Continuing to repay ‘the debt we owe’

As readers are all too well aware, we are living in very challenging financial times, which appear likely to continue for some time. The pressure on everyone’s pockets, whether individuals or commercial organisations, has been felt keenly in the charitable sector, where fundraising is becoming ever tougher.

I am pleased to say that the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund’s very generous and loyal supporters have continued to provide us with the means to undertake our vital welfare work for members of the RAF family in need in 2012.

But we are certainly not complacent, and we know that we need to continue to educate people about what we do to demonstrate the value of our work. This will help to widen our support base and further ensure our long-term financial health and sustainability.

In an appeal on behalf of the RAF Benevolent Fund in 1951, Winston Churchill reminded the nation of ‘the debt we owe’ to those who served in the Royal Air Force in World War Two. With recent operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and now places such as Mali, today’s Royal Air Force continues to face enormous pressures in keeping us safe at home and protecting British interests around the world, often involving long periods of separation from families.

We must acknowledge the debt we owe today just as our forebears did all those years ago. The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund is here to ensure that we remember that debt and continue to help those who need our assistance.

2013 will be my final year as Chairman of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, which has come a long way since I first became a trustee in 1991. It has been a great privilege to serve such a wonderful organisation and to play a part in the outstanding work that it does for the Royal Air Force family.

I know that my grandfather, the first Viscount Trenchard, sometimes called the founder of the Royal Air Force, would have been happy and proud that the charity he set up in 1919 continues to do much to help those in need almost 100 years later.

The Viscount Trenchard of Wolfeton DL
Chairman of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

OUR GOALS IN 2012 – HOW DID WE DO?

Carry out a full strategic review of the RAF Benevolent Fund’s welfare provision to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of the RAF family whilst ensuring the charity’s financial security.

Our review of the Benevolent Fund was completed and implemented in 2012. By taking sensible, pragmatic decisions, we have been able to maintain the broad range of welfare work that we undertake and remain ‘best in class’ in all that we do. We have protected those whom we have helped in the past and continue to provide vital support to new beneficiaries.

Maximise the effectiveness of the Airplay youth support strand at 25 RAF stations.

Working with our partners, the children’s charity 4Children and RAF Community Support, we increased the number of children and young people whom we supported during the year, up by 30% to 2,610. We continue to improve the quality of Airplay across all settings, through the Aiming Higher programme. The year also saw young people from the Airplay Programme take a leading role at the Tri-Services Youth Forum, which was supported by the Ministry of Defence and highlighted the challenges that young people from Service families face.

Increase the occupation of Princess Marina House and the Seaside Cottages by 5%.

Princess Marina House has had an excellent year. During 2012, the total number of guests at PMH and the Seaside Cottages has risen by 26.7% to 1,562.

Successfully take over the guardianship of the Bomber Command Memorial.

The Benevolent Fund became the guardian of the Bomber Command Memorial, following the successful Unveiling and Dedication ceremony in London on 28 June 2012. We now need to raise £1.5m to maintain the Memorial for future generations (see p10).
2012: facing the challenges together

Like many other organisations in the charity sector, the economic downturn has presented the Benevolent Fund with some difficult challenges. Due to worsening economic conditions, members of the RAF family are more in need of our help than ever while at the same time, pressure on household budgets means that many people are unable to donate as generously as they have done in the past.

So the challenge for us in 2012 was to do more with less. And we are delighted to say that while we spent £4m less on welfare delivery last year, we were able to help 68,538 members of the RAF family, a 10% increase on the number of people we helped in 2011. What helped us to achieve this was a more prudent approach to our grant-giving process, which focussed more specifically on the core needs of our beneficiaries. This resulted in the average grant awarded totalling some £1,300 in 2012, slightly lower than the previous year’s average of £1,500. The benefit of this approach was that we were able to align our expenditure in 2012 with the increased demands we are seeing, including a 2% increase in the number of awards made.

