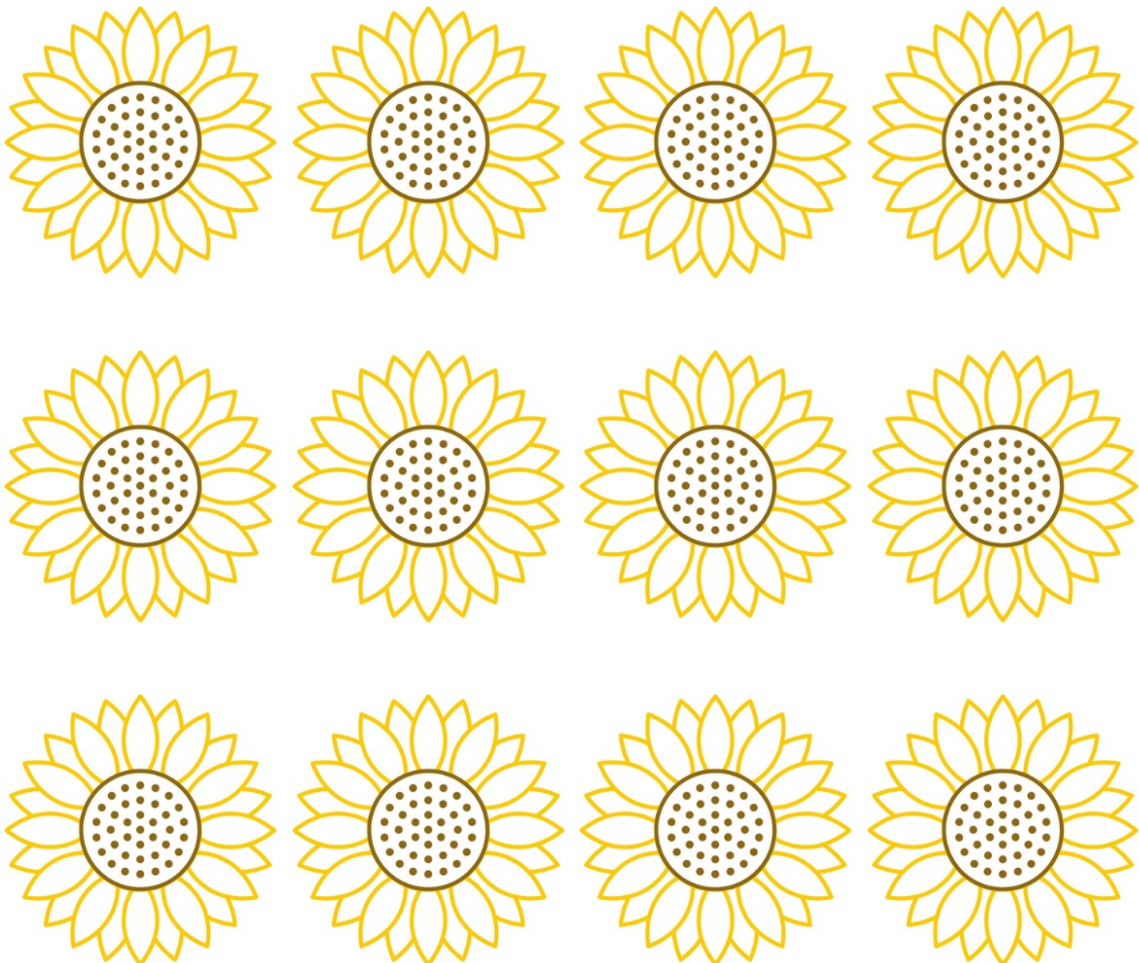




FRIENDS OF
ERLESTOKE PRISON

THE FRIENDS OF ERLESTOKE PRISON

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



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1. Chair's Report

Dear Friends

'The treatment of crime and criminals mark and measure the stored-up strength of a nation, and are the sign and proof of the living virtue in it.'

These words of Winston Churchill have resonated during my first year as Chairman of the Friends, when I have felt privileged to be involved with HMP Erlestoke. It has been particularly humbling to witness the work done by our Trustees and I would like to express my personal thanks to them all for their tireless efforts on behalf of the Friends; with especial thanks to my predecessor, Angela Hughes, for her invaluable help and support.



During the past year it has been heartening to watch many aspects of prison life return to normal after the pandemic, with education and industries gaining momentum, and free flow movements happening around the prison. Building works for two new replacement accommodation wings began, and Erlestoke was one of the first 14 prisons in the country to provide in-cell laptops to prisoners.

