



The Manna Society Annual Report 2021 – 2022

Working with homeless people & those in
need for the last 40 years
1982 to 2022

THE MANNA SOCIETY

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

Committee Members

- Cha Power Chairperson
- Bill Dodwell Treasurer
- Tony Charlton, Nannette Ffrench & David Mendez

The **Manna Society** began in 1982 and formed under a constitution in 1988 (amended in August 1989). 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.

Back to normal!
By
Bandi Mbubi
Manna Centre Director



It has been 40 years since the Manna Society began its work with homeless people and people in need. Throughout our existence, we have always had an open-door policy, allowing everyone to come into our centre and find reprieve from whatever worries life throws at them, be it food, clothing, housing or healthcare, to name but a few. As staff and volunteers, we strive to create a welcoming environment in which people can feel valued, respected, dignified, oh yes, even loved. But never before has our approach been as challenged as it has been during the Covid-19 Pandemic because of the nature of the disease and all the precautions we all had to take to prevent its spread. The unimaginable happened when we closed the centre at the beginning of the pandemic for 2 very long weeks, from end of March 2020 to mid-April, which coincided with the very first nationwide lockdown.

From mid-April to July 2020, we cooked meals for people who were placed in temporary accommodation thanks to a generous government policy called 'Everyone In' which allowed anyone without adequate accommodation, including people sleeping rough on the streets, to be placed into emergency housing. We worked with staff from Southwark Council who delivered our meals to people in emergency housing.

As the pandemic went on, we adapted our services several times based on the changing needs of our service-users and the risk posed by the virus to the general public, to our service-users and staff. As soon as government first eased restrictions, we reopened the centre and began giving takeaway meals, from 10am to 1pm, to people who remained on the streets and those in food poverty at the main entrance of the centre. We did this till December last year, 2021.

For our service-users who wanted welfare and housing advice, during these 18 months, they had to go through a telephone advice line before they could be called into the centre for an appointment with an advice-worker. At the centre, to protect both the advice-worker and the client, they spoke to each other using videoconference, sitting in separate rooms. People in need of medical attention continued to be seen by a nurse from the Health Inclusion Team (HIT), part of the NHS, on a Wednesday as usual. Access to our shower facilities was very restricted during much of 2020 because of the associated infection risks; only 2 showers per day were allowed. We subsequently increased to 4 showers a day for much of 2021. Those who needed clothes had to fill out a slip and indicate the clothing items they wanted. A package was then prepared for them to collect when it was ready. We did this to limit contact between service-users and the volunteers who work in our clothing store.

With the Pandemic winding up towards the end of last year, we have focused our effort this year, 2022, on returning to the level of services we offered before the Pandemic. As a result, starting from January, we stopped all takeaway meals we had been giving. Instead, we invited people back in. We kept some restrictions in place for the very first couple of months, including limiting the number of people in the centre at any one time to 40. Numbers went down from an average of 120 takeaway meals per day to an average number of 50 indoor meals per day - during the first couple of months.

After many different adaptations during the past two years or so, including making improvements to our ventilation systems, we are now in a position to welcome into our centre everyone who seeks assistance from us. Here below is a description of how we are working with people now and for the foreseeable future.

1. Food

We have removed all restrictions, meaning that people can come in and go as they please from 8:30am to 1:30pm. When they arrive we give them sandwiches we make onsite alongside cakes and croissants we collect from local stores like Tesco and M&S. At 10am we offer porridge in cold weather, and cereal in warm weather. And at 11:30am lunch starts being served till we close at 1:30pm. Throughout tea and coffee are available.

2. Shower facilities

Similarly, we have removed all restrictions on our shower facilities. But because we no longer want people queuing up inside the shower facilities, people wishing to have a shower wait in the centre and are informed when it is their time to have a shower. On average 30 people have a shower every day.

3. Clothing

We have gone back to our original arrangement which means that people are given tickets on our clothing days, which are Monday and Wednesday. 30 tickets are given at 8am, and the clothing store opens at 10am and closes around 11am. Women can show up on the day and do not need a ticket.

