



CHARITABLE GIVING

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2023



SUPPORTING LOCAL

OLDER PEOPLE

The Charitable Giving Team

We're pleased to bring you another update on our charitable giving and share some exciting information about our plans for 2024. We hope you enjoy reading.

We would also like to extend our thanks and season's greetings to all individuals and organisations who have supported us and enabled our funding to reach older people in need across our region, providing connection, contribution and choice. Through our collective efforts, we have supported an incredible 13,500 older people this year. Thank you for the part you have played in this.

10-year strategy update: important information

We have been busy making our own connections with trusts and foundations from across the UK over the past few months. These have helped to shape the St Monica Trust Foundation and the way in which we can support communities where older people flourish in the coming years.

The next step on our journey is a comprehensive review of our grant-giving and as such we will be unable to accept applications from organisations to our **Organisational Giving Fund** from January 2024 until the summer. We will keep you updated with our plans as they develop.

Farewell to Adam Rees

Congratulations to our former Director of Charitable Impact, Adam Rees, who has started a new role as CEO of Abbeyfield Bristol & Keynsham Society.

We wish Adam well in this role and thank him for his work for the St Monica Trust over the past four years.



Improving Connections Fund

The Improving Connections Fund that was launched in August was met with huge interest, and we are pleased to announce that we have awarded over **£200,000** to ten charities across our region.

Click [here](#) to find out which charities are being supported and the work they will be embarking on in 2024.

Joint Heating Project

As the weather turns colder, our thoughts turn to keeping warm at home and for many, the worry about energy bills.

However, for older people, particularly those with significant health issues, adequate heating is acutely important as outlined by a referrer to our joint Heating Project with The Anchor Society. Click [here](#) to read more.

Age UK South Gloucestershire's Improving Homes and Well-being Service

It's not always life's biggest problems that overwhelm us and leave us feeling unable to cope. Sometimes it's the steady accumulation of many small problems that pile one on top of the other until we cannot see our way out.

Like a stack of newspapers by the front door that grows until it fills a three-bedroom house or a blown light bulb that eventually leads to someone living in pitch darkness.

With the help of our funding, the Improving Homes and Well-being Service run by Age UK South Gloucestershire provides free help to homeowners over the age of 50 to remain safe, well and comfortable in their own homes for as long as possible.

People like Nichola, who found themselves in an overwhelming situation.

Read Nichola's story [here](#).

Individual Giving Fund update

2023 has been an extraordinary year for us at the Trust, seeing an unprecedented demand for our Individual Giving Fund. To date, we have received almost 800 applications for support and awarded over £260,000 in gifts and short-term grants. The greatest demand has been for short-term grants which have helped support people in times of real financial distress.

We always enjoy seeing the impact of this fund through the reviews and feedback we receive - see a selection on the right.

For further information on the fund and to make an application, please see the dedicated section on our website [here](#).

"Ms W has been very grateful for the grant from yourselves. It has meant she has been able to spend more money on electricity at home and has been able to put fuel in her car so she can visit her mum's grave when she is feeling low. Very precious times for her. She would like to send her thanks to you all for the financial support you have been able to provide at this stressful time."

(Received from a support worker via a review of the short-term grant)

"Many thanks for this, it will change my life no end, getting about the house easier. These last few months have been hell for me health wise and this has been the first positive I've had to cheer me a bit."

(Received from an individual awarded a gift)

Organisational Giving Fund update

Throughout 2023 we have provided over £600,000 to 95 organisations.

We are pleased to share a selection of some of the work these grants have supported.

Zion Bristol

Zion Bristol received one year's funding to help them grow and develop activities for older people from their community centre.



Many groups were supported through the funding, including the Local History Group, Memories Café, Blanket Club and Local Writing Group.

“The first member to join the Blanket Club was H, who lives alone and doesn't get out much. She has encouraged multiple different old acquaintances of hers to attend, including an old school friend, who now also attends regularly.

