

NEWSLETTER 2026
FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL LONDON HOSPITAL
Patron: Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Edinburgh



Registered Charity No. 279009
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President's Foreword

2025-26 has been another very good year for the Friends. The Trolley service has flourished; volunteers have been recruited and we now have a large capacity electric trolley. The Friends have continued to supply much needed ward amenities, provided the ward Christmas gifts and continued the Music Project. In October I was honored to represent the Friends and lay our wreath, at the Cavell Memorial Wreath laying Ceremony. The Lord Mayor of Westminster, the Belgian Embassy, the British Legion, the Company of Nurses, the Royal College of Midwives and most importantly, two of our nurses, Jeflyn Musariri & Megan Popplewell, looking absolutely magnificent in traditional uniform, also laid wreaths. In December we were represented at the Westminster Abbey Carol Service 'Together at Christmas', hosted by HRH the Princess of Wales; by Shree Laturia and Tosh Denholm. In March the Music Project celebrated 300 Recitals by hosting a programme given by medical students which was attended by Sir Mark Caulfield Vice president for Health QMUL, & Prof Ian Jacobs Chair Barts Health NHS Trust. On May 8th, Jean Robinson, Jan Ridding, Richard Gardner and his partner Liu, attended a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. The invitations to the two Royal events came from the Office of our Patron, The Duchess of Edinburgh. In July a Friends' team of 15, organized by Richard Gardner, ran in the Saucony London 10K run. It was a very hot and exhausting day but their fund-raising efforts were superb.



The Buckingham Palace garden party Friends representatives

Throughout the year the Committee met regularly, usually by Zoom. At the AGM held on 15th October 2025, also by Zoom, the Committee co-opted Graeme & Kimberly Eyre, whose knowledge & input have been extremely valuable. As always, our funds have been expertly managed by our Treasurer; Richard Gardner. Once again, we have benefited from increased donation income. We also received another generous grant of £10,000 from the Marie Celeste Samaritan Society to support the Music Project.

The Committee was greatly saddened to hear of the death on 4th July of one of our Vice Presidents, Dr Anthea McEwan. Her tireless efforts on our behalf are legendary. We are deeply indebted to her. Anthea entered the London Hospital Medical College in 1953, and during her student years she became a member of the London University Women's Rowing Club 1st Eight, gaining a Purple. She qualified in 1958 and after appointments at the London, she headed for General Practice. Then she became the Occupational Health Physician to the London Hospital Medical School and looked after thousands of students and staff. From 1985 she was a Council Member and Joint Secretary of the London Hospital Medical Club. Then, in 2006, alongside numerous other interests she was appointed to the Editorial Board of 'Barts and The London Chronicle', and in 2007, after some years on the Friends Committee she became Chair. She was elected as Vice-President in 2016. An 'Appreciation' of her many achievements and the contribution of her husband Tom, a distinguished consultant anaesthetist and another 'London' graduate, is displayed on the Friends website.

The Friends Website drop-down menu, thanks our sponsors and supporters and lists the activities of the Friends. In addition, there are hundreds of video clips of the heartening music project recitals with informative subtitles, by Richard Gardner at; <https://www.youtube.com/@richardgardner1990/videos>

Until now, the Friends only permanent notice in the Foyer was a small logo above an unobtrusive donation box- completely overshadowed by the Barts Charity Logo. Now, we have a double window vinyl in the Plaza between the A&E & Foyer entrances. The vinyl & the installation has been donated by Techniform Graphics, which has also supplied the Barts Charity with their graphics. They have done a great job in displaying what we do.



We succeed because of the combined efforts and skills of our hard-working committee. My grateful thanks to each of them for their contributions, their enduring forbearance and their persisting good humour. I would particularly like to thank; Jan Ridding for producing this Newsletter, Graeme Eyre who has continually updated the Friends Website; and Tosh Denholm, Neil Fletcher & Veronica Winslow, for their insightful reports about the day-to-day activities in the hospital. I would also like to record the Committee's renewed thanks to Richard Gardner our Treasurer; 10K organizer, runner, 'trolley volley', cameraman & video subscript author, for his continuing outstanding contribution.

My grateful thanks too to our diligent Co-Chairs; Jean Robinson who co-ordinates our efforts & ensures we liaise effectively with the ward staff, and Jan Ridding who expertly manages the committee meetings. Last but certainly not least, my thanks to Judith Walker who has diligently kept the meeting minutes and monitored our emails.