Our Transport Scheme continues to grow under the capable guidance of Eve McBride, with the numbers of visitors requesting our service steadily increasing. In December 2022, we were pleased to welcome a new Transport Scheme Coordinator, Les Drage whose energetic approach is making a positive impact on the Scheme.

We have maintained our Friday morning Origami Inside sessions in the prison, supported by two of our Trustees, Mark Mangham and Eve McBride, plus one of our volunteers, Rhona Atterton. Thank you to you all as these sessions would not have been possible without you. We would also like to thank Helen Holtam who started these sessions in 2017 and continues to support us from afar.

We have also been able to support several smaller initiatives this year; book bags for visiting children, refurbishment of Chapel chairs, prisoners' family days and artwork for the peer-support Listeners' dedicated room.

We were also delighted to welcome a new Trustee, Nick Crean, who joined us in December and soon began to run the brilliant Storybook Dads initiative. He has already recorded over 50 stories read by prisoners which go back to their families and help maintain those vital links. Throughout the year, under the passionate leadership of Sarah Gooch, we have maintained our focus on the

building of the outdoor Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in the prison and we are excited by the current plans which indicate that it will be built and opened for use in late 2024.

We said goodbye to one of Trustees, Fran Bishop, and to Sir John Nutting, who has been a Patron of the Friends since its launch. We would like to thank him for all his support over the years. However, we were pleased to welcome Sir Charles Hobhouse who joined us as a Patron when he stepped down from his role as High Sheriff of Wiltshire.

During the coming year we look forward to watching the reality of the MUGA gathering momentum, the reinstatement of our Art sessions (which ceased because of the Covid pandemic) and a prisoners' family day drama project, along with the continuation of our other programmes.

These initiatives are only possible with the support of all our Friends, Patrons and donors, and we are extremely grateful for all your various contributions which have enabled us to help prisoners and their families over the past year. Last week I was privileged to attend a service at the Chapel in Erlestoke where the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke to prisoners and staff about the power of forgiveness and hope. Later he told me of his belief in the huge importance of caring for prison communities.

With very best wishes.

Primrose Campbell
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: 1201388 (previously 1147582)
3. The Charity was previously an Unincorporated Charitable Trust and changed its status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in this reporting period
4. The address of the Charity is: HMP Erlestoke, Westbury Road, Erlestoke, Devizes, SN10 5TU
5. The Charity Trustees for the period of this report:

Primrose Campbell	Chair
Sue Weber	Treasurer
Charles Atterton	Governance
Eve McBride	Transport Scheme
Sarah Gooch	Multi-Use Games Area
Mark Mangham	Origami
Angela Hughes	Communications
Belinda Southwell	Chapel liaison
Nick Crean	Storybook Dads (from December 2022)
Francesca Bishop	Legal, contracts, origami (until September 2022)

6. The Charity Patrons for the period of this report:

Royal Patron: previously known as 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 (until June 2022)	
Sir Charles Hobhouse (from April 2022)	

3. Objectives of the Friends of Erlestoke Prison

HMP Erlestoke is a Category C training and resettlement prison for adult and young adult prisoners. It is the only prison in Wiltshire and is located in the rural village of Erlestoke, near Devizes. It was built in the grounds of the former Erlestoke Park House. The nearest railway station is Westbury, 8 miles away. In this reporting year, the prison's operational capacity reduced to 468 as two accommodation wings were out of action due to rebuilding work. This figure will increase to 534 when both are occupied again towards the end of 2023. Over one third of the prison's population are classified as indeterminate sentenced prisoners (ISPs) serving life sentences and indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP). Most of the remaining population is serving not less than four years. Younger prisoners in the 18 to 24 age group make up nearly 12% of the population. 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

In this reporting period, the Friends had nine trustees, a Royal Patron, five patrons, and a group of enthusiastic local volunteer drivers, supported by the Governor and the prison management team. There were no paid permanent staff.

Sir John Nutting Bt., QC stepped down from the Patron role in June 2022; we thank him for supporting the Friends since the charity was founded. We are pleased to welcome Sir Charles Hobhouse who joined us as a Patron after stepping down from the role of High Sheriff of Wiltshire. Charles has a long standing interest in criminal justice, particularly prisons and mental health and was a keen supporter of the Friends during his time as High Sheriff.

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, Technical Sales, Education, Human Resources, Marketing, Restorative Justice, Criminology, Magistracy, Fundraising and Event Management.

Trustees attend relevant seminars and webinars and ensure that their knowledge is current and relevant to the work that they perform for the Friends. The trustees held regular meetings (approximately every 8 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. Trustees also attend occasional Prison Council meetings.

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.

