

## 12. Methodist Homes (MHA)

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### 1. General report

- 1.1 MHA has continued to provide care and support to more than 19,600 people in later life. This has been achieved through our 90 Care Homes; 70 Retirement Living Schemes; and numerous Live at Home schemes (now 'MHA Communities'). For the 2020/21 financial year MHA budgeted for an income of £250 million with a predicted surplus of £19 million. This was reforecast during the year to an income of £228 million and a net surplus of £1 million due to the impact of COVID, specifically from reduced resident income and increased staffing and other related costs such as PPE.

MHA relies on the annual surplus to support its special services, such as Chaplaincy and Music Therapy. With reduced income, reductions to central support costs and a drawdown of reserves have ensured these services have continued.

- 1.2 At the start of 2020, MHA was developing its strategic plan and envisaged positive progress in work to connect services, share resources and link with a growing number of partners and supporters. In February 2020 a Coronavirus planning group was formed and in March 2020 all our homes and schemes closed to non-essential visits. At the same time a major incident management structure was created and many areas of development work were suspended in order to focus the organisation's resources on meeting the challenge of COVID-19.

### 2. SARS-COVID-19

- 2.1 For most of the year all our facilities remained closed to non-essential visitors and we experienced the untimely deaths of many of our residents, members and seven colleagues with COVID-19. In a rapidly developing health emergency MHA had to adapt and change with considerable speed, sourcing vast amounts of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and managing the financial challenges which arose with significantly lower occupancy.
- 2.2 The national and local support extended to MHA by the Methodist Church has been invaluable. This has ranged from a grant enabling our Methodist Church 'One Intern' to work with the Charity for an additional year to the donation of knitted hearts, cards, and gifts sent to support and encourage our residents, members and staff. Throughout the crisis we have known that members of the

Church have continued to hold us in their prayers and this has meant a great deal to people who could otherwise have felt invisible to the local community.

- 2.3 MHA Sunday could not take place in the usual manner as chapels and churches were closed. However, MHA made a unique MHA Sunday video, shown on the afternoon of 14 June 2020 and watched by thousands of people online. This moving service recognised the losses already experienced at that point and featured contributions by our Music Therapists as well as archive footage of hymns from the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service in Derby Cathedral.
- 2.4 MHA Chaplains have worked creatively during the pandemic to ensure that spiritual support has been available at all times. Due to shielding, some chaplains have worked remotely, offering services by digital connection to homes and working to keep relatives informed and supported during extended periods when physical visiting was impossible.

Monthly Zoom calls were set up for all chaplains to join, with members of the MHA Leadership Team giving contributions and answering questions. One of these meetings was joined by the Revd Richard Teal, President of the Conference.

- 2.5 Staff acted above and beyond our normal expectations, and MHA owes a debt of gratitude to all our colleagues who have ensured that every effort has been made to keep people safe. Nevertheless, the loss of life has been unprecedented and, for the first time in its history, MHA held a national Memorial Day across all its services. On Friday 4 September 2020 a specially commissioned video was shown with a two minute silence at 11 am in memory of everyone who had died to that point in the pandemic.
- 2.6 Staff welfare has been a major focus of concern and action during 2020. Both individual and small group counselling has been sourced by MHA and offered to colleagues, especially in schemes badly affected by the pandemic. A four stage Wellbeing Strategy was developed and implemented, drawing on the best expert advice.
- 2.7 In August, due to the changing environment and significant fall in occupancy, the decision was taken to reduce central support costs. This had a number of consequences including the restructuring of the area and regional support structure for chaplains. Following consultation a number of voluntary redundancies took place and a new part-time role of Area Support Chaplain was created. The number of 'Heads of Chaplaincy' was reduced from three to two.

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2.8 Other notable items for the year include:

- Due to the pandemic MHA was subject to a significantly raised level of media interest. Our CEO, Sam Monaghan, became a frequent contributor to BBC news programmes including a *Newsnight* programme in June dedicated to how the charity was managing the pandemic so far and regular interviews with Radio 4's *Today* and *World at One* as well as many other outlets. This increased media profile means the work of MHA has been seen by millions of people in the past year.
- During 2020, inspections of MHA's care homes and retirement living schemes with care were largely suspended. Instead, inspectors focused on checking settings for their response to infection prevention control. Overall, 91 percent of MHA's inspected services are rated as good or outstanding or equivalent. During the year MHA's 'Live at Home' provision was transformed. With face-to-face meetings paused, the service increased its digital engagement with people in later life, and in September 2020 it was re-named 'MHA Communities' with restructured staffing and the appointment of a digital team to produce online content. In addition, schemes supported members through additional befriending activities, door step visits, collecting and delivering prescriptions and food as well as providing treats such as arranging fish and chip lunches delivered, afternoon teas to mark VE Day and monthly activity packs.

2.9 For several years MHA Board Meetings have begun with a prayer offered by a resident, member or staff colleague. This is recorded in advance and during 2020 we were able to continue this practice as chaplains filmed the prayers and sent them in ahead of meetings. It has been a small but meaningful expression of our mutual prayers and connection during a time of enforced physical distancing.

2.10 Music therapy continued to be a valued service for people living in our specialist dementia care homes. We now employ 26 music therapists, with hundreds of individuals benefitting from one-to-one sessions. During the pandemic the working practices of Music Therapists were reviewed, with restrictions on cross-site working, and arrangements were made so that residents could continue to benefit from this therapy wherever possible.

2.11 Methodist Homes Sunday in 2020 raised £92,225, for which we offer grateful thanks. This figure was considerably reduced compared with previous years due to the closure of chapels and churches for MHA Sunday. This year the official date for the Sunday is **13 June** although it can be moved to suit local needs. Our theme for worship is '**relieving loneliness and bringing hope**' and a range of material

linked to this theme is available to download from our website ([www.mha.org.uk/sunday](http://www.mha.org.uk/sunday)).

- 2.12 MHA is working to ensure that wellbeing support continues as and when the critical stage of the pandemic has passed. This includes a Chaplaincy-led initiative entitled *Relative Recovery* which provides information, guidance and signposting for anyone who has experienced any kind of loss during the crisis.
- 2.13 The CEO Sam Monaghan spoke to the Conference in 2020 about MHA's experience during the pandemic and thanked members of the Methodist Church for their prayers and support. In addition, he was also the guest on a number of podcasts broadcast by the Church to update members.

### **3. Accounts and Governance**

- 3.1 The latest audited accounts are available on request from our website or from Epworth House. Our Annual Impact Statement, which tells the story of MHA's activities, is also available on the website or from Epworth House.
- 3.2 During the year Mr James Reilly was elected to succeed Mr John Robinson CBE as Chair of the Board with effect from September 2021.
- 3.3 The Trustees who oversee the work of the charity continue to offer excellent advice and guidance, sharing between them considerable expertise across the range of MHA's activities. The focus of MHA's holistic approach to care is at the root of their willingness to serve as Board members and they bring a range of spiritual and belief commitments to the role.

### **4. Church appointment to the Boards of MHA**

- 4.1 The Revd Ruth Gee continues to serve as the Church's nominated Board member.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

#### **12/1. The Conference receives the Report.**