

# ST GEORGE THE MARTYR CHARITY

## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023



## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our recent "Winter Party" at the Brick Lane Music Hall – another year of "Carry On down in Docklands". We had a lovely meal, a terrific show, and a freely running bar. We were joined by a coachload of Members from our sister charity – Southwark United Charities, as well as several of my fellow Trustees, and it was great that we had such a full audience.

Next year we are considering whether to try somewhere new, and I would be very interested in hearing your views on what sort of thing you might like, if Brick Lane Music Hall is not to your taste.

During my speech I thanked our Clerk Andy, Visitor Philippa for everything they do for our Charity, as well as both Tina and Sue from the other charities who came to help on the day.



This year we issued larger Marks & Spencer vouchers to our Members for Christmas, having taken a decision a couple of years ago to do this rather than issuing hampers where our Members didn't have any

choice over the contents. We also decided not to issue diaries this year as the demand for them was so low and postage costs higher than ever.

We are again running our trips and holidays, but on a slightly smaller scale as demand has been lower than before the Covid-19 epidemic. We continue to prioritise those who benefit most, and a lot of our grant making now is to residents who need household essentials such as cookers, fridges and washing machines. We also have resumed our other at-home and other services although we have had to go to Age UK Southwark to supplement our offering.

We have recently said goodbye to another Trustee, Gary Williams, who has now retired from the Charity. We hope to be able to announce his replacement very soon.

On behalf of my fellow Trustees, I wish you all a happy and healthy 2023, and hope to meet you at one of our events soon.

***Alderman Tim McNally, Chairman of the Trustees***

## VISITOR'S VIEWS

It's Spring! I for one will be looking forward for not sitting in a freezing room layered up with jumpers! I hope you all managed OK through the winter months and importantly kept warm.

I have seen a number of you at the theatre and the Brick Lane Music Hall recently which I hope you enjoyed.

We have a couple of new trips lined up for you over the next couple of months which I hope you will come on and have a good time.

As many will now know Deborah is now back with us and has been busy catching up with her nail care appointments. I think all those who had wanted to see how now done so. However should you have not been able to contact her please let me know so I can pass on your details to her.

Unfortunately, the Food2You service which we advertised a few newsletters ago is closing at the end of March. However, I understand that two supermarkets take telephone orders rather than it just being 'online'. These are:

- Sainsbury's: Tel 0800 917 8557
- Morrisons: 0345 611 611, choose Option 5

It might be worth keeping the numbers handy even if you don't intend to use them regularly, as they might be helpful to have in an emergency.

*Philippa van Os, Visitor*



## CLERK'S COMMENTS

It was great to see many of you at the **Winter Party** in February. Everyone who went seemed to have a great time and we hope to be booking for next year very soon. However, it is evident that the Brick Lane Music Hall is not as popular as it once was. In 2020, 125 members (plus carers/companions) came, and we had a 'full house'. Last year it was just 80, which we assumed was because we were just out of COVID. However, this year only 76 members came, and we ended up selling a lot of places to Southwark Charities.

So, for next year we are looking at the possibility of booking a smaller number of places at Brick Lane Music Hall and also organising a different kind of event that might interest those who may be bored with, or just not interested in the 'pantomime for grown-ups'. Watch this space!

At the end of 2022 we agreed an arrangement with Age UK's for members of St George the Martyr to be able to use their '**Happy Feet**' **nailcare service** free of charge. The intention is to provide an alternative for those who can get about to have their toenails done when our home nailcare specialist, Deborah is not available.

So far, 12 members have signed up for the scheme. If you are using Happy Feet and currently paying to do so, please get in contact with us.

Please note, though, that if you don't turn up to an appointment with Happy Feet, we still get charged. In February, two members failed to show up to their appointments. If they do so again, they may be removed from the scheme.

You may know that the Charity provides grants for things like kitchen appliances and furniture. Not just to members, but to a range of people in need who live in our area of benefit.

Quite often the things people need require assembly, for example a table and chairs that comes 'flat packed'. A lot of the people we give grants to don't have the wherewithal to do this themselves, so we end up purchasing items that come ready-assembled, which are much more expensive.

So, we're looking for volunteers who could help out with jobs like this. **Do you know anyone who might be interested and available?** Perhaps a friend or child/grandchild that lives locally and could pop round to someone for an hour or so and help them.

