

# BRIDGE TRUST



PROVIDING A BRIDGE FROM HOMELESSNESS

## Annual Report 2019-2020



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## Message from our Chairman

Our year to 31st March 2020 was once again dominated by uncertainties and changes to our largest funding source, our support contract.

We previously reported that this funding, received via a contract from Kent County Council, transferred to another agency, Look Ahead Care and Support in April 2019. We were told that they would work with us to sub-contract parts of the service by September, but they subsequently decided to provide the adult homelessness service themselves, albeit for only high needs homeless people and for reduced numbers. They therefore reduced the “transition funding” they were providing to us by over 50% and informed us that this would cease completely in March 2020, leaving us with no funding to provide any support services at all.



As the unreliability of this funding stream was becoming apparent to us, we took decisions to re-shape our income model to enable us to continue our services without relying on this income. This reshaped model has already involved a significant reduction in our costs, and we will continue to drive down costs through greater investment in IT hardware and systems, which will allow more home working and overall efficiency. We have had to develop home working due to the coronavirus pandemic and we will build on that experience. Additionally the reshaped income model no longer contains any plans to return to the retail sector which cost us dearly in the recent past. Lower costs will enable us to depend more on the income we derive from our homes without falling into deficit, and of course we will continue to seek donations from those who generously support our cause for the homeless. This strategy has left the Trust financially secure and we can view the future with greater optimism than the loss of the funding would otherwise have suggested.

The result of the actions we have taken leaves the Trust with lower income overall, but with the accompanying lower costs we are able to maintain our services in their previous form.

A major boost to our plans came in the form of a grant from another local charity, High Hilden Limited, who sold their care home and distributed some of the proceeds to local charities, including the Bridge Trust who received a grant of £700,000 to buy a new house in Tonbridge for our homelessness supported accommodation. This gave us the opportunity to close two of our lease-hold flats in Tunbridge Wells and replace their capacity with a property of our own. Our houses also provide us with income from the rents, usually paid through the housing benefit system, so the new house increases our housing income stream as well as providing housing for 5 people.

The Board is very grateful to our staff for the quality of support given to our clients maintained throughout this turbulent period and although there is a temporary reduction in our capacity whilst we get our new house open, we will soon be up to full capacity again, supporting 22 people.

The end of this financial year saw the start of the coronavirus pandemic and the associated “lockdown”. As our accommodation was already full, this did not leave us with any empty rooms, and although staff were only supporting our residents largely over the phone, our service continued successfully. The main impact from the crisis was the delay in refurbishing our new house which we now expect to be open by July 2020.

Whilst we were managing the financial challenges of losing our statutory funding to Look Ahead, they paid us transitional funding for the residents we were already supporting before they were awarded their contract, to give them the time to get their own operations up and running. By receiving this funding, we were obliged to use their new homelessness referral system, which provided us with far less referrals than we have had in previous years.

Therefore, although we had seen referral numbers increase year on year for the past 5 years, this year we saw a drop from 188 in 2018/19 to just 47, although some of this was due to us having to temporarily downsize our accommodation as mentioned above.

However, the quality of our service was maintained throughout the year with 84% occupancy and with 13 people moving on successfully from the trust to independence, with an 81% success rate which was exactly the same as the previous year.

We are confident that the actions already taken and those planned for the future will enable the Trust to continue to provide our much-needed service to those in our community who are in such need.

*Nicolas Heslop*

# What we do

The Bridge Trust provides life-changing services to homeless people in our community; helping them turn their lives around so they can move out of homelessness and into independent living. Many people come to us for help when they are at one of the lowest points of their life. By giving them the basics such as a place to live, to sleep safely, get food, benefits and then perhaps work, we start to help them re-build their confidence and wellbeing to a place where they are motivated to move their lives on.



We support single homeless adults, who fall outside of the statutory definition of being in “priority need” and therefore outside of the local authorities’ duty to house them. We work primarily, although not exclusively with people who have a connection to Kent, and particularly our local area of west Kent. We support people of all genders who have support needs, from 18 years old upwards and we give our support with professionalism, compassion, respect and understanding.