For more information about the Independent Monitoring Board, please visit: <https://imb.org.uk>

5. Governance

The one governance issue of significance to have arisen in 2022/23 is the impending change of our charitable status from an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), subject to the transfer of our assets.

Otherwise, it has largely been 'business as usual' in ensuring we conform to data protection legislation and that we are properly insured against risk. To the best of our knowledge the EU General Data Protection Rules, which constituted part of the UK's regulations prior to Brexit, have continued materially unchanged by Brexit.

The trustees are obliged to take reasonable steps to protect from harm, those people who come into contact with the Friends of Erlestoke Prison, including individuals who benefit from our work, prison staff, volunteers, trustees and other people who come into contact with the charity through our work.

Following a hiatus in our ability to offer the Transport Scheme during and after the COVID 19 pandemic, we have been pleased to record a gradual but steady increase in family visits over the past 12 months and hence requirement for drivers under the scheme. The trustees have continued to determine that, regrettably, requests for carrying unaccompanied minors have had to be refused.

6. Activities

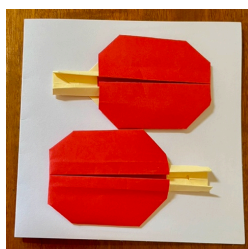
6.1 Origami

The Origami activity on a Friday morning remains an important part of our engagement with the prisoners. As in previous years, Helen Holtam continues to guide the Erlestoke team, providing materials and marketing the cards for which we are very grateful. We are also expanding our local links.

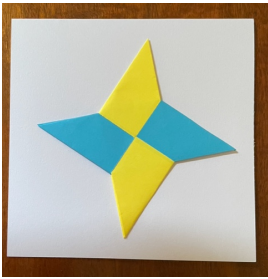
Some of the prison team's key individuals have left to pastures new this year but new members have joined and the group now numbers around 6-8 each Friday morning. The Friends provide a chaperone/guide/invigilator who is required to allow the activity to take place. Our trustee, Eve and our volunteer, Rhona, who have attended this year, have both found the session to be a lot of fun even if their origami skills were not as honed as the prison attendees! During this financial year, we decided to formalise this support and we are delighted to welcome Rebecca Morris as our new Origami supporter. Becky lives locally and going forward, will attend every Friday session, reporting to the trustees and acting as main link to Helen and our local retailers.



Last year we focussed on some of the ornate work done by our experts. This continues, but the main activity for the team is featured this year. The first skill for new prisoners is to make a heart - an easy and appropriate entry topic! These sell inside and beyond the prison in large numbers especially around Valentine's Day. New entrants to the group are usually intimidated by some of the more ornate work but the making of the heart boosts their confidence.



The pull of the two hour session is as much about calm, productive and safe surroundings where attendees are somehow freed of the often tense and charged atmosphere elsewhere in the establishment. Discussion while you work is a valued aspect of the session and topics recently have ranged from advanced astrophysics to whether satan exists or is simply the absence of God/good, and the group even discussed 'Married at First Sight Australia'!



A complement to the heart is a reasonably simple photo-frame - a more upmarket valentines present which many use for pictures of children and loved ones in their cell. Local links have developed this year and shown here is a simple blue and yellow card used by Love Ukraine Devizes, and one of a few designs for the Erlestoke table tennis team. We plan to expand to more outlets this year working up to Christmas.

Thank you to Elizabeth Williams in the Education Department who has been a marvellous co-ordinator regarding the activity. Two special mentions: the leader of the prisoner group in the prison (you know who you are) who is a pillar of strength for our activity and is endlessly patient, good humoured and resourceful. Also 'E' who has moved elsewhere and continues to work hard on origami despite fighting a serious illness. Lastly thank you to Helen Holtam, who remains tireless and supportive of the Origami project which continues to generate a significant financial contribution to the Friends.



If you would like to purchase any of the origami products made by the prisoners, please visit the <https://origamiinside.com> website.



6.2 Transport Scheme



Our Transport Scheme was first set up in 2014 and goes from strength to strength. 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.

Transport Scheme Figures

Use of the scheme is now as high, if not higher, than ever before. The annual figures do not yet reflect this as, post pandemic and with a significant number of new prisoners and families unfamiliar with the Scheme, numbers have only started to pick up significantly over the last 6 months. This positive shift will largely be due to our advertising push and the support of HMP Erlestoke in ensuring the information about the Transport Scheme is regularly posted on the men's laptops and we value the support from the Visitors' Centre.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/21	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total individual visitor lifts given	623	1072	1410	4	188	767
Total children under 12 years	111	146	338	0	20	88

March 2023 showed a total of 138 individual lifts which is higher than the 2019/20 monthly average. Lifts to children is a little down on previous averages but, of course, the numbers of men at HMP Erlestoke with children will vary. We attract several new visitors every week.