Professor Trevor Beedham. President of Friends of the Royal London Hospital

Co-Chairs Report

Grants Awarded 2025/6

Friends have had another busy and productive year. Thanks to the support and generosity of members and donors we are able to continue to support grant applications across the hospital, most of which are one off but some which are annual events.

Renal Memorial Event September 2025

Friends has supported this annual event for some years and in September 2025 we helped with the cost of the harpist and flowers. Jaryn Go, Renal Specialist Nurse was in touch after to thank Friends. There was a very good attendance of relatives and friends of those renal patients who had died as well as staff who had cared for them. There were beautiful readings, messages and music and everybody was able to offer petals in memory of their loved ones. Refreshments were available after the event which were highly appreciated by those who attended.

Christmas Grants

Members of the committee visited all the wards and departments at The Royal London in early December to meet staff and give out the annual Christmas ward grants for staff to use over the festive period. We also included visits to the Dental Hospital and Mile End Hospital for the first time. We enjoyed meeting staff who were very welcoming and very pleased to see us and enjoyed the opportunity to talk about the charity and its work and encourage staff to apply for grants. We were pleased to receive feedback from some staff about how the grants were used. Several staff bought snacks and drinks to supplement ward and department stocks over Christmas. Paediatric Critical Care bought travel cups to give to the parents of children on the unit. Gerry Bennett staff bought some small gifts for patients which were wrapped and put in a sack. While patients were having their infusions or treatments staff played a game with them which involved rolling a dice. They then received a gift or a chocolate. This was really enjoyed by both patients and staff.



The Friends met by the Christmas tree to begin the giving out of the ward grants



Travel cups for parents and other beautifully wrapped gifts.

Children's Community Speech and Language Therapy

Clair Chen applied for a grant to purchase posters and a spinner to help the team raise awareness in the local community of the importance of early communication development and how caregivers can support this. The team attend events as part of their campaign called "Get Down Get Talking Tower Hamlets" and they hoped the resources would help them attract people to their stall helping them to start conversations about children's communication skills. 1 in 5 children have communication needs but this is often unrecognised and can lead to other difficulties as children grow older. Many children would benefit from communication support but it is not always accessed. The team really felt the spinner made a big difference and drew more parents and care givers to their stall at an event at a local supermarket. Families were excited to come and see their stall and the team saw engagement double compared to previous events held without the spinner.



Speech and Language therapists get down get talking

Children's Emergency Department

Luke Whittemore, Matron contacted Friends to ask for help with replacement of sensory equipment in the department. The department holds accreditation with the National Autism Society, recognising the department's commitment to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other additional needs. Sensory rooms offer a calm, controlled environment where children can regulate their emotions and reduce anxiety which makes it easier for them to engage with clinicians and receive the care they need. Such places are proven to improve outcomes for these children, reduce the need for sedation and restraint and support families at what is often an extremely stressful time. Unfortunately one of the pieces of equipment in the unit's sensory

room was broken. Friends supported the repair of this equipment. Luke and the team are very grateful for this support and report the repair made an immediate and meaningful difference to children with additional needs. The new panel turned the room back into a much more welcoming environment.



A calming space for children to be treated effectively

Renal Transition Event

Friends again supported the Renal Transition Event held to welcome young people with renal disease transferring from paediatric care at Great Ormond Street Hospital to renal services at The Royal London Hospital. Transition when young people are already facing many other pressures is often very hard and a failure to engage with it will have many negative consequences. The event aims to introduce young people to the service and provide information and a chance to learn about other supportive services. Friends supported the cost of refreshments at this event.

Children's Community Physiotherapy Team

Niamh Keohane Children's Community Physiotherapist applied for funding to purchase some specialist toys and accessories for hydrotherapy sessions for children with complex neurodisabilities who use the hydrotherapy pool at Mile End Hospital. The children benefit greatly from hydrotherapy and the right toys to enhance sensory, motor and social skills are essential to their progress. The toys help the children enjoy the sessions and engage more fully with the therapy which improves their development and quality of life. The toys have been supplied and

Niamh says that all of the children are absolutely loving them. The tall tube and basketball for the pool are a huge hit. Niamh would like to thank Friends so much – the grant is massively appreciated.



Fun for children in the hydrotherapy session

Paediatric Critical Unit Annual Memorial Day

Friends were again able to support the annual Memorial Day following an application by Felicity Mitchell, Bereavement and Family Liaison Nurse on the unit. The event was held at Walthamstow Wetlands and despite the rain was a fantastic day and being around the campfire under canvas brought a real sense of togetherness to the event. Families and staff enjoyed making willow wreaths and one of the children who attended made everyone a jar of pine needle scrub to take home. Felicity reports the day is such an incredible and special time for everybody with every year being different. This year many of the parents sat around the campfire talking to each other

about what had brought them there and sharing memories of their children who had died. Peer support is so important and Felicity and team really appreciate Friends' Support.



