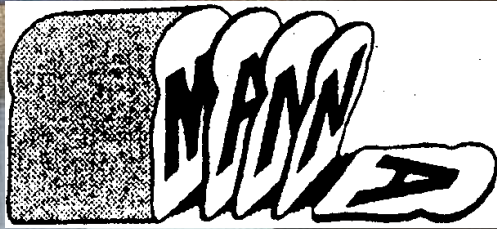


MANNA

CENTRE

The Manna Society  
Annual Report  
2011 - 2012





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**Patrons:** Most Rev Kevin McDonald, Retired RC Archbishop of Southwark,  
Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Anglican Bishop of Southwark.

### **Committee Members**

- Bill Dodwell ..... Chairperson
- Tony Charlton ..... Treasurer
- Becki Bruneau, Canon Michael Cooley, Pauline Emmerson, Nannette Ffrench, Cha Power & Marc Thurgood. (Committee Members elected at the Manna Society AGM 14<sup>th</sup> Sept 2011).

The ***Manna Society*** began in 1982 and formed under a constitution in 1988 (amended in August 1989). Our Charity Registration number: 294691.

The Society's objects and purpose: ***'to relieve poor persons who are homeless and/or unemployed by the provision of food, shelter and other forms of Christian care with the object of promoting the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of such persons and of improving their conditions of life.'*** (Constitution No 2a)

### **The Ethos of the Manna**

Our vision is the creation of a just society that respects the dignity of every individual.

The Manna Day Centre is a place of unconditional acceptance. Our task, as we see it, is not to judge but to love.

We aim to respect the dignity and worth of each person with whom we come in contact. Each and every one has an intrinsic value that deserves to be respected. No one is dispensable. Our task is to feed and care for homeless people and those in need who seek our help, but we cannot be content with this. We must also seek to challenge the structures of society that lead to homelessness and poverty.

## Director's Report

By  
Bandi Mbubi



The highlight this year has been the Manna Society reaching its 30<sup>th</sup> year of existence. It is an opportunity for us all to take stock of our work together. What can we consolidate or improve in the way we work with homeless people and all those in need? Our clients often struggle with a variety of social, physical and mental health problems, some of which cause them great pain and heartache.

For me and perhaps for you too, Nannette Ffrench's vision that invites us all to respond to one another's pain helps us to remain compassionate. We are pilgrims on this earth. As Christians and people of goodwill, we should not harden our hearts when we hear the cries of the world around us. Because through them, we may indeed really hear God's cries. Reading through literature published at the Manna Society's inception, I can clearly see that the Christian ethos was at the centre of all its activities. The principles of love, acceptance and the inherent value of human life were at the centre of what they did. They continue to propel us in our work. They are challenging to staff, the management committee, supporters and service users alike; they are a tough call. They keep us steady and are our compass. It goes without saying that as we celebrate our anniversary, we must renew our commitment to these values.

This year has been no different from previous years. Except for the addition of our new education service to the six others we have been providing over the years. It has been a steep learning curve for us. Some of our initial assumptions have proved to be unfounded. For instance, in spite of many people putting themselves forward for literacy classes, almost all dropped out within the first 2 months. Low literacy did not mean necessarily that people would be motivated to address the problem. Our computer classes, however, have proved to be the most successful, in terms of attendance with on average between 7 and 10 people attending each week. Our volunteer teacher, Esther Torrington's contribution has been invaluable. She has helped us create an interesting and friendly environment in which students can learn and challenge themselves. After a slow start for the Tuesday English class, it picked up midway through the year with a weekly average of 7 people. The Saturday English class has been steady and more regularly attended with an average attendance of between 7 and 10 people a week. We hope to build on what we have learnt this year to continue to offer even more opportunities for people to learn and acquire new skills.

The food service has remained the most popular with an average of between 150 and 200 meals served everyday. Unlike in previous years, we have stopped getting our food supplies from Fareshare, a voluntary sector food redistribution organisation. Our shower facilities have been constantly in use and like in previous years people have been able to get a change of clothing twice a week.

The advice service is a beacon of hope for many people who turn to us for help. People have found solutions through using us with great satisfaction. Among the issues dealt with are housing, welfare benefits, criminality and utility bills. I feel a sense of gratitude towards our advice workers for their dedication to those who come for assistance.

The day centre has continued to be an oasis of peace and quiet in our modern day desert. We could not have had such a friendly atmosphere without our experienced and competent staff. They go beyond the call of duty to deliver such an excellent service. It allows our service-users to feel safe in the centre and this gives them the space they need to sort themselves out. Clients are always thrilled to be able to access our furniture store whenever they move into accommodation. We ask them to make a donation towards petrol to cover the delivery cost.