They would need to have their own basic tools and be able to transport themselves (we'd pay their expenses). They would also need to be 'DBS-checked', which we would pay also for. If you do, please ask them to contact us by phone (020 7407 2994) or e-mail ([clerk@stgeorge1584.org.uk](mailto:clerk@stgeorge1584.org.uk)).



## MAKING A HOUSING APPLICATION

Some members have recently asked for advice or assistance with regards moving home, either because they want to downsize from a family home, or need something that better suits their health conditions, such as a ground floor flat, sheltered accommodation or one of the many alms houses in Southwark.

We have found that it is not an easy process, so thought we would share our knowledge with you. What follows is relevant to Council and housing association tenants, and private sector tenants wishing to move into Council or housing association homes or Southwark-based alms houses.

### ***DO IT ONLINE!***

The first thing you must do is complete a housing application with Southwark's Housing department. Unfortunately, there is no realistic alternative other than doing the application online, on a computer, tablet or smart phone.

You can, in theory, complete the initial application by phone. But from personal experience I would not recommend this. Also, once your application is processed you have to 'bid' for vacant properties and you can only do that online.



If you're not confident that you can do this on your own, get someone to assist you. If asking someone to act on your behalf, you will need to provide written consent. I have outlined below the process you will need to follow.

### ***THE APPLICATION***

Before you start, you have to register with *MySouthwark*. You just type that in the computer search bar, and you will see it. You will need an email address.

Once you have registered, you can log in to your *MySouthwark* account. Then:

1. Visit the page 'Your accounts' and add the 'Housing Applications' service and hit 'save'.
2. Click on 'View' Housing Applications.
3. Click on 'Complete a Housing Applications Form'.

MySouthwark Registration - Sou... x  
https://www.southwark.gov.uk/mysouthwark/SignUp?displaypref=large-contrast

Southwark Council southwark.gov.uk

MySouthwark

Show accessibility options

Listen

It only takes about 3 minutes to complete the 5 simple steps to register.

**Step 1: Your contact details**

Complete these fields

First name

First name

Last name

Last name

Email

Email

Below is a list of the information you'll need:

- If you are working, details about your employer;
- Your National Insurance Number and that of any other household member over the age of 18;
- Any other addresses that you, your partner or your dependants have lived at over the last 5 years, including the dates;
- Income about your income and savings;
- Medical information if you have a medical requirement for a move. Give as much medical information as you have, as it may increase your priority for moving into more suitable accommodation.

**Once you've completed the form, you will be provided with an online receipt reference number. Please write it down and keep it safe, as you'll need it in the future.**

## ***THE ASSESSMENT***

Upon receipt of your application the Council will carry out an assessment in accordance with the current housing allocations scheme. They say they aim to do this within 28 days, but it could be up to 3 months.

Once they have completed their assessment, they will send you a confirmation letter telling you your bidding number, priority assessment, bedroom entitlement and your qualification date.

## ***BIDDING***

Once you have your bidding number you can then go onto the 'Southwark Home Search' website where you can 'bid' on properties. Your 'login reference' will be your bidding number and your 'memorable information' will be your date of birth.

Properties are put on every Thursday, and you would need to go into the website and look at what properties are available to you every week. It will tell you how many

properties you are eligible to bid on and what ranking you are. So, if you are number 2, they will contact the person first in line. If that person refuses the property then the Council will contact you next.

## **CONFIRMING YOUR IDENTITY**

Applicants who are contacted following a successful bid will be required to provide documentation within 7 days of the offer being made if their application has not been previously fully verified.

The following documents will be required:

- Proof of identity for all household members (e.g. passports, birth certificates)
- Proof of current address (e.g. recent gas or electricity bill, or Council Tax statement)
- If you are not a British Citizen, evidence of your right to reside in the UK (e.g. passport and other relevant documents from the Home Office)
- Supporting medical information where required
- Financial checks will be made in order to verify the details you have supplied to the Council.

All documents provided must be originals, up to date and valid. For a full list of acceptable documents contact the Housing Advice Centre.