H is new to coming into Zion and very much enjoys the safe, friendly atmosphere where she can meet and talk to new people.”

Bristol Support Hub Partnership

2023 marked the end of our Mental Health and Older People Fund. One grant awarded through this fund was the Bristol Support Hub partnership, comprised of Age UK Bristol (lead partner), Bristol Drugs Project, Redcatch Community Garden, Sight Support West of England and The Reader. The partnership worked together in referrals, promotion, and delivery. The impact can be seen through a sample of feedback from the project participants:

“When we're talking, I'm not in this front room – I'm transported in the conversation; my surroundings are gone and I'm seeing pictures of what we're talking about. It's an opportunity to escape into whatever we're talking about. It's a lifeline for other people like me, because you see, if there's a topic coming up, you can learn about it before it comes up – it gives you something to do – it's great!”

Participant of Age UK telephone group

“It doesn't just save my sanity; it saves my life. I feel I have been treated with dignity, humour, and clarity with skilled invisible boundaries... I was scared at first as a result of long-term illness and isolation, but have met many special people.”

Member of Bristol Drugs Project 50+ crowd

“After diagnosis of Dementia and then also Parkinson's, I only left home for hospital appointments. The group is my only social activity. I couldn't be the same without it.”

Group participant at Redcatch Community Garden

Knowle West Health Park

Reaching its conclusion in 2024 will be our Community Development for Older People Fund.

Having received a three-year grant from this fund in 2020, Knowle West Health Park employed an Older Persons Community Development Worker who, over the course of the grant, has supported many local groups and encouraged older people in the community to start up their own groups based on their interests.

“The kurling group is a great fun thing to do, and all the people are friendly. I thoroughly look forward to going and hope it continues.”

Anne has met new people at the group and said it has been a good place to find out about local information.

“It is really useful to meet people of my age. We get to know each other, and it is very social.”



Vision North Somerset

Through our Peer Support Fund, Vision North Somerset was awarded a grant for 3 years to connect older people with visual impairment to each other and to their local communities.

With the funding, Vision North Somerset continue to deliver social groups, support groups and befriending to older people with visual impairments. When surveyed, 80% reported feeling more connected to other people suffering from sight loss and less alone. All individuals felt more confident and independent moving around the home; they also reported feeling happier in their day to day living.

Case study

In her 50s and working full-time as a nurse, Jan noticed she couldn't see the difference between pink and blue on some medical equipment and was diagnosed with advanced Macular Degeneration. This sudden sight loss turned her very active life into a very small world. She was unable to work, drive, care for her elderly mother, or look after her grandchildren. This was devastating for her. Her world became confined to one room, and this affected her mental health. She said, *“I will never have anything again in my life, I won't ever have a life again.”* The project visited Jan at home as Jan was too anxious and scared to complete any tasks in the home or to go out by herself. They immediately put a range of training and support in place and welcomed Jan to their Weston Hub where she met others with sight loss. This peer support was key to Jan's rehabilitation as she was able to chat, share and come to terms with her sight loss. Jan now joins in with the swimming club and has joined her local gym. She has also become a regular volunteer in Vision North Somerset's office garden. Without this support, Jan would still be sitting alone on her sofa, unable to move during the day.





St Monica Trust

Charitable Impact

Giving support for over 100 years

CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any questions or queries about what we do and who we can help, or any suggestions about how we can improve the way we work, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Tel: 0117 949 4003

charitableimpact@stmonicastrust.org.uk

We are a small team and do our very best to respond to all enquiries and applications as soon as possible.

We hope you find our newsletter useful. Please feel free to pass this on to anyone interested in hearing more about the work we do.

If you would rather not receive communications from us, please send us an email with the subject 'Unsubscribe' to charitableimpact@stmonicastrust.org.uk and we will remove you from our mailing list.

CHRISTMAS PERIOD OPENING TIMES

We hope you all enjoy a restful period over Christmas and New Year. Our office will be closed from Friday 22 December to Tuesday 02 January.

