



Friends of Bristol Eye Hospital

In Sight 2025

Friends of Bristol Eye Hospital improve care and treatment for patients by helping to pay for medical equipment, patient comforts and staff resources that would not otherwise be provided

The End of an Era ...

Farewell to Dinah Harrison

“I am sure that I will be one of many offering words of thanks to Dinah, for her truly astonishing contribution to the work of the Friends over so many years, and for the impact of that commitment on so many patients and staff. I enjoyed almost 10 years working with the Friends, and Dinah's passion for supporting the work of the hospital was evident throughout this time.”

Mark Stevens General Manager BEH until 2024.

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Kay McCluskey reviews our year

Another year has flown by, and it is my pleasure to report on another successful year for the Friends, during which we raised income of £215,000 and made grants of £103,000, demonstrating the generosity of those who give their money or their time to support our work for BEH.

Dinah Harrison is retiring in May 2025 after nearly 48 years as a trustee, including being Secretary and Chairman – which is nothing short of outstanding. Her work for the Friends has been faultless and all carried out with unparalleled warmth and understanding for those whom the charity was founded to support; she is truly heroic.

Heather Walker clocked up 45 years as a Trustee before her retirement last year. It is hard to envisage anyone coming close to such service to the hospital and its patients in the future as these two remarkable people. Simon St Leger-Harris, our Treasurer since 2012, is also standing down in May. I offer my personal tribute for his energy, commitment and huge contribution across so many of our activities – and his good humour, even when explaining the complexities of charity governance!

I am delighted to welcome Jim Duggan as our new Treasurer.

Fundraising highlights included our sold-out wine-tasting event organised by DBM Wines, Kat Jedrysiak's sponsored run with BEH staff and a Quiz Night in April. We plan to hold another wine-tasting event in 2025.

Whether spent on a grant to hold a Staff Ball, videos to explain medical treatments and tests to patients and their families, posture aids to assist recovery after retinal surgery or the purchase of medical equipment, every penny raised is carefully allocated to maximise the value to the hospital at minimal cost as over 95% of monies raised is spent on grants.

We are still actively looking for new trustees, especially for governance matters. Helping the Hospital is tremendously satisfying. You don't have to be a patient – or a professional – you just need to be keen to help!

The End of an Era - Thank you, Dinah and Simon

Dinah Harrison

We are sorry that Dinah will step down in May after serving as a trustee for nearly 48 years. When the Friends were inaugurated in May 1977 the founders had yet to find a secretary. Dinah was invited to fill this vacancy and thus became the Friends' first secretary upon her election as a trustee in September 1977. She served as secretary for the next 43 years followed by three years as Chairman.



"I've thoroughly enjoyed my time helping to develop the Friends and I look back with great satisfaction at all we have achieved since our foundation. It is very rewarding being part of it all. Bristol Eye Hospital is a very special place owing to the devotion of its staff to their patients, their work and their colleagues. I shall miss those I have got to know and I shall miss my fellow trustees. One I particularly wish to pay tribute to is Simon. It is thanks to his dedication that we have what must be one of the best managed and most effective charities in the country. He has done far beyond what is expected of a treasurer. His generosity with his time and expertise has been phenomenal."

Simon St Leger-Harris

After 14 years as a trustee and 13 as our Treasurer, Simon is also retiring. During this time, Simon has recorded income of over £1m and grants of over £800,000. Always looking to increase income, maximise Gift Aid and minimise expenses, he introduced new donation methods, including Online, Open Banking and Contactless; updated our donation leaflets and forms three times and greatly improved support for our fundraisers. He worked closely with the hospital management striving to ensure prompt ordering and delivery of equipment and invoicing for our grants. He also redesigned our website in 2013, chaired our Governance subcommittee, updated our Rules in 2017, managed our compliance with the new GDPR requirements in 2018, organised some fundraising events and edited several editions of In Sight.

Simon's knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment have been invaluable.

Mark Stevens has written extensively praising Dinah's and Simon's work for the Friends. You can read more of Mark's appreciation on our website.

The Friends' trustees as at 28 February 2025 are:

Kay McCluskey, Kevin Abbey, Richard Adams, Carole Brooke, Gail Glew, Dinah Harrison, Simon St Leger-Harris and Jenny Ward.

Other farewells and welcome



Heather Walker

Heather was one of our longest-standing trustees having become a trustee only two years after the Friends started. Heather was Membership Secretary in the early years and continued to help with secretarial work but her major contribution throughout her 45 years' service was her key role in organising our many enjoyable and successful fundraising events. She was a joy to work with and will be greatly missed,

James Reddish

James Reddish was a trustee for six years, giving expert support as chair of our governance sub-committee. Unfortunately his workload for the Charity Commission limited his ability to contribute fully and attend meetings so he felt he must retire. However, he kindly offered to give advice whenever we need it, so we have not lost touch.

Ben Phipps

Ben is the service lead in optometry for Medical Retina Services at BEH. He became a trustee in 2021; his knowledge and guidance were invaluable to the non-medical trustees, explaining the function of medical equipment for which grant applications had been submitted and why help with funding was needed.

Richard Adams

We welcomed Richard as a new co-opted trustee in November 2024. Richard is a retired engineer from Rolls Royce. He is an active member of the Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust and the South Gloucestershire Museums Group.



Jim Duggan

We also invited Jim Duggan onto our Finance Subcommittee in November and he has since been appointed as our new Treasurer succeeding Simon. Jim is a retired partner of our accountants Albert Goodman for whom he is still working part-time. He has not yet become a trustee lest this give rise to a conflict of interest with his firm.

Lona Jawaheer

Lona is our new BEH Consultant Representative attending trustees' meetings, replacing Cathy Williams who previously carried out this role.