The campfire and wreath made at Walthamstow Wetlands

National Children's Nurses Day

Kath Evans, Director of Children's Nursing Barts Health NHS Trust has written: National Children's Nurses Day, held for the first time on 30th June 2026 marked an important milestone for the profession. Given the Association of British Paediatric Nurses' roots in east London, it felt especially fitting that one of the flagship celebrations took place at Tower Hamlets Town Hall, led by Barts Health NHS Trust. The celebration brought together over 210 attendees, including children's nurses from across The Royal London Hospital and Barts Health NHS Trust. Student nurses, retired children's nurses, Chief Nurses, educators, national nursing leaders, professional organisations, children, young people and families all attended. Funding from The Friends enabled us to create a warm, welcoming and inclusive celebration through the afternoon tea that encouraged networking and reflection and connection between colleagues who rarely have the opportunity to come together. Throughout the afternoon there was a genuine sense of pride, belonging and professional identity. Many attendees commented that it was the first time they had experienced an event dedicated to celebrating children's nursing. The event featured contributions from national nursing leaders alongside presentations from student and children's nurses working across the Trust. Perhaps

the most powerful moments came from hearing directly from children and families whose lives had been transformed by the care they received. Their reflections reminded everyone why children's nursing matters and reinforced the compassion, expertise and advocacy that children's nurses bring every day. Sara Owen and her sons, Hari and Sennen shared their thoughts on what a dream nurse would be. Hari (10) has now recovered from acute lymphoblastic leukaemia following treatment at The Royal London Hospital.



The first National Children's Nurse Day

Children's Emergency Department Mobile Projector

Luke Whittemore Matron applied for funding for a mobile projector for the department. The projector can be moved around the department and can be trained onto walls and ceilings and is loaded with various films e.g. sealife. The projector has now been supplied and Luke has been back in touch to say it has been a real game changer. It helps to transform what can often be a frightening experience into one which is calmer, more comforting and engaging. It provides immersive distraction during procedures, helping to reduce anxiety and create a more positive environment for children and their families. The impact of the projector has extended beyond the department as it now also being used in the resus areas to help distract critically injured and seriously unwell children during treatment, providing comfort and reducing distress at some of the most challenging moments. The projector has also proved invaluable within the adult Emergency department where it is being used to settle and calm patients with dementia. Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive with the projector already making meaningful difference to the care provided every day. Luke thanks Friends for making such a tangible difference to patients and their families.

Jean Robinson Co-Chair

Treasurer's Report – 2026

The Friends have enjoyed another satisfactory financial year.
Unaudited full year figures to the end of June 2026 were as follows:

Balance Sheet

Current Account £3.5k

Savings Account £7.6k

Bank deposits £270.0k

Investments £270.0k

Balance Sheet Total: £ 551.0k

Profit & Loss:

Income £56.0k

Expenditure £49.3k*

Profit for the year: £ 6.7k

*of which £47.3k is for direct charitable activities, and only £2k on Admin.
Expenses/Overheads

This is a satisfactory result, given the continuing inflows of charitable and investment income, which allow the charity to provide ongoing financial support to hospital patients and the RLH community.

Richard Gardner - Treasurer

THE FRIENDS MUSIC PROJECT 2025-26

The Music Project has continued throughout the year, usually with two recitals each week. The varied recitals have provided numerous happy encounters amongst those who heard the music, and the musicians who provided it. The music continues to help to bring the realms of the hospital & the wider community together.

Like last year, the musicians and singers have come from local schools, the Music Conservatoires, Barts Health staff, QMUL students, Tower Hamlets Town Hall and from many other backgrounds.



THE NUADA QUINTET 'Musical Medicine for the Soul'.

LIDIA MOSCOSO OBOE
MARIA O'DEA BASSOON
KATHRYN TITCOMB CLARINET
LARA AISHA ALI FLUTE
JOSHUA PIZZO FERRO HORN

Guildhall School of Music & Drama

There have been many heart-warming occasions generated by children & the self-taught, and stunning performances delivered by amazing music students and international musicians.



ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION

**THE PAUL ANDERSON
(PIANO/VOCALS) DENNIS FISHER
(GUITAR) DUO**

Cool blues and relaxing jazz

The Friends 300th Music Project recital in March was magnificent. It was given by our talented medical students and **BARTS & THE LONDON MUSIC SOCIETY**.

