



CLYST CARING FRIENDS

WINTER 2020 NEWSLETTER

CCF Treasurer's Report

Roger Sercombe

On 23rd March 2020 the rollercoaster ride began.

The first lockdown resulted in CCF closing both the Day Centre and the charity shop, thereby cutting off our two major sources of income. We furloughed all our staff except one.

This was where the amazing support kicked in. Individuals were doing sponsored runs and walks, making bird boxes and bug hotels, selling flowers and plants and other activities. All ages were involved. I was amazed how the money kept

coming in during lockdown and we are extremely grateful for all the effort that all parts of the community have put in to support CCF. We also had grants and donations from Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Broadclyst Parish Council, the government furlough scheme, and a local charity.

I estimated without support we would sustain a loss of £32,000 at March 2021, which threatened the future of CCF. The support we have received has lessened the blow. Securing a lottery funding grant to be used to mitigate any



losses has also made us confident going forward.

I regret that we are unable to hold an AGM this year and can report that finances for this year 2020/21 are in a healthy position. For the year 2019/20, although both the income and expenditure were less than the previous year, we had a cash surplus of £3,897 and the accounts have been uploaded onto the Charity Commissioners website.

Day Centre Re-opens

On the 2nd of September this year, after almost six months of closure, Clyst Caring Friends Day Centre reopened to clients.

The COVID pandemic had forced closure in March and over the intervening months the future of the centre had looked, at times, uncertain. However, after weeks of planning, corresponding and cleaning (!), staff were delighted to welcome back some of our clients to the centre.

There had been many factors to consider and changes to make before we could reopen; we needed to ensure the centre was

safe and that clients and their carers and relatives felt reassured by the service we could offer. But we were also aiming to provide a



service that the clients would find welcoming, familiar and friendly. Being approached by a visitor-

wearing, thermometer-wielding member of staff, (particular if a client has cognitive or sensory impairments) can be rather scary, and all of this had to be considered and dealt with sensitively.

All of our clients had faced a challenging six months as they, and their and relatives coped with the restrictive conditions that shielding had imposed on them. The social isolation and the often reduced level of support from other friends and family put many people under pressure.

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Day Centre Re-opens

However, in spite of this, one of the most striking things we noticed on the first day, was our clients seemed healthier and happier than we had all expected. We had all been concerned about the toll the circumstances of this year may have had on them but it was immediately clear to us that each had received a high level of care and support (by often stretched and overwhelmed carers and relatives) during these difficult months.

To see the clients return was a rewarding and emotional moment for us – we had missed them! They were pleased to see each other and

us too. Understandably, most seemed a little overwhelmed by the changes and procedures we had been obliged to make and they were all rather quiet on that first day. However, they were quite easily reassured and by week two most seemed more settled and relaxed back into the routine. For us, to wave off an exhausted relative on that first day, knowing that they could take time to rest and relax added to our feelings of triumph at being able to reopen. It was also fantastic to see some of our volunteer drivers back again, who all seemed happy to be back in their valued roles.

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As the weeks have passed we have all adjusted and adapted, making changes along the way when necessary. We stay up to date with the latest advice and are now in a position to expand the service in terms of days of opening and client numbers. As a team we are proud of what we have achieved so far and would like to thank the clients and their relatives for returning to us and trusting us to provide support for them here in these strange times, and for helping us to adapt to the changes we have had to make.

CCF Charity Shop

With so many Charity Shops unable to open after lockdown, we are extremely lucky to have our Village Charity Shop open, with business almost back to normal.

Preparing the shop with covid 19 precautions in place was challenging. Our wonderful volunteers worked tirelessly to ensure every surface and corner of the shop was cleaned and sorted. I cannot thank them enough for all their dedication to Clyst Caring.

Donations have been restricted to one bag per customer, this enables us to quarantine everything for seventy-two hours and keep everyone safe.

We are also having to refuse donations that are difficult to store and keep clean for example: toys and large bulky items.

Thank you to our customers for understanding and for your generosity.



Charity Shop Volunteers

Surgery Report

It's been an eventful week or two here. On the afternoon of 9th October we were summoned to the Surgery, from our annual leave, for an emergency meeting. There had been a COVID outbreak at the Practice with 5 positive cases reported. On the advice of Public Health we were told ALL our reception, admin and clerical staff had to go home and self-isolate as they were identified as the main focus of the outbreak. Both buildings had to be fumigated over the weekend. Alternative home working

arrangements had to be put in place very quickly to enable staff to work from home, including answering the phones. That all took a few days to set up and we had to wave goodbye to the second week of the annual leave we had planned..... now postponed until December. Despite all that we've kept the wheels on and operated as (close to) normal. Drs Clements, Bird and Duncan all did their stints on the reception desk !