Our current number of active Volunteer Drivers stands at 24 with a further 6 who may be able to return to their role with us once their circumstances permit.

Transport Scheme Co-ordinator

We have a new Transport Scheme Co-ordinator, Les Drage. Les took up the role in December 2022 and we are extremely lucky to have him. He works with huge energy and enthusiasm to ensure that the system runs as efficiently as possible for both the visitors and our superb band of Volunteer Drivers. With his tireless, innovative approach to the role we have every confidence that, under his tenure, the Transport Scheme will continue to blossom.

Appreciation from visitors

Our team of Volunteer Drivers selflessly makes itself available to drive the visitors to and from the prison. Eve McBride, our trustee responsible for the Transport Scheme knows how appreciative the families are. One mum told Eve that there was talk of her son being moved to a lower category prison but she didn't really want him to be moved as it would be more difficult for her to visit as, at the other prison, there was no help with lifts.

Adriana, a new user of our Scheme, says the following:

"Thank you all once again for what you do - it is a great relief to myself and many other visitors to receive the help and support from the local community close to the prison"

Amy was also very complimentary about our Scheme stating:

"I am always so grateful for how much you all care and the service you run really is a God send for me!"

And Les, our new Transport Scheme Co-ordinator, sent these comments to our drivers saying:

"Receiving comments like this just makes what we do all worthwhile - well done to you all 🙌"

Progress

We have this year purchased new children's car seats for the scheme. This was largely funded through a generous grant from Devizes Lions. We now have enough seats for those drivers who wish to store them at their homes, making their trips more efficient.

In June 2022, for the first time since 2019, we held a get together for our drivers with lunch. It was a most welcome opportunity for us all to meet up, particularly as we have quite a large cohort of new drivers, and to share ideas. We will be repeating the event this year.

Funding

Our paid Co-ordinator role and other expenses of the scheme need funds. We are delighted to announce that we were successful in our bid for National Lottery funding and have our entire costs until October 2023 covered through their Community Fund Awards for All. Thank you National Lottery! We are, also, forever grateful to our patrons and donors and those of you who support our charitable events with your generosity.

New Volunteers

We are always in need of more Volunteer Drivers. If you are interested in joining this happy band or know of anyone who might be, please do get in touch with us either via The Friends of Erlestoke Prison website www.friendsoferlestokeprison.com or by contacting Les directly on [07504 987190](tel:07504987190) or email friendstransportscheme@gmail.com

Thank you.



6.3 Family Days



Family Days are an important way for prisoners to strengthen and maintain their family relationships. In HMP Erlestoke, Family Days are run by PACT, the national charity which supports prisoners, their children and families.

This year, the Friends supported 5 PACT family days held in the prison sports hall enabling the men to play ball games and take part in the craft activities with their children.

We funded a buffet on each of the days for the men to share with their families. Having a meal together is part of family life and without our funding, the families would have to leave the prison to eat their lunch and then return to the prison, be searched once more and walk back to the sports hall. Our funding therefore meant that the men had more time with their families.

For more information about PACT, please visit: <https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk>

6.4 Storybook Dads

Nick Crean, our newest trustee is currently supporting the Storybook Dads initiative in the prison.



Storybook Dads helps parents and family members in prison to record bedtime stories and messages for their children, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, brothers and sisters on CD or DVD. The CD or DVD is then sent to the child. This brings comfort to them as they can hear or see their parent whenever they need to. It shows them they are loved and missed as well as helping them to develop an interest in books and reading. This increases their chances of succeeding at school and significantly improving their social and learning outcomes. Enabling an imprisoned parent to maintain contact with their child improves prisoners' self-esteem and reduces the likelihood of re-offending, as well helping with their child's well-being.

Following an approach to the Friends from the Head of Learning and Skills, we began to support this initiative, once it was rebooted, post Covid, in February 2023. Since then we have recorded over 50 individual sessions with a growing uptake amongst the prisoners. Each session is recorded in a small room off the main library and coordinated with the help of the Prison Librarian. The small recording room has greatly benefited from some beautiful child friendly murals painted by two of the prisoners.

We are also very grateful to the generous donation by the Devizes Lions enabling us to upgrade the camera equipment which has the added benefit of technically aligning it with the equipment already sponsored by the Friends for HMP Erlestoke's media centre.

