

Update to Supporting Trusts

December 2016

In recognition of your generosity, the RAF Benevolent Fund is delighted to keep you updated on developments across the charity. We look forward to further opportunities in 2017 to present you with information on our impact and new welfare initiatives.

First Look at 2016 – January to November



£8,800,000 spent supporting 3,000 veterans and their families



£813,000 supporting 749 people regularly with their finances



£403,910 spent on care home top up fees



£718,140 spent on mobility aids for veterans and their families



£21,500 spent helping those who are leaving the RAF transition back into civilian life



£990,740 spent on our Airplay programme to help Serving families



£4,280,290 spent on Housing & Housing adaptations for veterans and their families

Engaging our Trust Supporters in Scotland

This year, the Trust Team at the RAF Benevolent Fund have been engaging with our supporting Trusts. We endeavour to do our utmost in donor care and ensure that you and your fellow supporting Trusts feel informed about our organisation and confident that their generous donations are being used to help the RAF family across the country.

We have increased our communications and held our first Trust only events this year, firstly in London in June. In October, the RAF Benevolent Fund held an intimate reception at the impressive 25 Learmonth Terrace, the home of 603 Squadron in Edinburgh. Debbie Hunter, Director of the RAFBF for Scotland and Northern Ireland and the Trust Team, welcomed a number of funders and friends of the RAFBF to this grand building to share with them more about the Fund's work in Scotland.

We were joined by beneficiaries of the Fund Mick McConnell and Joanna Martin, who told attendees how the RAF Benevolent Fund had supported them during their time of need. The RAF Benevolent Fund helped Mick to move to a more suitable house when he lost his leg as a result of an IED explosion in 2011 whilst touring Afghanistan. Mick said:



"The fact that the Benevolent Fund has helped us to move from a house where it took me 10 minutes to get up and down the stairs to a home that's easily accessible and close to family where we can get support, has made a huge difference to our lives. They've lifted this unbelievable weight from my shoulders. I didn't know a lot about them until I was injured, but now I realise that they're not a small cog in the wheel – they're making a huge difference to people like me."

Former RAF nurse Joanna Martin, from Helensburgh, sustained a spinal injury on an assault course during a training exercise with 612 Squadron in 2005. "The RAF Benevolent Fund assisted me greatly in funding adaptations to my house," Joanna explains. "These adaptations are essential for me to be able to live independently, so I am forever grateful for the help that the Fund gave me and the difference that it has made to my life."

Earlier this year, Joanna scooped five medals across three disciplines at the Invictus Games in Orlando, winning bronze in the handbike time trial, silver and bronze in rowing and two further bronzes in the discus. A regular fundraiser for the RAF Benevolent Fund, Joanna was able to join us to share her inspiring tale with supporters.

The RAF Benevolent Fund supports a range of needs in Scotland, from mobility aids to care home top up fees and support for our Serving families at RAF Lossiemouth. Last year, the Fund spent £545,000 supporting 340 members of the RAF family in Scotland.

Celebrating 75 Years of the Guinea Pig Club

The RAFBF has been proudly supporting Guinea Pigs since 1941, and still does today, adapting our support as needs and circumstances change. And while we will continue to support them, we are also determined to share their stories and ensure their legacy lives on.

On 2nd November, The Duke of Edinburgh unveiled a memorial to the Guinea Pig Club, at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. What had begun with 39 patients – mostly RAF crew who survived fiery crashes – grew to 649 by the end of the war, including Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders as well as Americans, French, and Czechs and Poles.



Under the care of Sir Archibald McIndoe, pioneering plastic surgery techniques restored function and gave hope to these young men with life-changing disfigurements. The Guinea Pigs did not hide away with their injuries, but instead led full, active lives. They challenged the existing perception that disabilities were life-limiting and went on to mentor new burns victims, including those injured in later conflicts.

Wimbledon Foundation Attends Small Grants Committee

We were delighted to welcome Ulrika Hogberg, Foundation & Community Manager of the Wimbledon Foundation (pictured on a hospital visit), for a visit to our main office in London to take part in our small grants committee.

The small grants committee meets fortnightly to review cases which are likely to cost between £3,000- £15,000. Our Welfare Executives present the details of the case to the committee, who scrutinise all the factors and consider the merits of each reward. They then determine if an award is to be made, and if so, the terms and conditions.

The Wimbledon Foundation help to change people's lives using the resources and heritage of the All England Lawn Tennis Club and The Championships they do this through a significant programme of grants to charities each year in support of the Foundation's objectives.

They have supported the RAF Benevolent Fund for a number of years through the ticket re-sale scheme, which supports several military charities in recognition of the many military service personnel give up their time to volunteer as stewards during the championship.



“Through the unique ticket resale scheme during The Championships, whereby spectators with show court tickets leaving the Grounds are encouraged to offer their tickets for resale to other people already within the Grounds, the Championships and the Wimbledon Foundation have been longstanding supporters of the RAF Benevolent Fund. As an active and supportive funder, we at the Wimbledon Foundation are interested in understanding what our projects and supported organisations are doing and how the money donated from the Foundation makes a difference.

“As a grant maker, it was particularly interesting to visit the RAF Benevolent Fund's Small Grant Panel to hear first-hand the cases for funding being considered, to see the decision-making process and the careful thought given to each application. I thoroughly enjoyed the session and would like to thank Philip Wiles, Head of Housing & Care, Margaret Heath, Chair of the Small Grants Committee and the committee members for giving me such a warm welcome.”

Small grants committee takes place fortnightly and offers limited places for guests, should you wish to attend a committee and see for yourself how we distributes funds to those in need.

Housing Trust Recognised for Excellence

In early November, the RAFBF Housing Trust was delighted to receive the Army Families Federation's Award: Outstanding Contribution to Resettling Military Families.

Leaving the RAF prematurely due to a medical discharge when you're Wounded, Injured, or Sick (WIS), or to take care of a disabled family member, can be overwhelming – especially when suitable housing is not available. This is when we can step in, as we have done for 230 families and individuals currently living in Housing Trust properties across the UK.

Our team of five works with every beneficiary to ensure that each property is selected and often adapted to meet their medical, emotional, and practical needs, such as proximity to family, particular schools to meet special needs, or hospitals for treatment or rehabilitation.

Moreover, we want every property to meet the needs of the whole family: making sure, for example, that there is a garden suitable for young children to play in and doorways wide enough for the father's wheelchair, can reduce strain on the whole family and help them stay happily in the home for years.

And as the years go by, we work with residents to make sure the accommodation continues to meet changing needs. We know that as medical conditions progress, or a beneficiary ages, they might need more support.

Corporal Ann Hughes, 46, is resident in one of the properties renovated thanks to funding from the Veterans Accommodation Fund and the generosity of supporting trusts.



She said: "I cannot describe how much this has improved my life. I am now able to cook meals and bake in our beautiful new kitchen, something which I previously struggled to do. Our garden is beautiful and I no longer have to negotiate awkward steps. I feel as if I have my independence back."

Everyone at the RAF Benevolent Fund wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Enclosed is a Christmas card to you from Controller Air Vice-Marshal David Murray.

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