It comprised; STRING QUARTET; Alice Agostinelli & Abi Cavanagh VIOLIN, Tae Choi VIOLA, Emily Ashley CELLO; PIANO SOLOS; Elena Lee, Luca Cheung, Trevor Dao, Matt Grundy & James Tai; PIANO/VOCAL, Tommy Japes; VOCAL, Emily Ashley; FLUTE TRIO; Ruhkia Johnston, Constance Ding & Madhura Sivakumar, BRASS QUINTET; Tabitha Harris, Meetraa Kunduzi, Jonas Leong-Smith, TRUMPET; Brandon Wong, TROMBONE & Keegan Green FRENCH HORN.

Professor Sir Mark Caulfield, Vice Principal for Health Queen Mary University of London Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, opened the event. He strongly supported collaboration between the Trust and the University in projects like this, which allowed students to bring pleasure to thousands of hospital users.





Professor Ian Jacobs; Chair: Barts Health NHS Trust closed the session. He congratulated the students & he thanked the hundreds of other musicians who had contributed over the 3 years. He emphasized the importance of the fruitful partnership between Barts Health and Queen Mary. He also felt there was real value in having live music for those using or working in the hospital. He thanked the Friends and all those involved in the Music Project, and concluded by saying '*long may these recitals continue*'.



Fourteen Saxophonists

THE LONDON SAXOPHONE CHOIR

Baroque, classical, modern
and jazz

A profusion of talented and generous volunteer musicians & singers continue to hearten us at the Royal London Hospital and we thank them for their interest and their wonderful contributions.



THE LONDON CHRISTIAN CHOIR

Celebrating Faith
through
Choral Music

The Choir includes a former RLH nurse and a current RLH doctor (soloist). The piece was BSL interpreted by the choir member on the right.

The Friends also thank the Trust & QMUL for their ongoing support. We are also very grateful to the Trustees of the Marie Celeste Samaritan Society and numerous others for their very generous & continuing financial help. Elixir UK, the hospital caterers have supplied the visiting schools with hundreds of drinks and snacks, and Markson's pianos generously discounted a good quality replacement lockable cover, for the one stolen. The cost of the cover was met by the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, QMUL. Since, with their approval, the cover has been donated by the Friends to the Trust.

I am particularly grateful to the Friends Trustees who have supported me and especially to Richard Gardner. Besides recording our events, he has been my diligent and resourceful helpmate. I also want to thank all those who have given personal financial support to the Music Project; the Royal London Hospital Trust Board for their permission to use their piano & their premises, and to Kenny Hanlon Director of Estates.

All the Programmes, and the names of the musicians who have given the 340 recitals so far, are on the Friends' website. The current month's schedule is also displayed in the Foyer & on the Barts Health NHS Trust's Royal London Hospital website, under '*Join us for Musical Performances*'. More than 130000 people have heard the Friends music and there have been a similar number of hits on Richard's Compendium of superbly notated clips;

<https://www.youtube.com/@richardgardner1990/videos>

Finally, if you or anyone you know would like to participate in the Music Project, please contact me via friendsrlh@gmail.com

Prof. Trevor Beedham.

The opening of the Young Adult Haemodialysis Unit, Mile End Hospital

On the 24th July 2026, the first Young Adult Haemodialysis Unit, in the UK, was opened at Mile End Hospital. The unit has been designed with young people, for young people. The space facilitates the delivery of developmentally appropriate

healthcare, helping young people with their healthcare transition from childrens to adult services. Richard Gardner, Treasurer, and Neil Fletcher, Trustee, of the Friends of the Royal London attended the event. The event was an outstanding success, and we heard from young people about the difference the unit is making.

To support the planning of the Young Adult Haemodialysis Unit, the Friends of the Royal London have supported the 'Welcome to the Royal London Hospital' events. These events have been organised by Tania Weekes, Young Adult Renal Youth Worker. This was an opportunity for young people, who were receiving dialysis treatment at Great Ormond Street, to visit the hospital before their care is transferred. They were also able to virtually see the Young Adult Haemodialysis Unit, so they were able to see what it looked like, before the grand opening. It was an opportunity for young people, and their families and carers, to meet members of the clinical team and to also meet other local partners.



A treatment area on the Haemodialysis Unit

Some of the feedback, from young people, who attended the 'Welcome to the Royal London Hospital' event:

"Amazing staff and event. I felt well informed by the friendly staff about any questions I had":

"I think the future patients defo have a better understanding of transferring and events like that have potential to be done once a year for all new patients. I'm more than happy to help anytime!"

