



# **“BETTER LIVING”**

## **A New Concept in Care for the Vulnerable**

### **COORDINATOR’S REPORT – AUG - 2023**

#### **1: GENERAL:**

##### **1.1: Address:**

Please note your records that from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 my home address (and therefore also Better Living address) has changed from 1 Sir Abraham’s Cottages, Putney Bridge Road, London, SW15 2PR to the following: 21 Rectory Lane, Ashted, Surrey, KT21 2BA. There is no landline telephone number here, so all telephone contact must be by mobile (07786-296163). My previous email has also changed – from [m466ie@aol.com](mailto:m466ie@aol.com) to [m466ie.6@gmail.com](mailto:m466ie.6@gmail.com). If necessary, please amend your contact details accordingly. Changes have been made on the website.

##### **1.2: Trustees:**

As you should all be aware, Richard Rappazzini had to resign as Trustee and also as Treasurer when he moved into residential care in Wandsworth, as he was no longer able to cope with either position.

Jonell Rowe kindly stepped into the breach as a Trustee, but then had to resign due to pressure of work and also the fact that he was having great difficulty organising his Enhanced DBS check on-line. He has, however, kindly stepped back up as a Trustee, and I have offered to assist him with the DBS checking system.

It has still been important to arrange to elect another Trustee as Honorary Treasurer, and Fred Watson has kindly agreed to step into this role. It is still important for him to arrange to visit the Metro Bank with Howard and Maggie to arrange for him to become a signatory. This has not been important to date as money has not been spent from the Charity account, but we like to hope it will become important in the not-too-distant future!

#### **2. OTHER ORGANISATIONS:**

##### **2.1: Government:**

My MP in Putney had changed to Fleur Anderson (Labour), and I had requested that she might put me in touch with Gillian Keegan – who was Minister of State for Health & Social Care at that time. However – nothing has happened from the request – possibly because the MP was Labour and the Government Conservative!

Consequently, on my move to Ashted where the MP is Mr Grayling (Conservative), it was hoped that contact might have been more successful.....but no! One has to wonder what these people are paid for!

##### **2.2: National Voices**

This over-arching charity encourages membership from voluntary and registered charities with the “strength in numbers” concept. Better Living continues to be a member even though I have stepped back considerably after the dreadful incident with one of their trustees last year. Nevertheless, if they are organising an on-line event which is of interest, I continue to attend.

##### **2.3 Kings Fund**

The Kings Fund organise many on-line events of interest – usually for considerable charges – but I generally manage to get free participation. It has, however, proved impossible to gain contact with any named individuals, but I will continue to try!

##### **2.4 Golden Lane Housing**

Based in Manchester, but with very similar aims to BL. CEO – John Verge. Another organisation with history of close contact with government organisations distributing grants for social housing – the kind of contacts we need!

## **2.5: Housing LIN - (Learning & Improvement Network)**

I have continued our membership of Housing LIN as they organise so many really interesting on-line events which I have attended. In fact – attendance at one of these events entitled me to attend an afternoon tea-party at the House of Lords, and also to invite a guest to accompany me!!! Yes – I invited our Chairman to accompany me and Graham and I had a great time! It was at that event that we met representatives from Hallmark Care, and their CEO – Stephen Burke – has provided me with many contacts ever since!

Yes – I provided the 400 word blog that they requested. I do not think it was promoted as well as it could have been though as Better Living is not on either Twitter or Facebook.

I also asked Jeremy Porteus (their CEO) if I might be invited as a speaker at one of their on-line events, as numerous other members were also saying that the community is the answer. I was subsequently invited to do so, but then it transpired to be to discuss the success of the event to be held, and the event to be held was promoting independent living for adults with severe learning disabilities – something I totally disapprove of!!!! – and in addition it was to be held – live – in Sheffield!!!! Needless to say – I politely declined the offer!

Nevertheless, Jeremy contacted me by email recently, and invited to be a speaker at one of their webinars in the afternoon of Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October! Yes - I have accepted the offer and I will let you have details when I receive them.

## **2.6 Archbishop's Commission on Reimagining Care:**

We were exciting when this Commission was launched and have contributed to it throughout its development. Our involvement also included meeting with Lead Lord Spiritual at the House of Lords, and the Archbishop of Guildford at his home. It is encouraging that the Church is sufficiently concerned about the poor standard of Care, that it has become involved. Subsequently, I have also spoken with leaders of my local church to see if there may be some help they can give.

## **3. Progress?**

I confess to massive disappointment regarding “progress” for Better Living. Experience had led me to believe that we would be able to acquire unused premises from the NHS quite swiftly and go forward from there. However, with Covid striking almost as soon as we registered, all underused buildings were rapidly filled with people suffering from Covid and needing to remain in isolation! And even a few years down the line, things don't seem to have improved much!

OK – so we can't seem to find empty/under-used buildings – but we can find other organisations which are involved in custom-building homes for the disabled and the elderly, and also organisations which administer grants for these purposes – and are certainly working hard at making such contacts!

In addition, we can (and are!), working hard at making as many contacts as possible who are concerned in the poor standard of care..... so we are making some level of progress – I just wish it could be quicker! If anyone has more ideas or contacts they wish me to contact – please let me know!

I confess that the lack of premises has prevented me from making applications for funding at present, as we will need all the money we can get when we have a building to equip! As we all provide our energy and time for free and have no paid staff, it seemed best to wait for a while before making serious finance applications!

## **1. General**

I just want to take this opportunity to thank you all for so kindly attending our numerous Zoom and Team meetings – you are too kind. It'll be great when we can re-commence face-to-face meetings without worrying! Meanwhile, wishing you and yours all the very best, and greatly looking forward to meeting up again in the near future!

Maggie x

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*Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registration Number: 1181947*

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