4. Welfare and Housing

We have kept our adviceline which means that people who need it can phone from 10am to 1pm, Monday to Friday. In addition, people can come in person and ask to speak to an advice worker and be seen. However, we are often oversubscribed, and it is not always possible for everyone to be seen on the very first day they come to us. Further information regarding this service is provided in this annual report from colleagues in the team.

5. Healthcare

During much of the Pandemic, NHS nurses from HIT saw people at the centre, including for vaccination and invaluable advice to service-users and staff during uncertain times. They have continued to offer their service every Wednesday unabated.

But we have not been able to obtain the return of a podiatrist to replace the one who retired during the Pandemic, although we have been told that one may become available in the near future.

We are still in discussion with the University College of Osteopathy to resume sending their final years students and supervisors to offer osteopathic treatments to our service-users.

6. IT sessions

We closed down our IT sessions for our service-users during the Pandemic, and we are going to reinstate them from August this year. We have bought 12 new laptops to replace the old ones which we have had for the past 7 years. It is a service which relies on volunteers, both individual

and corporate. Monday to Friday, the first session begins at 10:30am and ends at 11:30am, followed by a break of 30 minutes. The second session begins at 12:00pm and ends at 1:00pm.

This coming 26th October, we will all have the opportunity to mark the 40th anniversary of the Manna Society alongside old and new friends joined together around Nannette's vision of responding to the call to be each other's keeper. We are very pleased that both Archbishop John (R.C.) and Bishop Christopher (CofE) will speak at our event. We are grateful for the support we have enjoyed from the Christian Community as a whole, and particularly from the Archdiocese of Southwark (R.C.) who provided completely free of charge the first building we used for 33 years at 6 Melior Street, and when the land had to be redeveloped, for taking up a long lease on our current building at 12 Melior Street for which we only have to pay a service charge.

Our staff and volunteers make all the difference. Their commitment and sense of purpose is truly inspiring. As always, our trustees keep us on the straight and narrow path and we are grateful for their service.

A huge thank you, as always, to all our supporters and sponsors, including Southwark Council (who provide about 10% of our overall income), grant-making trusts, individual and corporate donors, who make our work possible.



Nannette Ffrench, who founded the Manna Society in 1982.

Housing & Welfare Advice Services – Review of the year

By

Margaret Shapland

Senior Housing and Welfare Advice Worker



As I write, we are moving into a time of change mostly due to the after-effects of the pandemic and what we have learned from that experience. Within our service as we have gradually re-opened the service, it has meant that we have re-thought how we might deliver it. It means that we have a three tier Advice and Welfare service whereby we now offer a mix of contact opportunities for our clients.

So, we now offer appointments for known clients, a drop-in component for clients who are making an initial approach to the service or who simply prefer that arrangement and a telephone advice opportunity for those clients who may just need to be signposted, a quick answer to an immediate issue and are happy to self-manage instructions that are given them over the phone or given we live in an online universe these days, we are able to complete forms, applications etc. via the internet or through Zoom remote meetings.

We settled on this mix as it was clear that certain segments of our clients felt more secure with an appointment-based setting whereas other clients' lifestyles worked better with a drop-in and to reflect the digital environment where there are no other options offered to client.

This new style service commenced on 16th May 2022 so for our last fiscal year, we maintained the appointment only and telephone advice and appointment booking service. We are going to take a look back at what we achieved over that year in our "Year in Review".



Numbers of clients seen in the last year

COVID restrictions were lifted in February 2022 but as noted above, we continued to serve clients using the appointment and remote working over the phone so that we could improve facilities in the centre such as ventilation to meet an appropriate standard of safety. This year we worked with 462 nett clients known to us and a further 113 over the phone (these clients were not recorded on the database).

Over the year, many local authorities began to decant people who had been accommodated under the "Everyone In" initiative (which temporarily housed homeless individuals over the period of COVID restrictions) so it was critical that services such as ours were active and able to see people face to face as many organisations were still operating a closed door policy including a number of local authority Homeless Persons Units.

