isolation
for care home residents in Bedford and the
surrounding area***

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General information

Name	Friends for Life Bedfordshire
Registered Charity Number	1165730
Registered Company Number	7951058
Registered Office	43 Bromham Road, Bedford MK40 2AA
Directors (trustees)	Keyur Bhatt, Dominic Carter, Nafiz Hasnat, Terri Harrington (Chair), Sarah Walker (Vice Chair), Helen Wheatley, Paul Wilson
Patrons	Rt Rev Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford, Rt Rev Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans and Susan Lousada, HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire
Independent Examiner	Ian Farthing
Banker	HSBC
Governance and Management	The charity is a company limited by guarantee and registered with the Charity Commission. It is operated under the rules of its memorandum and articles of association dated 18th January 2012. It has no share capital.

Introductions

I am delighted to introduce the 2022/23 Annual Report for Friends for Life Bedfordshire (FFL).

I joined the Board in February 2022 because I could see the urgent need for the charity to expand its service provision and meet the growing need of older residents in care homes in Bedford.

In my early days with FFL I was fortunate to accompany a number of befriending volunteers on their visits to care home residents and I was humbled by their commitment and passion to improve the lives of their "friends". I have been able to speak to managers about the residents who they worry have no friends or families to visit and to better understand how lonely and isolating this can be.

I have seen for myself the power of music and poetry when performed for care home residents. In one session I attended, I noted that one resident did not engage at all until we began to sing a song they clearly knew and not only did they join in but they were able to sing every word. This is why we are so committed to expanding the scope and reach of our outreach activities to bring this way of interacting and enjoyment to residents.

All of our trustees work very hard, contributing their time and expertise to ensure that FFL is fully compliant with all regulations and equipped to continue to grow our service in scope and reach. We have experts in a range of areas including HR, IT, communications, care home management and are served by an excellent and longstanding treasurer.

Overall, it has been a busy and challenging period but I remain confident that FFL provides an essential service and that collectively, those involved are very well placed to continue to develop the scope and reach to help more of those residents in need.

Terri Harrington, Chair



It has been a privilege to join Friends for Life as the General Manager working alongside our team of dedicated volunteers, staff and trustees to address the social isolation and loneliness of residents in Bedford's care homes. The immediate focus, coming into role, was joining with the team and Board of Trustees in an Awayday to set our priorities for addressing this need and agree our Business Plan, which sets the direction of the charity for the next three years. Our energy has been focussed on building and supporting our team of

volunteers; thanks go to our Volunteer Lead who has worked tirelessly to this end.

One of the main objectives during the year has been to embed our new impact tool, and we have seen a significant increase in recorded contacts with residents. Our Administrator has been key in supporting the embedding of the tool and our surveys. Our Interim Fundraising Lead has built on the work of our Fundraising Lead, to secure funding for maintaining our core service. We thank our supporters for allowing us to continue our work.

Our Outreach Worker set the foundations for our group activities and recruiting outreach volunteers. We are now working with local schools to facilitate new partnerships with care homes. We have connections with an increasing number of care homes and thank them for welcoming our volunteers and working with us to develop new activities for residents.

We have engaged in community events to raise awareness and participated in key networks so that our services are developed alongside partners in health and social care. Without our volunteers, we would not be able to provide our services and we give our thanks for their enormous contribution. We look forward to the next year with a clear roadmap for continuous improvement of our services, developing new partnerships and extending our reach to the residents of Bedford's care homes, confident in the value of our service.

Jane Eimermann, General Manager

Our organisation

History

Friends for Life Bedfordshire (FFL) works with socially isolated older residents in care homes (primarily in Bedford Borough), providing friendship and facilitating improved wellbeing. We achieve this through a programme of volunteer one-to-one befriending relationships and an outreach programme that brings volunteers, local schools, community groups and businesses into care homes to engage with residents.

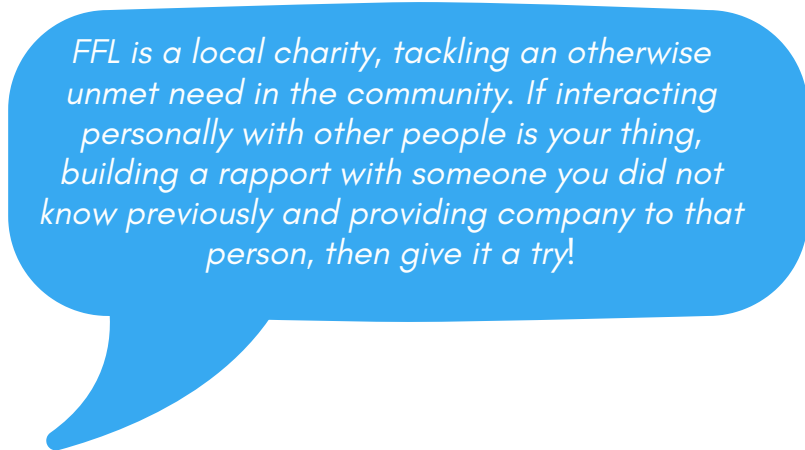
From small beginnings in 2007 as a charitable project organised by local churches, FFL became a limited company in 2012 and a registered charity in 2015.

What is special about Friends for Life?

FFL is well known in Bedford as the provider of a unique and valued service to older residents in care homes. Since its inception in 2007, we have demonstrated resilience and flexibility by adapting our provision as required (particularly when face to face visits were not allowed during Covid) and our more recent development of outreach activities is already being well received.

We are the only befriending service supporting older residents in care homes in Bedfordshire and there are few equivalent services elsewhere in the UK. We have an ever growing team of trained and dedicated volunteers who we match to residents ensuring a tailored and personalised service. We match residents to befrienders as closely as possible by considering background and interests, this supports the building of real friendships which is of mutual benefit to volunteers and residents.

In a recent survey one of our Volunteers summarised this well:



FFL is a local charity, tackling an otherwise unmet need in the community. If interacting personally with other people is your thing, building a rapport with someone you did not know previously and providing company to that person, then give it a try!

The focus and commitment of our volunteers, staff and trustees is recognised and we have an excellent reputation for caring and providing high quality support. In our survey, one of the care home managers said:



FFL are an invaluable service that provide vital services to those within care settings who may not have the opportunity to engage with the outside/local community. The organisers/management team at FFL are so friendly and helpful, they really care about the role they play in enhancing people's lives. ... A huge "thank you" from us all !!

The need for our service

FFL aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness, which are prevalent issues for older people, particularly in care homes. This is supported by research as shown below.

- When considering loneliness in old age the NHS website states: *"Older people are especially vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation – and it can have a serious effect on health, ...it's shockingly easy to be left feeling alone and vulnerable, which can lead to depression and a serious decline in physical health and wellbeing."*
- *"Older people who are frail and living with long term health conditions are particularly at risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness if cut off from social networks and community activities. On the flip side the value of social connection, a sense of purpose and belonging for mental health is immense."* – 'Social isolation, loneliness and the mental health of care home residents – lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic', May 2022, ARC social care researcher Dr Caroline Emmer De Albuquerque Green.
- In their 2021 publication 'Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Older People: Advocacy Brief', the World Health Organisation state: *"Social isolation and loneliness among older people are growing public health and public policy concerns which have been made more salient by the COVID-19 pandemic."*
- A 2021 article in the British Medical Journal concluded: *"The prevalence of severe loneliness among older people living in care homes is at least double that of community-dwelling populations: 22%–42% for the care population compared with 10% for the community population"*. It goes on to say, *"But the evidence highlighting this issue is limited and a neglected area of research"*.

Increase in need

The number of residents in need of our services is growing. Age UK estimates that the number of older people who often experience loneliness will increase to two million by 2026 (All the Lonely People – Loneliness in Later Life – 2018)

To better understand the extent of the problem locally, in 2021 FFL undertook a survey of the care homes we support. This suggested that 1 in 3 of their residents have few or no visitors and, consequently are at significant risk of being lonely and/or feeling socially isolated. This ties in with the British Medical Journal research outlined above and the findings from a Freedom of Information request to Bedford Borough Council which stated that there are 1600 residents aged 65+ in local Care Homes of which 465 are deemed to be in need.

The residents we target for support include those who have no family, have family living a long way away or, have family who do not visit them. Their hearing and/or sight may be less than perfect and some will be on the pathway to, or suffering from, dementia. The increase in care services to enable people to stay in their own homes as they grow older means that the residential care sector is increasingly coping with those who have higher support needs at a time when recruitment is difficult and staff turnover is notoriously high. Care homes are busy places, staff may have limited time to sit, listen and engage with residents, which is where we come in.

Our mission

FFL recognises the negative impact loneliness has on a person's wellbeing and the harm isolation can cause to physical and mental wellbeing. We work to alleviate this through our mission which states:

Friends for Life works in partnership with care homes in Bedford providing ongoing friendship and improving the wellbeing of otherwise socially isolated residents.

Our strategic aims

The Board and staff of FFL have spent time considering our strategic aims as we move towards expanding the scope and reach of our service provision.

To highlight the issue of **social isolation** and **collaborate** with care homes, partners, community groups etc to reduce the disconnect between older residents in care homes and the community.

To be **inclusive** in delivering befriending to all socially isolated care home residents in Bedford (referred to us) to decrease their isolation, provide intellectual stimulation, broaden their social circle and enhance their wellbeing.

To recruit and maintain a **diverse and dedicated** team of volunteers who are trained and matched with individual residents to meet their individual needs to enrich their level of social interaction and increase their contact with the community.