Our care services continue to be in demand. Overall, across Princess Marina House and the homes we run jointly with the RAF Association, 2,850 guests benefited from breaks at these facilities, representing a 4.8% increase on the previous year. Fees for residential care or nursing homes were slightly lower than the previous year, while with domiciliary care, demand increased but overall costs were lower, continuing the theme of doing more with less.

Indeed, the total number of awards made by our general welfare department in 2012 was up by 2% on the previous year. These awards are the heart of our welfare work and comprise grants for a variety of needs, ranging from the cost of a new cooker for a widow struggling to make ends meet, to the purchase of an electrically powered vehicle (EPV) for a World War Two veteran who has lost the use of his legs in old age.

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO SAY THAT LAST YEAR WE WERE ABLE TO HELP 68,538 MEMBERS OF THE RAF FAMILY – A 10% INCREASE.

“I didn’t know a lot about the Benevolent Fund until I was injured, but now I realise they’re not a small cog in the wheel – they’re making a huge difference to people like me.”

For RAF Police dog handler Corporal Mick McConnell a simple walk on the beach with his dog Memphis brings new pleasure, and support from the RAF Benevolent Fund is helping him rebuild his life.

In 2011 Mick was on patrol in Afghanistan searching for IED’s when his dog Memphis momentarily left his side and Mick stepped on a mine. Even though the IED only partially exploded, it caused irreversible damage.

“There was a massive bang and I fell on my left side,” Mick recalls. “Although I was screaming in agony, my first thought was to feel for any major bleeding and see if my arms and legs were still there. As I was dragged to safety, I heard Memphis barking – it’s the first time I’d ever heard him bark.”

Mick’s left foot had been shattered in the explosion and back in England he spent a month recovering in hospital with five-inch pins keeping his foot together. Despite almost two years of rehabilitation, he is still on medication and last year took the decision to have his foot amputated.

It was during this time he contacted the Benevolent Fund for a loan. This enabled him and his wife Lorra, a former Flight Sergeant, to buy a more suitable home in Elgin, close to family.

“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.”

Watch more of Mick’s story at www.rafbf.org/stories
Partnership

Working in Partnership

£126,000
was spent funding SSAFA caseworkers to assist RAF personnel

46,055
members of the RAF family have been directly helped through our work with other organisations

79
organisations and charities have received grants from the RAFBF

£3,420
was the average saved per person thanks to the Benefits and Money Advice Service

£428,000
was given to Combat Stress to support veterans suffering from PTSD

Reaching out to the RAF family

From the RAF Association and SSAFA to the Alzheimer’s Society and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, working in partnership gives us the ability to reach out and support thousands more members of the RAF family.

By partnering with these charities and many others, as well as third-party organisations, we avoid expensive duplication while at the same time ensuring that our beneficiaries have access to the best support from those who are equipped to provide it.

Over the last five years the Benevolent Fund has been involved with the Benefits and Money Advice Service (BMAS), which has helped 4,381 members of the RAF family and generated £14.96m in total, either through benefits owed to the individual or through banks agreeing to write off debt. This works out to an average of £3,420 per person who used the service. So, as well as delivering significant financial benefits to a large number of people, undoubtedly the BMAS has also helped lower applications for direct financial assistance from the RAFBF. Overall the Benevolent Fund contributed £2m to the Benefits and Money Advice Service over a five-year period.

Another example of our partnership working is our collaboration with the UK-wide network of RAF Association and SSAFA caseworkers. These caseworkers assess beneficiaries’ needs on our behalf, which means that those in need receive support quickly from teams who are close by.

When a problem arises, having local support is important and for many years we have encouraged RAF stations to invite their local Citizen’s Advice Bureau to provide a service on, or close to, an RAF station. Financially supported by the RAFBF, this service has advised personnel on everything from dealing with debt to housing problems.

Our people on the ground

On a daily basis RAFA Area Welfare Officer Karen Leahair hears stories from people in need. From debt to broken down boilers, Karen assesses people on our behalf to see if they are eligible for assistance.

