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**If you would like this newsletter in plain text or another accessible format please email [andrew.colclough@bjf.org.uk](mailto:andrew.colclough@bjf.org.uk)**

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## Joan Walley DL - First Patron of the Beth Johnson Foundation



I'm very honoured to have been invited to join the ranks of the Beth Johnson Foundation as your patron. It's fitting that as the March International Women's Day commemoration comes round again that we should be looking to redouble our efforts to build on the pioneering work of our founder and I hope that I can support you in this.

As an organisation the Beth Johnson Foundation can be exceptionally proud of its achievements to date. The Covid Pandemic has reminded us of the need to cherish all those who care for others and who volunteer for public service and the year ahead will be a time to strive to bring about the solutions we want to see in communities

around the UK. Whether it's the cutting-edge research that distinguishes the work of our Foundation, the need to bring more businesses to the corporate responsibility table to seek their assistance to promote positive attitudes to aging across they generations and all sectors of society, I am very much looking forward to joining a long line of dedicated individuals who have advocated for older people. I knew and respected a former chief executive, the late Vera Ivers and hope that my own life experience can in turn bring value to your objectives. I look forward to helping the Beth Johnson Foundation to continue to be a catalyst for change.

**Joan Walley DL 22.02.21**

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## Looking Back ... Driving Forward

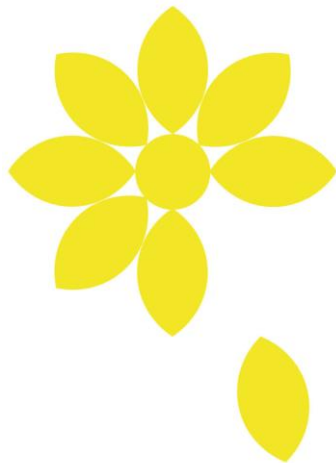
Last year brought unimaginable challenges for us all. We could never have imagined what 2020 would be like and the huge impacts that the pandemic would force upon us as its intensity spread across the globe. The UK government restrictions were difficult for everyone, young and old. Young people were separated from their school friends and family; work took on a very different pattern for many, as working at home became the new routine; older people felt isolated, lonely and lost regular contact with those important to them. A common thread across these different age groups was that of loneliness and isolation, particularly amongst the ageing communities. The effect of the pandemic has seemingly brought an epidemic of social isolation. We know this because social media has regularly highlighted this; we have all experienced it to varying degrees; and many of our clients have frequently told us.

As we endured yet another lockdown, our familiar world was paused again and many of us were variously thinking about what used to be; what our personal worlds and routines looked like; what we had lost either temporarily or permanently. We tried to imagine what we were doing prior to the pandemic; what we enjoyed doing and who we enjoyed doing it with.

The theme of this Spring Newsletter is reflections. When we reflect, we consider deeply something that we might not otherwise have given much thought to. Reflection is concerned with consciously looking at and thinking about our experiences, actions, feelings, and responses, and then interpreting or analysing them in order to learn from them (Atkins and Murphy, 1994; Boud et al., 1994). Typically, we do this by asking ourselves questions about what we did, how we did it, and what we learnt from doing it. We step back and pause to look, listen, think and unpack the situations we find ourselves experiencing. Thinking about the past can so often inform and shape our future. At the BJF, we have continued to support a range of older people across our various projects, in the best ways we know how. Listening to the voices of older people and adapting how and when to best support our local communities.



# Loss



On March 23rd, it is the twelve months anniversary of the formal beginning of the pandemic here in the UK. During this past year, thousands of people succumbed to this perilous disease, many of whom were older people. At the Beth Johnson Foundation, we are collaborating with Marie Curie ([www.mariecurie.org.uk/](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/)), a national charity established in 1948 to support people with life limiting conditions; Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([www.stoke.gov.uk/](http://www.stoke.gov.uk/)); and ASIST ([www.asist.co.uk/](http://www.asist.co.uk/)), a local advocacy charity, to reflect and remember loved ones who have died during the first year of the pandemic. During this time, many people were not able to say goodbye to their loved ones in hospitals and care homes; funeral rituals were very limited; the celebration of life and the usual associated rites of passage were simply not permitted. Many bereaved people felt unable to deal with their grief and

mourned in private, not able to meet with friends and family members to personally recollect and share simple yet powerful and important stories of their loved ones. This day of reflection is to encourage people to think about loved ones, constructively share their experiences with others, and for the local community to recognise and remember the sadness for the survivors left behind.

Whilst we join in the national activities, we have a number of local activities planned for this Day of Reflection. Community commemorative fruit trees will be planted in Fenton Park; a virtual space to leave words, poems, photographs of loved ones, is being developed on the BJB website. Life goes on, albeit in a different way, but the memories of loved ones remain strong and so important to us all.