For more information about Storybook Dads, please visit: <https://www.storybookdads.org.uk>

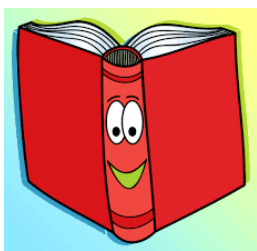
6.5 Canvasses for paintings in new Listeners' room

HMP Erlestoke is one of several prisons which support a peer-support Listener scheme with the aim to reduce suicide and self-harm. Trained by the Samaritan's volunteers and prison staff, the Listeners aim to provide a round the clock confidential service to support those who need it. The Listeners have a dedicated room in one of the prison wings. The Friends provided 2 canvasses to be painted by the art department and hung in their room to make it a more welcoming space.

For more information about the Listeners in prisons, please visit:

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/prisons/listener-scheme/>

6.6 Book bags



For several years, the Friends have continued to support the provision of book bags to give the men something to do with their children on visit days. They help build relationships between fathers and their children during what is a disruptive time for the child. There are several books included in the bundle which are age appropriate and vary from reading books to activity books which the children can take home. We provided calico material for prisoners to make the book bags which allows them to use the skills they have learned on their textiles course. Bags are created as and when needed and around 50 bags are given out each year.

6.7 Refurbishment of Chairs for the Prison Chapel

The Friends were approached by the Chapel to purchase suitable fire-retardant material to refurbish 80 chairs which had not been recovered for a long time and were tired, faded and in some places falling apart. We happily purchased the fabric, particularly as the lead craftsman was a prisoner supported by the Quaker Minister, who also teaches upholstery.

7. Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)

Significant progress has been made with the MUGA in this financial year. With the full support of the Ministry of Justice and the senior leadership team at HMP Erlestoke, we can now see this long awaited and much needed facility being built and opened for use in late 2024. A thorough investigation has been conducted and various sites within the prison have been explored. The MUGA will be built on part of the old playing field as an integral part of the development and new build project. Thank you to all those who have supported this project financially and continue to take an interest in the welfare of the prisoners We are all anxious to see the sports pitch completed and in use as soon as possible.



8. Financial Review 2022/23

Our total income for this year was £31,287. This was a combination of personal donations, two grants received and donations from Charitable Trusts. We have a steady stream of income from our generous regular supporters for which we are very grateful. 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. We won a grant of £8,700 from the National Lottery for running the Transport scheme. The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust gave us a grant of £5,000 to mark the occasion of our Royal Patron's accession from HRH The Duchess of Cornwall to Queen Consort.

Our total expenditure this year was £9,686 and was directly linked to the charity aims. We have yet to re-start most of our pre-COVID activities but the Transport Scheme is now back to pre-COVID levels. We spent £2,121 on Prisoner Support items:

Material to recover 80 Chapel chairs	£1,230
Calico material for book bags	£231
Two canvasses for visitor room paintings	£111
Guillotine for Origami	£91
Food for 5 Family Days	£458
TOTAL spend	£2,121

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 have now accumulated nearly £245,000. We spent £3420 in 2021/22 on the survey of the proposed pitch; the prison have agreed to reimburse us for that amount and we will receive the payment next year.

Our insurance and admin costs overheads are similar to previous years at £666. We have also spent £975 on having our website re-designed.

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 total reserves are £259,680. Deducting the MUGA earmarked funds this leaves £14,680 for our general reserve.

Our annual accounts have been independently inspected by Chris Vaughan, Accountants, 195 Ermin Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 4NA, are available on our website:

www.friendsoferlestoneprison.com

8.1 Receipts and Payments Accounts: 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

	Totals 2022/23	Last year 2020/21
	£	£
Receipts		
Fundraising Income	-	4,497
Grants Received	13,700	6,250
Donations Received	9,764	18,009
Gift Aid Income	1,253	191
Origami	4,080	3,500
Investment Income	2,490	5,228
Total receipts	31,287	34,174
Payments		
Transport Coordinator	5,032	910
Transport Scheme Expenses	856	50
Drama	-	23
Fundraising Costs	-	119
Insurance	400	425
Just Giving Subscription	36	216
MUGA construction costs	-	3,420
Prisoner support	2,121	561
Website redesign	975	-
Admin costs	266	255
Total payments	9,686	5,980
Net of receipts & payments	21,601	28,195
Assets		
Cambridge and County	90,990	155,224
Redwood Bank	105,000	-
HSBC bank accounts	64,293	82,855
Less Accruals	-603	
	259,680	238,079
Total Funds Brought forward	238,079	209,884
Total Funds Year End	259,680	238,079

9. 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.

10. For more information

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

www.friendsoferlestokeprison.com, or 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 charitable funds.

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