

eNEWSLETTER: SUMMER 2013

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BT BENEVOLENT FUND

160 years young and busier than ever: the Fund in 2013

When the Fund was founded in 1853 the Victorian concept of benevolence was at its peak. From assistance given to the widows of eight Post Office clerks in that first year, much has changed, and so far in 2013 the Fund has given over **£425,000** in grants.

Employee help

We get a steady flow of employees in need referred to us from BTs Employee Assistance debt counsellors (0800 917 6767). In the first half of this year we gave nearly £55,000 in grants to employees in need, plus loans of almost £14,000. Unexpected events like illness or relationship breakdowns can put people under serious financial pressure and increasingly we see employees who, in desperation, have taken out payday loans at extortionate

interest rates. By spreading the word about the Fund you can make colleagues aware that they can turn to us instead.

Ex-employees in need

A growing trend this year is the number of former BT people, typically in their fifties and often unemployed, single and in poor health, who are living on the very lowest incomes. A recent email to the Fund said *"...as you can see from the above figures I am finding it a real struggle financially. I am single but do have a small dog - sometimes I have gone without food to ensure he eats....it is very difficult."*

Your donations really do help us to make a difference for people like this.

Fund 2013 Christmas Card



We've already sold over 2,800 packs of our 2013 Christmas card. You can now order them online at www.benevolent.bt.com/xmas2013.htm and pay by Paypal. Order soon before stocks run out!

LINK UP!

Spread the word about the Fund by adding the Fund Manager, Debbie Terry, to your LinkedIn™ contacts



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FUND**

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RECRUITMENT SUCCESS

BT's pensioners continue to be generous and committed supporters of the Fund. At the end of June 16,814 of our 18,900 members were pensioners, including 318 who've joined this year. Another 330 existing pensioner members have increased their donations, typically by almost £5 a month.

Recruiting employee members has always been more challenging but a story on BT Today in April, about the help given to the wife of an employee, had a huge impact. It received over 27,000 hits and was the 6th most-read story in the month after it was published. As a result we gained over 70 new employee members in just a few weeks.

Becoming a Member

To join on-line, go to the Fund's Give As You Earn joining page:

www.btbfgivingonline.org.uk

Just fill in and submit the form, which will be emailed back to your BT or Openreach email address. You must then approve it to confirm that you are starting your donation.

Details of your monthly payment are then passed to BT payroll (Steria) and the Charities Aid Foundation, who manage the GAYE scheme for BT.



WHO YOU'VE HELPED

Lynda Hesketh worked for 12 years as a BT Clerical Assistant until severe rheumatoid arthritis meant she had to give up full-time work at the age of only 29. Since then the Fund has been pleased to assist her with various home adaptations and most recently with a grant of £2,000 towards an electric wheelchair, which is making her life much easier. This wouldn't have been possible without your support.

In the first half of 2013 our highest areas of demand were for help with household repairs, funeral costs, priority debts, and with home adaptations relating to disability.

Remember, you can give one-off amounts to the Fund through GAYE or via BT's MyDonate service.



www.mydonate.bt.com/charities/btbenevolentfund

2013 AGM

The Fund held its Annual General Meeting on 30th July. Pictured are Trustees Jane Shipway and Kevin Charlesworth at the meeting.



Tell your colleagues what we do

A slide summarising the Fund's work is now available on our website.

This eNewsletter is being emailed to employee members of the BT Benevolent Fund, as well as some pensioner members. Please do let us have any feedback:

benevolent@bt.com

www.benevolent.bt.com