

ST GEORGE THE MARTYR CHARITY WINTER NEWSLETTER 2023



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

As we head into the Festive Season there are some exciting additions to our Charity.

Firstly, we welcome a new vicar to St George the Martyr, Southwark – our parish church. Father Ben Bell is the new incumbent, and this also makes him a Trustee of our charity and of our sister charity, the Surrey Dispensary.

Father Ben engaged immediately with both charities and is already making a practical contribution to our grant making. We are looking into ways in which our family of charities can help Father Ben deliver more at the Church. I know Father Ben would welcome any of our Members at his Sunday Service.



Secondly, we are adding a second Visitor to provide additional capacity for Philippa van Os who has been very busy with grant making, and who wants to have capacity to do more pastoral care. At the time of writing, we are shortlisting from over 70 applications, and Trustees hope to be able to introduce you to a new Visitor soon.

One of the things we know we want to do more of is providing support to those who are not able to take advantage of our holidays, theatre trips and days out. Freeing up Philippa and providing cover when she is on annual leave or off sick will help prevent a backlog building up for when she is back.

As with the past couple of years we will be providing all our Members with vouchers rather than hampers. You told us that there was often much in the hampers that you didn't like or eat, plus the postage costs were very high, so we hope that vouchers which you can use for food or clothing are more useful and provide more value to you, our Members.

Along with the staff and Trustees I hope that you have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year – and I look forward to seeing you in 2024 – perhaps at the Brick Lane Music Hall pantomime!

Alderman Tim McNally, Chairman of the Trustees

CLERK'S COMMENTS

As you'll have already read in Tim's 'Chairman's Corner', we are expanding the size of the team and will soon have two Visitors. Sadly, we can't just clone Philippa (!), so we're having to go through a recruitment process.

Whoever is appointed needs to be able to get on with our members, so we're planning to involve some members of the Charity in this process. I'm very grateful to those of you who have agreed to help.

If all goes to plan, we'll appoint the new member of staff towards the end of November and she or he will start early in the New Year, hopefully in time for the Winter Party at Brick Lane Music Hall.

Some of you will remember that, just before the COVID lockdown in 2020 we sent a questionnaire to all our members asking for feedback on the services we provide. The responses we received were really useful, and we were very grateful to everyone that sent one.

We'll soon be sending round a new survey, and we hope the response will be just as good. This time we'll be particularly focussing on the things we provide to people that don't or can't come on trips and holidays. We've noticed that there has been a big drop in demand for our social opportunities since 2019 so we also want to try to find out why that is, and perhaps get some ideas for some new types of activities that help people who don't get out as much as they'd like.

Lastly, we're getting near to Christmas again. As we did previously, we'll be sending £60 Marks & Spencer gift cards to every member household. Last year, many members did not get their vouchers and Christmas cards in time for Christmas, as the postal service in some areas is not very good.

This year we're going to try to send them out earlier. However, that may mean that some of you receive your first Christmas card in November!

Andy Murphy, Clerk

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.

Please note that we will be closed for our Christmas break for the two weeks commencing 18th December 2023. We will be back as usual on Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

VISITOR'S VIEWS

The summer seems a long time ago, but I can say (and hope) that overall, the holiday in Hayling Island was enjoyed by all. It was our first time back at a Warner's Resort since 2019, so I hope that those of you who went made use of the entertainment that was on offer and were able to enjoy the sunshine, as we managed to time it for a good week, weather-wise! We also got to see the set of the BBC show 'The Repair Shop'.

More recently we have enjoyed two theatre productions: 'Ain't Too Proud' and 'Crazy for you'. I apologise to those who missed the first part of 'Crazy for You'. Unfortunately, we hadn't been notified that the performance start time had been brought forward by half-an-hour earlier. So, I was unaware until I turned up at the theatre myself.

I did try to contact as many of you that I could by phone although this was at very short notice. There were a small number of members who were unaware of the time change so missed the first part. Sorry that this happened but hope you enjoyed what you did manage to see. Hopefully it will be more straight forward for the next two theatre trips on offer.

A few weeks ago, I attended a talk by Ginette Laws at Southwark Council regarding their 'Winter Planning'. This included the provision of 'Warm Hubs' which are going to be promoted through the 'Southwark life' Newsletter which will be delivered to all households in November. The 'Warm Hubs' will provide individuals somewhere warm to go especially useful if you are struggling with your heating bills and as a result are not keeping warm at home.

Remember that it is very important to keep your homes warm with a minimum temperature of 18°C, wear layers of warm clothes, close doors and close curtains. These measures will help with keeping you warm which is especially important as you get older (although young at heart!).

Philippa van Os, Visitor





HANDYPERSON SERVICE

Did you know that Southwark Council offers a 'handyperson' service? The handyperson team can help with small repairs or adaptations around the home if you are aged 60 or over or have a disability. They can help if you're a council tenant, renting privately, a housing association tenant or a homeowner.



The amount you pay depends on your personal circumstances. If you get housing benefits, Income Support, Council Tax Reduction, Pension Credit, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, they charge £22 per hour plus material costs.

If you don't get benefits, they charge £44 for the first hour, and each additional hour is £33, plus materials

costs. If you need to use the service but can't afford the charge, please get in touch with us, as we may be able provide a grant to pay for it.

Contact the handyperson team by phoning 020 7525 1863 during office hours or email handyperson@southwark.gov.uk.