“Sometimes people contact us directly, or the Benevolent Fund puts us in touch with individuals in need,” she explains. “We take a holistic approach to a case and look at the whole picture — they may have contacted us because their boiler isn’t working, but at the same time we may see that they’re finding it difficult to get up the stairs and need a stairlift.

“We see the difference the RAFBF’s financial support makes to people’s lives. There are some people who are in desperate need, and it’s very rewarding to know that you have helped them to get their life back on track.”

Watch a film about Karen’s work at www.youtube.com/rafbf

Sheila Prettejohns:
Proud to be in the RAF family

For many, the RAF Benevolent Fund provides more than just financial support. We’re a family and we provide care and assistance through difficult times. Sheila Prettejohns tells us why she’s proud to be a part of the RAF family.

“Last year I faced the prospect of spending my first Christmas alone – I really wasn’t looking forward to it. My husband, Gerald, a Flight Sergeant Engineer in Bomber Command, had passed away six months ago, and it was a terribly lonely time. “Gerald and I would have been married for 50 years and we’d never spent a day apart. We met when I was 18 and Gerald was 29 and we married seven years later. I was so proud of him being in the RAF, but Gerald never talked about what he did – he would just say ‘it’s my job’ but I was proud that he was looking after his country and his family.”

After having a triple by-pass operation in 1989, Gerald made his first visit to our welfare break home on the south coast, Princess Marina House (PMH), but Sheila was unaware that, as the wife of somebody who had served, she, too, could stay at PMH in her own right.

Years later, when Gerald developed Parkinson’s disease and the couple were in need of a break, they both made the trip to PMH together.

Sheila says: “We would visit twice a year; it was our little holiday and Gerald loved it. It also gave me a break from caring for him – though I didn’t like leaving him – I knew he was in good hands.

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Sheila says: “We would visit twice a year; it was our little holiday and Gerald loved it. It also gave me a break from caring for him – though I didn’t like leaving him – I knew he was in good hands.

“The staff there were so caring, they couldn’t do enough for us.”

Being able to spend Christmas 2012 with the friends she had made at PMH was a huge relief for Sheila, who herself has been battling cancer.

“The thought of spending Christmas alone in London was dreadful and I was thrilled to be able to spend it at PMH. Being there is like being part of one big family – they really do care about you.”

“The thought of spending Christmas alone was dreadful and I was thrilled to be able to spend it at Princess Marina House.”
Taking the strain from serving personnel

Throughout 2012, RAF serving personnel and their families continued to feel the pressure from all sides. Operational tempo continued at the same high intensities as in previous years, with new operational commitments in Libya. At the same time, the full effects of the 2011 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) were starting to be felt throughout the serving RAF community.

At the Benevolent Fund, we are very aware of the effect this has had on serving personnel and their families, struggling with long periods of separation and increasing financial and organisational uncertainty. This is why, over the last six years, we have been rolling out a range of new services, specifically designed to take some of the pressure off serving families, spending some £3.7m on support for the serving RAF community in 2012.

Our Airplay youth support programme, which was set up to assist serving parents, came into its own last year, with over 2,610 children attending Airplay youth clubs and young people themselves to parents and station welfare teams.

The Relate contract continued to be an important lifeline for serving couples. In 2012, the RAF Benevolent Fund provided over 1,500 free counselling sessions to more than 770 unique clients, compared to 600 people in 2011. Figures also indicate that clients’ issues are being resolved more quickly, with the average number of sessions per person falling in 2012.

At the end of 2011, we expanded our offering of affordable seaside breaks to serving families in need of respite by opening the second of our Seaside Cottages, Shencot. 2012 saw a significant increase in the number of visitors to these facilities, with a total of 337 members of the RAF family taking a much-needed respite break at both cottages. This demonstrates that there is a real demand for this kind of support among the serving RAF community.

Finally, the Benevolent Fund provided direct financial assistance to 363 serving members of the RAF – an increase of 13% on the number of personnel we supported in 2011. The number of awards made through the minor financial assistance scheme to the RAF increased, as did those made through the chain of command.