We believe in the basic human right for everyone to be given the opportunity to have a safe and secure home of their own. Our work therefore is to provide the essential services that someone may need as they journey over that bridge from homelessness to independence; helping, advising and assisting in any way we can. Each person we help is different and we tailor our support according to each individual’s needs.

## Supported Accommodation

The Bridge Trust has 4 properties providing shared accommodation for up to 22 people at one time. These are normal, residential properties in residential neighbourhoods as we believe that this approach is key to our success in helping homeless people reintegrate into the everyday life in their local and wider community. Each resident has their own secure bedroom with their own fridge and many also have washing facilities. All other facilities of the house are shared with their house-mates.



Each resident has their own Supported Housing Officer (SHO) who helps them work through whatever issues may have contributed to them becoming homeless and anything that may be a barrier to them gaining independence. These can be emotional, financial, substance dependencies, health, training, employment, general life skills, or more usually a mix of several of these.

A Support Plan is agreed with them, setting shorter-term goals which are tracked together to reach longer-term aspirations. This is revisited and reviewed regularly, with progress discussed, actions agreed and plans made for the next steps in their journey. The SHOs can also facilitate access to outside support agencies and community organisations such as careers advisors and coaches, mental health professionals, debt advisors and so forth. We empower residents to enable them to fulfil their potential and re-establish direction in their lives.

Although residents can be with us for up to 2 years, the average stay in one of our houses is around 12 to 14 months so in any one year we typically support between 30 and 45 people. When a resident is ready to live independently we help them find their new accommodation and can continue to support them once they have moved-on, through our Supported Move-on scheme.



## Supported Move-on (Re-settlement)

We don't only support residents when they are living with us, but we also provide further support when they move-on from us into their own accommodation. We can give continuity of support through what can be a difficult time for someone – sometimes living on their own for the first time. We can provide a move-on pack of essential provisions and equipment, along with some furniture provided through grant funding.

This support gives people the best possible chance to make that transition to the next stage of their lives and gives them confidence as they adjust to a new set of challenges.

## Advice

In recent years, statutory funding to give advice to single, homeless people has been directed to other organisations and in addition the Homelessness Reduction Act, implemented in April 2018 gives further duties on local authorities to give advice and guidance to non-statutory homeless people. However, if anyone comes to us for advice we don't turn them away and this can often lead to an application into our own accommodation. If we are unable to help people ourselves we always try to connect them to other agencies we work with.

## Homelessness Prevention

Homeless mediation can work for any relationships where conflict threatens living arrangements. When there is family conflict that leads to homelessness, the ideal solution is often (with some exceptions) for the person to return to their family home. We offer the opportunity for any parties in conflict, whether young or old to sit down in neutral territory to listen, talk and communicate. This is often all it takes to reach a workable understanding and is an approach we sometimes employ with our own residents who may not get on with each other.

# Outcomes

## Quantitative Outcomes

	18/19	19/20
<b>Applicants</b>		
No. of homeless people coming to us for help and advice	110	43
No. of people who applied for accommodation with us	188	47
No. suitable for accommodation	54	41
No. accepted into our accommodation	29	20
<b>Residents</b>		
No. of people in our accommodation throughout the year	43	32
% Residents finding voluntary work	21%	9%
% Residents finding employment	65%	38%
% Residents in education or training	67%	13%
No. of residents who moved-on from us	21	13
No. supported through our Supported Move-on scheme	17	12
<b>Total No. of homeless people helped</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>103</b>

## Quality Outcomes

The headline statistics above give an indication of the outcomes that have been achieved for the people we have helped over the past 2 years. From those, the *“Number accepted into our accommodation”* shows how many previously homeless people we gave a home to. The *“Number of residents who moved on from us”* shows those who we have moved on into secured, independent accommodation – the ultimate goal.

However, between someone moving in with us and then moving on from us, lies a significant amount of work and achievements for both the Trust and the homeless people we work with. The following pages show some of our “qualitative outcomes” which we have achieved with our residents. Often referred to as “soft” outcomes, these give an insight into the significant achievements which underpin those headline statistics – the work that takes place with a client on their journey through our service and then on into independence.