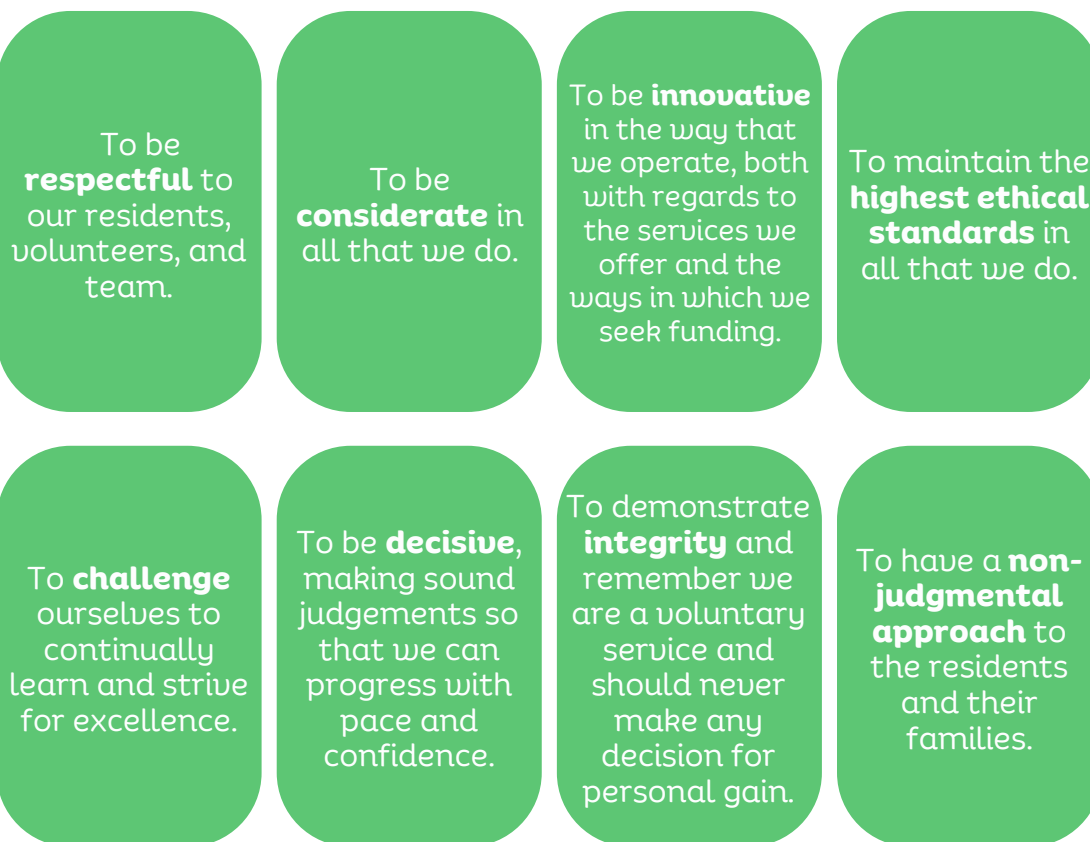
To **promote and support** additional services and activities through **partnerships** with schools, colleges and businesses, through sponsorships of events, donations of resources and materials to augment activities and cultural experiences for residents within care homes.

To **continuously improve our services**, whilst ensuring they are fully compliant with the latest regulations.

To provide our volunteers, staff and trustees with ongoing **learning opportunities** and maintain a high level of **communication** across our community to promote engagement and provide ongoing support.

Our values

Staff and trustees have also developed a set of values which underpin the delivery of our service:



Challenges

It is a tough time for everyone in the charity sector given the high cost of living, limited funding for multiple important causes and everyone's increasingly busy lives.

FFL is competing against other important causes (both locally and nationally) for funding and directly demonstrating the positive impact of our service is complicated by a high proportion of our recipients having cognitive challenges. Consequently, it may not be possible to ask many of them directly how valuable the support we provide to them is and must rely on feedback from others to demonstrate this.

Demonstrating impact is essential to be successful in bidding for grants so we have been working hard to find ways to show why our service is so important. We have been extremely fortunate in receiving several grants to support expansion of our service.

Our target population are older residents, sometimes close to end of life. Strong friendships form between our volunteers and the residents they befriend and following the inevitable passing of residents, there is a direct and lasting impact on the volunteers. Our volunteer numbers also vary as often a sabbatical (or time out) is needed before the befriender of a resident who has died is ready to offer friendship to someone new.

We plan to expand our service as currently we are only able to befriend around 1 in 4 of the estimated number of residents who would benefit from befriending. To support an increased number of residents we need to recruit, train, match and support an increasing number of volunteers and this requires additional staff resource which in turn requires additional funding.

Service provision

We provide the following suite of services.

Providing one-to-one befrienders

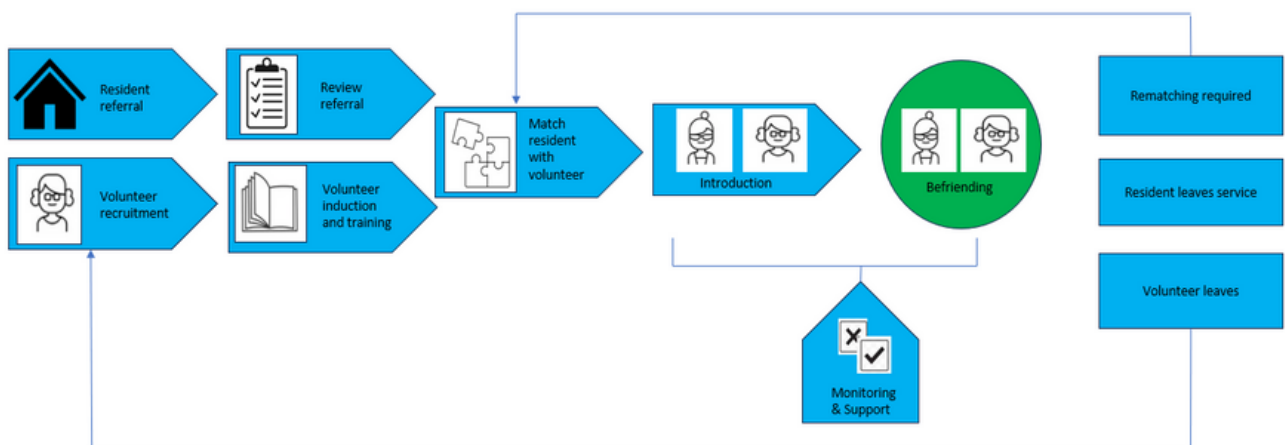
We **recruit and train** volunteers to offer friendship and company to residents who would otherwise have no or few visitors.

We **match** volunteers to residents by considering their backgrounds, interests, health conditions etc – this is essential to encourage close friendships to develop.

We **develop** and maintain a close relationship with care home managers who identify residents at risk of loneliness and provide us with ongoing guidance, support and feedback on the friendships we provide.

We have **comprehensive insurance** to cover our volunteers during their visits and to allow residents to be taken on short trips outside of the homes where appropriate.

We **support** our volunteers with ongoing training, support, social interaction and by encouraging the development of a strong network. Our coffee mornings, Christmas and Summer parties and training events are all very well attended.



Outreach provision

- Following the successful outreach activity of providing “robopets” and supplying craft materials to care homes, new partnerships with care homes have emerged. For example, we supported the Place Theatre in the provision of “Timeless Tales”.
- Provision of group wellbeing activities: Some care homes are fortunate to have space and resource to organise a programme of activities. Others do not have the resources (staff or money) to invest so our outreach service is even more crucial.



- FFL outreach volunteers: we recruit and train outreach volunteers to undertake activities with residents which could include activities such as music (instruments and singing), spoken entertainment (poetry and literature readings).
- Working in partnership: we link up with local businesses to tap into their “corporate volunteering”. We facilitate partnerships and connections between schools, colleges and care homes.
- Pilots: we pilot new activities and partnerships in response to the need identified by care homes.

Evaluating our service

The staff and trustees of FFL understand the importance of assessing the value of the service we provide. This is particularly important in support of our grant applications.

The Mercers Co. produced a report in 2021 entitled “Understanding Befriending – A Study of Befriending Schemes for Older People”. This concludes that organisations involved in befriending for older people should be confident in the value of the befriending relationship in and of itself and make this the focus of their work. The report found that befriending makes those involved feel better by providing a meaningful and ongoing personal relationship. This was backed up in our recent survey when, for example, one of our care home managers said:

“The service offers the elderly some comfort and meaningful relationships and is a wonderful organisation”. Care home manager

The report also concluded that evidence remains limited about the significance of the impact on loneliness, in part because of the time limited nature of the befriending relationships. It also emphasises the use of case studies and feedback from those involved to capture the beneficial impact of befriending.

To start to address this lack of evidence, FFL staff and trustees have been working collaboratively with an academic from the University of Manchester and a benefits expert to develop a view of the areas where we want our service to have the most impact. These are:

- **Promoting wellbeing** – this is the essence of the service we provide – encouraging increased social interaction with residents to improve the wellbeing of both residents and volunteers.
- **Promoting social responsibility** – our team of volunteers which includes, befrienders, outreach volunteers, trustees, and others (for instance a volunteer supports our social media) all demonstrate a high level of social responsibility through their work with FFL.
- **Credible delivery** – FFL is a professional “not for profit” organisation that must demonstrate the need for and positive impact of our services as well as ensuring we have all the necessary policies and procedures in place to support our staff and volunteers.

To begin to demonstrate our impact in these areas we have introduced several ways of assessing our service provision:

Impact Tool

FFL introduced a phone-based impact tool in October 2022 to record befriender visits and enable us to understand how often each resident received a visit and the extent of their engagement with the volunteer during the visit.

The tool records basic information such as date, time, participants' names but also asks the volunteer to record, using our "smiley face" scale of 1-5, how the resident appears to be feeling at the start and end of the visit. We are then able to establish the number of residents who appear to be happier at the end of the visit and their level of engagement.

Given some of the residents who have befrienders have some type of cognitive impairment, it may not be possible to ask them whether they enjoy their visits and whether it makes a difference to their wellbeing.

A similar approach is used in some care homes to assess how their residents are feeling and use of the Impact Tool allows us to see if the visits have a positive impact. There is also a narrative box which allows the volunteers to record how the visit went.

We analyse data from the tool to identify trends in numbers of Volunteers who are active, frequency of visits as well as whether the visits appear to be having a positive impact.

We provide a monthly summary of the percentage of residents who appear to be happier at the end of their visits which is consistently higher than 50%. When considering some of the residents are very happy to see the volunteer when they arrive this is an excellent indication of the value of the visits.

The monthly report also records the extent of engagement by residents which can vary due to individual circumstances and the health conditions of the residents. In the majority of cases, however, the residents are recorded as being actively involved in conversation.

Surveys

To demonstrate the positive impact of our service provision, FFL worked with an expert in assessing benefits and an academic from the University of Manchester to develop and implement a survey of volunteers, care home managers, staff, and trustees. Careful consideration was given to whether to ask residents to complete the survey as well (where they were able) but it was decided that this wouldn't be appropriate for ethical reasons.

The first survey took place in May 2023. We plan to repeat every six months to map our progress over time. We had a reasonable take up of the first survey and learned a great deal from the process about which questions worked best and how to adapt in the future to better derive the information needed to continue to improve the service.

The screenshot shows a digital form titled "Friends for Life Befriending service" with the subtitle "reaching care home residents in Bedfordshire". Below the title is a section for "Befriending Visit Record" with the instruction "Please fill out this form whenever you make a visit to your resident". The form includes a "smiley face" scale from 1 to 5, represented by five colored circles: 1 (red, sad), 2 (red, neutral), 3 (orange, neutral), 4 (green, happy), and 5 (green, very happy). Below the scale are two questions: "Please record how your resident was feeling at the beginning of your meet using the smiley face tool" and "Please record how your resident was feeling at the end of your session using the smiley face tool", each followed by radio button options 1 through 5. At the bottom, there is a question "Tell us about the engagement with your resident today. Were they..." with three radio button options: "Actively involved - conversing", "Quiet - listening but not necessarily engaging", and "No engagement".

The survey responses clearly show that we are having a beneficial impact on residents and volunteers, with over 70% of volunteers experiencing a slight or significant increase in their wellbeing because of their visits.

