

BBC
RADIO



CHRISTMAS
APPEAL



90
YEARS

For supporters of the
BBC Radio 4 Christmas Appeal
with St Martin-in-the-Fields

You were there



Manu was supported by The Connection

Thank you. Your kind generosity is supporting many people like Manu, so he could access life-changing services and turn his life around for the better.

Within this newsletter you can hear the positive steps Manu has taken since he was supported by The Connection, and from many other people who are taking brilliant strides forward, now they've had that little bit of support. Manu said:

'Without The Connection I haven't got a clue where I'd be... They're trying to help me. To me The Connection is home.'

As you may know, each gift is shared between the Vicar's Relief Fund and The Connection at St Martin's. When you chose to make that precious gift to the 2015 BBC Radio 4 St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas Appeal, you stood with someone and offered your hand. Through coming together we are all stronger. We hope you enjoy reading over the next few pages, as you will see many examples of this for yourself.

Inside

Hugh Dennis tells the story of the Christmas Appeal, as we mark 90 years. Visit www.smitfc.org to find out more.

Thank you for standing with us as we mark 90 years of the Appeal, and 90 years together



I'm very glad to tell you that you helped raise an incredible £2.5 million for the 2015 BBC Radio 4 St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas

Appeal. You can read about how your gifts have been helping vulnerable people in this newsletter. It's not about magic wands or quick fixes: it's about slow, sustained, resilient, sometimes painstaking steps to emerge from crisis into dignified, empowered lives. It's very hard to do this alone; and it can't be done overnight.

While planning for the 2016 Christmas Appeal we reflected on the way the Appeal is a remarkable partnership between the BBC Radio 4 listeners, the St Martin's community, especially The Connection, those who work with homeless people around the country, and homeless and

vulnerable people themselves. This year we also see the Appeal, and the partnership between all who support it, reach a landmark 90 years.

That's why we want to call the 2016 Appeal, simply, **'Together for 90 years'**, marking the 90 years that St Martin's has run the Christmas Appeal with the BBC and with kind support from our donors each year. The 'together' emphasises that it's done in partnership, and that the most important thing we can do is to show a vulnerable person that they are not alone.

Thank you for being part of this precious partnership. We really appreciate your support.

Yours sincerely

Revd Dr Sam Wells

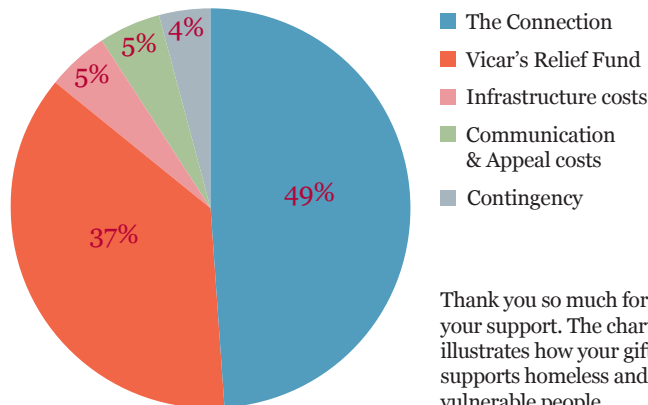
Our year in 2015. How your money is spent.

2,571 people accessed practical and advice services, receiving support for homelessness and with housing

744 people slept at the Emergency Night Centre

658 people accessed our in-house training, education & employment service

3,090 grants were awarded by the Vicar's Relief Fund



Thank you so much for your support. The chart illustrates how your gift supports homeless and vulnerable people.

With your support Manu is making a new start

After losing his job, Manu battled with addictions and also ended up losing his home. You supported Manu to move on with his life and now he is ready to return to work.



Manu had a job in London for almost 20 years, but after he lost it, he began to struggle with his alcohol and gambling addictions and lost his home. Thanks to your help, Manu is now doing really well and is hoping to move into his own flat soon.

Manu was sleeping rough on the streets of London but with the help of the Outreach Team he started to get back on his feet. Manu remembers how Beki, the Outreach Team Manager, helped him:

'She put me in The Connection Night Centre. I stayed for five months. I felt safe and warm, that's what you need. Especially in the cold weather you need some place safe and warm and The Connection is there.'

£50

can provide a safe night's sleep in our shelter, while long term housing is found.

Over the years, Manu has accessed a range of different services at The Connection but the one that has helped him the most is The Connection's in-house volunteering scheme, Step Up, through which he completed a six week placement in the kitchen. At first he didn't think he could do it:

'You know what? Anybody can do it. If I can, anybody can do it. It doesn't matter what age, anybody can do it. It's very, very good for your future, for your CV and another reason I did it was because I want to pay The Connection back for what they did for me. They've done a lot for me – I've learnt to be patient and be kind to people because they've been there.'