Our experience over the year is that many clients have a number of issues/requirements which means that over the year, we had 2340 visits from those clients, an average of 195 per month and delivered 3,496 consultations on a number of issues over the year. We will work with clients on all issues with the exception of immigration where we are not accredited to provide advice – we do however on the instruction of immigration advisers help the client to get evidence together to help support them in their dealings with the Home Office.

We welcomed 194 new clients to the service – 42% of all clients seen. When we ask how they found our service, many of them had found out about us from friends or been signposted to our services from outreach teams or other organisations that are not able to work with them due to their service criteria. We are lucky in being able to work with clients across all the London boroughs and beyond if needed.

Our advisers delivered 90% of all available advice sessions allowing for annual leave and any staff illness. As you know the centre normally closes for the week at Christmas when CRISIS at Christmas is open to those who are sadly not in any accommodation over the Xmas period – so the decision was taken to open the centre over the period and that included the Advice & Welfare service.

18+



How did people describe their gender?

The society has a policy of welcoming all to our centre and services and indeed we have been working with a person who describes themselves as transgender - research tells us that people in the LGBTQ+ community are disproportionately more likely to experience homelessness, housing instability, and rough sleeping. Largely however our clients determine their gender identity as male or female. Over the last year, we saw 23% of clients who identified themselves as female and this is almost exactly the same split as seen in the previous financial year. If we compare this against the overall breakdown of who uses our centre (captured in a snapshot survey of those using the centre on that day), the most recent survey showed that just 3% of our centre users described themselves as female. Research tells us that lone adult homelessness is as likely to be female as male – women are just less visible (University of York) and pre-pandemic data recorded that at least 14% of rough sleepers were women. The research also identified that many women experiencing homelessness felt judged and stigmatised due to their homelessness. Our hope is that any woman approaching our Advice & Welfare service will find us a sanctuary where we are focussed on listening and helping them to put together a holistic plan to get them the support they need.

Which age groups were most prevalent?

As a centre, we work with single adults (over 18s) and we are not able to allow persons under that age to use the centre due to safeguarding and we would refer them to centres who are able to do so or link them to Social Services in the area where they are homeless. From time to time, we are approached by homeless single mothers seeking for assistance. Our role there tends to be that we refer them to the local authority regarding their homelessness and support them to link in with services that primarily work with single parent families or are able to allow very young children into a centre.

Coming back to last year, the largest single group were 26-35 year olds at 26% (a little lower than FY20-21 where 29% fell into this age group). The smallest group were those aged 18-25 at 9% but this is a group which has access to centres dedicated to working with younger homeless individuals. The remaining age groups had a spread between 20% (55+) and 23% (46-55). One point to note is that our 55+ client group has grown from 15% to 20%. Research into advice services by Age UK tells us that although written information can be sufficient for some in this age group, many prefer to have a face to face opportunity to obtain information and advice. This is amplified in our service.

As we work with many EU citizens who have settled in the UK and who may have more limited English than younger EU citizens. The research also points out that stand alone information centres are generally less effective than one that also provides advice because many will require support to fully understand and act on the information provided.



Where do our clients originate from?

By far the largest client group in terms of ethnicity are those from a Black African background - they represent 44% of all clients seen. This is followed by clients who classified themselves as “White – Other” at 26%. These are largely clients who are EU citizens and now settled in the UK. The third largest contingent are those who are White British at 10%. The hierarchy has not changed from the last fiscal year. Research shows that 35% of Londoners came from BAME backgrounds. London also has the highest reported percentage of EU citizens at 18%.

Joseph Rowntree research looked at homelessness in the BAME community in a 2021 report stated that people from BAME backgrounds are more likely to face unaffordable housing costs. BAME communities are more likely to be affected by labour market inequalities, wealth inequalities as well as that of the benefit cap and immigration policies. Collectively, this means that they are more likely than their “White” peers to find themselves homeless. With respect to our EU clients, the ending of free movement has resulted in significant number having pre-settled status (they do not have the statutory 5 years of provable residence in the UK) and thus are required to maintain “worker” status to receive any support with their housing costs or who have by accident not made the required application to the Home Office or had lapsed applications which, in effect, meant that their residence in the UK was not legal and they would fall foul of the “Right to Rent” legislation.