"I think I get as much out of this as the lady I visit". FFL volunteer

"Volunteering will make you feel like you are making a contribution to society and brings a little joy to the person you visit!" FFL volunteer

All care home managers agreed that one-to-one befriending has a positive impact on their residents.

"Our involvement with FFL has had a very positive impact with many of our residents. We hope to continue working with FFL in the future". Care home manager

A large proportion of our volunteers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied and no one is dissatisfied with the support provided by the FFL team. The support individuals found most useful varies, but includes the coffee mornings, training sessions, talking to other befrienders and the help available from the FFL team whenever needed.

"I enjoy being part of the organisation. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have the necessary training which has been very helpful to develop my role as a befriender. I enjoy the autonomy, managing my own time, and space to be creative. Thank you to the kind, friendly staff for their support." FFL volunteer

Most volunteers also said they would recommend volunteering for FFL to others. When we asked them why they volunteered we have a range of responses including:

"For me, after retirement, volunteering gave me a purpose coincident with helping society at large." FFL volunteer

"Just to say thank you to everyone who set up and maintains the charity, as this enables people (like me) to do the Befriending in a safe and supported way." FFL volunteer

We are very pleased with the output from our first survey and the suggestions which we will use to continue to improve our service. This will help us as we continue to expand our scope and provision.

Funding

FFL is wholly reliant on the financial support we receive from a variety of sources, without which we would be unable to offer our services. We are very grateful for all grants and donations received and make sure 100% of these are used to support as many residents as possible.

Most of our funds are used to pay for our small, part-time, highly trained and resilient core staff team who are responsible for identifying volunteers, vetting and training them and matching them with the residents who need support. We also have a fundraising lead to ensure we attract the money required to pay for our service. Most people involved with FFL are volunteers and receive no payment for their time. We also need funding for the associated costs such as office accommodation, as well as room bookings for training, staff and trustee meetings.

FFL operates a professional service which ensures all required checks and balances are in place to protect both the residents and volunteers. Safeguarding is of primary importance when providing services to vulnerable individuals and it is our staff team who ensures everyone involved understands their responsibilities and has the support they need when potential issues arise.

During the year we have been grateful for grants and donations from a range of sources including:



We also received gifts from individuals, groups and “members” of FFL, as well as local churches, care homes, and businesses.

All these generous donations represent a pattern of support that goes back to our formation in 2007 and remain essential.

Of particular note during 2022/23 was the receipt of a grant of £64,000 from The Harpur Trust to fund the post of General Manager for 3 years, the receipt of £25,000 from the House of Industry (Bedford Borough Council) to fund an Outreach Worker for 2 years and £30,000 from the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation to support our ongoing work.

These grants have enabled us to increase our staff provision and, as demonstrated in the data in this report, begin a shift change in the number of residents we are able to support through befriending and outreach activities.

The Big Give

For the first time this year, we’re taking part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge, the UK’s biggest match funding campaign.



We have already been successful in attracting pledges (promises of funds) and champion funding status, and will be seeking online donations from our supporters and the wider public when the campaign goes ‘live’ at the end of November.

Our people

Volunteers

FFL could not function without our volunteers. At the start of the period, we had only befriending volunteers, but we have now begun to attract others to support us in a range of roles, including outreach activity and developing our social media content. This has been essential to help FFL grow and expand our service provision.

We have feedback on how volunteering benefits not only our residents but the volunteers themselves.

"What do I bring...? 1 hour a week where she can express her feelings freely, we can have a chat and a laugh, including sharing recipes with me in the hope that one day I might be a good cook! What do I get from the visits? A good laugh, fabulous recipes and tips and just a feeling of doing some good in life. Loneliness is the scourge of the 21st Century and we must invest and make time to ensure people are given hope." FFL volunteer

We are increasingly attracting younger volunteers (<25 years old) to support our more mature team and are delighted that they are starting to develop their own network to provide friendship and support to each other.

Ann and Leslie's friendship

"I look forward to seeing Lesley, our friendship has grown and is very strong. She doesn't have any other visitors and I know how much she looks forward to our time together. When she laughs or holds my hand or tells me I'm her best friend and she loves me, I feel I'm making such a huge, positive influence to her day and I wish more lonely people could have the same."



Meet Richard



Richard is semi retired, still working part time and also volunteers as a mentor in local schools. His volunteering takes up 4-5 hours each week.

"My visits to the care home for FFL gives me a good feeling of selflessness and I feel worthy about what I do there...it just gives me a 'warm glow' to know that I'm 'giving back' and making a difference to someone else's life through a very small sacrifice of my time. I feel very strongly that my visits have a positive effect on my friend's emotional well-being...a sort of calm contentedness, which will endure much longer than the memory of the visit."

Staff

We are extremely fortunate to have a dedicated and highly professional part time team, who run our operation. This comprises of a General Manager Jane Eimermann (appointed in January 2023), a Volunteer Lead Pauline Carter, Administrator Alison Flashman and Fundraising Lead Kathryn Hughes.

Our thanks are due to them for their diligence, enthusiasm, and loyalty throughout the year. We particularly want to thank an outgoing member of the team, Charlie Fay, who was instrumental in providing our marketing and communication support and in beginning the work which is now part of our Outreach activity. We thank our Outreach Worker Alice Jennings (who supported out outreach activities between February and June 2023).

During the period, our Fundraising Lead took maternity leave and was temporarily replaced by George Ruston who not only kept the essential work going but also identified new and different approaches to raising the funds we require to maintain our business. Our thanks to him for his commitment and hard work.

Meet our Volunteer Lead



Pauline Carter has been our Volunteer Lead since 2017. She has a professional background which includes 35 years as a qualified nurse, where she worked the majority of her career in district nursing and palliative care at St John's Hospice, Moggerhanger.

At the hospice, Pauline worked first as a nurse, and later as practice educator, providing both generic and specialist training for internal and external healthcare. She also gained significant experience of working with, and training, volunteers.

She has degrees in both Psychology and Community Nursing, as well as a PGCE, qualifying her as a teacher. Her community nursing roles brought her into close contact with local care homes and their residents, many of whom were socially isolated. For the past 5 years she has also been a Samaritan's Listening Volunteer, which has given her considerable experience and training in supporting and befriending the lonely, sad and marginalised. Pauline has been able to bring many transferable skills and experiences into her FFL role to ensure her current volunteers are well trained, supported and valued for their vital work.

Trustees

The trustees of FFL are also volunteers and those who have been in post since April 2022 have had to spend a great deal of their personal time introducing a broad range of changes so FFL was able to begin the process of expanding the scope and breadth of our service provision.

Until the appointment of the General Manager, Trustees directly oversaw the day-to-day operation of FFL as well as introducing a new payroll and pensions scheme for staff, moving FFL onto a more sustainable IT system, developing, and implementing new policies and procedures and engaging with a broad range of third parties to support fundraising.

Special thanks are due to our outgoing Trustees during this period – Frances Parry, Ray Reed and Ken Barber and we extend a grateful welcome to our new Trustees who are working hard to ensure their excellent work is continued. We would also like to thank Mike Elliott, our Treasurer who has been with FFL for many years and who manages our finances with efficiency and rigour.

Meet a trustee

Sarah Walker is one of our Trustees and has a background in communications, engagement and media and public relations. She brings this expertise to the Board where she's served for 18 months, and now fulfils the role of Vice Chair.

Living locally, she has been keen to improve FFL's image and reputation with stakeholders, develop the fundraising support and promote the charity's activities on new social media channels.



Partners and Patrons

We are fortunate to have established relationships with a range of local businesses, schools and other organisations and thank them for working with us and with care homes in Bedford.

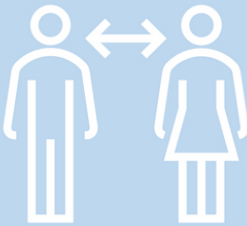
We are grateful to our local MP, Mohammad Yasin who joined FFL volunteers, trustees and staff on a visit to Southway care home in April 23.



We are also grateful to our existing patrons (Rt Rev Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford and Rt Rev Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans) for their continuing support and to Susan Lousada the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, who has kindly agreed to give her support as one of our patrons.



Friends for Life in 2022/23

8 induction (Welcome) days		53 residents were matched with volunteers	
<i>"It has improved my confidence learning about the care home system and communicating with residents using an empathetic approach"</i>	22 new volunteers trained	<i>"Our friendship has grown and is very strong. She doesn't have any visitors and I know how much she looks forward to our visits"</i>	There were 345 contacts between residents and volunteers
41 residents were referred to FFL		We hosted volunteer coffee mornings, held a Christmas Party and a social/training event	
<i>"FFL can hugely enhance the lives of people through their befriending and support"</i>	We visited residents in 24 care homes and 2 sheltered housing complexes	<i>"we complete jigsaws, play noughts and crosses...and our favourite activity is to bake together"</i>	75% of residents were observed to be actively engaged in visits



Our plans

The staff and trustees of FFL have been working together to develop a Business Plan which sets out our ambitions for the next 3 years. This is to underpin our commitment to expanding the reach of our service as far as possible.

In this plan we set challenging targets for increasing the number of befriending volunteers and the residents they are able to support, extending the scope of the outreach services we are piloting and developing a broader range of volunteering opportunities to make these as inclusive as possible. We also want to increase the number of care homes to which we provide services as we currently support only half of those in Bedford Borough with older residents.

We are continuing with our work to understand the impact of the work we do and making our evaluation more meaningful. We will be conducting a "survey of need" with care homes to better understand how we can target our resources as effectively as possible. We will also be working with researchers to add to the literature in relevant topics such as the impact of befriending on loneliness and social isolation. This will enable FFL to demonstrate the need for our service and help others to better understand this.

We are working very hard to identify and target new funders to ensure we can continue to grow our staff team to support the increasing numbers of volunteers and residents.

Our Business Plan is challenging and ambitious but underpins our commitment to continuing to expand the scope and reach of our crucial service and enable us to fulfil our mission.

Summary

Since the 2021/22 Annual Report, FFL has continued its post-pandemic recovery, grown and improved its service and further strengthened its fundraising, and governance.

Like all charities, it's been a challenging couple of years for FFL, for the care homes, and older residents we serve. This report demonstrates the progress we have made in increasing both our staff team and the scope of the fully safeguarded service we provide. The evaluation work we've carried out, the improved governance, and rigorous work on policies and procedures are further evidence of an increasingly robust approach.

With the ongoing support of our funders, we are confident we can continue our journey to help reduce loneliness and social isolation for older residents in Bedford's Care Homes.

