



THE FRIENDS of ERLESTOKE PRISON

The Friends of Erlestoke Prison

Annual Report for 2020/2021



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1. Chair's Report

Welcome to our 9th Annual Report for a year which has been like no other. In my report last year, I ended with cautious optimism that we would be able to restart provision of our services in HMP Erlestoke during this financial year. Sadly, in common with most other service providers and charities across the England and Wales prison estate, this has not been possible due to the COVID-19 restrictions. On the 23rd March 2020, we wrote to our service providers to temporarily suspend their contracts with the Friends and have not yet been able to reengage their services in this financial year.



However, I am pleased to share with you that Helen Holtam, our Origami teacher since 2017 did not let the COVID-19 restrictions deter her from raising funds from the sale of origami products. Several prisoners continued to fold in their cells during lockdown enabling Helen to complete cards at home and sell them via the <https://origamiinside.com> website. A huge thank to Helen, her helpers and the origami prisoners for all their lockdown work.

Thank you also to Beth Fiducia-Brookes, who previously facilitated drama for the Friends, for launching a pre-Christmas creative competition; the winning entry is included later in this report.

Sadly for prisoners and their families, social visits this year have been scarce. Correspondingly demand for our Transport Scheme has been virtually non-existent. Also, some of our volunteers have stepped down from driving due to COVID-19 vulnerabilities, but we have been successful in recruiting new drivers who are ready to step in as soon as social visits restart. Thank you to all our drivers, past, present and new.

Many of our drivers will remember Carol Part, who, sadly, died in August 2020. Carol joined the Friends in 2016 as our Transport Scheme Co-ordinator and became an invaluable trustee in 2017, sharing with us her previous career experience as a professional fundraiser. Carol was passionate about our work, particularly in supporting prisoners' families and she is sorely missed by us all.

On a positive note, I am delighted to share that Belinda Southwell, our founder and previous Chair was, this year, awarded the MBE for her voluntary services in the criminal justice system. This is a well deserved honour after Belinda's many years of supporting prisoners and their families and we are very proud of her achievements.



I am also pleased to report that although we did not win, we were proud to be shortlisted for Wiltshire Life's Community Group of the Year award and we came second. Thank you to Wiltshire Life for recognising our work and congratulations to the winners!

Fundraising has been a challenge in the pandemic, but thank you to Primrose Campbell who organised our trustee sponsored walk in September. We are also grateful to Al Margadale for allowing the walk to take place across the Fonthill Estate. Thank you also to the prisoners who completed the 5km walk/run in August raising over £200.

Although we have had limited success with grant applications this year, we were grateful to receive a grant from BA13+ Community Area Partnership Group for Personal Protective Equipment for our drivers. Thank you also to the Hilden Charitable Fund who continue to support our Transport Scheme and have allowed us to carry their grant forward into the next financial year. Thanks also to the Lynn Foundation, Salisbury Cathedral, our regular supporters and to all those who have contributed to our sports pitch fund.

Prisoners have had a challenging and difficult year, with many locked up for extended periods every day with limited access to activities, outdoor exercise, behavioural programmes, education and their families. In the coming months, in conjunction with prison staff, the Friends will focus on facilitating the planning and build of a much needed outdoor Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in HMP Erlestoke. We hope to have this up and running in the next financial year (2021/2022) to support recovery from the pandemic restrictions which have impacted both the mental and physical health of prisoners and prison staff.

Finally we are grateful to our patrons and all those who continue to believe in and contribute to the work of the Friends. We could not do any of this without you. I look forward to the next financial year being one of recovery for the prison and the charity and one in which the Friends can positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of the men in HMP Erlestoke and their families.

Best wishes to all our supporters and let us hope that we will soon return to some semblance of normality in our communities, in HMP Erlestoke and all prisons across the country.