Our impact on the serving RAF family

£3.7m
providing a range of support for serving personnel and their families

£90,000
was spent providing Relate counselling sessions for RAF personnel and their partners

337
members of the RAF family benefited from a respite break at our two cottages on the south coast, Seacot and Shencot

771
serving personnel and their partners benefited from Relate, compared to 600 in 2011

£1.25m
was spent providing Airplay youth workers to support RAF children and young people

I can be tough being an RAF mum. Flight
Lieutenant Janet Logan serves in the RAF
at Lossiemouth and is a proud mum to three
children. She tells us how she juggles family
life with on a busy RAF station.

“I have been a mother for the majority of my RAF
career. When you have a job that demands ‘Service
first’, balancing my career with being a mother to three
wonderful children can be a huge challenge!

“I am always on the go and feel like I have a constant
double shift, with home life fitting in the gaps between
work as I attempt to achieve a realistic work-life balance.

“Simple things like duty for orderly officer or attending
a training course require advance planning. I have been
lucky to have been stationed with my partner for the past
two years, but Andrew has been recently posted to HQ
Air Command.

“This means we are now a 1,000-mile round journey
apart. It was a challenge juggling the kids and the job
when dad was here, but it’s tougher now. Obviously, the
children miss him and whilst the house is a lot tidier
without his mess and laundry, he did have some users
and would occasionally cook, sometimes hoover and he would
always do the ironing!”

“We are very fortunate though to have secured places
for all three children at the RAFBF-funded childcare centre
at RAF Lossiemouth. It is an absolute lifeline for working
parents like me. The care provided for the team is
excellent, and I can go to work safe in the knowledge
that our children will be well looked after and worn out
by the end of the day.

“Thanks to the Benevolent Fund, the facility we have is
open, airy and well equipped. It is run by managers who
have partners in the RAF so they understand the pressure
on Service families.

“I have worked on RAF stations with no supported
childcare and the difference is amazing not to mention,
significantly cheaper. I don’t think I could have continued
my RAF career without access to affordable and quality
childcare. So I’m very grateful to the Benevolent Fund
for providing these facilities for all parents.”

“I don’t think I could have continued
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Flying high at RAF Lossiemouth

As a remote, and exceptionally busy operational unit, RAF Lossiemouth faces its own unique challenges and pressures. It’s the Air Force’s most northerly base, lying three hours from the nearest motorway and cutting off many RAF personnel and their families from friends and loved ones.

“When a family gets posted to Lossiemouth, they come knowing that they’re on their own,” says the station’s Community Development Officer, Sarah Riley-Evans. “Grannies and grandads are not around the corner to help with the family; they won’t be there if mum needs that little bit extra support when dad is away.

“We are an incredibly busy operational unit and this creates a lot of pressure on our families. How we support those that are left behind is really important.

“Our deployed troops need to feel confident that while they are doing their duty, their family is well supported. The Benevolent Fund helps us do that.

“In the last couple of years they have made a big investment in our Airplay youth support project. The visible sign of that is that we now have three fabulous play parks and a games area that is jam-packed.

“Three years ago, before Airplay started, RAF Lossiemouth had no youth work provision. In fact, we couldn’t maintain any youth clubs because our volunteers were always being called away on deployment, posted elsewhere or on shift patterns, which meant they couldn’t commit.

“As a result we could never guarantee having the right numbers of staff each night. Now that we have dedicated reliable Airplay youth workers, it has turned around how we deliver support to young people. We are busy four nights a week!”

Support in a crisis

With just over 2,500 personnel and their families at RAF Lossiemouth, and upheaval and change a part of daily life, there are bound to be tensions within relationships. The RAFBF funds six free counselling sessions through Relate, which are being put to good use.

“In this area there is a long waiting list to access Relate services,” says Sarah. “Through the Benevolent Fund we’ve been able to fast-track couples through that process, so instead of waiting 6–7 weeks for the initial appointment, we can get them started within a week. That means some of the issues and tensions can be relieved almost immediately and they can begin to work through their problems.