Accounts 2022/23

Notes to the Accounts – 2022/23

- 1) Friends for Life Bedfordshire is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors/Trustees and is also a Registered Charity.
- 2) March 31st is the agreed Year-End of this the eleventh year of the Company's operation. Assets from the Company's forerunner (an Anglican/Methodist joint project) were transferred to the new Company on April 1st 2012.
- 3) The Accounts have been drawn up on an Accruals basis. This is a requirement of Companies House and is applied regardless of turnover.
- 4) The accounts are examined at the end of each year by an Independent Examiner. Being classed as a 'Small Company' no audit is required (Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006) unless requested by the members. The accounts need to be filed with Companies House by 31st December 2023. As our income exceeded £25,000, there is a requirement to also file the accounts with the Charity Commission by January 31st 2024.
- 5) Accounts were filed this year with HMRC, our 3 year exemption having terminated. We now have a further 3 year exemption and do not have to file until March 2026; for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 6) The Company's liquid assets are held in an HSBC Business style account which, hitherto, had been free of charges. The account now incurs a £5 monthly fee as of 1st Jan2022. An additional savings account is linked to the current account to separately hold the Reserves Fund and any short term surplus. A small amount of interest (currently 1.5%) is paid on this latter account.
- 7) Major office equipment (e.g. furniture, software and computers) are declared as assets on the balance sheet if their value exceeds £250. Depreciation is linear. Smaller resource or training materials are written off in the year of purchase.
- 8) As a result of discussions with our broker FFL insurance cover was put into the hands of Q Underwriting Services Limited (Aviva Insurance Limited).
- 9) During the year most contract staff opted to transfer to employee status. The calculation of the monthly payroll was put in the hands of Haines Watts who in turn use the National Employment and Savings Trust (NEST) for employee pension provision. Some support work is still bought-in on a contract basis.
- 10) Since 2019 an office has been rented in the CVS building at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA. This is also our Registered Office.
- 11) The Company Directors/Trustees and Treasurer receive no remuneration as result of their office.
- 12) All income was derived through grants, donations, membership fees and fund-raising events.

Michael Elliott
Hon Treasurer – Friends for Life Bedfordshire

Balance sheet for the year ended 31st March 2023

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis

	2022/23		2021/22	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment, furniture & computers	2,098.90		3,442.00	
Non-tangible Assets	0.00		0.00	
Cash in hand	17,643.30		23,032.14	
HSBC Business Current a/c March 31st	26,364.44		16,291.13	
HSBC Business Money Manager a/c March 31st	0.00		0.00	
	<u>46,106.64</u>		<u>42,765.27</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	-			
Less: creditors and provisions	(395.45)		(2,834.23)	
		<u>45,711.19</u>		<u>39,931.04</u>
		<u><u>45,711.19</u></u>		<u><u>39,931.04</u></u>
Represented by:				
Brought forward from previous year	39,931.04		34,562.69	
Plus: excess of income over expenditure	5,780.15		5,368.35	
		<u>45,711.19</u>		<u>39,931.04</u>
		<u><u>45,711.19</u></u>		<u><u>39,931.04</u></u>

Income and expenditure account

for the year ended 31st March 2023

	2022/23 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2021/22 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
Income		
Membership Fees	340.00	295.00
Unrestricted Grants	24,450.00	41,000.00
Restricted Grants	28,072.00	10,200.00
Donations	2,916.90	5,239.64
Fundraising Events	337.29	400.00
Interest on Reserve Account	73.31	1.85
Other Income	-	-
Total Incoming Resources	56,189.50	57,136.49
Expenditure		
Contractor Fees	10,641.25	27,435.00
Staff Salaries	24,272.25	-
Employee Deductions (PAYE, NIC, Pensions)	1,578.26	-
Employer Costs (PAYE, NEST etc)	1,373.63	-
DBS and Trainer/Welcome costs	937.00	898.53
Publicity and Website	913.90	906.81
Insurance, HSBC Fees and Database	1,268.67	1,090.71
All Travel	484.50	160.45
Resources and Miscellaneous Expenses	1,151.42	686.52
Office Rent, Phones, Stationery, Postage etc	4,616.17	4,573.95
Non Budget Expenses	1,829.20	15,447.07
Total Resources Expended	50,409.35	51,768.14
Income less Expenditure	5,780.15	5,368.35
	56,189.50	57,136.49

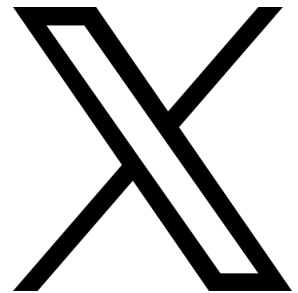
Reserve account - balance and transfers

for the year ended 31st March 2023

(This account is classed as Designated but Unrestricted)

	2022/23 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2021/22 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
Income		
Transfers from General Account	10,000.00	-
Interest Added	73.31	1.85
Other Income	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	10,073.31	1.85
Expenditure		
Transfer to General Account	0.00	0.00
Total Resources Expended	0.00	0.00
Income less Expenditure	10,073.31	1.85
Previous Balance Brought Forward	16,291.13	16,289.28
Total Reserves	26,364.44	16,291.13

hello@friendsforlife.org.uk



www.friendsforlife.org.uk



Friends for Life
Bedford

Patrons

The Rt. Reverend Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St. Albans
The Rt Reverend Richard Atkinson, OBE, Bishop of Bedford

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS – 2022/23

- 1) Friends for Life Bedfordshire is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors/Trustees and is also a Registered Charity.
- 2) March 31st is the agreed Year-End of this the eleventh year of the Company's operation. Assets from the Company's forerunner (an Anglican/Methodist joint project) were transferred to the new Company on April 1st 2012
- 3) The Accounts have been drawn up on an Accruals basis. This is a requirement of Companies House and is applied regardless of turnover.
- 4) The accounts are examined at the end of each year by an Independent Examiner. Being classed as a 'Small Company' no audit is required (Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006) unless requested by the members. The accounts need to be filed with Companies House by 31st.Dec 2023. As our income exceeded £25,000 there is a requirement to also file the accounts with the Charity Commission by January 31st. 2024.
- 5) Accounts were filed this year with HMRC, our 3 year exemption having terminated. We now have a further 3 year exemption and do not have to file until March 2026; for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 6) The Company's liquid assets are held in an HSBC Business style account which, hitherto, had been free of charges. The account now incurs a £5 monthly fee as of 1st Jan2022. An additional savings account is linked to the current account to separately hold the Reserves Fund and any short term surplus. A small amount of interest (currently 1.5%) is paid on this latter account.
- 7) Major office equipment (e.g. furniture, software and computers) are declared as assets on the balance sheet if their value exceeds £250. Depreciation is linear. Smaller resource or training materials are written off in the year of purchase.
- 8) As a result of discussions with our broker FFL insurance cover was put into the hands of Q Underwriting Services Limited (Aviva Insurance Limited).
- 9) During the year most Contract Staff opted to transfer to employee status. The calculation of the monthly payroll was put in the hands of Haines Watts who in turn use the National Employment and Savings Trust (NEST) for employee pension provision. Some support work is still bought-in on a contract basis.
- 10) Since 2019 an office has been rented in the CVS building at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA. This is also our Registered Office.
- 11) The Company Directors/Trustees and Treasurer receive no remuneration as result of their office.
- 12) All income was derived through Grants, Donations, Membership Fees and fund-raising events.

Michael Elliott
Hon. Treasurer – Friends for Life Bedfordshire.



Friends for Life

Balance Sheet **for the year ended 31st. March 2023**

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2022/23</u>		<u>2021/22</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment, furniture & Computers	2,098.90		3,442.00	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	0.00		0.00	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.	17,643.30		23,032.14	
HSBC Bus.Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	26,364.44		16,291.13	
Other Assets	0.00		0.00	
	<u>46,106.64</u>		<u>42,765.27</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	-			
Less: creditors and provisions	(395.45)		(2,834.23)	
	<u>45,711.19</u>		<u>39,931.04</u>	

Represented by:

Brought forward from previous year.	39,931.04		34,562.69	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	5,780.15		5,368.35	
	<u>45,711.19</u>		<u>39,931.04</u>	

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the books of the Company and agree that the Income and Expenditure Account for the year and the Balance Sheet presented above give a true and fair representation of the financial position.

Signed 

Mr. Ian Farthing

Dated 13/9/23



Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st. March 2023

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2022/23</u>		<u>2021/22</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment	2,098.90		3442.00	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	0.00		0.00	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.	17,643.30		23,032.14	
HSBC Bus.Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	26,364.44		16,291.13	
Other Assets	0.00		0.00	
	<u>46,106.64</u>		<u>42,765.27</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	0.00		0.00	
Less: creditors and provisions	(395.45)		(2,834.23)	
	<u>45,711.19</u>		<u>39,931.04</u>	
Represented by:				
Brought forward from previous year.	39,931.04		34,562.69	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	5,780.15		5,368.35	
	<u>45,711.19</u>		<u>39,931.04</u>	

Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31 March 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies

Directors Responsibilities

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provision for small companies under part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)

The accounts were approved by the directors and authorised for issue at the AGM on 29th November 2023 and were signed on their behalf by :-

Signed T Houghton Date 29/11/23

(Chair of Trustees)

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Income & Expenditure Account **for the year ended 31st March 2023**

	2022/23 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2021/22 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Membership Fees (1)	340.00	295.00
Un-Restricted Grants (2)	24,450.00	41,000.00
Restricted Grants (2)	28,072.00	10,200.00
Donations (3)	2,916.90	5,239.64
Fund Raising Events (4)	337.29	400.00
Interest on Reserve Account	73.31	1.85
Other Income (5)	-	-
Total Incoming Resources	<u>56,189.50</u>	<u>57,136.49</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Contractor Fees	10,641.25	27,435.00
Staff Salaries	24,272.25	-
Employee deduct's(PAYE,NIC,Pensions)	1,578.26	-
Employer Costs (PAYE,NEST,etc.) (5)	1,373.63	-
DBS & Trainer/Welcome costs(6)	937.00	898.53
Publicity & Website	913.90	906.81
Insurance, HSBC Fees & Database	1,268.67	1,090.71
All Travel	484.50	160.45
Resources & Misc. Expenses (7)(8)	1,151.42	686.52
Office Rent, Phones, Stationery, Postage etc.	4,616.17	4,573.95
Non-Budget Expenses (9)	1,829.20	15,447.07
Depreciation of Assets	1,343.10	569.10
Total Resources Expended	<u>50,409.35</u>	<u>51,768.14</u>
Income less Expenditure	<u>5,780.15</u>	<u>5,368.35</u>
	<u>56,189.50</u>	<u>57,136.49</u>

Notes

- 1 Comprised 12 Individual, 5 Church and 1 Corporate Memberships.
- 2 i.e.Funds from a Grant making body following an application process
- 3 Usually from individuals, companies, churches, voluntary groups etc.
- 4 FFL Support to Respite Home Training (2021/22)
- 5 Also includes payroll support and recruitment fees.
- 6 Includes the Trainer salary & costs.
- 7 Includes - Office equipment, Badges, Volunteer & Trustee expenses and NCVO fees.
- 8 There were no Capitalised items in this FY.
- 9 Grant repayment.