"Excellent event, well facilitated by Tania and the team. Really great to see young people and their families in an environment away from the clinical areas and to have time to meet them and hear from them."

Neil Fletcher – Trustee of the Friends of the Royal London Hospital

Friends of the Royal London are on social media

Some of the Trustees, Jan (Co Chair), Jean (Co Chair), Richard (Treasurer), Graeme and Neil met with Lisa Dinh, Head of Communications for the Royal London and Mile End Hospitals, to explore ideas about social media presence. The discussion explored whether the Friends of the Royal London should have their own dedicated social media platform or utilise existing social media platforms. The consensus was to tap into the NHS Barts Health LinkedIn page. A huge benefit of this is that there are over 83,000 followers.

Neil Fletcher, Roald Dahl Clinical Nurse Specialist for teenagers and young adults for Barts Health, and Friends of the Royal Trustee, has been posting on his LinkedIn page (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/neil-fletcher-b821877b>) activity involving the Friends of the Royal London using the hashtag #FriendsoftheRoyalLondon and 'tagging' in NHS Barts Health. Posts have included; examples of successful grant applications, promoting the 10k run, information about the music recitals and including the link to the Friends of the Royal London website. The aim is to send 2 posts per week.

Has it been successful - yes. Each post has had over 300 views.

Neil Fletcher – Trustee of the Friends of the Royal London Hospital

The Friends' Shop Trolley Service – 2026 Report

At the beginning of the year, the trolley service was enhanced by the acquisition of a new electric-powered trolley, which is bigger than the previous 'manual' version, and therefore allows us to carry a slightly wider range of goods (drinks, biscuits, sweets, toiletries, newspapers, etc.). Being self-propelled, this helps those of us who are getting on in years to get round the miles of hospital wards.

Financially, the trolley service had a bumper year. Trolley sales amounted to £17,145 and cost of sales was £12,600, so the service generated net income of £4,545 of funding towards our other charitable activities. But - more importantly – our committed 'trolley vollies' delivered not only the treats of their 'alternative medicine' to patients and staff alike, but also provided an opportunity for conversation and a listening ear to anyone who wanted it (and many did), which is rewarding in both directions...

Many thanks to Honor Cousens, Molly Morrell, Rachel Baylis, Deborah Petrich and Jean Robinson for your trolley efforts, and for kindly reaching out to the patients on your rounds. We often receive positive feedback from patients (and staff!) to tell us that your service is greatly appreciated.

*Richard Gardner
Volunteer/Treasurer*



Richard & Molly with the old style trolley

10K Report

A team of fifteen runners* took part in the Saucony London 10K event on Sunday 12th July to help raise funds for The Friends. This day was another hot one - part of what became a long summer of unprecedented hot weather. But there was a wonderful atmosphere around the course, which took in some of Central London's most iconic landmarks, and the number of cheering supporters and live musicians all around the course contributed to the 'buzz' enjoyed by the runners. The organisers had also provided a number of 'misting stations', whose cooling sprays were equally welcome. A record total of 19,000 people crossed the finish line this year. In spite of the heat, all our brave runners completed the course, and even said they enjoyed the experience! We thank each one of them for helping us raise almost £4,000 for the charity. Why not join us for next year's run which is on Sunday 11th July 2027. Pop it in your diary now!

*Participants were: Shreeraj Laturia, Ashley Waters, Grace Pilsbury, Tanda Kabanda, William Bowry, Oumatee Madhoosingh, Fatuma Male, Eva Gowen, Imogen Davies, Rosalind Davies, Prasanthini Edward, Sushant Patra, Rachel Berry, Boshura Khatun & Richard Gardner

Richard Gardner – Treasurer & runner



Membership Report 2026

Following the display of a new Friends banner on the external windows of the main hospital entrance, we have recently welcomed a few new members from within the local community. Our web portal – MemberMojo* – makes joining easy, and our annual membership fee of £10 is no more than a few first class stamps. New members are always welcome!

*Link here: <https://membermojo.co.uk/friendsoftheroyallondonhospital>

Sadly, we have lost a similar number of members during the year, so our overall total membership remains at a similar level to previous years. Notable among those who have passed away this year is Dr. Anthea McEwan, a former Chair and Vice-President of The Friends, and a distinguished physician and contributor to the Royal London Hospital and its Medical School.

Feedback and correspondence on any membership issues is always welcome by post or by email:

friendsrlh@gmail.com

Richard Gardner – Treasurer & Membership Secretary