Types of jobs a handyperson can help with:

- move furniture (within the property or outside of property)
- fix curtain rails, including hanging or taking down curtains
- tape down carpets and electrical leads
- change light bulbs and smoke alarm batteries, and install smoke alarms
- put up shelves
- re-glaze small windows
- change smoke alarm batteries
- fit internal doors
- fit locks and security chains
- minor decorating, carpentry and plumbing
- small gardening jobs
- minor fencing repairs or installations
- build flat pack furniture
- install grab/hand rails

If you need a repair that's not listed above, contact them and they will let you know if they can help. They **cannot** help with the following:

- gas servicing
- major building work
- electrical work
- furniture removals
- home cleaning
- window cleaning



They can supply materials or can use materials that you have purchased.

If you do use the service, please let us know how you get on.



CUT YOUR PHONE AND BROADBAND COSTS WITH A SOCIAL TARIFF...

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Pension Credit, Universal Credit and some other benefits. Some providers call them 'essential' or 'basic' broadband.

They're delivered in the same way as normal packages, just at a lower price. Amid rising living costs, Ofcom is encouraging companies to offer social tariffs to help customers on low incomes.

How a social tariff could help you:

- **It's available to those on a variety of benefits.** If you or someone in your household claims Pension Credit or Universal Credit, you could switch to one of many of the tariffs available.
- **It's cheaper than a regular package.** Current prices range from £10 to £20 a month.
- **Fast, unlimited broadband.** Most tariffs offer superfast broadband which is fast enough for you to keep in touch with friends and family, stream HD films or shop online.
- **You'll pay next-to-nothing to get set up.** If you do have to pay any setup costs, these should only be small. Your provider should tell you before you sign up.
- **It could cost nothing to switch.** If your provider offers a social tariff, you can switch to it at any time, free of charge.
- **The price won't go up mid-contract.** You won't pay any more than what you agree at the start of the contract.
- **It costs nothing to leave.** You won't pay a fee to leave the tariff before the end of your contract.

How to apply

First, check if your current provider offers a social tariff. You can apply for most tariffs online or call your provider and ask to switch.

If your provider doesn't offer a social tariff, you can switch to one that does. There is a list on the Ofcom website (<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs>).

Your current provider might let you leave your current contract without paying a penalty fee.

If you would like help finding out more about social tariffs, or signing up to one, please contact the Visitor.

MEET OUR NEW TRUSTEE: FATHER BEN BELL!



I'm delighted to have moved to Borough, although crossing the river after a lifetime of living on the other side felt like a big step.

I arrive here with experience of running a youth and community Charity in Islington and Hackney for over 20 years before being ordained as a priest. Most recently, before taking up the role of Rector of St George the Martyr, I was a Parish Priest in Hoxton, East London and bring a love of walking the streets and talking to people.

Keep an eye out for me on the steps of St George's in the morning – I enjoy greeting people as they head off to work; it's amazing what a difference a smile in the morning can make. Aside from my work as a Priest, I am an avid 'Sneakerhead' (collector of trainers), a keen cook, and lover of cities.

I wonder if you know much about St George the Martyr Church (from whence the Charity comes)? There has been a church on this site since 1122 and the current building is the third on the same site. We have a long history of serving the people of Borough and at present we do this through the Borough Food Cooperative where you can buy 16 grocery items for £4.50, if you haven't already been you would be most welcome to come and shop here.

As well as the Food Cooperative we host Lunchtime concerts on Thursday lunchtimes at 1pm. We have a range of different musicians come and play for local people. Do come along and enjoy some music free of charge.

It's a joy to join the St George the Martyr Charity and I look forward to meeting many of you in due course.

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES – WINTER 2023-2024

Please use the form provided to request a place on any of these opportunities. Do 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 (that is most of you), and anyone accompanying them as a carer. However, there may sometimes be a charge for Honorary Members and the charges are shown below (these are based on the actual cost to the Charity).



- **Winter Party, Wednesday 28th February 2024:** We have once again been able to book the Brick Lane Music Hall for our Winter Party. Guests will be taken to the music hall by coach. You will enjoy a three-course meal followed by a 'pantomime for grown ups', which this year is 'Peter and the Loose Boys'. Those of you that have been before will know what to expect! (cost price for Honorary members: £65)

Theatre trips:

You have a choice of one or other of the following two performances:

- **'Frozen' at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Wednesday 6th March 2024 (matinee performance).** When Queen Elsa's hidden powers plunge the land of Arendelle into an eternal winter, her sister Anna sets out to find her and save the kingdom before it's too late. But as the storm rages on, both sisters must learn that only an act of true love can thaw a frozen heart. Based on the 2013 animated Disney movie, FROZEN will defy all expectations on an unforgettable journey packed with thrilling surprises, hilarious characters and soaring music, including twelve new songs written especially for the show, alongside all the classics such as 'For the First Time in Forever', 'Do You Want to Build a Snowman?' and the worldwide smash-hit, 'Let it Go'. The maximum number of places is 44 (cost price for Honorary Members: £40).



- **'Mrs Doubtfire' at the Shaftesbury Theatre, Thursday 21st March 2024 (matinee performance).** Out-of-work actor Daniel will do anything for his kids. After losing custody in a messy divorce, he creates the alter ego of Scottish nanny, Euphegenia Doubtfire in a desperate attempt to stay in their lives. As his new character takes on a life of its own, MRS. DOUBTFIRE teaches Daniel more than he bargained for about how to be a father. A musical based on the hit 1993 comedy drama film starring Robin Williams. The maximum number of places is 44 (cost price for Honorary Members: £42.50).





clothes mending workshops

Ripped jeans?
Lost buttons? Holes in your hoodie?
Don't dump them yet! Learn simple techniques to mend your clothes & fabrics. Save money & take pressure of our planet. Bring an item to mend or just drop by for a chat .

free!

Starting 19th Sept 2023
Every Tuesday 11:15 am-
2:15 pm

AT RJ4ALL Rotherhithe Community
Centre
30, Plough Way
London, SE16 2LJ



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