Our collaboration with the NHS remains fruitful and continues to benefit our clients. Nurse practitioners hold their surgeries twice every week. Our clients do not normally access health services unless prompted to do so. Left untreated, certain illnesses can become more serious and detrimental to patients and costly to the taxpayer. Fortnightly, we hold interdisciplinary meetings. They involve the nurses, the local mental health team, START, and outreach workers from St Mungo's.

All this could not have been possible without the R.C. Archdiocese of Southwark generously providing the premises in which we operate. Christians of all denominations continue to be our strongest supporters. The volunteers who offer their time and energy make this place what it is. Working alongside our paid staff, they provide us with the assistance we need to meet the needs of those who turn to us. Our management committee keeps us focused on what truly matters. We cannot thank you all enough.

## **Treasurer's Report**

**By  
Tony Charlton**



Included within this annual report is the statement of financial activities and the balance sheet for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

Our income and expenditure report shows that our income was £429,405 and our costs for the year were £435,852 and we therefore had a deficit for the year of £6,447. This is the third consecutive year that there has been a deficit and the cumulative deficit over those three years is slightly over £20,000. Because of the downturn in the economy, many other charities are having to deal with deficits and we are possibly suffering less than many. We consider ourselves fortunate to have built up healthy reserves in the previous few years and this means that we still have considerable reserves with the balance sheet showing total net assets of £205,057 at the financial year end.

After taking into account adjustments relating to the value of shares which were donated to us and which were sold in the year, both our income and our expenditure increased by around £10,000 in the year.

At the time of the last AGM, I reported that we had budgeted for a deficit in 2011/12 of £65,000 and I stated that I thought the deficit would be considerably more than that forecast figure. Because of that, we postponed expenditure on any new projects. We also lost a member of staff and we reluctantly decided not to replace her, at least in the short term. Despite that reduction in costs, we were still anticipating a large deficit at the year-end but we received two substantial donations very late in the year and, because of that, the deficit was "only" £6,447 as stated above.

We continue to make a provision of £50,000 in our accounts to cover any costs that we might incur as a result of the redevelopment of the site occupied by the Manna Centre and we are advised by the developers that they are hopeful of obtaining planning permission within the next six months or so and of course the demolition and building work would probably start fairly soon after that. We have no idea of what expenses we might incur at that time and therefore we think it prudent to make a provision for some estimated costs now, at a time when our balance sheet is still healthy.

We are budgeting for a deficit in the current financial year of £40,000 and this budget takes into account the fact that we have reduced our overheads by around £3,500 per month compared to the previous year. If that forecast proves to be correct, reserves would fall to around £165,000 and that equals roughly five months overhead and it would not be prudent to allow reserves to fall far below that. We therefore need to continue to work hard to raise funds as we will very soon have to make sure that our income exceeds our costs because we cannot continue to finance deficits indefinitely.

Although our financial position is not as good as it was it is still healthy, and each and every one of our donors is responsible for enabling us to be in that position. Once again, I take this opportunity to thank everybody who has donated money and/or goods and services in the past year. Also, it is important time to thank the Roman Catholic Diocese of Southwark for the use of this building, without which we would simply be unable to function. Additionally, I would like to thank the Diocese for their support during the ongoing negotiations relating to the redevelopment of this site. Also, this is the right time to thank all the staff and volunteers at the Manna for all the hard work that is involved in making this place so welcoming to our visitors, many of whom must surely sometimes feel unwelcome in our society.

**“A Busy Year”**  
By  
**Margaret Shapland**  
**Housing & Welfare Advice Worker**



As ever, one has been trying to keep abreast of what's happening in the homeless sector and I was drawn to a report recently issued by "Homeless Link. It looked at the decline in services and hostel beds across the UK. The report called suitably enough "Projects and Beds Report – 2012" showed that in London alone, 8% of hostel beds were lost in the period from November 2011 to May 2012 – a loss of a thousand beds across the capital. There were 52 fewer homeless projects nationwide.

We count ourselves lucky to continue to be here in our 30<sup>th</sup> year and delivering services to all who choose to cross our threshold, including those looking for housing. The loss of these beds contrasts with the rough sleeping figures we have drawn attention to in a previous newsletter article, which has shown that rough sleeping has increased by 25%. So where are these people going to go in the brave new world of the Big Society combined with the increasing pressures on statutory housing provision and what answers do our leaders have to the recent research that recommends more investment in low cost rented housing – answers, politicians please, on a postcard!

### **A brief look back on 2011-12**

As is the norm with the annual report, let's start with a brief resume of the work of the Advice & Welfare service during fiscal year 11-12.

