



THE FRIENDS of ERLESTOKE PRISON

The Friends of Erlestoke Prison

Annual Report for 2021/2022



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1. Chair's Report



Welcome to our 10th Annual Report. Yet another extraordinary year during which we had hoped to see a return to the normal prison regime but it was not to be. Prisoners continued to spend long hours in their cells and provision of education, offender behaviour programmes, outdoor exercise and work opportunities has been limited. Similarly, social visits have been affected with prisoners continuing to see much less of their families. Once again, we were unable to provide our pre-pandemic services due to the COVID-19 restrictions across the England and Wales prison estate.

However, throughout the year, we have maintained our focus on the planning and build of an outdoor Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in the prison. We have continued to work with the prison management team and Government Facility Services (GFSL) and although we do not yet have a confirmed build start date, we are optimistic that this will happen in the coming months. This is a much needed facility to provide an outdoor space for exercise and sport; we strongly believe that the MUGA will help mental and physical health recovery following the lifting of pandemic restrictions.

As per our report last year, neither the COVID-19 restrictions or a house move out of Wiltshire deterred Helen Holtam, our Origami teacher since 2017, from raising funds from the sale of origami products. Several prisoners continued to fold in their cells enabling Helen to complete cards at home and sell them via the <https://origamiinside.com> website. A huge thank you to Helen, the volunteer helpers and the origami prisoners for all their work.

Thank you also to Beth Fiducia-Brookes, who previously facilitated drama for us, for launching a summer creative competition encouraging prisoners to share what lockdown has meant to them; entries included some thought provoking poetry, song lyrics, art work and creative writing. Thank you to the prisoners who submitted their work.

As you will read in our Transport Scheme section, although up on last year, take up of the scheme has been very low this year. Some of our volunteers stepped down from driving due to health and fitness reasons, but we were pleased to welcome a significant number of new recruits to our team. We said goodbye to Sally-Anne Livesley who has been co-ordinating the Scheme for the last 3 years during turbulent times for which we thank her. We welcomed Shirley Carr who joined us at the end of March to take over from Sally-Anne. Thank you to the BBC Points West news programme which highlighted our scheme and generated a lot of new interest. Thank you also to all of our drivers, old and new.

We have also had some changes in our Trustee team. Simon Petchey retired from the Friends after 6 years with the charity. Carolyn Deverall-Hart stepped down from the role after 4 years with us. Welcome to Sue Weber who has taken over the Treasurer role from Mark Mangham and to Charles Atterton who has joined our MUGA team. Thank you to Simon, Carolyn and Mark for their many combined years of contribution to the Friends.

We are grateful to our patrons and donors and all those who continue to believe in and contribute to the work of the Friends, whether that be financially, undertaking fundraising activities or volunteering. You are critical to our work and we thank you.

I would also like to thank the trustees who have continued to be passionate about the work of the Charity throughout the pandemic even though our output has been severely limited. I stepped down from the Chair role at the end of this financial year after just over 3 years at the helm and it has been a privilege to work with you all. I now look forward to supporting my successor, Primrose Campbell and wish her every success in the role.

Finally, best wishes to all our supporters and let us hope that 2022/2023 will be a year of recovery for the prison and the Charity and one in which the Friends can once again positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of the men in HMP Erlestoke and their families.

Angela Hughes

Outgoing 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 (up to November 2021)
Sue Weber	Treasurer (from November 2021)
Simon Petchey	Governance (retired November 2021)
Sarah Gooch	Multi-Use Games Area
Eve McBride	Transport Scheme
Francesca Bishop	Legal, contracts and Origami
Belinda Southwell	Yoga
Primrose Campbell	Art
Carolyn Deverall	(Resigned March 2022)
Charles Atterton	(from November 2021)

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 training and resettlement prison and is the only prison in Wiltshire. The prison is a national resource for offending behaviour programmes. 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). Most prisoners are serving sentences of over four years. The total operational

capacity of the Prison is 524, although during this financial year this number was significantly reduced to just over 440 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 aims 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 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. Only the Transport Scheme Co-ordinator's was re-engaged in 2021.