With your support Manu is now doing really well, looking forward to moving into his own flat and looking for a job as a cleaner. Manu added:

'Without The Connection I haven't got a clue where I'd be. Maybe I'd be dead. When I started coming here I was getting banned from the centre. I know the limit now and I don't cross that line. They're trying to help me. You have to lead by example.'

With your help we're Better Connected



A client takes part in Better Connected

Last October, the Connection started a new drop-in group called Better Connected, to help people who are homeless gain vital online skills that they often lack. The group is an inclusive space, supporting people to feel more confident using the internet.

Because many come to The Connection with absolutely no experience, the tutors here show them how the internet and IT know-how can help in their day-to-day lives. Each workshop focuses on different areas such as Keyboard Skills, Social Media, Digital Photography or Internet Safety.

William has been a client volunteer from the start and says:

'I never used Facebook or Twitter before but after being involved with Better Connected I now have an account. I can see how you can put your views across and I like that because it's democratic. There's a lot to learn in Better Connected and so much software available to clients. If you've got the technology you can really do things, and it's free!'

No Scrooge in this Christmas Carol...

Last Christmas, we were delighted to have the support from the cast of 'A Christmas Carol' which ran at the Noel Coward Theatre in St Martin's Lane, during the festive season.

With a contribution made from ticket sales and collections on site, we were over the moon to receive a fantastic £17,106!

Cast members Jim Broadbent, Samantha Spiro, Adeel Akhtar, Keir Charles and Amelia Bullmore came to visit The Connection at St Martin's, to see for themselves how the centre in Trafalgar Square supports homeless and vulnerable people through specialist services – including a day and night centre and street outreach.



We would like to say a very big thank you to the cast, the many audience members and Sonia Friedman Productions for their enthusiasm, support and generosity.

There are now 940 people sleeping rough each night in London, which represents 26% of rough sleepers in England.

Your donations to the Christmas Appeal mean The Connection can keep their doors open all year round. With your support, last year 744 people stayed in the Emergency Night Centre. The Connection's Outreach Team are out in London every night, looking for people bedded down, to offer help and support, with many referred to the night shelter.

1,417

rough sleepers were contacted by our street outreach team and encouraged to access relevant support services, last year.



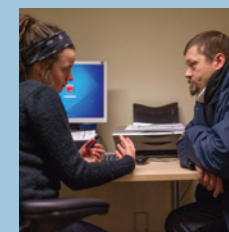
£5

provides someone with a hot meal, a shower and clean clothes



£15

can help improve confidence, with an activity workshop session



£25

can help to end homelessness for someone, with an in-depth assessment for someone sleeping out.



£50

can provide a safe night's sleep in our shelter, while long term housing is found.



£100

pays for an employability course, with interview techniques, confidence building and presentation skills – and helps someone get back into work.



£200

will provide street outreach support and help someone in crisis

The Vicar's Relief Fund

Since January this year, you have supported 1,475 people with grants awarded by the Vicar's Relief Fund.

The Vicar's Relief Fund (VRF) provides urgent grants to vulnerable people, right across the UK. In 2015, your support meant 3,090 people were supported into accommodation, or saved from the threat of eviction.

Grants from the VRF average between £200-£300, and are usually given within 48 hours, which can avert a crisis and have an enormously positive impact – just when someone needs it most. Your support makes this vital work possible, thank you.

Did you know?

The Vicar's Relief Fund awards grants to the following:

- To pay rent arrears to remove the threat of eviction
- To help fund a deposit in order to secure a new tenancy
- To pay for essential items such as a bed, cooker or fridge freezer
- To pay towards a Debt Relief Order or Bankruptcy fee, when someone is faced with imminent eviction.

In the financial year 2015/16 the majority of grants were awarded to secure a tenancy (36%), followed closely by grants to pay rent in arrears (35%), then beds and appliances (24%) and DRO/Bankruptcy (5%).

With your support, the VRF team award grants to organisations right across the UK, supporting people far and wide – from Inverness to Belfast, Aberystwyth to Exeter.

30%

increase from last year of rough sleepers in England, the number has increased from 2,744 to 3,569.

Source: DCLG, Autumn 2015

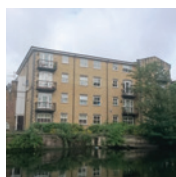
Trish Kinsella manages the Rainbow Centre in Scarborough and earlier this year she wrote to us to say thank you. Trish applies to the VRF for urgent funds, so she can secure housing for someone sleeping out, or help when they might be under threat of eviction.