#### **The Advice Service**

- **985 clients seen – an increase of 5% from last year**
- **1888 visits to the service – an increase of 2% from last year**
- **411 of those clients were looking for housing – we placed 253 in housing, an uplift of 17% from fiscal year 10-11**
- **3503 consultations on various topics with clients – an average of 3.56 per client**
- **Service offered for 302 sessions (compared to 314 in FY 10-11; 83% coverage; so despite offering fewer sessions, we increased the number of clients seen, the number housed and the number of opportunities that clients were able to speak to us about their problems**
- **We have been able to increase our productivity with the same level of resources, which can only be good for our clients and is a demonstration of how efficient our service continues to be**

### **A more detailed spotlight on employment & training**

The advice service has been asked by our major funders to look at the work we do with clients to help them into training, education and employment – these being interlinked. As you know we have started the Education and Training Project which I am sure will be touched upon in other articles in the magazine but within the advice service we undertake to assist clients who are seeking work. Last fiscal year, we helped 144 clients with such activity ranging from helping

them with CV construction to doing job searches with them, to referring to specialist employment projects, to helping them complete their job search booklets for the Jobcentre particularly where English is a second language and if left to their own devices, they may not complete it to the Department of Work and Pensions satisfaction simply because they cannot articulate as well as someone who has spoken English all their life and they therefore might run the risk of having their benefit sanctioned – meaning they can be left without funds for two weeks at a time.

### **What our plans might be in the future**

We have been lucky enough to build relationships with some new landlords over this period and are hoping to build capacity through trained volunteers that will hopefully enable employed staff to devote more time to this process. We know private rented is the direction of travel but we live in a world where private rented properties in London are at a premium, accommodation costs in Travel Zone 1 and 2 – which is where a lot of our housing clients want to live – are even more so and sometimes the standards of property in private rented are not what we might hope. So, if we can get out and about, network more at landlord events and forums in London boroughs that might give us a chance to build more momentum and more landlords. In doing so, not only do you have to think about the front-end of placing people into accommodation but help them to sustain that tenancy – assistance with housing benefit, debt management and budgeting, even advising on maintaining relationships with the other people with whom clients might have to share – the nature of issues that come up continue to surprise.

We have another proposal completed in conjunction with a property management company who secure leases on rented property, which is under consideration but more of that at another time.

### **The human side**

Of course, figures are just one part of the story. Each one represented is a human being with a story of their own and I am going to recount just a couple so you get an idea about the impact of our work.

### **Giordano – a safe haven from persecution**

Giordano who hails from Sierra Leone had already been through the asylum process when we first started to work with him. His claim had failed and he was destitute and living on the streets. We have known him since 2008, when he first started to use the centre. Our first step was to obtain the original papers from the Home office as we had made innumerable attempts to obtain them from his previous solicitor but as the case had been closed and the records archived by the firm, it was impossible to obtain them from that source. We made a Subject Access Request under the Freedom of Information Act for which we had to pay a fee. We did this in conjunction with the British Red Cross.

We also linked him to an organisation called Praxis who could do an assessment and have links to a large number of immigration solicitors – we helped him with fares to get to and from the solicitor. We also introduced him to the Jesuit Refugee Centre who were able to help him with some funds and toiletry supplies. A solicitor was found – I remember copying the one hundred plus pages of the original application manually feeding each page through our little copier - fresh evidence about the likely repercussions given his brother's political activities (even though Sierra Leone is not on the front page these days as an area of conflict) was gathered and has resulted in his asylum claim being accepted anew. He has NASS support providing accommodation and a small amount of living expenses.



Quite recently, he had been a victim of an attack in the street and had to appear at court when the case of his attacker was brought to court. He was entitled to receive some expenses to cover his travel and subsistence, so we helped him complete the form and as he had no bank account, we were the payee on the cheque against which we provided cash to him. When we gave him the money, he asked if he could contribute something to the society for the help we had given him. I was so touched and humbled that someone with so little who had survived on virtually nothing wanted to do this; it was hard to keep one's emotions in check. At this point, I could not allow him to give anything in a financial sense as he still has a way to go with his case. We have travelled a long road together.

### **Felicia – escaping from harassment**

Felicia is a 26 year old Eritrean girl who was living in Yorkshire. Through a call to her mobile, someone claiming to be from the Department of Work & Pensions obtained her personal details illegally. This resulted in problems with her benefits and she was being harassed by other people who had obtained her number. She changed her mobile but was still receiving calls. That is the reason that she gave us for coming to London.