Angela Hughes
Chair, Friends of Erlestoke Prison



2. Reference and administrative details of the Friends of Erlestoke Prison

1. The Charity is known as 'The Friends of Erlestoke Prison'. No other name is used.
2. The registration number is: 1147582
3. The address of the Charity is: HMP Erlestoke, Westbury Road, Erlestoke, Devizes, SN10 5TU
4. The Charity Trustees for the period of this report:

Angela Hughes	Chair
Mark Mangham	Treasurer
Simon Petchey	Governance
Carolyn Deverall	Prison/police liaison
Sarah Gooch	Multi-Use Games Area
Belinda Southwell	Yoga
Primrose Campbell	Art
Eve McBride	Transport Scheme
Francesca Bishop	Legal, contracts and Origami

5. Patrons for the period of this report:

The Charity has a Royal Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall

and 5 Patrons:

Sir Christopher Benson, DL	John Bush, CVO, OBE
Robert Hiscox, DL	The Lord Margadale of Islay, DL
Sir John Nutting Bt., QC	

3. Objectives of the Friends of Erlestoke Prison

HMP Erlestoke is a Category C adult male predominantly rehabilitation and programmes prison and is the only prison in Wiltshire. It is now designated and moving towards being 50% rehabilitation and 50% resettlement. Located in the rural village of Erlestoke, the nearest railway station is Westbury, 8 miles away. Many prisoners are Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoners (ISP), serving life sentences and Indeterminate sentences for Public Protection (IPP).

The prison is intervention-focused and whilst it will accept all Category C prisoners, they will primarily be serving sentences of 4 years or more. The total operational capacity of the Prison is 524, although at times during lockdown this number was significantly reduced to less than 450 prisoners.

For further information about HMP Erlestoke, please visit:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder/erlestoke>

The objective of the Friends of Erlestoke Prison is 'to promote and support the rehabilitation of prisoners who are or have previously been prisoners at HMP Erlestoke, by the provision of funds and services as the trustees think fit, and in consultation with prison Governors/Governing Body'.

The Friends of Erlestoke Prison helps to support prisoners with the challenges of rehabilitation whilst in custody and also helps them to keep in touch with their partners and children whilst completing their sentence. The Charity also aims to raise awareness and promote local understanding of the prison, which for many, is an unknown 'hidden' institution.

4. Structure and management

The Charity currently has nine trustees, a Royal Patron, five patrons, and a group of enthusiastic local volunteers, supported by the Governor and the prison management team. There are no paid permanent staff. Pre-COVID-19, the Charity contracted independent service providers to deliver yoga, art, drama and origami workshops in the prison and co-ordinate the Transport Scheme. These contracts were suspended from March 2020 due to the pandemic restrictions.

The trustees are all volunteers; two have been with the Charity since start up and were previously members of the Independent Monitoring Board, both at HMP Erlestoke and one other establishment. New trustee recruitment is often achieved through existing trustees' personal networks of interested individuals. All trustees are risk assessed and vetted by the prison security department. Trustees' backgrounds are diverse and include experience in the NHS, the Army, Police, Technical Sales, Education, Human Resources, Marketing, Restorative Justice, Criminology, Magistracy, Commissioning, Event Management and Law.

Trustees attend relevant conferences, seminars and webinars and ensure that their knowledge is current and relevant to the work that they perform for the Charity. The trustees held regular meetings (approximately every 6 weeks) throughout the year to ensure that they remain up to date with what is happening in the prison, make decisions on requests for support, plan future events and discuss fundraising ideas. These meetings have continued throughout this financial year, but without exception, have been held virtually over Zoom.

Pre-COVID-19, the Governor or Deputy Governor plus a member of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) attended these meetings to provide up to date information about the prison. Also, prison staff

sometimes joined the meetings to provide additional expertise on prison issues. Prisoners were also invited on occasions to discuss how they have benefited from the work of the Friends. During this financial year, the Governor provided regular updates to the Chair by phone which were then shared in the Zoom trustee meetings.

5. Governance

The routine governance activities have continued with insurance renewal and monitoring of Charity Commission information. Our data protection registration has been maintained. Personal information is restricted and controlled according to the European General Data Protection Rules which are still applicable even though the UK has exited the European Union. Our Trustee responsible for governance (Simon Petchey) also ensures that formal trustee board votes are undertaken for all major decisions.

6. Friends of Erlestoke Prison Public Safety Award

The Friends once again sponsored the Public Safety Award to recognise the work of staff relating to public protection. This year we were unable to present the award in person due to the COVID-19 restrictions but our congratulations go to Charlotte Harris who won our award. We were also pleased to see that there were 18 nominees for this award. Charlotte is fairly new to HMP Erlestoke, having previously worked as a Probation Officer in Chippenham. Her hard work, diligence and professionalism helped to improve the standards within her department especially in her work with Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPPA) cases. Charlotte is a popular member of staff who has integrated successfully into the HMP Erlestoke team.