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Reserve Account - Balance & Transfers **for the year ended 31st March 2023** **(This account is classed as Designated but Unrestricted)**

	2022/23 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2021/22 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Transfers from General Acct. (1)	10,000.00	-
Interest Added (2)	73.31	1.85
Other income.	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	<u>10,073.31</u>	<u>1.85</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Transfer to General Acct.	0.00	0.00
Total Resources Expended	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Income less Expenditure	10,073.31	1.85
Previous Balance Brought Forward	16,291.13	16,289.28
Total Reserves (3)(4)	<u>26,364.44</u>	<u>16,291.13</u>

Notes

- 1 Only one transfer made this FY.
- 2 Currently 1.50%
- 3 Current Reserves Policy is to hold 3mths expenditure or at least £10k.
- 4 Includes temporary funds from current account earning interest.



Friends for Life

Balance Sheet **for the year ended 31st. March 2023**

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2022/23</u>		<u>2021/22</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment, furniture & Computers	2,098.90		3,442.00	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	0.00		0.00	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.	17,643.30		23,032.14	
HSBC Bus.Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	26,364.44		16,291.13	
Other Assets	0.00		0.00	
	<u>46,106.64</u>		<u>42,765.27</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	-			
Less: creditors and provisions	(395.45)		(2,834.23)	
	<u>45,711.19</u>		<u>39,931.04</u>	

Represented by:

Brought forward from previous year.	39,931.04		34,562.69	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	5,780.15		5,368.35	
	<u>45,711.19</u>		<u>39,931.04</u>	

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the books of the Company and agree that the Income and Expenditure Account for the year and the Balance Sheet presented above give a true and fair representation of the financial position.

Signed 

Mr. Ian Farthing

Dated 13/9/23

Accounts



Friends for Life
— Bedford —

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2021/2022



*Promoting wellbeing and reducing social isolation
for care home residents in Bedford
and the surrounding area*

"It's such a joy to see the interaction of residents once they can connect with something they remember or something they enjoy"
Friends for Life volunteer befriender

Overview of our organisation

Friends for Life Bedfordshire (FFL) works with socially isolated older residents in care homes primarily in Bedford Borough, providing friendship and facilitating improved well-being. We achieve this through a programme of one-to-one befriending relationships and a social activity programme that brings local schools, community groups and businesses in to care homes.

Starting off in 2007 as a small charitable project organised by local churches, Friends for Life became a limited company in 2012 and a registered charity in 2015. Our Companies House registered number is 7951058 and our charity number is 1165730.

According to the Age UK report *"All the Lonely People: Loneliness in Later Life"* (2018) older people are over 5 times more likely to be often lonely if they don't have someone to befriend them. In addition, the right to participate in social and public life is enshrined in international human rights law, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. However, we know that, exacerbated by the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, meaningful participation in a social life is often missing in care home settings.

We recognise the negative impact loneliness has on a person's well-being and the harm isolation can cause to physical and mental wellbeing.

We work to alleviate this through our Mission:

"Friends for Life works with care homes primarily in Bedford Borough providing friendship and facilitating improved well-being to otherwise socially isolated residents through a programme of one to one befriending relationships and a social activity programme."

Our Mission is realised through a suite of practical activities, including:

Providing one-to-one "befrienders". We recruit and train volunteers to offer friendship and company to residents at risk of loneliness, who would otherwise have no or few visitors. For those residents for whom it is appropriate our volunteers are insured so that residents can be taken out of their care home on short trips.

Providing specialist resources to residents with dementia which have been designed to reduce anxiety and enhance well-being.

These include therapeutic robotic pets, creative art packs and one touch button radios.

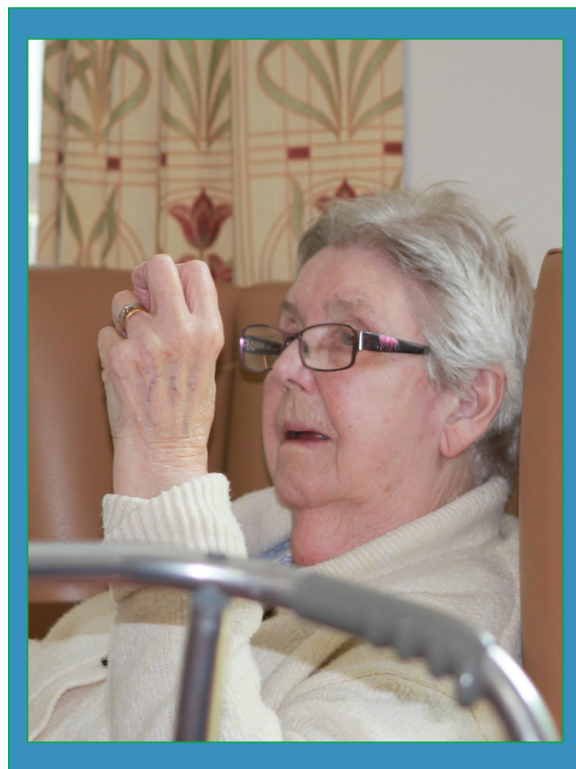
Working in partnership with other local services including Tibbs Dementia Foundation, The Place Theatre and local schools to provide residents with opportunities to socialise and participate through programmes such as Music4Memory and Timeless Tales.

"Marvellous. Absolutely marvellous. Thank you for coming to see us."
Diane, Salvete Care Home resident, after joining in all the songs in a social activity session.

At 31st March 2022 Friends for Life was working with 49 active volunteers (“befrienders”) who were linking up with 52 care home residents face to face. 70% of these residents have some form of cognitive or sensory disability and most are over 65.

We have befriending partnerships in 20 of the local care homes and links with 32. There are currently 52 care homes in Bedford.

Through a combination of one-to-one befriending, the provision of well-being resources and our partnership projects we were able to support 372 older care home residents in Bedford Borough in the year ending 31st March 2022. We estimate that this represents about 25% of the residents in need of support in the Bedford Borough.



Friends for Life's strategic aims are to:

Highlight the issue of social isolation and develop a comprehensive support network which, through collaboration and partnerships, breaks down the disconnect between elderly and vulnerable residents in care homes and the wider community

Be inclusive in the delivery of befriending services to all socially isolated care home residents in Bedford Borough, increasing social interaction, providing intellectual stimulation, broadening the social circle of residents and enhancing their well-being

Provide a diverse and dedicated team of volunteers, trained and matched as “befrienders” with the resident’s social needs and their interests

Promote and support additional services and activities, through partnerships with schools, companies and other voluntary sector organisations, that will provide life-enhancing activities, cultural experiences and social interaction for residents

Create a model for best practice in the delivery of befriending support to care home residents, both in one-to-one and group activities.

“I don’t know who this benefits more, me or the residents!”

From a volunteer who has commented on the fact she enjoys her involvement so much.

Our activity this year

This year has been one of trying to establish a “new normal”. Whilst it has been terrific to get back into the homes with our range of activities, we have naturally needed to adapt our approach, with Covid and the safety of residents very much at the forefront of people’s minds. We were all looking forward to the day when we could sit next to residents and hold their hands again.

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact adversely on Friend for Life’s face to face activity with residents during the year to 31 st March 2022. Care homes remained cautious about allowing residents to have direct contact with visitors due to the danger of infection. In addition, guidelines around social distancing and visiting changed frequently throughout the year, and their application differed between care homes. Care home residents were undoubtedly disproportionately affected by the pandemic and those who were already socially isolated were particularly harshly affected.

“Older people who are frail and living with long-term health conditions are particularly at risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness if cut off from social networks and community activities. On the flip side the value of social connection, a sense of purpose and belonging for mental health is immense.” - “Social isolation, loneliness and the mental health of care home residents – lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic”, May 2022, ARC social care researcher Dr Caroline Emmer De Albuquerque Green.

Friends for Life is proud of the way in which we adapted our activities to maintain contact and reach residents who were most at risk of loneliness. Befrienders wrote letters and made phone and video calls and we put 27 robotic pets and almost 100 creative art packs into the homes. In this way, throughout the pandemic, we continued to provide emotional support to our residents.

Towards the end of 2021/22 social distancing restrictions eased and our befrienders started to resume visiting the residents they support face-to-face and our Outreach activities recommenced.

In order to reinvigorate the work of Friends for Life following the lifting of restrictions our Volunteer Training Lead has instigated a programme of re-engagement activities with our befrienders, including a diary of popular local walks and meet and greet activities. Interest in, and commitment to, volunteering as a befriender is beginning to increase again. By September 2022 the number of befrienders had risen to 49 with 55 residents being visited.



During this period, to ensure we retained contact with the residents and the care homes whilst direct befriending was proving difficult, we also piloted two new projects. Both were aimed at supporting and increasing the well being of care home residents. The first project was carried out in partnership with Tibbs Dementia Foundation and provided care home residents with 30 Music4Memory workshops.

These workshops, led by music therapists, provided residents with a safe space to find expression in a range of emotions, many of which could not be expressed through words. This was particularly valuable for residents with dementia who were less able to express their thoughts and feelings through speech and were particularly confused by the restrictions put upon visitors by the pandemic:

"It [the session] enhanced social stimulation and sense of belonging...It also eradicated boredom and lethargy as residents were encouraged to take part."

Care Home Manager

"I enjoy every bit of the Music for Memory sessions."

Care Home Resident



The second project, Timeless Tales, was carried out in partnership with The Place Theatre, Bedford and was funded by East London NHS Foundation Trust Community Fund Programme. This delivered weekly sessions (including to residents who are bed bound) featuring performances from actors from the theatre and providing residents with the opportunity to write and perform their own work. 68 residents were reached, most of them receiving ten sessions each. They were supported by 9 volunteers. 42 hours of poetry, songs and prose were delivered across 4 care homes. By the end of the sessions 86% of the residents were engaged – clapping, commenting and joining in. Even those residents who found it difficult to focus on poetry for instance would often join in with the singing.

"We don't get to do much like this now. You know every day is the same really. It's nice you come in your day to see us and it's nice to listen and see some different things going on here."

Care Home resident

We found it more difficult to recruit volunteers in the year to March 31 st 2022. We think this is likely to be because potential befrienders were apprehensive about visiting care homes, particularly under restrictions. A high number of our volunteers have experienced the person they have befriended dying during the pandemic. We have been mindful of the distress felt by befrienders and have provided them with additional support. Sometimes the befriender has not felt ready to start a new befriending relationship just yet. More recently volunteer recruitment is rising.

Friends for Life has learnt much throughout the pandemic about the support needs of our residents, our volunteers and our care homes. Our major learning point is that a "one size fits all" approach does not work best and our ability to adapt to circumstances and to the individual needs of residents and care homes is what will have the maximum impact and ensure a successful future for Friends for Life.

Our plans for 2022/23 and beyond

The Covid pandemic has had the unintended consequence of highlighting, quite dramatically, the loneliness experienced by many, and especially of older people living in care homes. Loneliness has consequently become more “relatable” and easier to discuss. We have all had a taste of what it feels like to be alone, to be regimented, to not be able to go out and about our business freely.

