

# Mini Newsletter

APRIL 2020



## A message from the Vice-Chair

My goodness, so much has happened since our last issue of our Newsletter in September last year!

The main thing on all our minds at the moment is the dreadful affects of the Covid-19 pandemic across the world. It has resulted in tragic loss of life across the world, economic impacts for countries, businesses and charities. On our televisions and in the press we have discovered the amount of kindness the general public has shown in volunteering and fund raising to help fight the affects of the virus. Now we are following the government's guidelines on social distancing which will hinder the spread of the virus and reduce the pressure on our National Health Service already working flat out to save lives across the country. I've just received the letter sent to us all from the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson. The letter and the leaflet that was enclosed give us all very clear guidelines to follow.

Within Darlington Town Mission the impact has resulted in even more social isolation for the Friends that we support. We can no longer arrange our monthly outings programme or the Friends Forum lunches. Churches are all closed for public worship and many care homes cannot allow friends or family visiting.



Our Missioners, Sue Allison and Hilary Reaney, each have a case load of Friends that they are telephoning on a regular basis instead of conducting home visits.



During March prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> there were 86 visits/contacts and after the 16<sup>th</sup> there were 177 contacts by text, email or telephone calls completed by Missioners. Help is being given with collecting shopping and prescriptions as well as on-line shopping as required. Some of our volunteer visitors are now maintaining phone contact with Friends and also helping with shopping collections. All our current efforts are much valued by Friends.

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## Economic Impacts

Along with so many other charities the Mission is feeling the economic impact of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. Our investment portfolio has significantly fallen in value by 22% since December 2019, so we will be using reserves to meet our expenses. The Fund Raising Committee reached the sad, but inevitable decision that all fund raising events originally planned for this year have been put on hold.

On a happier note the Fund Raising Committee continued to raise funds from September until February this year. They are a wonderful group of dedicated people.

- The October Quiz night at St Thomas Aquinas raised a magnificent total of £648

- The Christmas Carol Singing collection at Sainsbury's raised £415
- Mary Drury held a special January birthday party at her home and donations in lieu of presents raised £422 for Town Mission funds. Thank you so much Mary, you're a star.
- The Fourum Concert in February raised £681 which was amazing, especially as many turned up on the night to pay on the door.

This loss of income challenges us all to consider other ways in which to offer financial help to our charity.

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## Monthly Outings Programme

Since September the Missioners have arranged a number of group outings before social distancing was introduced:

- 29 Friends, our Missioners and 13 volunteer drivers enjoyed a tour and afternoon tea at Locomotion, the railway museum at Shildon in September.
- Another afternoon tea with a musical theme was enjoyed at Elm Ridge Methodist Church in October.
- 36 Friends and their volunteers enjoyed a visit to Strikes Garden Centre in November. The garden centre staff are so welcoming, and the catering was great.
- Jack Frost Party at Polam School on 12<sup>th</sup> December. A traditional afternoon of excellent entertainment, great food and fun. 38 Friends, DTM missioners and 14 drivers went.
- QE 6<sup>th</sup> Form Christmas Party on 16<sup>th</sup> December. A lunch time event featuring a primary school choir from Jarrow, a generous lunch, bingo, pass the parcel and a free raffle. 28 Friends, DTM missioners and 11 drivers went.
- Our Annual DTM Carol Service at Haughton Methodist Church was on 20<sup>th</sup> December. DTM Friends Nance and Nancy read the bible passages, Rev Andrew Wigram, our Chair, led the service and everyone enjoyed the refreshments afterwards provided by the DTM missioners and volunteers. 25 Friends, DTM missioners and 13 drivers attended along with many others. The place was full!
- Harrowgate Hill Methodist Church hosted an afternoon of food, dancing and fun on the day of Burn's Night, 25<sup>th</sup> January. There was a quiz, a dancing school display and a most generous afternoon tea.
- We had an outing to Mainsgill Farm Shop in February which turned out to be our final outing before the Covid-19 struck. 29 Friends, the Missioners and 11 volunteers enjoyed the afternoon with great refreshments. Some even managed to see some new-born lambs in the barn. What a joyful sign of spring and hope.