7. Activities

7.1 Origami

Helen Holtam has achieved the impossible and enabled some prisoners to continue with their origami activity during lockdown. Members of her classes were able to fold in their cells throughout lockdown. A kind individual seconded to HMP Erlestoke but living in Salisbury safely and regularly couriered papers and instructions to the prisoners via the Education Department and brought finished card fronts and swans back to Helen. As the men have no access to the internet in prison, they needed written instructions for all designs, which were also delivered.





With the help of a group of Helen's friends, cards were completed at her home. This means there is a large stock of 15 different patterned cards which she has continued to sell on behalf of the Friends of Erlestoke Prison. Helen is also currently planning some new designs for future sales. Helen was invited to send entries in to the annual national Koestler Art Exhibition.

Sales over the year have achieved £2,800; an amazing achievement when fundraising has been challenging. In addition 1000 cards were donated to all the men so that they could write messages to their families over this difficult period. The prison paid the postage on these cards.

As part of the push to sell the Origami cards Helen has set a new website <https://origamiinside.com> which showcases the cards as well as providing an efficient way to achieve sales, the proceeds of which currently come to the Friends of Erlestoke Prison. The cards are also sold in various outlets across Wiltshire and hopefully sales will pick up as these shops reopen. A special thank you goes to Crisis UK and the Bishop of Salisbury for their bulk purchase of origami cards.

Helen also submitted photos to the online St Thomas's (Salisbury) Christmas Tree festival in 2020. The tree shown on the left is decorated with origami products made by Erlestoke prisoners.



On a sadder note the face to face Origami classes have not been taking place due to the pandemic and are now unlikely to recommence when the lockdown measures are removed. This is because Helen is moving out of the area in July with her husband, the Bishop of Salisbury, to begin life in well earned retirement. We are hopeful that Origamiinside expands as a venture further afield and wish it, and the team behind it, every success.

The Friends of Erlestoke Prison cannot thank Helen Holtam enough for her enthusiasm, creativity and contribution to the charity over the years. Helen is truly an inspiration and she will be missed by the Friends and the prisoners who have worked with her.



7.2 Transport Scheme



Knowing that maintaining strong links between prisoners and their family and friends can positively contribute to successful rehabilitation, it has been the cause of endless sadness and frustration to us during the pandemic that our Transport Scheme has been unable to help. Visits have been curtailed during periods of lockdown and were minimal when restrictions were lifted. Not only has this been devastating to prisoners and their loved ones but it has also impacted negatively on our wonderful bank of volunteer drivers who have not been able to help in the way that gives them so much pleasure and fulfilment. The Scheme itself had to be curtailed during the Spring and Summer with a temporary suspension of the contract of our Transport Scheme coordinator, Sally-Anne Livesley.

Whereas in 2019-20 our drivers gave 1410 individual lifts to visitors, in 2020-21 the total was 4. But there is some good news! Despite the Scheme being transformed so negatively this last year, the Hilden Charitable Trust, who have so generously supported our Transport scheme with a grant of £6,000 in each of the preceding 2 years, saw fit to grant us a further £6,000 this year. In addition, BA13+ Partnership responded to our need to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and vehicle cleaning equipment for our drivers, to keep them and the visitors safe when visits and the Scheme do resume; they awarded us a grant to cover the costs of these.

Despite the scheme not operating, some visitors still managed to express their gratitude and appreciation of the work our drivers do to support them and their imprisoned loved ones through their Christmas and New Year wishes. The nature of comments from visitors demonstrates their perception of our drivers not just as facilitators but as kind and supportive individuals who are there for them, often at times when they are feeling stressed and anxious.

We have been unable to have our Drivers' annual get together this year which has been a great sadness. We also had to cancel at short notice, in March last year, the prison visit for drivers. Both these events not only give drivers and our team a chance to meet up but are valuable functions in information sharing for the drivers. They will be reinstated as soon as we are allowed to do so.

We are pleased to report that our drivers understand the importance of our Transport Scheme and are all too ready and willing to restart their volunteering as soon as the situation allows. We can almost hear their engines revving from here!

7.3 Creative competition



In an attempt to alleviate some of the boredom of lockdown for the prisoners, we supported a pre-Christmas Creative Competition, initiated by Beth Fiducia-Brookes. Beth has previously led drama workshops in HMP Erlestoke funded by the Friends.