The shock of the pandemic continues to resonate amongst our residents. The number of residents in need of our services is growing. Age UK in “*All the Lonely People – Loneliness in Later Life*” (2018) estimates that the number of older people who often experience loneliness will increase to two million by 2026. We observe more residents who have no, or few, visitors. Families are moving away for “fresh starts”. The number of residents exhibiting symptoms of withdrawal is increasing. Even the continued wearing of masks in care settings creates a distressing barrier, keenly felt by residents. Staff shortages and turnover and regulatory rule changes in the homes are challenging for residents, and for volunteers. All these factors cause distress to older people who are already vulnerable and do not generally respond well to change. Friends for Life is determined to build our service provision to support more residents and counter the issues described. To this end we have set a programme of strategic change targets for 2022/23 that will enable us to build upon the lessons we learned during the pandemic, and to increase the numbers of care homes with which we work and residents we befriend:

We have sought and been awarded funding (from the Harpur Trust) for a new post of General Manager which will be central to developing support for residents. They will lead and manage our small, professional and dedicated, staff team.

The GM will contribute to the development of services and activities, nurture relationships with other care home providers with whom we can partner, liaise regularly with 6 care homes and develop new care home relationships.

They will be tasked with the management of our monitoring and evaluation procedures, ensuring that these are consistent and robust and enable us to state with confidence 'what works, why and how.'

We are continuing to strengthen the Board with a recruitment drive seeking Trustees with expertise in Charity Fundraising, Personnel, Change Management, IT, Social Media and Communications

We will write, and commence implementation of, a comprehensive business plan for the 3 years 2022-2025

We are seeking funding for the new post of Outreach Worker which will build upon the group sessions in care homes that have proved so successful in increasing wellbeing.

We will write, and commence the implementation of, a fundraising strategy to support the aims and objectives of the business plan.

“How lovely that you’ve come back. You have made my day.”

Care home resident

Our people

We are fortunate in having a dedicated and highly professional part time team to support our operation. This comprises of a Volunteer and Training Lead, a Fundraising Officer, a Communications Lead and an Administrator.

Our thanks are due to them for their diligence, enthusiasm and loyalty throughout this year. The later stages of the pandemic remained challenging, requiring flexibilities around work practices which the team rose too. We extend our thanks also to Lorraine Gunther who took up the reins as the new Chair from Brian Belcher, and to Mike Elliott our Treasurer, who has continued to manage the charity's finances with efficiency and rigour.

We would like to thank those Trustees who retired in this period - Brian Belcher, Carol Solaiman and Pauline Panter. Friends for Life is grateful to them for their commitment and support of the charity.

In the next period we will be changing the contractual arrangements of our team, ensuring that their allocated hours are adequate to meet our objectives, and moving them to the status of employees.

We wish to thank all our partners, without whom our activities would not have been possible, in particular Tibbs Dementia Foundation , The Place Theatre, East London NHS Foundation Trust and Bedford School.

Lastly the Trustees wish to thank our volunteer befrienders. Friends for Life could not function without them. Their dedication throughout a particularly challenging period is especially appreciated and is best articulated by this resident:

Oh lovely to see you again. Thank you so much for coming. I love you coming to see us...Please come back and see us next week."
Maggie, Elcombe Care Home



Our fundraising

We are very grateful for the financial support we have received. Friends For Life is only able to help older people living in local care homes if we continue to receive gifts and grants from a variety of sources.

During the year grants were received from the Harpur Trust, William Butterfield Trust, Gale Family Trust, Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation, Bedford Borough Council Infection Prevention Control Fund, Arnold Clark Community Fund, Bedfordshire Charitable Trust and the National Lottery. Bedfordshire Borough Council has also provided funds which helped us through the Covid period. Gifts were made by individual and group members – local churches and a care home – and these, as with some of the grant-making trusts, often represent a pattern of support that goes back to our formation over ten years ago. Some of these gifts enabled us to buy the Robocats – animated pets – that proved to be invaluable ‘company’ for care home residents. Local businesses such as the Peach Pub Company have also supported us.

As this Annual Report was being prepared we received news that the Harpur Trust had awarded us over £64,000, spread over 2022-5, for the recruitment of a General Manager. This will enable us to plan for a step change in activity and demonstrates to other potential donors that they can have confidence in Friends for Life.



Thank you to everyone who has supported us financially and, also, to those who have recommended us for support.

Financial overview

Accounts 2022

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS – 2021/22

- 1) Friends for Life Bedfordshire is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors/Trustees and is also a Registered Charity.
- 2) March 31st is the agreed Year-End of this the ninth year of the Company's operation. Assets from the Company's forerunner (an Anglican/Methodist joint project) were transferred to the new Company in April 1st 2012
- 3) The Accounts have been drawn up on an Accruals basis. This is a requirement of Companies House and is applied regardless of turnover.
- 4) The accounts are examined at the end of each year by an Independent Examiner. Being classed as a 'Small Company' no audit is required (Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006) unless requested by the members. The accounts need to be filed with Companies House by 31st.Dec 2022. As our income exceeded £25,000 there is a requirement to also file the accounts with the Charity Commission by January 31st. 2023.
- 5) Accounts were filed this year with HMRC, our 3 year exemption having terminated. We now do not have to file until March 2026; for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 6) The Company's liquid assets are held in an HSBC Business style account which, hitherto, had been free of charges. The account now incurs a £5 monthly fee as of 1st Jan2022. An additional savings account is linked to the current account to separately hold the Reserves Fund. A small amount of interest is paid on this latter account.
- 7) Major office equipment (e.g. furniture, software and computers) are declared as assets on the balance sheet if their value exceeds £250. Depreciation is linear. Smaller resource or training materials are written off in the year of purchase.
- 8) During the year Virgin Money Giving, which had enabled supporters to donate online, ceased operation. A similar account has been set up with the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). FFL has also signed up to use Charitylog, as a data resource, and which incurs a monthly fee.
- 9) The Company received several grants during the year to be used in making purchases which directly supported Bedford care homes during the Covid19 pandemic. This expenditure is shown as Non-Budget items.
- 10) The Company has no Employees though certain tasks are 'bought-in' by means of 'Contracts for Services' agreements. Invoices arising from these are settled monthly. Since 2019 an office has been rented in the CVS building at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA.
- 11) The Company Directors/Trustees, Secretary and Treasurer receive no remuneration as result of their office.
- 12) All income was derived through Grants, Donations, Membership Fees and fund-raising events.

Michael Elliott
Hon. Treasurer – Friends for Life Bedfordshire.

Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st March 2022

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis

Tangible Assets

Office Equipment, furniture & computers	3,422.00	4,011.10
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Non-Tangible Assets

Cash in hand	0.00	0.00
--------------	------	------

HSBC Business current a/c March 31st.	23,032.14	16,611.93
---------------------------------------	-----------	-----------

HSBC Bus. Money Manager a/c March 31st.	16,291.13	16,289.28
---	-----------	-----------

Other Assets		0.00
--------------	--	------

42,765.27

36,912.31

Add debtors, loans and pre-payments

Less: creditors and provisions	(2,834.23)	(2,349.62)
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39,931.04

34,562.69

Represented by:

Brought forward from previous year	34,562.69	19,496.32
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Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	5,368.35	15,066.37
---	----------	-----------

39,931.04

34,562.69

Reserve Account - Balance & Transfers
for the year ended 31st March 2022
(This account is classed as Designated but Unrestricted)

	2021/22 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2020/21 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Transfers from General Acct. (1)	-	6,253.00
Interest Added (2)	1.85	5.11
Other income	0.00	0.00
Total incoming resources	1.85	6,258.11
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Transfer to General Acct.	0.00	0.00
Total Resources Expended	0.00	0.00
Income less Expenditure	1.85	6,258.11
Previous Balance Brought Forward	16,289.28	10,031.17
Total Reserves (3)	16,291.13	16,289.28

Notes

- 1.No transfers made in this Financial Year
- 2.Currently 0.01%
- 3.Current Reserves Policy is to hold 6 months expenditure or at least 10,000

Income & Expenditure Account

for the year ended 31st March 2022

	2021/22 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2020/21 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Membership fees	295.00	270.00
Grants	51,200.00	38,934.87
Donations	5,239.64	2,502.58
Fundraising events	400.00	1,362.71
Interest or Reserve account	1.85	5.11
Other income	-	-
Total Incoming Resources	57,136.49	43,075.27
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Fundraising lead	6,495.00	5,060.00
Volunteer trainer	420.00	120.00
Volunteer coordinator	7,350.00	6,870.00
Media & marketing lead	9,900.00	5,872.50
Office admin assistant	3,690.00	1,835.00
DBS & misc training costs	478.53	403.70
Website support & phone	222.18	385.39
Publicity and events	906.81	234.95
Insurance, fees & legal	1,090.71	847.86
All travel	160.45	29.50
Printing, post & stationery	209.73	150.56
Resources & misc, expenses	686.52	670.91
Office rent	4,142.04	4,142.04
Non - budget expenses	15,477.07	0.00
Depreciation of assets	569.10	1,386.49
Total resources expended	51,768.14	28,008.90
Income less expenditure	5,368.35	15,066.37
	57,136.49	43,075.27

We want to keep in contact. You can find us at:



@friendsforlifebedford



@friendsforlifebedford



@FFL_Bedford



hello@friendsforlife.org.uk



www.friendsforlifebedford.org.uk

Room 1, 2nd Floor
CVS
43 Bromham Road
Bedford
MK40 2AA

07460 575410





Friends for Life
— Bedford —

Patrons

The Rt. Reverend Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St. Albans
The Rt Reverend Richard Atkinson, OBE, Bishop of Bedford
Mrs Helen Nellis, HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS – 2021/22

- 1) Friends for Life Bedfordshire is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors/Trustees and is also a Registered Charity.
- 2) March 31st is the agreed Year-End of this the ninth year of the Company's operation. Assets from the Company's forerunner (an Anglican/Methodist joint project) were transferred to the new Company in April 1st 2012
- 3) The Accounts have been drawn up on an Accruals basis. This is a requirement of Companies House and is applied regardless of turnover.
- 4) The accounts are examined at the end of each year by an Independent Examiner. Being classed as a 'Small Company' no audit is required (Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006) unless requested by the members. The accounts need to be filed with Companies House by 31st.Dec 2022. As our income exceeded £25,000 there is a requirement to also file the accounts with the Charity Commission by January 31st. 2023.
- 5) Accounts were filed this year with HMRC, our 3 year exemption having terminated. We now do not have to file until March 2026; for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 6) The Company's liquid assets are held in an HSBC Business style account which, hitherto, had been free of charges. The account now incurs a £5 monthly fee as of 1st Jan2022. An additional savings account is linked to the current account to separately hold the Reserves Fund. A small amount of interest is paid on this latter account.
- 7) Major office equipment (e.g. furniture, software and computers) are declared as assets on the balance sheet if their value exceeds £250. Depreciation is linear. Smaller resource or training materials are written off in the year of purchase.
- 8) During the year Virgin Money Giving, which had enabled supporters to donate online, ceased operation. A similar account has been set up with the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). FFL has also signed up to use Charitylog, as a data resource, and which incurs a monthly fee.
- 9) The Company received several grants during the year to be used in making purchases which directly supported Bedford care homes during the Covid19 pandemic. This expenditure is shown as Non-Budget items.
- 10) The Company has no Employees though certain tasks are 'bought-in' by means of 'Contracts for Services' agreements. Invoices arising from these are settled monthly. Since 2019 an office has been rented in the CVS building at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA.
- 11) The Company Directors/Trustees, Secretary and Treasurer receive no remuneration as result of their office.
- 12) All income was derived through Grants, Donations, Membership Fees and fund-raising events.