'I don't know if you fully realise when you say yes to a request for help what a difference you are making – not just to the individual who we are requesting the help for but to those of us who see how much the life of a person can be changed by something as basic as having somewhere to live. Many of the ones who you have helped us with are now on the way to recovery from their addictions and have met up with family that they have been estranged from for many years.'



Nottingham: John became homeless after his relationship broke down. After sofa surfing for several months, John was supported with a grant for £350, which enabled him to secure a tenancy.

Support worker, Sue Jackson, Community Rehabilitation Company



Scarborough: Steven had a history of alcohol abuse and was homeless for years. He had lost everything – his family, his home and his job. You helped Steven with a VRF grant for £280, which helped him secure a home of his own. Steven has now been sober for six months and attending support meetings. He is also in contact with his family again.

Support worker, Trish Kinsella, Rainbow Centre



Wales: When Kieron and his younger brother struggled with rent arrears, you supported them with a grant of £140, so they could stay in their hostel. Now they are no longer at risk of eviction and Kieron can focus on completing his training course and looking after himself and his brother.

Support worker, Shani Payter, Vale of Glamorgan Council



Sheffield: Elliott had made fantastic progress from living in supported accommodation to independent housing. However, in this transition to supporting himself, a gap in income led to rent arrears, leaving Elliott at risk of eviction. You helped Elliott with a grant of £85 to pay these arrears, which enabled Elliott to move into his new home.

Supported by Action Housing and Support, Sheffield



Wales: Shaun had been homeless for five months. With your support, the VRF provided Shaun with a grant of £250, so he could pay rent in advance and secure accommodation.

Support worker, Natasha Daniels, The Wallich, Llanelli



Belfast: As a child, Jennie spent years in foster care after her mother died and her father suffered from health issues. Jennie is now 20 and she has moved into her own accommodation. Your support provided Jennie with a grant of £250 to buy a cooker and fridge freezer, helping her to settle into her new home.

Support worker, Sharron Gray, Belfast Central Mission

**Please note these are stock photographs and not homes of the people featured.*

With your support, we keep The Connection doors open



Every day The Connection's Day Centre opens its doors to 150-180 homeless people looking for support.

Kaz, who's been Deputy Manager for over 17 years, explains what kind of support people receive when they first come through the doors:

'The biggest part of my job is managing the Day Centre on a daily basis. It's about making sure that everyone that comes in is treated properly. That they're given a full assessment, that we check in with them about why they're here and what we can do to help. I think it's quite important that we make them feel safe and secure, that we treat them with respect when they come in, we'll do everything that we can to help them with that.'

'When I open up on a Monday morning I try as much as I can to say morning to everyone. If I know their name then I'll always use it. As people come in the building, I will always greet people by name, because I think your name is the most precious thing you can have. That personal identity, not just being another homeless person.'

Sometimes building up the trust needed to work with someone can take years and for those clients who don't feel confident enough to come into the busy Day Centre, Kaz runs a Rough Sleepers group on a Friday. She remembers one of those clients:

'He was very, very sweet, rough sleeping and in his late 50s with a few physical health problems. Just very, very quiet; he didn't like coming into the Day Centre; it was just too busy for him. It's about relationship building, eventually Outreach Workers convinced him to come on a Friday, then into the Night Centre and to Crisis at Christmas with us. He said it was the best Christmas he'd ever had. Just after Christmas we managed to find him accommodation and he's been as happy as Larry ever since.'

Without your donations, The Connection Day Centre wouldn't be able to take the time to build these relationships; Kaz thinks it's often the small things that make the real difference.

'And that's what the donors do for us, they give us the freedom to do those sorts of things and to treat each person as an individual.'

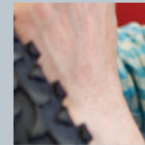
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people took part in a range of activities and groups designed to build life skills and self-esteem including mindfulness, art, stop gambling and anger management support.

The Build a Bike course providing skills and improving health



Frederik completed the Build a Bike course at The Connection.



This year your gifts have helped 13 clients to complete a three day 'Build a Bike' course at The Connection, an introduction to building and maintaining a bike. Each participant is given a flat packed bike on the first day and during the three sessions they learn how to build and maintain it. The course is run by Bikeworks, a social enterprise which uses bicycles and cycling as a tool to tackle social and environmental challenges at a community level. The introductory course can lead onto a City and Guilds qualification in Bike Maintenance – and around half of the 13 participants are now working to complete this qualification, giving them the qualifications needed to work in a bike shop on the high street.

Steve Huddleston, Group & Activities Co-ordinator in the Connection's Day Centre says:

'The Build a Bike course is great as not only does it build participants confidence and give them skills to get back into work but also gives them a cost effective mode of transport to keep. They can then use the bike to get around expensive London, going to appointments and interviews, while also improving their health and well-being – win win!'