57% of our clients shared their country of origin with us. Apart from those who were British, Eritrean clients were the second largest group at 18%, followed by Polish clients at 5%. Overall, 62 different nationalities were represented – a reflection of how diverse our service is.



What was the legal status of our clients?

In answer to this question, this fiscal year has seen a sea change in terms of the legal status of our clients. We have been used in previous years to British citizens being the largest single group. In fiscal year 21-22, the largest single group were those who are EU citizens (31%) with British citizens falling back to 29% and those with a refugee or leave to remain status accounted for 25%. We have already mentioned some of the reasons why we see such a large proportion of clients from the EU. 6% were undocumented migrants – people who do not have any status in the UK and are largely destitute. Our function is to assist them with financial support where possible, help with obtaining some respite through temporary accommodation and to help them take the relevant steps to help them understand their options in terms of what routes they can use to regularise their status in the UK. This group are very vulnerable - being undocumented has significant practical, social and economic impacts which permeates the everyday lives of this group.



Let's look at housing

Over this year 309 people approached us for help with housing – that is 67% of all clients meeting with us – clearly an important element of our service. We managed to place 168 of this group in some form of accommodation – 54%. Obviously, we would like to place more but this activity depends on bringing together the delicate balancing act of matching the client to the right kind of accommodation in an area that they are happy

with backed up with relevant documents and that accommodation being available within a reasonable period of time.

Where we are working with clients where a local authority has accepted duty to provide accommodation, it can mean that some clients are facing years in temporary accommodation before being permanently re-housed. Our waiting lists for hostel placements and shared housing have been growing despite having a ready supply of shared housing.

For many years, private rented housing has been the direction of travel for many authorities and forms an important part of the mix that we can offer clients provided they meet the criteria. The problem can be that many clients are subject to the benefit cap restricting the total amount of personal and housing cost that Universal Credit is willing to pay. This is alongside the fact that the amount of housing cost that a client may expect to receive has been frozen for this year and has been subject to a very inconsistent policy in that there is no consistent lift in payments on an annual basis such as would be seen with the personal allowance given to benefit claimants. As it stands the housing cost rate is calculated on the lowest 30th percentile of rents so it is already at the lowest end of the market.

As part of our agenda moving forward into the new financial year, we are looking to invest in new ways of providing housing opportunities for our clients – yet another way in which our service offer is changing in the hope that we can have better control over our housing supply. We'll keep you posted on that.

A final word

What spurs us on is the enormous level of trust and appreciation that our clients demonstrate to us. Two short quotes from recent clients with whom we have had long-standing relationship. This first quote relates to dealing with incorrect calculations on council tax liability which resulted from the implementation of a new calculation system for council tax in a London borough. Incorrect calculation of income resulted in a hugely inflated bill. This is now resolved in favour of the client *"First and foremost thank you for all your help with this we fully appreciate all your efforts"*.

The second is from a long-standing client who we have worked with on their immigration issues, housing, and benefits and lately helping them prepare documentation and secure a solicitor for a medical negligence case. They wrote, *"You've been there for me through thick and thin and giving great support during my treatment and post treatment. Thanks to Manna Society for all the help rendered to me. Honestly, I don't know what I would do without the great support."*

We would not be able to help our clients without the support and back up that comes from having dedicated supporters who have faith in what we do. Thank you so much

Adventures in administration

By

Eleanor Smith

Housing & Welfare Advice Worker



I'm writing this on one of the hottest days of the year – the Monday that the temperature was pushing 40. Thankfully the day centre is a very cool building. The Manna from heaven today is the shade and respite from the heat. It does not feel like a good day to be on hold endlessly to customer service departments of various kinds, sweating and listening to terrible hold music, but this is part of the advice service work. We work side by side with clients, navigating the labyrinths of arcane administrative procedures that are as much a part of poverty as food insecurity and debt.