In reality it is a little more complex. She is quite a naïve and trusting girl, suffers from depression (she is very tearful) and has a problem with her chest that requires specialist treatment, again a prospect that makes her incredibly anxious. In addition, she feels very isolated. It has been good to see her over this last couple of weeks, sitting with her countrymen and women and feeling like part of a community. We have made referrals to suitable hostels, linked her to a GP who has subsequently made a referral to a specialist for her health problem and she has an appointment for an X-ray and other tests. Just today when I was losing faith with ever being able to do so – as I had been trying every day for 2 weeks with no success, I have been able to secure some temporary accommodation that means that she will be safe until a more permanent solution presents itself from one of the referrals we have made. It has been a relief to me as it was worrying thinking about her being on the streets in a city she does not know well especially given her trusting nature.



As you are able to see from both these examples and those of my colleague, Karolina (to who I am so grateful for her industry and hard work) has mentioned, the range of our work is wide and the essence of it is that it is built on hope. I am always heartened by this little bon mot from Dale Carnegie, the author of “How to win friends and influence people” – he says

***“Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all”***

It says to me that no matter how remote the chance of success might be, we should never be seduced by the quick win as in doing so we may give up on something of great value. I think in the 30 years that the Manna Centre has been in existence that that is as good a spirit as any in which to continue.

Thank you all so much for sticking with us!

**Open To All**  
**By**  
**Karolina Muszynska**  
**Housing & Welfare Advice Worker**



Another year has passed and it is time to summarize our struggles and successes at the Manna Day Centre. It is also a great occasion for me to express something: I am proud to be a part of the Manna Day Centre Team as we all do a very good job here. And this is not empty praise but a judgment based on observations. The Manna Centre was founded 30 years ago with the purpose of providing people in need with essentials such as food, showers, clothes, access to welfare advice, etc. That is not much different from other similar places in London. What makes us different from most other day centres is the fact that, thanks to our donors, we can still serve people regardless of their local connection. Quite a large number of homeless organizations are financially dependent on their local councils and as a result they have to limit their assistance to local people. Manna is not an exception, we are partially funded by the London Borough of Southwark and priority to the Housing & Welfare Advice Service is given to those with a local Southwark connection. Please do not get me wrong on that – there is nothing bad in serving local people. However our service does not exclude those who do not fit the local connection criteria and that makes a huge difference.

Recently workers from another London day centre came to visit the Manna and I showed them around and explained how we worked - they were really astonished by the relaxed atmosphere and our open access policy. They explained that in their day centre if a homeless person wanted to access the food or advice services they first had to go through reception where they are asked about their local connection. If a person does not fit the criteria the service is refused and the client is signposted to another place (which is often the Manna Centre). Our doors are open to everyone, we do not question people – we assume that if you have come to us, you are in need and our aim is to assist you. Firstly, many homeless people will not be able to demonstrate a clear local connection to any London/UK borough. Secondly, some of our clients are in need of acceptance and although in housing now, they still choose to come to the centre just to socialize. Let me give you some examples:

1. **Pascal** came to the UK from France with some cash in hand and 800 Euros in his French account. He came here to find a job; he is articulate, well educated and speaks good English. When he came he opened a bank account and wanted to transfer his money from his French account in order for him to survive until he found a job. Unfortunately his bank refused the transfer, explaining that with a basic account international transfers are not possible. When Pascal's money ran out he became homeless with no cash for food, let alone travel expenses to search for a job. He came to the centre to ask for help. We managed to get him a small grant for his travel to the closest French city so that he could access his money. Now Pascal is back, thankful for the assistance he received and now he can start job hunting.
2. **Elena** is an older British lady, around 60 years old, housed some time ago by another London borough. She is a petit lady, always dressed in warm clothes regardless of the weather. Elena has been coming to the Manna for many years, on and off. She usually sits on her own, does not talk much with other users, but if you greet her she will give you a beautiful smile. She does not want to talk about her situation but you can feel that it is important for her to be here, among people. We can only speculate what she would do if we refused her access to the centre (no local connection). How lonely she would be, how isolated.
3. **Salem** came to London around two weeks ago from Cardiff. She is a 24 years old Eritrean refugee who had to escape from her own country due to religious persecution. She came to



the UK on 15<sup>th</sup> June this year. Initially she had been 2 weeks in NASS (National Asylum Support Services) accommodation in London before being moved to Cardiff whilst her asylum application was processed. She was granted limited leave to remain in the UK and asked to leave her NASS accommodation at the end of July. She decided to move back to London where there is a much larger Eritrean community. She has no local connection to any London borough and was signposted to our centre by another service. The only option offered to her by the other services she had visited was to send her back (or to use official parlance to “reconnect” her) to Cardiff as she has been there longer. Can we really count the month she spent there as a local connection? We are still working with Salem to get her a place to live.