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, Education, Event Management and Law.

Trustees attend relevant 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) 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 at HMP Erlestoke, unlike the previous year when they were held on Zoom. Trustees also attend Prison Council meetings on a regular basis.

The Governor or Deputy Governor plus a member of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) attend these meetings to provide up to date information about the prison.

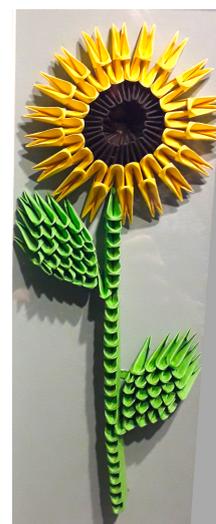
5. Governance

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 Unions.

6. Activities

6.1 Origami

Origami is alive and well in HMP Erlestoke. Under the direction of Helen Holtam from her residence in Brighton it has been possible to ensure that prisoners have been in receipt of materials and Origami patterns. The card sales increased over the year with some notably large orders. More card sales mean it is possible to fund more materials. Sales are continuing via the <https://origamiinside.com> website and local stockists such as Salisbury Cathedral gift shop, Fisherton Gallery and Kerfuffle bookshop. The British Origami Society also sent us patterns and materials for the men to use this year.



The Origami group is still a small group but as some normality returns to prison life following the pandemic we are hoping to be able to recruit more men to keep the card production going and the art of Origami alive. At the moment the Trustees are assisting in the supervision of classes. The trustees who have attended this year have all found it to be a lot of fun even if their origami skills were not as honed as the prison attendees! One particularly expert prisoner is teaching the others on a Friday morning. It is a therapeutic activity and a motivational class.

Here are some examples of the class's success this year:

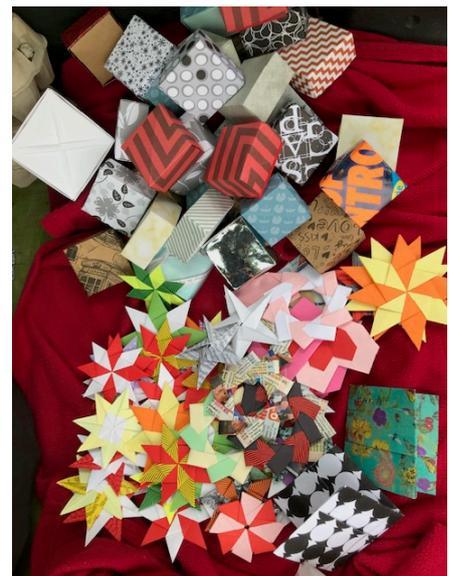
- Proceeds from the card and model sales directly benefit the prisoners. Since the inception of the Origami class, over £25,000 has been raised. This year's contribution was £3,500. This is an extraordinary figure given the circumstances in which we have all found ourselves in the past two years.
- The Origami Christmas decorations were once again used to decorate the tree in St Thomas's Church in Salisbury to great acclaim. This tree is always returned to the prison to lift morale for the men during the Christmas season.



- 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.
- The Origami class was featured in the Autumn 2021 prison magazine 'The Manor' which quoted that the class 'helps provide a calming influence when the outside environment is noisy and hectic'.
- The penguin Origami card was submitted for the Koestler Art award and was a worthy Bronze award winner. Congratulations to the Origami team!
- The HMP Erlestoke Governor chose to use the Origami cards at Christmas. Also, Prisons Minister, Victoria Atkins and four other Justice Ministers chose to use the penguin image for their Christmas cards. This is a testament to the men's hard work and also good news for the Friends in terms of funds and raising the Charity's profile.



Thank you to Elizabeth Williams in the Education Department who has been a marvellous co-ordinator regarding the activity. However, without Helen's tireless efforts for the Origami activity and in selling via shops and the Origami Inside website, we would not be in as good a position as we are today. Thank you to Helen for all her hard work and financial contributions to the Friends.