When I was a social work student, we were encouraged to think about where our interventions were aimed. Are they aimed at the client? In which case we might be more focused on encouraging the person to make changes in their life, increasing our client's knowledge about how to take care of themselves, how to manage their finances, where to go to socialize and keep healthy. Or is the intervention aimed at the structures around the client. Most often it's both, but I would like to talk here about the latter. The power and frequent irrationality of large-scale bureaucracy is well expressed in literature; Joseph Heller coined the term 'catch 22' whilst building a satirical world of paradoxical military bureaucracy. It means 'a problem for which the only solution is denied by a circumstance inherent in the problem'. The term 'Kafkaesque' references the novels of Franz Kafka, in which characters frequently find themselves caught in a series of seemingly dry administrative processes, but which are at the same time life threatening and terrifying, carried out by an inhuman, faceless system. Finally, to describe something as 'Orwellian' might describe a state authority attempting to wield enough power over its citizens to define their very reality.

The following vignettes illustrate some of the situations our clients find themselves in, that would perhaps not seem out of place in these dystopian worlds.

Catch 22

My client Yasmin moved into her council flat as a working single mother of three. After the last of her adult children left home, she continued to work and pay the rent, which she could afford. She was conscientious about this, and always up to date. However, after suddenly losing work, she had to apply for Universal Credit. Because of the bedroom tax, Universal Credit did not cover her full rent, so she started to accumulate rent arrears. She asked the council if she could downsize but was told that she would not be able to do this while she still had outstanding rent arrears on her account. Not being able to make up the full rent, she continued to go into debt, the solution to which was barred to her, because of her debt! When she came to see me, I contacted the income team to see if a repayment plan could be arranged, hoping that if this was in place, a move to an affordable property might be considered. However, the income team could not arrange a repayment plan while the full rent was still not being covered every month. Two possible solutions, both prohibited by the problem itself. Eventually we were able to find out that she could apply for a discretionary payment to top up her rent every month. If granted, this would mean that the full rent could be paid, a repayment plan set up, and finally a move may be considered. We are still waiting for the outcome of this application. Until then, Yasmin is in a property which she cannot afford, does not need, is sorely needed by others, and which puts her further into debt every day.

Kafka's claim forms

If anything is Kafkaesque, it is the personal independence payment application process. My client Josephine suffers from Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Like many women with this illness, she has learnt to act in a way that hides her symptoms. However, she struggles to focus on tasks, finds social interaction confusing and exhausting, feels overwhelmed and frightened by lights, noises and other sensory stimuli that are part of the backdrop of most people's normal lives, and so understandably finds life in general extremely anxiety provoking. When she went to her PIP assessment with a medical professional, she worked very hard to make sure she was on time, answered the questions clearly, and was polite with the assessor. It turns out that all of this counted against her, and the assessor decided that there was 'no evidence' that Josephine had any significant difficulties with the business of day to day living. The negative decision letter was sent, many months later, to the wrong address – despite the fact that her up to date address had been written on the original form. This meant that we found out two months after the decision had been made, when we called to chase them up. We requested the full decision to be sent to her up to date address, so that we could challenge it. A month later, still waiting, we called them again. The agent told us that the letter had been sent on the same day it had been requested. Worried that post wasn't reaching Josephine, we asked PIP to send the decision to The Manna Centre. I asked the agent to make sure that changing the address for her PIP correspondence did not affect her housing benefit payments. 'No', said the agent. 'It won't'. A week later Josephine got a letter to say that her housing benefit had been suspended because the council had received word from the DWP that Josephine's address had changed, and they took this as evidence that she no longer lived there. Correcting this involved another long-winded set of online forms. The PIP decision letter we needed was then sent to The Manna Centre, but with pages missing. We requested the full decision to be re-sent. By the time we received the full decision, we were told we were out of time to appeal through the DWP's internal appeal process – the 'mandatory reconsideration' stage, and we would have to go to the first tier tribunal. Every time myself and Josephine have needed to call the PIP helpline to speak to someone, we have been on hold for at least 40 minutes, and once, I was on hold for just over an hour. We are currently awaiting the tribunal date.