Despite there being several categories: drawing, script writing, poetry and short stories, sadly the uptake was quite low. However, thank you and congratulations to the men who participated and to the 3 winners who were given a certificate, chocolate and sketch pads. The winning entry is reproduced below:

*The Meaning of Life?
We live
We love
We laugh
We dream
however impossible
they seem*

*We dance
We play
We train
We sing
believe we can
do anything*

*As time goes by
and we get old
countless items bought and sold
married with kids
you found a wife*

But what's the meaning of your life?

7.4 Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) (previously known as an All Weather Sports Pitch)

The Friends have raised a considerable sum for a sports pitch in the prison, from fund raising events and generous donations. A place for sport and exercise outside in the fresh air has the potential to support prisoners' rehabilitation by improving mental and physical health, particularly following a long period of lockdown due to COVID-19.



With this in mind, the trustees formed a small working group in October 2020 to try to push this project forward to completion. The enthusiasm and support of the prison officers for a sports



pitch is heartening. We have now decided that we will build something a little smaller than originally planned. The AWSP (All Weather Sports Pitch) has therefore become a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). This smaller facility will be within our current budget and we are confident that it will be a very useful facility, which can be used for inter unit competitions and multiple sporting activities for individuals and teams. It also has the potential to be used for family days when they resume.

The final site for building the MUGA is dependent upon other building works in the prison and will be confirmed in the coming months. Once we get the green light, we will work with relevant prison staff and the Regional Development Manager to identify and instruct a contractor to start work so that this dream can at last become a reality.



8. Fundraising

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only restricted our service provision within the prison, but also our ability to fundraise. The past year has curtailed any fund raising for the MUGA, and a talk at Sarum College by Robert Gordon entitled “Shackleton and the Endurance” had to be postponed twice because of safety concerns during the pandemic; however we look forward to an interesting evening in October 2021 when we hope to be able to hold the talk.

We have been unable to run any face to face indoor events due to the pandemic restrictions and have been largely unsuccessful in securing grant funding this year. We believe this to be because many grant providers have, quite rightly, focused their support on individuals and charities with vulnerabilities resulting from COVID-19, whether they be health, social or financial. Also, we have substantial reserves in the monies currently allocated to the MUGA.

8.1 Sponsored Walk

However, we did organise a sponsored walk. Thank you to our trustee Primrose Campbell and our patron, Al Margadale, who jointly organised the walk across the beautiful Fonthill estate in Salisbury, in September 2020. Various distances were completed by our trustees, family members and their dogs; 3km 10km and 20km, raising just over £2,200. Congratulations to Eve McBride who completed 10km wearing an inflatable Sumo wrestling suit!



8.2 Prisoners and Staff Fun Run

In August 2020, several prisoners and staff took part in a 5km fun run/walk raising just over £200 for the Friends. Sadly we were unable to join the event due the COVID-19 restrictions, but thank you to all who participated. Monies from the fun run also made it possible for the indeterminate sentenced prisoners on the Progression Regime to send a photo of themselves holding a board with a message to someone who they love. This was particularly valued as social visits have either been restricted or not permitted at all.



9. Financial Review – 2020/21

Our fundraising is a combination of personal donations, the proceeds of fundraising events and organisation/trust fund donations and grants, often for specific projects. A bedrock is the continuing steady stream of donations from our generous regular supporters. Our specific fundraising this year has been muted due to the pandemic but our outgoings have been curtailed too. The impetus remains our medium-term project to build a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) under the leadership of Sarah Gooch. The trustees have been able to earmark over £200,000 for the MUGA at the end of March 2021, which is a tremendous achievement.

Our expenditure is directly linked to the charity aims. Our spending has been severely curtailed by the reduced activity due to COVID-19. However, origami, with great energy and enthusiasm from Helen Holtam, is still a major contributor to the charity with its range of original and quality cards and art work.

Our expenditure budget for 2020/2021 was set at £29,836 anticipating adding Drama workshops and restarting Art sessions to our regular provision of support to the prisoners. However, the COVID-19 restricted regime prevented us from operating most of our activities. We will develop a budget for 2021/22 when a change of activity level allows us to make sensible forecasts.

Our draft reserve policy is to ensure that we have sufficient funds to cope with a 25% drop in income without impacting key projects for 6 months and our reserve level is now more than in line with this policy. Our access to external grants has been impacted by the growth in our reserves, particularly as we have a growing proportion earmarked for the MUGA which is not technically yet a formal restricted fund.