6.2 Transport Scheme



Our Transport Scheme was first set up in 2014. By facilitating regular contact between prisoners and their families, it lies at the heart of the aims of our Charity. We know that maintaining strong links with family and friends is key to successful prisoner rehabilitation and our scheme aims to contribute to this.

Our volunteer drivers collect visitors from the nearby bus and train stations and drive them to the prison and back. In so doing the scheme supports visits for friends and families of prisoners in both a practical and financial way; without the scheme, visitors would have to pay for a taxi to take them to the prison for the last part of their journey and would not benefit from the familiar, friendly face of their driver. Visits are thus not only made easier but the prospect of them is less daunting for people who may have travelled a long distance. We hope people may therefore be encouraged to visit more frequently.

Despite our optimism at the start of the year, visits over this past year have been significantly slower to pick up than we anticipated and 2021/2022 has again been a quiet one for our valued Transport Scheme. Covid restrictions at the prison have continued to impact significantly on visitor numbers and therefore, also, the opportunities for our drivers, who engage so selflessly with the scheme, has been diminished.

Transport Scheme Figures

As you will see from the following figures, numbers of requests for visits remain significantly down compared with pre-pandemic figures:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/21	2020/21	2021/22
Total individual visitor lifts given	623	1072	1410	4	188
Total children under 12 years	111	146	338	0	20

At the time of writing this report, there are indications that numbers are beginning, very gradually, to increase again. Certainly prison visits are now longer, with fewer restrictions in place for families. Whilst we know how important physical visits are to both the men and their families, it is frustrating that numbers remain small and we are doing our best to spread the word about the scheme with information available in the visits hall and communications to all the prisoners.

Volunteer Numbers

The good news is that we have a healthy number of wonderful volunteer drivers. Although several of our drivers have decided, for good reasons, to stand down from the role over this last year, we have a significant number of new recruits. This has been achieved through local advertising and also through a piece on BBC Points West at the end of February, repeated on Radio Wiltshire, that attracted new people to the volunteer driving role. We are very grateful to the BBC for their support for our Charity.

If you would like to view the short BBC Points West piece, you can watch it via this link:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/au50cyjqhlu83e5/prison_for%20link%20exarchive%201858%2027%204-h264.mov?dl=0

We are very grateful to Rhona, our driver, and Ursula, the visitor in the recording, who so generously agreed to be involved in the piece. Ursula's words so clearly demonstrate the value of the Scheme to the visitors:

“To be able to get here on time and see my son without all the stress, yes it's wonderful.”

Transport Scheme Co-ordinator

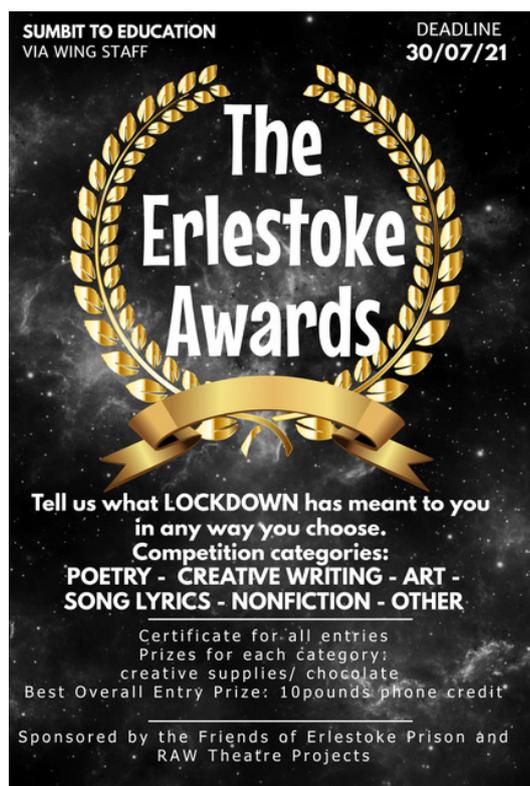
A very significant piece of news is that our highly valued Transport Scheme Co-ordinator needed to resign from the role at the end of March. Sally-Anne Livesley showed such understanding of and commitment to the role and there is no doubt of the extent to which she enabled the scheme to progress positively. We would be in the deep doldrums about this were it not for the fact that we have appointed a fantastic replacement for Sally-Anne in a very short space of time. Shirley Carr has taken on this paid role and from the very start has shown every sign that she will be an ideal Transport Scheme Co-ordinator. With the surname 'Carr' who could expect otherwise?