Unpersons

Our client William, having held refugee status in the UK for many years, applied for his British Citizenship. He was refused on the basis that the Home Office suspected he had committed immigration offences by working while he was an asylum seeker. Given, they argued, that William had been denied the right to work as well as any state support during a part of his asylum application, how else had he survived in this period? The very fact of his survival was held up as evidence of his crime.

Luckily, we and other charities that had supported William were able to state that we had done so, so William had not needed to work illegally. He was eventually granted citizenship. However, applying for his first British Passport has not been without these kinds of problems – after submitting confirmation of his identity and completing his application, he received an email two months later telling him that the passport office had not received confirmation of his identity. Luckily, by now, William knows what to do in the face of such obstacles – he comes to The Manna Centre.

Going through these processes together with clients can be difficult and frustrating, but this at least makes the resolution all the more satisfying. I am greatly looking forward to a positive outcome on Josephine's PIP application. I will do the little victory dance that I save for such occasions. I am glad to be able to share the knowledge we have accumulated in the advice service about how to successfully navigate these labyrinths with clients. It has been quite useful in my own life as well! And I know that at least having someone to commiserate with makes what can be a scary and alienating experience a little bit more manageable.

Treasurer's Report

By
Bill Dodwell



Our Report and Accounts cover a second year affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Annual Report includes the statement of financial activities and the balance sheet for the year ended 31st March 2022. Full copies of the certified accounts will be available at the Annual General Meeting if anybody would like a copy. They will also be found on the Charity Commission's website

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityWithoutPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=294691&SubsidiaryNumber=0>

Our income for the year to 31 March 2022 was £661,417, up from £523,015 in the previous year. We benefited from legacies totalling £116,268 in 2022 (£46,312 in 2021) and we are aware that further legacies will be received in the following year. Legacies continue to be an important source of funding for the Society; we are very grateful to our long-term supporters who continue to leave money to the Society in their wills. We continue to receive some funding from the London Borough of Southwark, which is at the same level as in prior years, but which is now paid to us as a grant. We received a one-off large donation from another charity.

Our expenses in 2022 were £469,758, compared to £468,168 in 2021. Our expenses were similar to last year overall, with some continuing to be lower than before the pandemic, whilst other areas have seen increases. We have taken on responsibility for our store from the Archdiocese of Southwark and benefited from a contribution to the rent in 2022; we will insure true full cost in the current and future years. We continue to invest in our staff, through pay rises and pension contributions.

The result is that in 2022 we had a surplus of £191,569, compared to £54,847 in 2021. Our retained funds are £589,234, which means we have more than six months running costs in hand.

Our financial position has thus continued very well during the year. Our donations have continued strongly, for which we very much thank our donors.

As always, I and the whole management committee would like to thank our staff for all the helpful, friendly and productive work in the past year. We would also like to thank all the volunteers, who support the staff in helping the Manna Centre clients. The high regard that the centre is held in is directly as a result of the staff and volunteer efforts. We must also thank the Roman Catholic Diocese of Southwark for their continuing practical support in providing the Centre and our storage space rent-free. We expect that we shall need to pay for our storage space in the near future as our current short-term lease is ending.

Finally, of course, I would like to thank all our donors, who continue to support the Society with donations and many fundraising efforts. Without your help the Society would not be able to continue with its work which is so important to many people on the margins of our society.

Statement of financial activities
for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Restricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £	<i>Total funds 2021 £</i>
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	63,000	596,862	659,862	<i>520,047</i>
Investments	<u>-</u>	<u>1,555</u>	<u>1,155</u>	<u>2,968</u>
Total income	<u>63,000</u>	<u>598,417</u>	<u>661,417</u>	<u><i>523,015</i></u>
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	-	6,268	6,268	<i>6,142</i>
Charitable activities	<u>60,327</u>	<u>403,163</u>	<u>463,490</u>	<u><i>462,026</i></u>
Total expenditure	<u>60,327</u>	<u>409,431</u>	<u>469,758</u>	<u><i>468,168</i></u>
Net income before other recognised gains and losses	2,673	188,986	191,659	<i>54,847</i>
Net movement in funds	2,673	188,986	191,659	<i>54,847</i>
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	<u>25,977</u>	<u>371,598</u>	<u>397,575</u>	<u><i>342,728</i></u>
Total funds carried forward	<u>28,650</u>	<u>560,584</u>	<u>589,234</u>	<u><i>397,575</i></u>

