

14. Methodist Homes (MHA)

Contact name and details	The Revd Dr Chris Swift Director of Chaplaincy and Spirituality chris.swift@mha.org.uk
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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 88 care homes, 70 retirement living schemes and numerous MHA Communities schemes supporting older people living independently in their own community.
- 1.2 For the 2021/22 financial year MHA budgeted for an income of £229 million with a predicted Net Surplus of £13m – of which £8.4m is government monies and £2.2m is non-recurrent property sales. MHA faced considerable financial challenge due to the decline in occupancy caused by the pandemic and the restrictions for admitting new residents to homes and schemes that were in outbreak. Government funding to assist with infection control and staff absence due to COVID-19 helped in 2021/22, but this funding has ceased in the 2022/23 financial year. This cessation of income, coupled with ongoing COVID outbreaks and major increases in energy costs, suggests that the Charity will just be above a breakeven position in the new financial year.
- 1.3 MHA relies on the annual surplus, along with its fundraised income, to support its specialist services, such as Chaplaincy and music therapy, as well as contributing to funding our community services. With reduced income, reductions to central support costs and a drawdown of reserves have ensured these services have continued.
- 1.4 At the start of 2021, MHA developed its strategic objectives and business focus for the next financial year, placing an emphasis on four areas along with a COVID-19 recovery plan. For most of the past year MHA continued to operate its Gold Command, both in order to manage its response to the pandemic and also to address the staffing crisis in social care.
- 1.5 MHA has continued to embed a positive approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the organisation. A diverse range of events are celebrated across the year, from LGBT+ History Month to Black History Month, enabling colleagues, residents and members to share their stories in a supportive environment and learn from one another.

2. Responses to COVID-19 and innovations in care

- 2.1 Thanks to the success of vaccinations, our homes and schemes were able to open in line with the guidance issued in the home nations of the UK. Visiting restrictions were gradually eased in care homes, enabling families to be reunited. Our retirement living residents were able to gather again in our communal areas and MHA Communities (previously known as 'Live at Home' schemes) were once again able to meet for face-to-face activities.
- 2.2 The national and local support extended to MHA by the Methodist Church continued to be invaluable. This included the donation of knitted hearts, cards, and gifts sent to support and encourage our residents, members and staff. Throughout the continuing pandemic we have known that members of the Church have held us in their prayers and this has meant a great deal to people at MHA.
- 2.3 In October 2021 MHA partnered with the Learning Network to deliver a webinar, 'After the Storm', looking at grief and loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with practical suggestions to support those still grieving.

- 2.4 As churches had started to open for worship once again, MHA Sunday was able to take place as usual with congregations returning to face-to-face worship, and MHA is grateful for this support for the day. In 2021 we raised £152,200 for our services and are grateful for this support. This year the official date for the Sunday is 12 June although it can be moved to suit local needs. The theme for 2022 is 'Growing Together' inspired by Isaiah 43:19 and we will celebrate how the beauty, tranquillity, and joy of nature, can reduce isolation and bring communities together. Resources for the day can be found at www.mha.org.uk/sunday.
- 2.5 Our supporters also helped us raise funds to provide robotic pets which help people living with dementia, and Tiny Tablets (which are actually giant tablet computers) for our care homes. These have a range of apps on them for residents to use as well as having facilities such as video calling.
- 2.6 We appointed our first Digital Chaplain to enhance and support existing chaplaincy services, offering new ways for communities to interact, complementing existing skills and reaching audiences further afield.
- 2.7 The work of MHA chaplains continued to have a key role within the life of the Charity, supporting residents, members, their families and our colleagues.
- 2.8 We held our second Memorial Day in September 2021 to remember those who had died in the past 12 months and the event featured a special film featuring our chaplains and music therapists.
- 2.9 The on-going issues in recruiting people to work in social care reached crisis point in autumn 2021 when MHA had to close a number of homes to new admissions due to staffing levels. This had been exacerbated by colleagues leaving due to the mandatory vaccination requirement from November 2021. Fortunately, a recruitment campaign successfully led to some new appointments and, while the situation has eased, the underlying issues of recruitment remain (even though the need for mandatory vaccinations has been lifted).
- 2.10 Staffing was a contributory cause of MHA's announcement of the intention to close the MHA Richmond care home in Bexhill on Sea, along with issues of over provision of care home capacity in the town.

Other notable events in the year

- 3.1 MHA launched its first national campaign #FixCareForAll focusing on five asks to reform the adult social care sector including the need for long term funding and the recognition of the workforce as skilled and in need of investment.
- 3.2 There was continued media focus for MHA with Chief Executive Sam Monaghan contributing to programmes such as BBC Radio 4's *Today* and *World at One*. In November, Sam was interviewed as part of an ITV Tonight programme focusing on the staffing crisis in the sector.
- 3.3 During 2021, inspections of MHA's care homes and retirement living schemes with care were largely suspended. Instead, inspectors focused on checking the approaches taken to ensure high standards of infection prevention and control. Overall, 94% of MHA's inspected services are rated as good or outstanding, or equivalent.
- 3.4 The restoration of The Wilderness at MHA Hall Grange care home in Croydon has been completed. Originally laid out by the Revd Henry Wilkes, creator of the world famous Shirley poppy, the historic seven-acre garden has been transformed thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and opened up for the benefit of residents and the wider community.

- 3.5 Evaluation of the Better Together project in North Staffordshire with Father Hudson's Care showed 71% of members/ beneficiaries feel less lonely and isolated and 22 new social groups have been set up during the four years of the project. Additionally, 84% of volunteers felt they had been able to make a difference through their volunteering
- 3.6 Music therapy continued to be a valued service for people living in our specialist dementia care homes. In 2021 we joined a partnership with Casio and Music for Dementia for the Light Up My Life research campaign. Casio has donated 50 light-up keyboards to MHA dementia care homes which will be used to engage with residents living with dementia for improved music participation. The research project aims to gain a better understanding and insight into how the use of these musical instruments, as part of a care plan, can better help people living with dementia at various stages of the condition.
- 3.7 MHA's Strategy led to the launch of specialist development plans for Music; End of Life Care; Spirituality and Dementia Care. These Specialist Service Strategies are being translated into Welsh and shared with Synod Cymru.

Accounts and governance

- 4.1 The latest audited accounts are available on our website or by request 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.
- 4.2 During the year Mr James Reilly took over from Mr John Robinson CBE as Chair of the Board from September 2021 following a transition period. The Board expressed its appreciation for Mr Robinson's personal commitment, passion and experience in chairing the Board during an unprecedented time for the Charity.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 The Revd Ruth Gee continues to serve as the Church's nominated Board member.

*****RESOLUTION**

14/1. The Conference received the Report.