Frederik is one of the Build a Bike participants and he's now working towards his City and Guilds qualification. He told us how he plans to use the qualification to work with other people in the community:

'When I've completed this course, I would like to help people understand bicycles: I'm always rescuing people and now I hope to help people with their bikes. I love to do things that make a difference and hope after this I can make a difference in the community.'

Who else came to help the 2015 Radio 4 Christmas Appeal?



Miles Jupp

Miles began supporting the St Martin's Christmas Appeal from last year, with a short film in which he imagined what life on the streets would be like, and what it must feel like if he were homeless.

'Last year I asked people to support the St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas Appeal, because it's a way each of us can make a difference – by giving our attention and making a donation.'

Now, so many months on, it's fantastic to hear that so many people did just that – and by doing so helped to raise £2.5m for the Appeal! This huge gesture of support will allow St Martin's to help many more people away from life on the streets.'



Hugh Dennis

Last year Hugh went out with The Connection's outreach team, to understand what drives people to become homeless. On a typical night, the outreach team see about 30 people and see new faces every night.

'When I look back at that night with Neil and Samah from the outreach team, what struck me was how people were living their lives in these small, hidden corners of London, in places you just wouldn't notice. The appeal asked us to 'Pay Attention' to those people, and thousands of people really did – what a wonderful thing.'



Aasmah Mia

Aasmah presents the BBC Radio 4 programme 'Making a Difference', in which she reports how money raised from the Christmas Appeal is helping people to change their lives around.

'The programme 'Making a Difference' features people like Dennis, Phil and Margaret who have overcome huge difficulties, often experiencing loneliness and pain – both physical and psychological. A small act of kindness or a little practical help can provide just what someone might need to get their life back on track, and that's just what people do when they support the Radio 4 Christmas Appeal.'

Supporters of St Martin's sing their support

Last Autumn, we were joined by a few friends at Radio 4, who came to support the Christmas Appeal by recording the song 'I See You'. The song was written by John Telfer (also known as The Archers Vicar of Ambridge Alan Franks) and Clive Hayward, to raise awareness of homelessness and what it means to be homeless. It was a special evening here at St Martin's, where people came together to spread message of the Appeal – and share their musical talents!



'It was amazing to take part in the recording of 'I See You'. I wanted to be involved because the song seemed to capture so wonderfully the spirit of what The Christmas Appeal is about; reaching out to people and asking them to stop, reflect on what it is to be homeless and to help in whatever way they feel they can.'

Felicity Finch, (aka Ruth Archer),
BBC Radio 4



'When I was approached to take part I was a bit worried about unleashing my less than perfect alto on the world! But the experience was thoroughly enjoyable, well organised and of course all in a great cause. The lyrics of 'I See You' were perfectly pitched to get the message across and demonstrate the ease with which any of us are only a few steps away from finding ourselves in a position where we too need help and compassion.'

Carolyn Quinn, BBC Radio 4 presenter

Will you be with us to mark 90 years of the Christmas Appeal?

The 2016 Appeal will mark 90 years that the BBC and St Martin's, with the fantastic support from you, our donors, have been working with homeless and vulnerable people as they positive steps forward and move on with their lives.

This year, the Appeal will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on Sunday, 4 December at 07:55 and repeated on Thursday, 8 December at 15:25. You will also be able to hear the impact your donation makes by listening to 'Making a Difference' on 4 December at 09:45 and 17:40, and repeated on Friday 9 December at 15:45.

Visit www.smitfc.org to watch our videos, including the history of the Christmas Appeal and the song 'I See You' recorded at St Martin-in-the-Fields Church.



A precious partnership for 90 years – thank you for being part of it

This year marks 90 years of the Christmas Appeal. Thank you for standing with us, and for being part of a precious community with the BBC, St Martin's and those we support who are homeless and vulnerable. Since the first Christmas Appeal in 1927 the huge support of our donors has resulted in £22m to support others in their time of need.

90
YEARS



How to contact the Christmas Appeal team

The Christmas Appeal is only made possible because of your kind support and generosity. If you would like any further information about the appeal, please contact Kirsty on the details below:

Phone: 020 7766 1138

Email: Kirsty.cunningham@stmartinscharity.org.uk

Web: www.smitfc.org

Other ways to support the Christmas Appeal

As you may know, the services you support aren't just over the festive period – they run all year round. Every day, The Connection at St Martin's opens its doors and welcomes 200 people, and the Vicar's Relief Fund provides funds across the UK.

If you would like to support St Martin's with a regular gift, please find enclosed a donation form to set up a regular donation. Alternatively, you can set this up directly via our website.

If you are already making a regular gift to St Martin's, thank you for all that you do.