**As ever, we need new people to help us run the Friends.
If you can help, please contact the Secretary.**

Fundraising

Successful wine-tasting evening

In September 2024, we held a hugely enjoyable wine-tasting evening in the prestigious Clifton Club. It was hosted by Clifton wine merchants DBM Wines, whose director Richard Davis described all the wines including their history.



The sold-out event raised £1,070 - boosted by generous donations from some who were unable to attend as well as from DBM Wines.



Kat runs for the Friends

Kat Jedrysiak raised £249 by organising a 10k run along the River Avon in October with five staff (Vanessa, Lauren and Kat from Theatres, Carmen from an office and Debbie from outpatients).

Kat was very happy with how the event went and said she was “proud of everyone. There is such a nice feeling after raising money for a good cause.

“We had an amazing time, getting to know each other better and finishing with a coffee at the Ashton Court café.”

Kat hopes to run more events in future to support us.

Birthday bounty for the Friends

Simon St Leger-Harris, our retiring Treasurer, held house parties for friends and family to celebrate his 70th birthday. In lieu of presents, he requested donations in favour of the Friends and raised £1,736.

Simon joined the Friends after he had retinal detachments in both eyes at the same time and underwent a series of operations over three years initially to repair the retinas and later to correct cataracts, a squint and double vision - all side effects of the treatment.

“It was difficult for me to find the words to adequately thank all the many staff who saved my sight” Simon said. “At the end of it all, with artificial lenses, my sight was actually better than ever before - and, 16 years later, it still is.”



**There have been 69 Friends' Trustees since 1977.
Can you become the 70th?**

Grants

Ocular Response Analyzers

We have frequently purchased tonometers for measuring eye pressure; elevated pressure can be a symptom of problems, especially glaucoma.

We bought two Ocular Response Analyzers, new alternative devices which should provide more insightful information and which may be less expensive in future.



Employment of a Physician Associate

We helped BEH participate in a pilot scheme run by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists by funding the salary of a physician associate for one year. This gave BEH the welcome benefit of an extra pair of hands, especially helping to manage the flow of patients through the eye examination hub, with patients' eye examinations being recorded by non-medical staff so that the data can be assessed by doctors remotely.

Thomson Test Charts for Ophthalmology Service in Weston

The ophthalmology service at Weston General Hospital includes paediatric clinics run by the Bristol Eye Hospital.

Expanding the service in Weston means families don't have to travel to Bristol.

We purchased three additional digital vision testing charts complete with associated software for the Seashore (paediatric) outpatient department.



Autumn Ball for Hospital Staff

We subsidised the costs of a Ball for BEH staff. We were especially keen to ensure the cost of tickets was affordable for all staff. The event was hugely popular, bringing people together in celebration and support of our shared cause.

We thank medical suppliers Haag Streit and Veni Vidi for also sponsoring the event.

Thank you Core Telecom who provide our 0300 telephone number entirely free of charge for us and our callers.

more grants

Three informative videos to explain:

... Eye Tests for Special Needs Children

Children with special needs often have serious eyesight problems. Games and toys are used to distract and relax children, enabling staff to examine children and prescribe glasses to help their development, education and behaviour. The film explains the tests to parents and teachers.



... Cataract Surgery

Narrated by consultant ophthalmologist Omar Elhaddad, this film improves consultations and reduces time staff spend explaining processes.

... Macular Surgery

A patient, who had been unable to find any information about what to expect after macular surgery, drew some diagrams which were incorporated into a film to help show future patients what to expect.

These three videos were produced by the NHS Medical Illustrations Team. You can watch all of them from links on our website.

Refurbishment of Doctors' Mess and staff kitchen

These areas for administrative work, clinical audit and a space for taking breaks and resting while on call were long overdue an upgrade.

You can read some of the glowing appreciative comments from staff on our website.



New Murals on Level 3 in BEH

We funded new murals which were designed and painted by Lizzy Naden, who is both an ophthalmic technician at BEH and a professional visual artist.

We also paid for another motorised chair for vitreoretinal treatment, warranties and service contracts on some equipment, prayer mats for the staff quiet room, more posture aids for retinal patients recovering at home, maintenance of the children's aquarium, indoor plants and the patients' courtyard garden.

Your support enhances the care and treatment for all patients of the Bristol Eye Hospital

Thanks and How You Can Help

We frequently receive very gracious messages of thanks to the hospital staff for the care and treatment received. We are delighted by these and the donations which often accompany them. Space does not permit us to include any of these messages here but you can read many of them on our website.



We are most grateful for legacies from James Barrett, Vera Lawrence, Cora and Peter Maslen, Florence Whittingham and for donations in memory of Ken Farlie, Jonathan Forster, Jane Murrish, Maurice Parfitt, Muriel Rogers, Brian Tooth and Kenneth Williams.

have been helping the patients and staff for over 40 years.

Could you also help by leaving a gift in your Will?

The Friends help improve care and treatment for patients by paying for medical equipment, patient comforts and staff resources when these are beyond the NHS budget and cannot otherwise be provided.

Already over 2 million people in the country live with impaired vision – with that number set to double over the next 30 years



The majority of our income comes from legacies and donations. Leaflets on how to make a donation or leave us a legacy in your Will can be found in the hospital or on our website.

We are a small charity with very low operating expenses. Your support can make a big difference to our hospital, the staff and their patients.

Or if you can offer any practical support, that would be wonderful!

To find out more about the Friends or to make a donation, please visit www.fbeh.org or scan the QR Code



Call us on 0300 102 4556 or contact us by email:

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We do not have an office in the hospital. If you wish to send us anything by post, please email or telephone to ask for a home address.

This avoids delay and saves the time of hospital staff.

In Sight is printed on FSC uncoated paper using vegetable based inks.

Friends of Bristol Eye Hospital

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