Balance sheet
as at 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	13,217	24,835
Current assets		
Debtors	22,411	64,747
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>569,085</u>	<u>324,706</u>
	591,496	389,453
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(15,479)</u>	<u>(16,713)</u>
Net current assets	<u>576,017</u>	<u>372,740</u>
Net assets	<u>589,234</u>	<u>397,575</u>
Charity Funds		
Restricted funds	28,650	25,977
Unrestricted funds	<u>560,584</u>	<u>371,598</u>
Total funds	<u>589,234</u>	<u>397,575</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Management committee on 6th September 2022 and signed on their behalf, by: Bill Dodwell, Manna Society Treasurer.

Ripples and their far-reaching effects

**By
Karolina Muszynska
Housing & Welfare Advice Worker**



The Manna Society will be celebrating its 40th anniversary of service in October this year. It amazes me that it all started from a need to help the poor, a calling, that Nannette Ffrench had over 40 years ago. This is how she described it in her own words: “Somehow that glimmer of light let me see and, in a strange way, feel the pain and the injustice on the streets around me and I felt I was being called to do something about it”. (If you are interested you can read more about our history on our website: www.mannasociety.org.uk). Nannette’s calling of a heart developed into a service that is now serving vulnerable people for almost 40 years. It proves the power of the ripple effect when a virtuous idea starts a ripple and it develops into a huge wave of kindness, that is still expanding 40 years later. If you are reading this article, you are part of this wave too, like all other people involved with The Manna: our staff, our volunteers, our supporters and our customers. Thank you for keeping it flowing! Thank you, Nannette, for your courage and righteousness that made you start the ripple. It would be interesting to know how many people Manna fed and clothed or assisted via our advice services during this 40 years – it will be a jaw dropping number, I am sure. And it is all thanks to Nannette’s initial strength and determination to fulfil her calling.

Last year at Manna was a year of transitioning back to our pre-covid ways. We fully reopened our doors to people; the drop-in for our various services and face to face advice service has been restored – we are busy again. The type of advice work we do has changed in the last year quite significantly – we now see a lot of people who suffer from the repercussions caused by Covid, Brexit and a complicated social welfare reality.

It appears that Covid has changed the world forever. We had to limit face to face encounters, so the digitalisation of various services has spread and speeded up. Now most of the benefits are claimed and managed online. We are advised to go online if we want to book GP consultation, open a bank account, apply for ID, book an appointment in a consulate or make a homelessness application etc. Third parties would often request that supporting documents be uploaded or emailed to them as opposed to being brought in person. That makes life very difficult for people, who for various reasons are not computer literate and often may never acquire the skills needed. They would need to rely on others to deal with the online world. Moreover, our clients often have no or limited access to the internet, which makes it even more frustrating. Helping people to navigate through the digital reality is a huge part of our work these days.

Post Brexit regulations required all EU and Swiss nationals to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) before the deadline of 30 June 2021. In the last year we supported many people who for various reasons missed the deadline for their application. Our work would be linking the person with a specialist immigration service, helping to chase the progress of the application and gathering all the documents necessary for a successful late application (identity documents, medical records, bank statements, supporting letters from other professionals etc).

Our welfare system is still transitioning from the old system into the new Universal Credit era. We see many clients who still claim old style benefits like Employment and Support Allowance and are not eager to transfer. Universal Credit is a fairly new benefit and it is full of imperfections. One of them, for example, is that some claimants will be actually worst off under the new system. On top of that, we have complexities around the benefit cap or local housing allowance and long waiting times (over 30 min) to get through someone on the helpline. It is a confusing system now – no wonder people come to us for support.

MANNA

CENTRE