Documents can be uploaded via the *Southwark Homesearch* website or taken to the contact centre via an on-line appointment. Failure to produce all the required documents within the deadline may lead to the offer being withdrawn. The offer may also be withdrawn if the documents provided indicate that an applicant is not entitled to be considered.

If you do not complete the form correctly or fail to provide the required documents, your application may be rejected and you will be required to complete a new application.

Once fully registered please remember you are required to inform the Council of any changes to your circumstances (e.g. change of address, additional household members, employment status, etc). You can do so at any point by accessing our change of circumstances form on your *MySouthwark* account. Failure to do so may result in any future offers being rejected.

Good luck!







## SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

We have arranged some more social opportunities over the next few months, which we hope you'll enjoy. Please use the form provided to request a place on any of these opportunities. Make sure you put your name on the form!

Please bear in mind that trips may be over-subscribed, so we may not be able to meet every request. All opportunities are **free-of-charge** for Full and Associate Members of the Charity (this is the vast majority of you), and anyone accompanying them as a carer. However, there may be a charge for Honorary Members and the charges are shown below (these are based on the actual cost to the Charity).

### **Coach trips:**

- **Eagle Heights, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

Eagle Heights in Kent is home to one of the UK's largest Bird of Prey Centres with over 50 species. It's also a wildlife sanctuary that houses many different species of other animals including Meerkats, African Servals, Farm Animals, Huskies and more! The trip will include a flying display and afternoon tea. The maximum number of places is 41 (cost for Honorary Members is £25)



- **Historic Dockyard Chatham, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May**

The Historic Dockyard Chatham is a maritime museum on part of the site of the former royal/naval dockyard at Chatham in Kent. You will have plenty of time to explore the dockyard site and buy yourself lunch. The trip will include a tour of the set of the BBCTV drama, 'Call the Midwife'. The

maximum number of places is 51. *Not suitable for Members with mobility problems* (cost for Honorary Members is £25).

- **A day at the seaside, Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July.**

This trip will comprise coach transport to and from a well-known seaside resort (destination to be confirmed). Members will be dropped off/picked up, with time to spend in town or on the beach independently. The maximum number of places is 100 (cost for Honorary Members is £10).



## **Short break:**

- **Monday 10th to Friday 14th July, Warner's Resort at Sinah Warren, Hayling Island, Hampshire**

The break includes coach travel to/from the hotel, breakfast and evening meals, daytime excursions and activities, and evening entertainment. The maximum number of places is 47 (cost for Honorary Members: £499)

This will be our only break in 2023. This means it is highly unlikely that we will be able to provide a place for everyone that wants to. Top priority will be given to:

- Members who have limited social circles and/or no local family networks
- Members who have not been on holiday in recent years - whether with the Charity, family/friends, with other groups, or independently – and who have little or no prospect of doing so in the foreseeable future
- Members with mental/emotional or physical health conditions that make it difficult for them to go on holiday independently.
- Members who live in particularly difficult situations, for example in respect of their housing circumstances or family responsibilities.

After that, it will be a case of picking names out of a hat. It's important to stress that we don't operate a 'rota' system, whereby everyone eventually gets a holiday at some point, on the basis that it is their 'turn'. Some people may get holidays more frequently than others because their needs are greater.

Also, the Charity has relatively little control over the mix of rooms (single, twin, double) provided and their relative accessibility for people with mobility impairment. Therefore, it is possible that, on some holidays, a lower priority member may end up getting a space while a high priority member will not, just because we have been given more of a certain type of room.



We are planning to do the initial allocation of places for the summer break by early May and will let you know then if you have been successful, or if you are on the waiting list.

*Are you struggling to make ends meet?  
Do you need help with your energy bills?  
Are you in debt or rent arrears?  
Do you need help with Universal Credit - or any other benefit?  
Do you need help with your Council Tax?*

*For expert help with any of these issues and more, come to our Cost of Living Crisis Support Roadshow.*

## **COST OF LIVING CRISIS SUPPORT ROADSHOW**

*"Speaking to all the different people I got lots sorted - they were all so helpful and friendly"*

**Hankey Hall, 3 Hankey Place, London SE1 4LR**

**10AM-1PM, Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023**



## **ST GEORGE THE MARTYR CHARITY**

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**Our normal working hours are Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 5.30pm**  
Make sure you phone before visiting us, as we are not always in the office