Michael Elliott
Hon. Treasurer – Friends for Life Bedfordshire.

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Friends for Life

Balance Sheet **for the year ended 31st. March 2022**

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2021/22</u>		<u>2020/21</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment, furniture & Computers	3,442.00		4,011.10	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	0.00		0.00	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.	23,032.14		16,611.93	
HSBC Bus.Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	16,291.13		16,289.28	
Other Assets			0.00	
	<u>42,765.27</u>		<u>36,912.31</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	-			
Less: creditors and provisions	(2,834.23)		(2,349.62)	
	<u>39,931.04</u>		<u>34,562.69</u>	
Represented by:				
Brought forward from previous year.	34,562.69		19,496.32	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	5,368.35		15,066.37	
	<u>39,931.04</u>		<u>34,562.69</u>	

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the books of the Company and agree that the Income and Expenditure Account for the year and the Balance Sheet presented above give a true and fair representation of the financial position.

Signed

Mr. Ian Farthing

Dated

28/9/22



Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st. March 2022

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2021/22</u>		<u>2020/21</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment	3,442.00		4011.10	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	0.00		0.00	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.	23,032.14		16,611.93	
HSBC Bus. Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	16,291.13		16,289.28	
Other Assets	0.00		0.00	
	<u>42,765.27</u>		<u>36,912.31</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	0.00		0.00	
Less: creditors and provisions	(2,834.23)		(2,349.62)	
	<u>39,931.04</u>		<u>34,562.69</u>	
Represented by:				
Brought forward from previous year.	34,562.69		19,496.32	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	5,368.35		15,066.37	
	<u>39,931.04</u>		<u>34,562.69</u>	

Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31 March 2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies

Directors Responsibilities

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provision for small companies under part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)

The accounts were approved by the directors and authorised for issue at the AGM on 8th November 2022 and were signed on their behalf by :-

Signed T Houghton Date 8/11/22

(Chair of Trustees)

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Reserve Account - Balance & Transfers **for the year ended 31st March 2022** **(This account is classed as Designated but Unrestricted)**

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
	Examined	Examined
	(Accruals Acct.)	(Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Transfers from General Acct. (1)	-	6,253.00
Interest Added (2)	1.85	5.11
Other income.	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	<u>1.85</u>	<u>6,258.11</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Transfer to General Acct.	0.00	0.00
Total Resources Expended	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Income less Expenditure	1.85	6,258.11
Previous Balance Brought Forward	16,289.28	10,031.17
Total Reserves (3)	<u>16,291.13</u>	<u>16,289.28</u>

Notes

- 1 No transfers made in this FY.
- 2 Currently 0.01%
- 3 Current Reserves Policy is to hold 6mths expenditure or at least £10k.

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Income & Expenditure Account **for the year ended 31st March 2022**

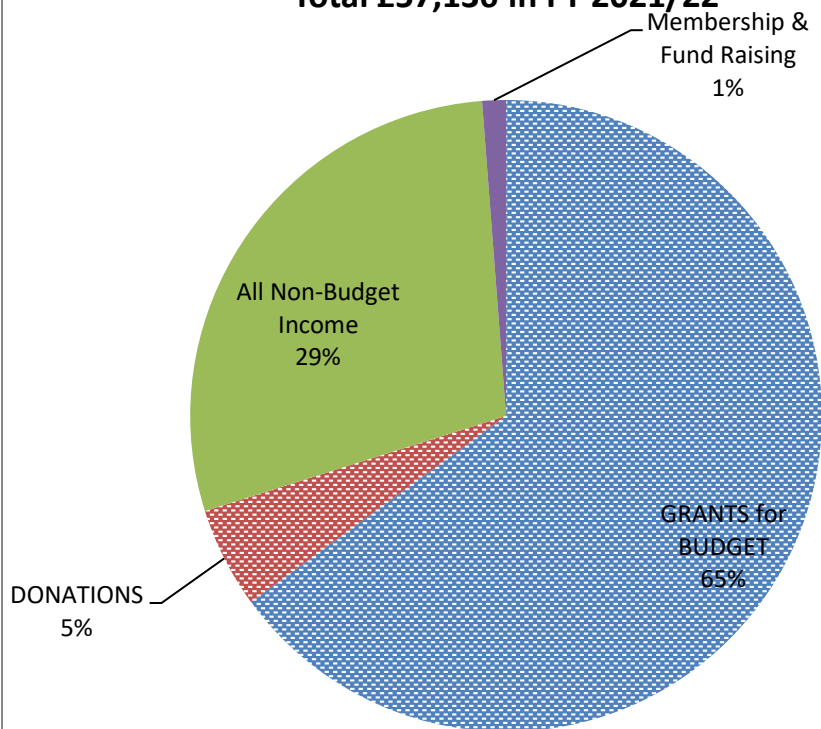
	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
	Examined	Examined
	(Accruals Acct.)	(Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Membership Fees (1)	295.00	270.00
Grants (2)	51,200.00	38,934.87
Donations (3)	5,239.64	2,502.58
Fund Raising Events (4)	400.00	1,362.71
Interest on Reserve Account	1.85	5.11
Other Income (5)	-	-
Total Incoming Resources	<u>57,136.49</u>	<u>43,075.27</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Fundraising Lead	6,495.00	5,060.00
Volunteers Trainer	420.00	120.00
Volunteers Coordinator	7,350.00	6,870.00
Media & Marketing Lead	9,900.00	5,872.50
Office Admin. Asst.	3,690.00	1,835.00
DBS & Misc training costs(6)	478.53	403.70
Website Support & Phone	222.18	385.39
Publicity & Events	906.81	234.95
Insurance, Fees & Legal	1,090.71	847.86
All Travel	160.45	29.50
Printing/Post/Staionery	209.73	150.56
Resources & Misc. Expenses (7)(8)	686.52	670.91
Office Rent	4,142.04	4,142.04
Non-Budget Expenses (9)	15,447.07	0.00
Depreciation of Assets	569.10	1,386.49
Total Resources Expended	<u>51,768.14</u>	<u>28,008.90</u>
Income less Expenditure	<u>5,368.35</u>	<u>15,066.37</u>
	<u>57,136.49</u>	<u>43,075.27</u>

Notes

- 1 Comprised 5 Individual, 5 Church and 1 Corporate Memberships.
- 2 i.e.Funds from a Grant making body following an application process
- 3 Usually from individuals, companies, churches, voluntary groups etc.
- 4 FFL Support to Respite Home Training.
- 5 n/a
- 6 Excludes the Vol. Coordinator & Trainer Fees.
- 7 Includes - Badges, 1xRobocat, Gifts, Key Box, Lanyards&ID, Other Equipment & Misc items(8)
- 8 There were no Capitalised items in this FY.
- 9 Grants administered by FFL but from which FFL does not directly benefit.

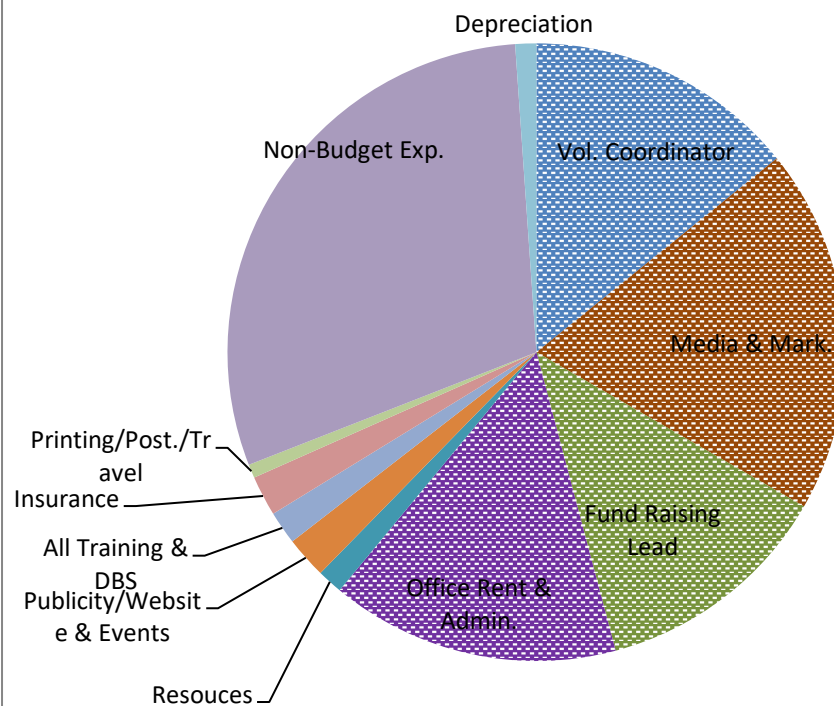
FFL INCOME BREAKDOWN

Total £57,136 in FY 2021/22



FFL EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN

Total £51,768 in FY 2021/22



Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Friends for Life

Balance Sheet **for the year ended 31st. March 2022**

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2021/22</u>		<u>2020/21</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment, furniture & Computers	3,442.00		4,011.10	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	0.00		0.00	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.	23,032.14		16,611.93	
HSBC Bus.Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	16,291.13		16,289.28	
Other Assets			0.00	
	<u>42,765.27</u>		<u>36,912.31</u>	
Add debtors, loans and prepayments	-			
Less: creditors and provisions	(2,834.23)		(2,349.62)	
	<u>39,931.04</u>		<u>34,562.69</u>	

Represented by:

Brought forward from previous year.	34,562.69		19,496.32	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	5,368.35		15,066.37	
	<u>39,931.04</u>		<u>34,562.69</u>	

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the books of the Company and agree that the Income and Expenditure Account for the year and the Balance Sheet presented above give a true and fair representation of the financial position.

Signed _____

Mr. Ian Farthing

Dated _____

28/9/22

Accounts



FRIENDS FOR LIFE BEDFORD

Annual Report 2020 / 2021

It has been an extraordinary year for Friends For Life.

At this time last year, we began to see the care homes we support overcoming many of the myriad challenges brought on by the arrival of the pandemic six months before and, in a few cases, being able to organise garden visits allowing our volunteers to visit their residents in a well controlled environment. The rapid development of the pandemic's second wave last autumn and the subsequent lockdown through the winter cut off once again our ability to visit our care home residents. We returned to our adapted service, writing 'lockdown letters', sending in cards and reaching out to our residents through phone and video calls. We saw how some care homes struggled more than others with the fresh challenge of the second wave.