The Way Forward

We need to be able to continue to help families like Ursula's. As the Transport Scheme moves forward with, we very much hope, rapidly increasing numbers of users when the pandemic finally wanes and vanishes, there will be additional costs to factor in as the Co-ordinator role gets busier. We are constantly seeking funding for the Scheme and are forever grateful to patrons and donors and those of you who support our charitable events with your generosity.

For more information about our Transport Scheme, please contact Shirley: phone: 07504 987190 or email: friendstransportscheme@gmail.com

6.3 Summer creative competition



In July and August 2021, we ran a creative competition to encourage prisoners to express what lockdown has meant for them in any medium. The competition was initiated by Beth Fiducia-Brookes who also judged the entries with Angela Hughes. Beth is familiar with the prison having previously led drama workshops in HMP Erlestoke funded by the Friends.

Sadly the take up of the competition was low; we had only 10 entries, but although we lacked quantity of entries, there was no shortage of quality or variety. Entries included artwork, sculpture, song lyrics, poetry and creative writing. Thank you and congratulations to the men who participated and to the winners who were given phone credit, art materials or chocolate as prizes.

6.4 Celebration of Recovery

The Friends were pleased to support a Celebration of Recovery given by the Drug Recovery Unit in December 2021. Unfortunately outside visitors were not permitted due to Covid restrictions but the event was attended by 22 prisoners and several staff. The Friends funded the cost of food and gifts for the event. Several of the men who attended are now working as peer mentors supporting delivery of the drug recovery programme to other prisoners.

7. Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)

Work continues with the prison to facilitate the build of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). We believe that this project is even more relevant now than before the pandemic because of the impact of lockdown on prisoner health and mental well-being. There is universal awareness of the benefits that sport, teamwork, fresh air and exercise can bring. Furthermore, there is also recognition that sport can contribute to efforts to reduce violence in prison and reoffending on release, often through opportunities for education and employment linked to sport.





The MUGA will have the potential for inter-unit competitions and multiple sporting activities for individuals and teams. It also has the potential to be used for family days when it is up and running.

An environmental/ecological survey was conducted on the site in December 2021 and we are now in the early stages of applying for planning permission. We hope to report that the MUGA is up and running in next year's annual report.

8. Fundraising and Promotional Activities

The COVID-19 pandemic not only restricted our service provision within the prison, but also our ability to fundraise. However, the talk at Sarum College by Robert Gordon entitled "Shackleton and the Endurance", postponed from last year, did go ahead in October 2021, raising just over £1,660 for the MUGA. Our online 'Lockdown 21 Auction' which we ran in the Autumn raised just over £2,300.

The highlight of our fundraising activities this year has to be the High Sheriff's Fete in July 2021. We were invited to run the plate smashing stall which we took on board with great enthusiasm. Thank to the local recycling centres in Wilshire who provided us with multiple boxes of old crockery. We survived a boiling hot day and Sarah Gooch even sold some of the better quality china as well as encouraging visitors to smash plates! For our efforts, the High Sheriff, Sir Charles Hobhouse awarded us a grant of £1,285. It was also an excellent opportunity to promote the Friends to a wider audience.



Setting up our plate smashing stall - July 2021

In February 2022, we had another opportunity to promote the Friends. Angela Hughes was invited to Marlborough College to speak to the GCSE students about prisons in England and Wales and the work of the Friends. This was in support of their GCSE Crime and Punishment module. Thank you to Marlborough College for this opportunity.