“We refer personnel to our local Citizen’s Advice who receive a grant every year from the Benevolent Fund. This enables them to stay open extra hours so that personnel can access them outside of normal working hours. We also have the Armed Services Advice Project, which the Benevolent Fund supports. It means our personnel can access quality financial advice in a forces-friendly environment. That wouldn’t be possible without the RAFBF.”

A hand with housing

SSAFA caseworker Janet Goddard supports RAF Lossiemouth personnel and families during difficult times.

“Some of the families we help to support are quite isolated. RAF Lossiemouth is a very remote location and this can be tough for families. They might be away from their home area for a long time, or they might not have family to help them when they return to the UK.

“RAF Lossiemouth is very much a family station and we work hard to help families settle into their new home. We are always there to help, whether it’s finding a school for their children or helping them to find accommodation. We also help with financial issues, such as finding the money to buy a new car or pay for the cost of moving house.

“We are very proud to be able to provide this level of support to the RAF Lossiemouth personnel and their families. It’s important that they feel supported and well cared for.”

Team RAFBF Lossiemouth!

When Karen Cox saw first-hand the support given to personnel at the station by the Benevolent Fund, she and a few friends decided to get together and give something back.

Through fire walking, cake sales, Christmas fairs and quizzes, the ladies from Team RAFBF Lossiemouth have been tirelessly raising money for us.

Karen, whose husband Rob is often away in Afghanistan, has found Airplay a godsend. She says: “I’ve got health issues and when Rob’s away, my daughter Natalie is very limited with what she can do. I can’t always provide Natalie with what she needs, but she can still go to clubs and meet friends and that’s all thanks to Airplay.”

Watch a film about Team RAFBF Lossiemouth at www.youtube.com/rafbf
The long-awaited Bomber Command Memorial, commemorating the 55,573 young airmen who lost their lives while serving in Bomber Command in World War Two, was unveiled at a ceremony in Green Park, London, on 28 June 2012.

During the 30-minute ceremony Her Majesty the Queen unveiled the nine-foot high bronze sculpture depicting seven Bomber Command aircrew, and a Bomber Command veteran read an exhortation before the act of remembrance. The ceremony ended with a flypast by five GR4 Tornado aircraft and the RAF’s last flying Lancaster Bomber, which dropped poppies over Green Park in remembrance of the aircrew lost.

Staff from the Benevolent Fund, which assumed guardianship of the Memorial on the same day, worked with members of the Bomber Command Association to bring together thousands of Bomber Command veterans, widows and family members from all over the world. They were joined by members of the serving Royal Air Force, the Air Cadet Organisation and University Air Squadrons. The whole RAF family came together in this one place to commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of those few men who gave their lives fighting for the freedom we enjoy today.

Air Marshal Chris Nickols, RAFBF Controller said: “We are honoured to be the guardians of this Memorial, which we know means a great deal to the RAF serving personnel and veterans we support every day. As part of our guardianship, we will ensure that the Memorial’s significance continues to be understood by future generations as part of the debt we owe to members of the Royal Air Force, past and present.”

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As guardians of the Bomber Command Memorial, we have pledged to maintain the Memorial for future generations and need to raise £1.5m for the endowment. If you would like to make a donation, please visit www.rafbf.org/bc or send a cheque made payable to the RAF Benevolent Fund to: Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, 67 Portland Place, London W1B 1AR.
There is no doubt that the depressed economic climate is having an impact on all charities, including the RAF Benevolent Fund. But through these difficult times our loyal supporters have continued to show their generosity and last year we received more than £11m from fundraising and legacies.

We enjoyed the support of corporate companies both large and small, raising more than £200,000. Shepherd Neame Brewery and Midshires Powerchairs donated the proceeds from their golf days whilst Brewery and Midshires Powerchairs donated the proceeds from their golf days whilst the proceeds from their golf days whilst.

We were thrilled to have made a successful application to the Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Scheme, which resulted in a grant of £138,000 towards the building of a state-of-the-art Airplay park for children and young people at RAF Brize Norton. The park was formally opened by Prime Minister David Cameron in September 2012.

