



The College of
St Barnabas

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St Barnabas Bulletin - New Year 2021

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS

Let's hope that this new year is not as fraught as the one that has just ended!

We are going to need to work out what we are going to do to mark our 125th anniversary once the COVID-19 circumstances permit, so watch this space!



Some significant changes are afoot at the College to reflect the changing needs of those we serve and our need to adapt to changes in the care environment.

The way we work may be changing, but rest assured that our mission and ethos that have endured for more than a century remain unaltered. Outgoing College Chairman Sir Paul Britton (inset) explains more in the enclosed letter.

This month sees the 10th birthday of the **St. Barnabas Bulletin** which we launched in January 2011.

Our very first front page repeated an appeal from the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, for support for the first phase of the College Redevelopment Project, by reminding readers that "The Residents of the College are people who have given their lives in the service of Christ" and observing that **"it is now our turn to care for them"**.

That particular project has long since been completed, but the need for our work to care for elderly and infirm Anglicans is as great as ever.

125 years of caring for Anglicans

That Was The Year That Was

What a crazy year it has been. We've had Brexit, lived through the Royal soap opera of Megxit' and we have the worst economic contraction since 1709 to navigate. We have even seen our own 125th anniversary plans come to nothing. But all of that pales into insignificance in the face of the human suffering that is COVID-19.

It was on the 31st December 2019 that Chinese authorities reported treating dozens of cases of a type of pneumonia of an unknown cause, and just a month later the WHO declared a Global Health Emergency.



'You must stay at home'

● PM declares national emergency ● Meetings of more than two banned ● Fines for flouting new curbs

Despite the first COVID death in Europe occurring on the 14th February and a catastrophic situation developing in Northern Italy towards the end of that month, there seemed to be a feeling here that dear old Blighty was safe, that it would never reach us, of course, or would not be as bad as all that. Just a bad dose of the flu, don't you know?

Crisis? What crisis? But of course it did reach us, and it was worse.

By very good fortune, the management of the College had begun its contingency planning early and proved again the truth of the saying that "proper planning prevents poor performance". Residents elected to forego visits from family and friends. Wherever possible, staff not involved in care provision switched to working from home and a robust lockdown regime was introduced, with the nursing wing being isolated from the rest of the College. Initial funding was raised from Surrey Community Foundation to help cover the additional costs of PPE, but it was clear that the COVID outbreak was going to have serious financial implications. In the meantime, Mike Herbert's epic sponsored walk from Gravesend to Eastbourne brought in a very helpful £15,000.



The planning undertaken by the College's Senior Management Team and its Council was as good as it could be.

We launched a Summer Appeal in May to help us meet the increased costs resulting from COVID and were delighted that so many of our supporters responded so generously and with such alacrity. Thank you for everything that you do to help.

As the Summer months approached and the first wave declined, "tiers" and the "Rule of 6" were presented to us. The College wisely kept strict controls in place. Staff continued to work from home if at all possible, and "COVID-secure" work spaces were established for whenever staff needed to be onsite.

A visitor schedule was introduced for outside visits, and with the help of the "Friends of the College of St. Barnabas" a number of garden tables and chairs were purchased so that Residents could meet their visitors in the College's grounds. Summer drifted inexorably into Autumn. The number of cases of COVID began to rise again, and the changing seasons meant that outside visits were no longer possible. Eventually the College was able to obtain a reliable, regular supply of test kits and introduced weekly swabbing of staff. This has given rise to one or two false alarms through apparent "false positives", and glitches such as Test and Trace losing large numbers of test results, but by the time the November lockdown came into effect all relevant staff were being tested weekly and getting test results back within a couple of days. Nonetheless, the regime of testing has placed a considerable administrative burden on the staff who have to manage it.

Vaccines that look as if they will be successful have been developed in record time, and as the country leaves the November lockdown only to be plunged into a new tier system that is for the majority a lockdown more stringent than the measures that preceded it, the staggering extent of the damage to the economy is revealed, and that is before any

as yet unknown consequences of Brexit begin to appear as the transition period ends on the 31st December. On a more positive note, new COVID tests and frequent testing hold out the possibility of care homes being able to allow visitors back in, much to the delight of Residents and their families who have been forced to stay apart for so long and perhaps, just

perhaps, by the middle of 2021 COVID-19 will no longer be a defining feature of our daily lives.

NURSING HOMES RAVAGED



Aftermath

The consequences of COVID-19 are going to be with us for a long time.

We have never liked the idea of using the St. Barnabas Bulletin as an out-and-out fundraising tool. If ever there was a time to do so, it is most probably now. However, as a supporter of our work, you most likely appreciate already that the need for what we do so well is not a short-term problem fixed with a single gift, and that the onset of COVID-19 has made it more difficult and more expensive to provide the services on which our elderly and infirm Residents rely.

More than ever, we need regular, reliable income, month in, month out, to enable us to tackle these challenges so that our Residents can benefit from the best possible care and enjoy the best possible quality of life that they are able to attain. We do not get any help with this from the government—not even during the pandemic, despite promises of emergency cash for charities - or from the Church of England.

In fact, it is generally only private individuals and some PCCs who can offer the regular, reliable help we need. Indeed, the best possible way that you can help us do this is to become a committed partner in the care we provide by setting up a regular monthly standing order.

We understand that some people are not keen to make that kind of commitment, and that others are not in a position to do so, but in trying to find a solution to the challenges before us, we do need to ask you to consider—or to consider once again—helping us in this way. Thank you.

And finally...

If you haven't yet got round to responding to our Christmas Appeal, there is still time to do so. You can give the gifts of care, companionship and compassion that most of us can take for granted.

Thank you so very much.

Caring for retired Anglican Clergy