## Welfare Benefit Support



Received support to obtain correct benefits  
Received correct benefits

15  
16  
94%

## Debt Support



Received support to reduce debt  
Debt reduced at time of leaving

10  
8  
80%

## Choice, Control and Involvement



Received support in developing confidence and ability to have greater choice and/or control and/or involvement  
Had more choice and/or control and/or involvement during residence

14  
13  
93%

## Employment Support



Received support to obtain paid work  
Participated in paid work during period of residence

10  
8  
80%

## Improved Mental Health



Received support to manage their mental health better  
Managed their mental health better during residence

14  
10  
71%

## Wellbeing



Received support to participate in leisure/cultural/faith and/or informal learning activities  
Participated in chosen activities during residence

13  
13  
100%

## Improved Physical Health



Received support to better manage physical health better  
Managing their physical health better during residence

10  
10  
100%

## Training and Education



Received support to participate in training or education	5
Participated in training or education during period of residence	4
	80%

## Substance Misuse



Received support to better manage substance misuse issues	6
Managing substance misuse issues better during residence	2
	33%

## Criminal Activity



Received support to comply with statutory orders and related processes in relation to offending behaviours	3
Compliant with statutory orders and related processes at time of leaving	3
	100%

## Summary

The above figures show that The Bridge Trust has a positive impact on the quality of its residents' lives throughout their journey with us. Although the degree to which we are able to have a positive impact varies with certain issues (such as substance misuse for example) you can clearly see that our residents' lives are improved by our support.

They are:

- subject to less financial stress from low incomes and/or debt
- more likely to be in employment providing them with more money, meaningful activity and the associated enhancements to feelings of self-worth
- more likely to be in a situation where they can gain useful skills through education, training or volunteering
- better able to make social contacts through work, training etc. as well as by participating in activities with others
- more likely to be able to break the chain of offending behaviour to the advantage of themselves and the community
- able to access emotional support from friends and family
- less likely to suffer the negative impacts of physical or mental health issues or of substance misuse
- less likely to harm themselves or others or be subject to harm from others
- more likely to be an active participant in shaping their lives and the community around them.

# Trustees Report

The trustees (who are also directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their report and the audited financial statements of The Bridge Trust Corporation for the year ended 31 March 2020. This trustees report is also the directors' report and so is also prepared in accordance with section 415 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees confirm that the report and financial statements of the charity comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document, and the provisions of "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

## Reference and Administrative Details

The Trust employed 4 full-time and 4 part-time staff during the year. Part-way through this year, our fundraiser changed their previously full-time role to a part-time one as our social media officer and our Receptionist left. Fundraising is now undertaken by the CEO. In addition, at least 5 volunteers assisted in helping at the Trust's office and at fundraising events.

## Structure, Governance and Management

The Bridge Trust Corporation is a charitable company limited by guarantee and was established in October 1995. It is governed by up to 20, but not less than 4 trustees in accordance with the Articles of Association. There are currently 6 trustees, who are responsible for the overall direction and strategic

management of the organisation. They are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and can hold office until the second AGM following their appointment when they are eligible for reappointment.

Trustees are recruited to ensure the charity has access to a comprehensive range of skills and on the basis of the specific needs of The Bridge Trust.

The Trustee Board:

- holds an Annual General Meeting to which all its Members are invited
- meets a minimum of 4 times a year where decisions are made relating to strategic issues affecting the charity
- confirms that they have, in administration of the charity, paid due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

## Vision, Mission and Strategy

*Our Vision:* We work to alleviate homelessness by giving people the opportunity to have a home.

*Our Mission:* Founded on Christian principles, we provide single, homeless adults with the best accommodation, support and related services that will empower them to move on into independent living.

*Our Strategy:* The Trust's strategies are approved by the Board of Trustees and are reviewed on a regular basis.

## Significant Achievements

The Trust provides public benefit by meeting its core, charitable objective and during the year provided supported accommodation for up to 43 single homeless adults within 5 properties. The Trust continued to work, often with other community-based organisations, to provide the quality of support that single homeless people need to achieve sustained independence.

We provide an in-house Tenancy Training programme to better prepare people for moving-on and some other agencies have expressed interest in us delivering it for their residents. Our Resource Centre continues to provide a valuable contribution to our residents with access to internet P.C's, with accompanying guidance on CV's, letter-writing and job searches and the opportunity to maintain their social networks.