The Benevolent Fund continued to seek opportunities for partnership working with our main sister Army and Naval Benevolent Funds, and for a second year we were chosen to benefit from the British Military Tournament. The event raised £18,750 for our work while exposing an audience of some 45,000 people to our brand. We also collaborated with the same two organisations in 2012, raising more than £200,000.

Fundraisers remember fallen Tornado pilots

On 3 July 2012 a tragic flying accident between two Tornado GR4 aircraft at RAF Lossiemouth resulted in the loss of three young lives.

The Benevolent Fund stepped in immediately to help the families of Flight Lieutenant Adam Sanders, 28, Squadron Leader Samuel Bailey, 36, and Flight Lieutenant Hywel Poole, 28, from XV (Reserve) Squadron.

Wing Commander Jonathan ‘Jonny’ Moreton OC XV (R) Sqn saw first-hand how this financial support helped the families.

He said: “While money will never take away the pain of losing a loved one, the swift receipt of the grant massively reduced the families’ financial worries.”

“While money will never take away the pain of losing a loved one, the swift receipt of the grant massively reduced the families’ financial worries.”

Friends Aysun Young and Henrietta Talbot raised over £3,000 for the Benevolent Fund in memory of the airmen during a charity race night in Aberdeen. More than 100 people donated their finest race-going attire to bid for prizes that included, weekends in luxury hotels and spas, meals out for two, whisky, chocolates, luxury hampers, a signed rugby shirt and a Tornado Role Demonstration Team print signed by all the team.

In memory: friends raise £3,000 through auction

In March 2013 friends and family of Flight Lieutenant Adam Sanders raised over £1,300 for the Benevolent Fund during a fundraising event at his favourite football club, Wigan Athletic. Adam was a lifelong supporter of ‘The Latics’ and had been inspired to organise the event by the support they received from the Benevolent Fund and decided they wanted all the money raised to go to the charity.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of the Tornado airmen, or perhaps another friend, colleague or relative who served in the RAF, please visit www.rafbf.org/inmemory or contact Becky Brader on 020 7307 3444.

In memory: Wigan Athletic fundraiser
Financial review
2012 highlights

We planned to operate a deficit again in 2012, largely in order to accommodate previous commitments made to the serving RAF, in particular with the Airplay Programme for children and young people.

Looking ahead, we are now planning some sensible steps to re-position the charity on to a firmer financial footing. This is necessary in order to negotiate the tough economic climate that now prevails and may continue for some time. We are constantly looking at how we can do more for less to preserve the core of our work for current and future members of the RAF family.

Despite these challenges, we still spent £21.7m on welfare even though our income was only £17.3m. We were able to do this thanks to the reserves we built up through being financially prudent during the good years. Consequently, our free reserves fell from £66.7m to £62.5m during the year.

Total income at £17.3m was £0.6m lower than the previous year whilst total expenditure at £25.4m was £4.2m lower than in 2011. We had a positive return of £3.6m from our investment portfolio, which has cushioned the additional spending.

The continuing effects of the global recession have again made it a tough year for members of the RAF family. Further cuts in benefits, which have been introduced this year, are likely to cause further hardship for RAF families in the year ahead.

So we remain incredibly grateful to our many supporters who have continued to be extremely generous during these difficult times. We were fortunate enough to receive £6.2m in legacy income, and other donations increased from £5.1m to £5.4m last year in spite of the recession. Finally, we would like to pay tribute to the serving RAF personnel and their families who continued to show their support through the half-days pay scheme and other initiatives, which contributed some £1.8m to our work.