We currently have a current account and an instant access savings account which is earning a basic level of interest. Our investment policy was reviewed last year, and we have added a one-year £50,000 bond purchased in Oct 20 due to mature in Oct 21.

Our 2020/2021 accounts, independently inspected by Chris Vaughan, Accountants, 195 Ermin Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 4NA, are available on our website: www.friendsoferlestokeprison.com

9.1 Receipts and Payments Accounts: 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021

	Total funds 2020/21	Last year 2019/20
	£	£
Receipts		
Fundraising Income	7,420	38,716
Grants Received	9,000	15,000
Donations Received	8,890	28,050
Gift Aid Income	2,090	3,226
Investment Income	11	62
Total receipts	27,411	85,054
Payments		
Transport Coordinator	591	6,201
Transport Scheme Expenses		216
Yoga	338	3,130
Art (Labour and Materials)		6,738
Drama	310	3,345
Health Training and Equipment	243	-
Equipment		-
Origami	436	2,595
Fundraising Costs		385
Insurance	510	490
Just Giving Subscription	198	180
Older Project Areas		36
Sundries	179	500
Sub total	2,806	23,817
Asset purchase	50,000	50,000
Total payments	52,806	73,817
Net of receipts/(payments)	24,606	11,237
Assets		
Cambridge and County	150,000	100,000
Total funds brought forward	185,278	125,461
Total funds year end	209,884	185,278

10. Public Benefit Statement

Most prisoners will eventually be released into our communities and will have to re-establish themselves back into society. Unless effective interventions are made whilst the men are in custody it is unlikely that they will change their behaviour and many will revert back to old habits upon release, leading to re-offending and more victims of crime.

It is well documented that the risk of individuals re-offending is much reduced if they have a home and a job upon release and have been supported throughout their sentence by friends and family. HM Prison Service works to help the men in these areas, but there is always more that can be done.

Any rehabilitated prisoner, who becomes a law-abiding citizen, will provide benefit to the community, particularly if he is employed and supporting his family. The Friends work with HMP Erlestoke to help prisoners take responsibility for themselves and their future outside of the prison. The Friends aim to provide services which offer the men opportunities to educate and develop themselves whilst in custody.

The Friends also offer volunteering opportunities for the local community to help the men in HMP Erlestoke maintain contact with their families. We aim to raise awareness of prison life and build understanding of how many of the prisoners ended up in prison, often through, for example, mental illness, drug/alcohol addiction, abusive childhoods and poor education. Prison is also an opportunity to change. The Friends are realistic and know that even with powerful interventions, some prisoners will not change. However, if the interventions work for a percentage of the prison population, communities will benefit from the integration of non-violent, employable men with skills and trades who are able to support themselves and their families. People are often prejudiced because of what they don't know – as more locals become involved with the prison and understand what it is trying to do, they may become more accepting of ex-prisoners, particularly those who want to transform their lives.

11. The Year Ahead – 2021/22

As with this financial year, the year ahead is fraught with uncertainty as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not yet fully understand the long term impacts of the virus and its restrictions but it has undoubtedly affected the mental and physical health of prisoners across the prison estate. Our main objective for the year ahead therefore, is to expedite the build of the Multi-Use Games Area. Concurrently, with the prison, we will begin to develop programmes which will optimise its use to ensure that multiple prisoners can experience outdoor exercise and the associated benefits to their mental and physical health.

At the time of writing our Transport Scheme has just become operational once more with the restart of social visits. We also hope to reintroduce in-prison activities during 2021/22 although it is currently unclear what form they will take.

Sustainability of the charity is also a key objective; we are mindful that we need a clear succession plan within our trustee team. This will be developed in the coming months to ensure that we continue to develop a robust and talented group of individuals who will lead and grow the charity throughout the coming months and years.

12. For more information

If you would like more information about the work of the Friends, please visit our website:

www.friendsoferlestokeprison.com, email: info@friendsoferlestokeprison.com

You can also follow the Friends and HMP Erlestoke on Twitter: [@friendserlepris](https://twitter.com/friendserlepris) and [@HMPErlestoke](https://twitter.com/HMPErlestoke)

If you would like to make a donation, please visit:

<https://www.friendsoferlestokeprison.com/donate.html>

Any contribution that you could make would be of great value to us, particularly with the current challenges in raising funds during a pandemic.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in our charity.

The Trustees

Friends of Erlestoke Prison

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