During the period we accommodated a total of 32 homeless people and saw 13 people move-on into independence. We continue to implement a quality standard for our accommodation, based on the government's Decent Homes Standard, which although does not apply directly to us, we believe it to be best practice against which we can self-assess to ensure the quality of our accommodation. Two of our properties fell under new regulations for defining Houses of Multiple Occupation and we obtained the relevant licences accordingly. All our properties now also meet these HMO standards.

At the end of the year we adapted some of our policies and procedures to cope with the coronavirus crisis, which meant that support for our residents was successfully provided remotely.

## Membership of Statutory Bodies and Community Groups

The Bridge Trust seeks to be an active member of the West Kent community, lobbying and raising awareness of homelessness issues where appropriate. In particular we are active members of the Tonbridge & Malling Local Strategic Partnership, the Tonbridge Forum, the West Kent Partnership Housing Sub-Group and the West Kent Private Landlord's Forum. We also hold membership with Homeless Link, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Regional Action and Involvement South East, Imago and regularly attend various business networking groups.

## Financial Review

### *Income:*

Our total income for the year increased from £427,917 to £1,065,052.

The principal sources of income were:

### *Supported Accommodation (arising from Licence and Support charges):*

Decreased from £263,234 to £202,098.

### *Donations, Grants and Legacies:*

Increased from £156,629 to £853,605. This was mainly due to a single grant of £700,000 to purchase and re-furbish a new property for our supported accommodation.

### *Expenditure:*

The Trust reduced its expenditure this year from £381,601 to £343,105, mainly due to the loss of two staff members and leases being surrendered on retail outlets. The principal areas of expenditure were:

### *Charitable Activities (arising from providing accommodation and support services):*

Decreased from £327,192 to £282,044.

#### *Raising Funds (grants and donations):*

Decreased, from £17,378 to £5,427. This was due to not having any fundraising staff.

#### *Charity Retail Operations:*

Increased from £36,507 to £53,952. This was due to payments of backdated business rates and legal fees to surrender property leases.

### Retail Operations

During the year we completed the planned closure of our retail operations by releasing ourselves of leasehold commitments on both of our remaining retail properties.

### Fundraising, PR and Marketing

The Trust employed one part-time Social Media Officer during the year. The Chief Executive has the responsibility for any Fundraising, Marketing and PR activities.

### Reserves

The Trust's total reserves at the end of the year were £1,339,582, of which £159,325 were Restricted to specific use, £846,013 were held for Designated purposes to ensure continuity of our accommodation-based services and the remainder of £334,244 were available for Unrestricted use.

The total reserves of £1,339,582 contained liquid reserves (net current assets) of £460,529 and £879,053 held as fixed assets. The reserves are established over time through an accumulation of net incoming resources from the charity's activities. They are available to fund revenue or capital expenditure and are also a contingency against anticipated future funding shortfalls.

The Trust, having acknowledged the risk of losing its statutory funding via Kent County Council's Support contracts, had over the past years accumulated liquid unrestricted reserves to mitigate against this eventuality. The current level of liquid reserves represents approximately 10.5 months average operating costs, compared to the policy of having between 3 and 6 months average operating costs.

### Plans for the Future

Our plans for the future are set out in our rolling three-year Business Plans, which are reviewed annually by the staff, our service users and the Board. We now publish our Business Plans on our website. Our plans acknowledge the continued pressure we will have on our funding, our determination to provide excellent accommodation and support to our residents and the continued impact of welfare reforms upon our current and future clients.

During the first half of 2020/21 we will be opening a new 5 bedroom house in Tonbridge for our supported accommodation. Also, as the lease on our head office expires in April 2022, we will be working towards obtaining a smaller, and therefore less expensive office, with more home-working taking place.

In addition, we will be embarking on a major upgrade of our IT infrastructure to strengthen resilience, add more contingency services and more easily enable off-site working.

### Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted

Accounting Practice), including the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP FRS 102;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### Statement of Disclosure to Auditors

So far as the trustees are aware, there is no relevant audit information which has not been disclosed to the charity's auditors. They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any matters which would be relevant for audit purposes, and to ensure that such information has been communicated to the charity's auditors.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies' regime in Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the board of Trustees on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and signed on its behalf by  
Nicolas Heslop, Chairman.

## Summary Finances

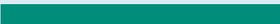
### Summary Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2020

	Restricted Funds 2020	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Total 2020	Total 2019
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	728,685	124,920	853,605	156,629
Charitable activities:				
Supported accommodation	-	202,098	202,098	263,234
Investment income	-	9,349	9,349	8,054
<b>Total income</b>	<b>728,685</b>	<b>336,367</b>	<b>1,065,052</b>	<b>427,917</b>
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	-	61,061	61,061	54,409
Charitable activities	28,118	253,926	282,044	327,192
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>28,118</b>	<b>314,987</b>	<b>343,105</b>	<b>381,601</b>
Net losses on investments	-	(32,666)	(32,666)	( 253)
Transfers between funds	(541,242)	541,242	-	-
<b>Net income and net movement in funds</b>	<b>159,325</b>	<b>529,956</b>	<b>689,281</b>	<b>46,063</b>
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds bought forward	-	650,301	650,301	604,238
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>159,325</b>	<b>1,180,257</b>	<b>1,339,582</b>	<b>650,301</b>

## Summarised Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2020

	2020	2019
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	626,013	176,033
Investments	<u>253,040</u>	<u>186,585</u>
	879,053	362,618
Current assets		
Debtors	26,120	30,069
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>459,516</u>	<u>278,610</u>
	485,636	308,679
Liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(25,107)	<u>(20,996)</u>
Net current assets	460,529	287,683
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>1,339,582</b>	<b>650,301</b>
The funds of the charity		
Restricted funds	159,325	-
Unrestricted funds	1,180,257	650,301
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>1,339,582</b>	<b>176,033</b>

## Income and Expenditure at a Glance

Income			
Donations and Legacies	853,605		80.14%
Supported Accommodation	202,098		18.98%
Investment Income	9,349		0.88%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>1,065,052</u>		
Expenditure			
Raising Funds	61,061		17.8%
Charitable Activities	282,044		82.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>343,105</u>		

## Trustees Statement on the Summarised Financial Statements

The summarised financial statements are an extract from the statutory annual report and financial statements of The Bridge Trust Corporation for the year ended 31 March 2020 and which have been audited by Lindeyer Francis Ferguson Limited. The full annual report and financial statements were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf on 7 July 2020 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and Companies House. A copy of the Company's full annual report and financial statements can be obtained, free of charge, from Mr J Handley, 17A Quarry Hill Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2RN.

The auditor has issued unqualified reports on the full financial statements and on the consistency of the Trustees Report with those financial statements.

The Summarised Financial Statements on pages 13 and 14 are for information and have no statutory status. The members of The Bridge Trust are entitled to a full set of the statutory accounts that have been prepared by the Trust's auditors, and these are available on the Trust's web site: [www.thebridgetrust.org.uk](http://www.thebridgetrust.org.uk).

The Trust's Auditors are:

Lindeyer Francis Ferguson Limited  
Chartered Accountants  
Statutory Auditors  
North House  
198 High Street  
Tonbridge  
Kent  
TN9 1BE

## Patrons

The Rt Rev James Langstaff, Lord Bishop of Rochester  
The Rt Rev Simon Burton-Jones, Bishop of Tonbridge  
The Rt Rev John Hine, Auxiliary Bishop for Archdiocese of Southwark  
James Priory, Headmaster, Tonbridge School  
Tom Tugendhat OBE, MP (Tonbridge & Malling)  
Mrs Sue Aldred

## Directors / Trustees

Nicolas Heslop (Chairman)  
David Glynn (Vice Chairman)  
Bruce Pugsley FCA  
Peter Lowe (Resigned December 2019)  
Erica Ffrench  
Helen Von Trotsenburg  
Gemma Buckland (joined January 2020)

John Handley (Chief Executive and Company Secretary)

### Registered (Head) Office

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[www.thebridgetrust.org.uk](http://www.thebridgetrust.org.uk)

Registered Charity No: 1050291  
Registered Company No: 3111576