

St Monica Trust - A short history

In 1911 Monica Wills made the decision that she wanted to establish a 'Home of Rest' for a number of retired missionary friends.

The idea came to her in the rose garden at the family home in Somerset, where she was celebrating with husband Henry their silver wedding anniversary.



The focus of this garden was a sundial bearing the inscription "***tempus fugit, caritas manet,***" meaning "***time flies; love remains***". The significance of this sundial at the inception of Monica's plan is the reason that it is the logo of the St Monica Trust today.

With the intervention of the first world war the original idea for a 'Home of Rest' was put on hold and by the time war ended the plan had evolved in scale. Instead of purchasing a small rest home, Monica and Henry decided to build a 'purpose-built haven' with a 'splendid and very beautiful chapel' central to the design.

In 1919, a 27-acre site was purchased at Cote Lane in Westbury-on-Trym and a charity named the St Monica Home of Rest was established with Henry and Monica Wills named as trustees.

Monica was a devout Christian in the High Church Anglican tradition, and after the site was cleared, priority was given to the building of the new chapel. The foundation stone for this was laid in 1920 and the building of St Monica Home of Rest was finally completed five years later. Sadly, Henry had died in 1922, but not before establishing the Trust Council which still exists today.

In 1922, the original Deed Poll for the management of the St Monica Trust was created, with clause 5(1) setting out the intentions to provide individual gifts, grants and annuities "to persons of good character who are in need.."

All applicants to live in "The St Monica Home" or receive financial assistance were recorded in the Applicant's Register.

Dated **24 April 1924**, the very first applicant for financial assistance was Annie Butcher who lived on St John's Road in Clifton, Bristol, and had worked in India as a nurse. Annie was suffering from a number of medical issues.

All applications for both accommodation or financial assistance were discussed at the regular Selection Committee Meetings, which included Dame Monica Wills herself. On 16 June 1924, the Selection Committee recommended that Annie should receive financial assistance at the rate of £50 per year. Annie's application was duly approved. That was a year before our founding Cote Lane site was even opened.

From 1924 to 2016, regular financial support through annuities was provided to older people in need.

The original home was opened **in 1925** when 70 women became its first residents. Since then the Trust has evolved into the organisation it is today, committed to establishing and promoting communities

where older people flourish and honouring the heritage of spiritual and pastoral care that was so important to Monica.

Monica's charitable legacy continues to this day. **In 1988**, the scope of financial support the Trust provided was expanded to include 'one-off gifts,' now part of our Individual Giving Fund.

In 2002, the charity was renamed the "St Monica Trust" marking the beginning of its modern development.

By 2003, the Trust began awarding grants to organisations supporting older people, in addition to individuals, to extend the reach of its grants.

Today, 100 years after providing the first financial support to an individual in the community, the Trust is launching its Charitable Foundation, marking another key milestone that honours Monica's enduring vision.