Looking at this busy list, you will quickly realise how dramatically some of normal activities have been affected. Our Friends look forward to these events, but now we can only support them in other ways. We pray that our programme of events, monthly outings and home visits will be back in full swing soon.



## Co-op Sponsorship

This year the Darlington Co-op stores have once again selected DTM as one of three local charities to sponsor. This time their sponsorship is funding a series of exercise classes for our Friends. Of course, these classes cannot get going at the moment because of the Covid-19 outbreak. Hopefully they will commence as soon as things improve. You can boost the sponsorship by becoming a member of the Co-op and selecting DTM as your chosen charity. A percentage of your Co-op purchases will then be donated to DTM. The Co-op Community Pioneer is also donating a number of Easter food hampers to some of our Friends that may not have family support at this time. Sue and Hilary will be delivering them to bring a bit of Easter Joy.

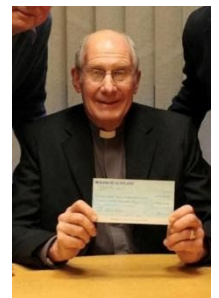
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## Covid-19 and our AGM

To comply with the Charity Commission's regulations charities must hold an Annual General Meeting each year that must take place at least 15 months apart. We originally planned the AGM for 28<sup>th</sup> April, but this is no longer possible as the venue is closed.

Instead, the Management Committee are planning a remote AGM on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Current members will be sent Declaration of Commitment to send back to the secretary. Annual Reports will then be issued to those that have responded.

At the AGM we need to elect officers and trustees, accept the annual statement of accounts and appoint the independent accounts examiner. All of these will be included in a proxy voting form issued to members. Minutes of the 2019 AGM will also be issued to members for approval. Please contact me if you need further information.



We are sad to announce that our Chair, Rev Andrew Wigram, is stepping down at the AGM as he and his wife Catherine are leaving Darlington to live nearer family in the Midlands.

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## Our New Logo and Website

Work has been going on with the executive and others to introduce a newly designed logo which is on the top of this Newsletter. It will be used for our advertising and promotional material. It will also be featured in a new website that will be available shortly. Cloak & Map Digital were contracted to carry out this project which has also been supported by one of our Trustees, Julia Bean.

We look forward to seeing this in action, especially as our charity is facing financial difficulties at the moment. Let's hope that a new image will increase our profile with the wider community in Darlington as we continue to seek out new volunteers, fund raisers and corporate sponsorships.

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## Easter Blessings to all our readers



## A Prayer for Today

by Revd. Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference

*Loving God,*

*If we are ill, strengthen us; if we are tired, fortify our spirits.*

*If we are anxious, help us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.*

*Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders.*

*Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves. Fix our eyes on your story and our hearts on your grace.*

*Help us always to hold fast to the good; see the good in others and remember there is just one world, one hope and one everlasting love with baskets of bread for everyone.*

*In Jesus we make our prayer, the one who suffered, died and was raised to new life, in whom we trust these days and all days, **Amen.***

## A Prayer for all those connected with Darlington Town Mission

*Loving God,*

*We pray for all our Friends, volunteers and staff that are finding life anxious and hard to bear at this time. We pray especially for Friends and volunteers that are ill at the moment. Dealing with isolation with poor health is a tough time. Give them strength and hope knowing they are not alone if they reach out to You.*

*Please pray for our Management Committee, the Executive Committee and the Fund Raising Committee who all work so hard for Darlington Town Mission. We pray for them and all those involved with our charity in so many ways. In the name of Christ, our risen Saviour and ultimate 'friend'. **Amen.***

Each of our meetings concludes in prayer and remembers those Friends that have died during the past 10 years that month. They are also remembered in a Wall of Remembrance that is included in the new website.

With Easter blessings and good wishes for the future of all in the DTM family,

*Brian  
Simpson*

Vice Chair and Acting Secretary  
8<sup>th</sup> April 2020



*If anyone would like to contribute to the Autumn DTM Newsletter, please contact me.  
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