Whilst our ability to provide a full volunteer-visiting service was curtailed during last winter, the FFL team turned to other work. Using the new video technology, the team met frequently to discuss and decide on new priorities, embarking on a review and renewal of our policies and procedures, adapting our service to our care home residents still further and repositioning our fund-raising efforts, all to great success.

The Trustees increased their cycle of meetings from every three months to every six weeks so that we could better respond to the fast changing environments that the pandemic brought upon us all.

All these efforts - from our team and the Trustees - began to bear fruit as we moved into the New Year.

We received tremendous support from grant funders during this period. Many funders with whom we have a relationship approached us to ask if we needed extra funds, others who we applied to, some for the first time, responded positively and generously. As a result, this year we have raised more money than in any previous year. While some of this was COVID related grants and will not repeat itself, other funds came from existing and new funders seeing what, as a small charity, we were doing for residents in care homes and responded warmly. Today, we have a greater stability to our funding base than we have seen before.

Charlie Fay, who looks after our media and marketing, has led the expansion of our profile in the Bedford community, among the schools and colleges, with the corporate community and in the care homes themselves. A recent success has been the introduction of 'Robo-cats' which are gifted to a resident. These have proved very popular indeed. We have raised funds specifically for these electronic cats and donors have been enthusiastic in their support for the cats which provide comfort and joy to our residents.



Friends for Life
— Bedford —

Pauline Carter, who leads our volunteer team, has been very busy. As in any organisation, we have turnover in our volunteer team throughout any year. As volunteers leave us, others join. But, during lockdown, we had to find a way to train them without meeting in one place. So, Pauline developed a Zoom based meeting on Saturday mornings where new volunteers in small groups could be trained. This proved to be a great success, attracting a number of young people, including school leavers to join our Volunteer team. With the easing of conditions now, Pauline is due shortly to run the first in-room training session for 18 months.

Paul Huggins joined us in April as our Administrator and works closely with Pauline. He has begun to strengthen our database and co-ordinate the development and refreshment of our policies and procedures. We are glad to have him on our team.

Michael Elliott, our Treasurer, has managed the charity's money through the pandemic with efficiency, keeping the Trustees advised of upcoming challenges and reporting frequently on our financial position with clarity and good guidance.

Kathryn Hughes, who looks after our fund raising efforts, has had a busy year. Our early concerns that the onset of the pandemic might restrict our ability to raise funds was something that challenged us in the first few months. Our response, guided by Kathryn, was to increase the number and breadth of our grant applications. This proved to be successful and is due, in large part, to the effort put in by Kathryn to research for and write these additional applications. She also put herself (and me!) into various training courses on charity fund raising. Today, our funding position is strong and stable. We can now begin to plan our expansion into more care homes and take on more volunteers.

I am stepping down as the Chair of Friends For Life after a short tenure as I have moved away from Bedford. I am delighted to welcome Lorraine Gunther as our new Chair. Lorraine joins us with a wealth of experience in the Bedfordshire care sector having worked at Relate and Citizens Advice Bureau for many years.

On your behalf, I thank our team for their energy, commitment and hard work, especially during the past 18 months. Our charity is in a strong position thanks to each of them. And my thanks to our Trustees who have similarly worked hard in these most trying of circumstances to ensure Friends for Life is able to prosper and grow.

Brian Belcher
Chair of the Trustees Friends For Life

11/10/21



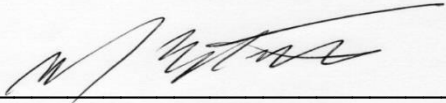
Friends for Life
Bedford

Patrons

The Rt. Reverend Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St. Albans
The Rt Reverend Richard Atkinson, OBE, Bishop of Bedford
Mrs Helen Nellis, HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS – 2020/21

- 1) Friends for Life Bedfordshire is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Trustees/Directors and a Management Committee and is also a Registered Charity.
- 2) March 31st is the agreed Year-End of this the seventh year of the Company's operation. Assets from the Company's forerunner (an Anglican/Methodist joint project) were transferred to the new Company in April 1st 2012
- 3) The Accounts have been drawn up on an Accruals basis. This is a requirement of Companies House and is applied regardless of turnover.
- 4) The accounts are examined at the end of each year by an Independent Examiner. Being classed as a 'Micro Entity' no audit is required (Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006) unless requested by the members. The accounts need to be filed with Companies House by 31st.Dec 2021. As our income exceeded £25,000 there is a requirement to also file the accounts with the Charity Commission by January 31st. 2022.
- 5) The Company is registered with HMRC as a charity for Gift-Aid purposes.
- 6) We have been exempt from filing accounts with HMRC for the last 4 financial years but these accounts, for FY 2020/21, will need to be filed by March 31st.2022.
- 7) The Company's liquid assets are held in an HSBC Business style account which is free of charges. An additional savings account is linked to the current account to separately hold the Reserves Fund. A small amount of interest is paid on this latter account.
- 8) Major office equipment, furniture, software and computers having a value of over £250 are declared as assets on the balance sheet and depreciated linearly. Any smaller resource or training materials acquired during the year are written off in that year.
- 9) Friends for Life has an account with Virgin Money Giving which enables supporters to donate to sponsored events online. FFL is also registered with CAF and Donorfy.
- 10) The Company has no Employees though certain tasks are 'bought-in' by means of 'Contracts for Services' agreements. Invoices arising from these are settled monthly. Since 2019 a 2nd floor office has been rented in the CVS building at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA.
- 11) The Company Directors, Secretary and Treasurer receive no remuneration as result of their office.
- 12) All income was derived through Grants, Donations, Membership Fees and fund-raising events. We are especially grateful for the support of Independent Age, The Allen Lane Foundation, Bedford Borough Council, BLCF, Gale Family Trust, St John's Hospital, Butterfield Trust, House of Industry, Municipal Charities plus generous individuals and organisations.


Michael Elliott

Hon. Treasurer – Friends for Life Bedfordshire.

Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st. March 2021

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2020/21</u>		<u>2019/2020</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment		4011.1		772.65
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.		0.00		0.00
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.		16,611.93		10,354.24
HSBC Bus. Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.		16,289.28		10,031.17
Other Assets		0.00		0.00
		<u>36,912.31</u>		<u>21,158.06</u>
Add debtors, loans and prepayments		0.00		0.00
Less: creditors and provisions		(2,349.62)		(1,661.74)
		<u><u>34,562.69</u></u>		<u><u>19,496.32</u></u>
Represented by:				
Brought forward from previous year.		19,496.32		13,626.27
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure		15,066.37		5,870.05
		<u><u>34,562.69</u></u>		<u><u>19,496.32</u></u>

Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31 March 2021 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies

Directors Responsibilities

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provision for small companies under part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)

The accounts were approved by the directors and authorised for issue at the AGM on 11 th October 2021 and were signed on their behalf by : -

Signed  Date 11/10/21

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Income & Expenditure Account **for the year ended 31st March 2021**

	2020/21 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)	2019/20 £ Examined (Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Membership Fees (1)	270.00	325.00
Grants (2)	38,934.87	23,298.99
Donations (3)	2,502.58	4,163.50
Fund Raising Events (4)	1,362.71	947.31
Interest on Reserve Account	5.11	17.25
Other Income (5)	-	159.22
Total Incoming Resources	<u>43,075.27</u>	<u>28,911.27</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Fundraising Lead	5,060.00	3,287.50
Volunteers Trainer	120.00	900.00
Volunteers Coordinator	6,870.00	6,706.25
Media & Marketing Lead	5,872.50	3,887.50
Office Admin. Asst.	1,835.00	491.50
DBS & Misc training costs(6)	403.70	456.53
Website Support & Phone	385.39	136.88
Publicity & Events	234.95	1,410.80
Insurance & Legal	847.86	736.88
All Travel	29.50	352.20
Printing/Post/Staionery	150.56	413.48
Resources & Misc. Expenses (7)(8)	670.91	1,596.52
Office Rent	4,142.04	2,334.05
Depreciation of Assets	1,386.49	331.13
Total Resources Expended	<u>28,008.90</u>	<u>23,041.22</u>
Income less Expenditure	15,066.37	5,870.05
	<u>43,075.27</u>	<u>28,911.27</u>

Notes

- 1 Comprised 5 Individual, 4 Church and 1 Corporate Memberships.
- 2 i.e.Funds from a Grant making body following an application process
- 3 Usually from individuals, companies, voluntary groups etc.
- 4 Includes 2.6 Challenge, 'Give as You Live' and misc.
- 5 n/a
- 6 Excludes the Vol. Coordinator & Trainer Fees.
- 7 Includes - Strategy Review Fee, Grants Directory, Course Fees, Badges and Fee to Co. House.
- 8 Excludes Capitalised Items

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Reserve Account - Balance & Transfers

for the year ended 31st March 2021

(This account is classed as Designated but Unrestricted)

	2020/21	2019/20
	£	£
	Examined	Examined
	(Accruals Acct.)	(Accruals Acct.)
<u>Income</u>		
Transfers from General Acct.	6,253.00	5,000.00
Interest Added (1)	5.11	17.25
Other income.	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	<u>6,258.11</u>	<u>5,017.25</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Transfer to General Acct.	0.00	0.00
Total Resources Expended	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Income less Expenditure	6,258.11	5,017.25
Previous Balance Brought Forward	10,031.17	5,013.92
Total Reserves (2)	<u>16,289.28</u>	<u>10,031.17</u>

Notes

- 1 Currently 0.01%
- 2 Current Reserves Policy is to hold 6mths expenditure or at least £10k.

Friends for Life Bedfordshire



Friends for Life

Balance Sheet **for the year ended 31st. March 2021**

Note: Debit balances are shown in parenthesis.

	<u>2020/21</u>		<u>2019/20</u>	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Assets				
Office Equipment, furniture & Computers	4011.1		772.65	
Non-Tangible Assets				
Cash in hand.	0.00		0.00	
HSBC Business current a/c Mch. 31st.	16,611.93		10,354.24	
HSBC Bus.Money Manager a/c Mch. 31st.	16,289.28		10,031.17	
Other Assets	0.00		0.00	
	<u>36,912.31</u>		<u>21,158.06</u>	
 Add debtors, loans and prepayments				
Less: creditors and provisions	(2,349.62)		(1,661.74)	
		<u><u>34,562.69</u></u>		<u><u>19,496.32</u></u>
 Represented by:				
Brought forward from previous year.	19,496.32		13,626.27	
Plus: excess of Income over Expenditure	15,066.37		5,870.05	
		<u><u>34,562.69</u></u>		<u><u>19,496.32</u></u>

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the books of the Company and agree that the Income and Expenditure Account for the year and the Balance Sheet presented above give a true and fair representation of the financial position.

Signed

Mr. Ian Farthing

Dated

24-8-21