Mike Forster
Director of Finance

HOW WE RAISED THE MONEY IN 2012

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<tr>
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<td>Donations and legacies</td>
<td>£11.5m (67%)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>£3.7m (21%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>£17.3m</td>
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HOW WE HELPED OTHERS IN 2012

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>General welfare</td>
<td>£15.4m (73%)</td>
<td>£19.8m (76%)</td>
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<td>Residential care</td>
<td>£4.1m (19%)</td>
<td>£3.8m (12%)</td>
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<td>Housing</td>
<td>£7.4m (33%)</td>
<td>£7.2m (28%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>£21.7m</td>
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TOTAL EXPENDITURE OF CHARITABLE FUNDS

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charitable activities</td>
<td>£21.7m (86%)</td>
<td>£26.0m (87%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generating funds</td>
<td>£3.2m (13%)</td>
<td>£3.2m (12%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other expenditure</td>
<td>£0.5m (2%)</td>
<td>£0.4m (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>£25.4m</td>
<td>£29.6m</td>
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</table>

5,981
serving members of the RAF and their families received support from the Benevolent Fund through individual grants, Airplay, Relate and visits to the Seaside Cottages.

Disclaimer: This information is summarised from the full financial statements. For a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity, and details of our welfare impact, please read the Trustees’ Annual Report and Auditor’s Report at www.rafbf.org.

WE SPENT £3.7M ON THE SERVING RAF IN 2012

The map below indicates how the money has been spent on RAF stations, including support to individuals and the Airplay Programme.

RAF Scampton £557,718
RAF Waddington £368,174
RAF Cranwell £35,767
RAF Coltishall £31,965
RAF Brize Norton £429,194
RAF Benson £93,202
RAF Odiham £62,843
Prudent planning for the future

After less than a year as the Controller of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, there is still much for me to learn about the organisation. But the one thing that struck me almost immediately on my arrival was the incredible breadth of our work, involving a wide range of welfare activities which embrace all members of the Royal Air Force family, from the most elderly to the young children of those currently serving. Some of our work is highly visible, such as our youth activities on Royal Air Force stations or our guardianship of the Bomber Command Memorial in London (already a top visitor attraction), but much of our day-to-day welfare support, particularly to the veteran community, is not. That work is just as vital in supporting those who need our help, even though few see it.

Readers of this review will note that our spending has reduced in 2012. This was deliberate as for several years we funded a large number of projects for the serving Royal Air Force under the umbrella of the Airplay programme. The capital expenditure on Airplay is now largely complete, and going forward we need to better balance our income and outgoings to ensure that we remain a viable organisation for the long term. Our future health will also require us to look at a broader range of fundraising methods to counter a loss of income in some areas and to enable us to withstand the tough economic climate. Overall, however, the Benevolent Fund remains in good health as the Royal Air Force’s leading welfare charity, and I thank all who have supported our important work, no matter how large or small the donation, as well as our staff and volunteers. With no government funding, we rely on your support to continue providing the depth and breadth of the services laid out in this Review.

So please continue to support us in whatever way you can. It is your advocacy, your volunteering and your donations that are the lifeblood of everything we do and everything we stand for.

Air Marshal Chris Nickels
Controller, RAF Benevolent Fund

Tony Rogers: an extraordinary life

Not many people had a life like World War Two Polish pilot, Tony Rogers. Tony, who sadly passed away on 15 January 2013, flew Lancaster, Spitfires and Wellingtons during World War Two. Tony was taken prisoner by Soviet forces after the invasion of Poland and was imprisoned in a Gulag in a hard labour camp. In 1942 he was freed in an agreement with the Allies. Making his way to the UK, he went on to serve with the Royal Air Force. In service, he flew a range of aircraft and in 1944 he flew dangerous and daring supply missions to resistance forces in Warsaw. Later in life, Tony was immobilised by a stroke and the Benevolent Fund stepped in to provide him with a mobility scooter. Despite his disability, Tony was keen to attend the unveiling of the Bomber Command Memorial on 28 June 2012. The Benevolent Fund assisted him by paying for his journey to London and for a helper to support him on the day. Tony was so grateful for the assistance he received from the Benevolent Fund over the years that he became a keen supporter and a passionate advocate of our work.

Watch more of Tony’s story at www.rafbf.org/stories
The Red Arrows rehearse their ‘nine-ship’ manoeuvre at RAF College Cranwell in Lincolnshire with a Hawk carrying the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund’s heart roundel. © Crown copyright 2013

For further information about the RAF Benevolent Fund or to make a donation, please visit www.rafbf.org

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