Some limited return to work is now taking place for the admin staff although, because of one further

confirmed case, we are having to maintain a strict split site policy between the Pinhoe & Broadclyst surgery premises with no staff member visiting both. That will remain in place next week as a minimum and may be extended. In the meantime if you ever have to come in to one of the surgeries, please do NOT visit the other without getting clearance first.

None of the above is a secret as such, but the advice from the CCG was not to publicise it unnecessarily.

Clyst Caring Friends AGM Postponement

Regrettably we have had to postpone the Clyst Caring Friends AGM this year because of the COVID pandemic. We took advice from the Charity Commission before deciding on this action. The reasons for the decision have been recorded in the committee meeting minutes, in order to demonstrate good governance. This is in accordance with the Charity Commission advice.

Our usual AGM venue is the Pinhoe waiting room. Even with chairs suitably spaced out, this would not be large enough to accommodate the 20 people who typically attend. The Day Centre would probably also be too small. However the much bigger issue is the average age of those attending, which is typically over 70 years. I know that many of our older volunteers and members are active and generally fit and well. Nevertheless, it is now well established that the risks of serious complications of COVID infection increase rapidly with age, particularly from age 60. The committee could not justify bringing together a group of higher-risk individuals and for an extended period of time.

We did think about a 'virtual' or online meeting, but felt that for the numbers involved this was not a practical solution. Not everyone has access to suitable equipment and the sound and picture quality can often make participation difficult. Within the Practice we now hold our meetings using Zoom or similar systems and few meetings pass without some technical problems. We hope to hold an AGM next Spring and until then the committee members have agreed to remain in post.

Sadly we have lost the much-valued Sarah Vaughan, who decided to step down as a trustee because of her many other commitments. During her time on the committee Sarah spent hours writing up policy documents, sourcing funding and doing risk assessments – among other things. We are very grateful for all her hard work and the expertise and enthusiasm she brought to the table. She will be missed.



We are very pleased that limited re-opening of the Day Centre has been achieved. This is in large part due to the detailed risk assessments and operating procedures researched and prepared by Carole Traer and Dr Lindsey Gibson. The Devon County Council officer who reviewed the plans said this: "Thank you so much for sending me your risk assessment, it's brilliant. One of the best!". High praise indeed. Until we are able to meet again, thank you to all the staff, volunteers and members of Clyst Caring Friends for your continuing support.

.Dr Catherine Clements – Chair of Trustees

CLYST CARING FRIENDS YOUR LOCAL CHARITY SHOP

**Help your Community!
Bargains galore,
All proceeds to Clyst Caring**

OPENING HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
9:30 am - 4.00 pm
Saturday 9:30 am -12:00 pm

*Donations always welcome,
purchases even more so*



Transport Service

Lockdown brought a complete halt to all of our services. With the Clyst Caring Day Centre closed and the majority of surgery appointments taking place by phone consultation, our transport service didn't operate for a five month period through April to the end of August.

Thankfully, in September our Day Centre was able to open its doors again to a small group of clients. This signalled the return to volunteering for some of our drivers who help to transport our clients to and from our Day Centre in Broadclyst.

Measures had to be put in place to keep our drivers and the clients as safe as possible whilst travelling in the car. These measures include face masks being worn by both parties, hand sanitiser being used and with the clients having to sit in the near-side back seat to create as much space between driver and clients as possible. Our drivers also have to wipe down areas in the car after the client has got out as a precaution against the Covid virus.

Our drivers are also now beginning to help again with the odd surgery appointment, with the same measures in place as for our Day Centre clients. We are also doing "Screening Calls" the day before the appointment takes place, where I phone the clients to make sure that they have had no recent Covid symptoms and they are well enough to travel. At the moment we are only able to help those clients who can get in and out of a car by themselves; this is so that we can keep social distancing in place as a safety measure for both the client and the driver.

If you would like more detail on any of our services and what we are able to offer during the pandemic, please phone our main office, Tel. No. **01392 464940**. If I am not in the office please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as I am able to do so.

Ann Unwin,
Office Manager



CLYST CARING FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP AND TAX DEDUCTION FORM

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE EMAIL

I/We would like to become a Member of **Clyst Caring Friends**
(Please tick the appropriate box)

ANNUAL MEMBER : Single £5.00
Couple £8.00

LIFE MEMBER : Single £25.00
Couple £40.00

I would like CCF to reclaim tax on all my donations made on or after the date of this declaration. I am a UK tax payer and pay tax equal to Please tick box or more than the tax deducted from my donation

DATE/...../.....

Please return completed form and remittance to the Clyst Caring Office at Pinhoe Surgery