- 4. **Grzegorz** is 42 years old Polish man who started to look for work in the UK after his marriage broke down. He was recruited in Poland to work on a farm in Wales. Unfortunately the conditions on the farm were very poor – low pay and high charges for overcrowded accommodation so after 4 months of work he decided to leave. Grzegorz had no idea what to do; he had no money and no place to stay. He has never claimed any benefits in his life and so had little idea about the welfare system in the UK. He decided to ask for assistance from the Polish Embassy. They gave him directions to the Manna Centre. We managed to place him in a night shelter and helped him to make a claim for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Now Grzegorz is waiting for the outcome of his JSA claim and searching through job adverts on the internet via free internet access at a local library. He is highly motivated so I am sure that he will find a job very soon.

Pascal, Elena, Salem and Grzegorz and many others will not fit the local connection criteria and may be easily overlooked by the system. I am glad that we can still assist them. Thank you very much for your support dear donors. Together we do make a difference.



# The Manna Society

## Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2012

	Restricted funds 2012 £	Unrestricted funds 2012 £	Total funds 2012 £	<i>Total funds 2011 £</i>
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
Incoming resources from generated funds:				
Voluntary income	2,000	418,282	420,282	398,763
Investment income	-	9,123	9,123	9,497
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>427,405</b>	<b>429,405</b>	<b>408,260</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
Costs of generating funds:				
Costs of generating voluntary income	-	7,398	7,398	9,052
Charitable activities	4,160	415,544	419,704	409,062
Governance costs	-	3,150	3,150	2,938
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>4,160</b>	<b>426,092</b>	<b>430,252</b>	<b>421,052</b>
<b>Net incoming resources / (resources expended) before investment asset disposals</b>	<b>(2,160)</b>	<b>1,313</b>	<b>(847)</b>	<b>(12,792)</b>
Gains and losses on disposals of investment assets	-	(5,600)	(5,600)	-
<b>Provision for major works before revaluations</b>	<b>(2,160)</b>	<b>(4,287)</b>	<b>(6,447)</b>	<b>(12,792)</b>
Gains and losses on revaluations of investment assets	-	-	-	4,065
<b>Net movement in funds for the year</b>	<b>(2,160)</b>	<b>(4,287)</b>	<b>(6,447)</b>	<b>(8,727)</b>
<i>Total funds at 1 April 2011</i>	<i>4,000</i>	<i>207,504</i>	<i>211,504</i>	<i>220,231</i>
<b>Total funds at 31 March 2012</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>203,217</b>	<b>205,057</b>	<b>211,504</b>

All activities relate to continuing operations.

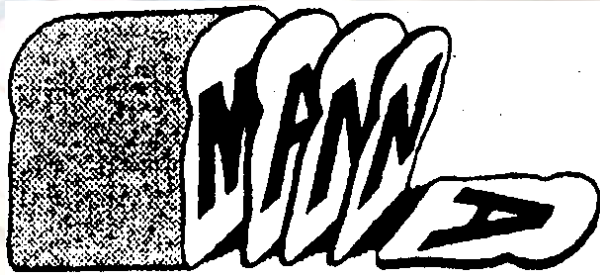
# The Manna Society

## Balance sheet as at 31 March 2012

	2012	2011
	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
	<b>6,931</b>	9,348
Tangible assets	-	<u>26,593</u>
Investments	<u>6,931</u>	35,941
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	1,778	999
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>305,591</u>	<u>272,772</u>
	<b>307,369</b>	273,771
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due within one year	<u>(59,243)</u>	<u>(48,208)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>	<u>248,126</u>	<u>225,563</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>255,057</b>	261,504
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due after more than one year	<u>(50,000)</u>	<u>(50,000)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>	<u>205,057</u>	<u>211,504</u>
<b>Charity Funds</b>		
Restricted funds	1,840	4,000
Unrestricted funds	<u>203,217</u>	<u>207,504</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>205,057</u>	<u>211,504</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Management committee on 31 July 2012 and signed on their behalf, by: Tony Charlton, Manna Society Treasurer.





The Manna Centre, 6 Melior Street, London SE1 3QP

Tele: 020 7403 1931

EVERY DAY (7 days a week)

- Approximately 150 - 200 people use our services
- 150-200 free lunches served
- Over 100 use our toilet facilities for a wash or a shave
- Over 40 have a shower
- 35 use the clothing store (Twice a week)
- Over 70% of service users are homeless

IN 2011-2012

- 985 clients benefited from Housing & Welfare advice
- Accommodation found for 253 clients

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