We also featured on Wiltshire Life's website with a short article about the MUGA project:

<https://www.wiltshirelife.co.uk/general/friends-of-erlestoke-prison>

9. Financial Review 2021/22

Our total income for this year was £34,174. This was a combination of personal donations, the proceeds from an online auction and donations from Charitable Trusts. We have a steady stream of income from our generous regular supporters for which we are very grateful. Apart from the online auction and the High Sheriff's Fete, we have only been able to run one other fundraising event because of COVID restrictions. Over the last three years our investments in short term bonds have earned interest and this is included in this year's income.

The proceeds of the sale of the origami work produced by some of the prisoners is still a major contributor to the charity; with the support and enthusiasm of Helen Holtam the work continues to provide us with a good income.

Our total expenditure this year was £5,980 and was directly linked to the Charity aims. Our spending has been severely curtailed by the reduced activity due to COVID-19, with the in-house projects of Art, Drama and Yoga still not back in action. Nevertheless the Transport Scheme started to operate again mid-year and we hope it will be back to its pre-COVID levels very soon.

Our biggest project is still the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) under the leadership of Sarah Gooch. We have been raising funds for this over the last few years and we have now accumulated nearly £226,000 which is earmarked for the project. Because of anticipated rising costs, we are still short of approximately £50,000 to complete the project. We have already spent £3,420 on the survey of the proposed pitch and we hope to complete the MUGA within the coming year.

Our policy for the general reserve is to ensure that we have sufficient reserves to fund key projects for 6 months which we estimate as £12,000. Our reserves are much higher than that at the end of the year because of the £226,000 which is earmarked for the MUGA project.

Our annual accounts have been 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 2021 – 31st March 2022

	Totals 2021/22	Last year 2020/21
	£	£
Receipts		
Fundraising Income	4,497	7,420
Grants Received	6,250	9,000
Donations Received	18,009	8,890
Gift Aid Income	191	2,090
Investment Income	5,228	11
Total receipts	34,174	27,411
Payments		
Transport Coordinator	910	591
Transport Scheme Expenses	50	-
Yoga	-	338
Art (Labour and Materials)	-	-
Drama	23	310
Health Training and Equipment	-	243
Origami	-	436
Fundraising Costs	119	-
Insurance	425	510
Just Giving Subscription	216	198
MUGA construction costs	3,420	-
Prisoner support	561	-
Admin costs	255	179
Total payments	5,980	2,805
Net of receipts & payments	28,195	27,232
Assets		
Cambridge and County	155,224	150,000
Bank Account balances	82,855	59,885
	238,079	209,885
Total Funds Brought forward	209,884	185,278
Total Funds Year End	238,079	209,885

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 and Probation Services (HMPPS) work 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 – 2022/23

We are optimistic about the year ahead, following the HMPPS announcement that the Prison and Youth Custody Service have formally existed the COVID-19 National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services as of the 9th May 2022. This means that many restrictions have been lifted and the prison regime can begin to operate more normally once again. However, there will be a minimum set of ongoing COVID-19 controls to manage local outbreaks, vaccinations and effective cleaning to prevent any resurgence of the virus.

We are pleased that Sir Charles Hobhouse, High Sheriff of Wiltshire for 2021/22, has agreed to become one of our Patrons and we look forward to working with him in the coming months.

We hope to see increased take up of our Transport Scheme as more families return to the prison to visit in person. We will also be working with the prison to identify prisoner needs in recovering from the consequences of the 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 MUGA. 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.

Sustainability of the charity is also a key objective; we are mindful that we need to have clear successions plans for when trustees retire or leave the Charity. The recent changes in the team have partly addressed this but we cannot afford to become complacent. We will continue to ensure that we have a robust and talented group of individuals who will fundraise and lead the development of the charity throughout the year ahead and beyond.

12. For more information

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

www.friendsoferlestokeyprison.com, or email: info@friendsoferlestokeyprison.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.friendsoferlestokeyprison.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

HMP Erlestoke

Westbury Road

Erlestoke

Devizes

SN10 5TU