As we emerge from the latest lockdown, here at the BJB we do so with hope and look forward with optimism. We are delighted to welcome our first Patron, Joan Walley, a local person who has lived in Stoke on Trent all her life. I'm sure many of you will remember Joan from her time as a Labour Party Politician, who served as a Member of Parliament (MP) for Stoke on Trent North, from the 1987 general election until 2015. We are so pleased that Joan has agreed to be our Patron, to be the figurehead of our Foundation as we move forward. BJB will be forever reflecting on the past, to constructively inform our future.

Sue Read



**Emerita Professor Sue Read, CEO, Beth Johnson Foundation**

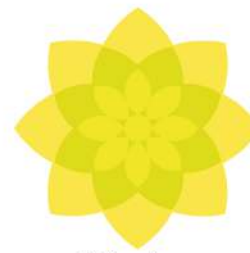
# National Day of Reflection



Remember



Reflect



Unite

Since the first lockdown began in 2020, thousands of people have died. Let's come together to reflect on our collective loss, support those who've been bereaved, and hope for a brighter future

## Add a loved one to our Memory Wall

For the people of Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire  
Online from Monday 15th March until Friday 26th March

[www.bjf.org.uk](http://www.bjf.org.uk) email: [admin@bjf.org.uk](mailto:admin@bjf.org.uk)



The 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 will be commemorated as a national day of reflection. Since the first lockdown began in 2020, thousands of people have died. At the Beth Johnson Foundation, we are collaborating with Marie Curie, a national charity established in 1948 to support people with life limiting conditions; Stoke-on-Trent City Council; and Asist, a local advocacy charity, to support a number of activities to encourage our communities to come together and remember loved ones who are no longer with us.

We are inviting people to contribute to a **memory wall** for the people of Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire. If you would like to find out more, please go to our website at [www.bjf.org](http://www.bjf.org) Let's come together to reflect on our collective loss, support those who've been bereaved, and hope for a brighter future.

## Bereavement Help Points

Bereavement Help Points are free social groups open to people age 50+ living in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire who have experienced bereavement, the project offers support to people who may have been struggling to grieve in isolation.

The project was initially funded for 6 months by the Community Fund and has since been extended to September 2021. We are working on developing the next stage of the project and we continue to support the **Bereavement Help Points online group which meets every Wednesday at 2pm.**



The BHP group provides information on coping with both the practical and emotional aspects of the death of a relative or friend and offers a chance to chat to trained volunteers and to others in a similar situation, sharing their experiences and stories and offering help and support to each other.

Due to covid restrictions the group meets online so that people can join from the comfort and safety of their own home. Some people who do not have access to the internet join the group via telephone.

Reflecting on their experience of grieving during the pandemic, the group told us that as well as grieving alone, it has been particularly difficult not being able to fully commemorate and celebrate the life of their loved ones. The usual rituals of bereavement have been drastically curtailed with limited numbers at funerals and no opportunity to get together and gain comfort and support from family and friends after the funeral.

People have looked for other ways to remember their loved one, books of remembrance and photo books have helped, and some will add names and stories to Memory Walls and Memory Clouds. Group members have helped to create resources that have been shared online including "Twelve ways to remember a loved one at Christmas" and "Ways you can be kind to yourself following a bereavement". The support that members have given to each other has been extraordinarily powerful and continues to be the foundation of the group



We will join the Marie Curie Day of Reflection on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and we hope that we will soon be able to visit the Memorial bench and Reflection area in Fenton when restrictions are lifted.

People who have been bereaved during the pandemic have had to learn how to build their lives around their loss. As restrictions ease and society starts to open up again, we will continue to offer support to ensure that older people who are grieving do not remain in isolation.

They may need support to join local groups, meet old friends and make new friends and generally become part of society again. BJF will continue to offer group support as long as we are able, sharing stories and helping people to join and create new circles of support and friendships.

### Hilary Stefanelli, Project Lead - Bereavement Help Points

For more information and meeting dates please contact: [bhpoint@bjf.org.uk](mailto:bhpoint@bjf.org.uk)

Tel: Hilary 07507 408372 / Andrew 07770 016978

[Visit Bereavement Help Points on the BJF Website](#)

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## A Summary of Support During the Covid Lockdown



The graphic above summarises the support that BJF teams have given directly to our clients from March 23rd 2020 to the end of February 2021

# Healthy Generations Project

Spring is on the horizon and we at Healthy Generations are embracing new approaches to delivery and looking forward to taking the project into its 3rd year. We adapted to the pandemic in 2020 very quickly and, with the support of the Team and Volunteers, were able to continue our work by taking it in a new direction – totally virtual delivery!

We re-developed our Health and Wellbeing sessions to enable them to be delivered over the video platform 'Zoom' as a rolling programme of sessions covering 5 topics: Emotional Wellbeing, Physical Wellbeing, Diet & Nutrition, Art and Wellbeing and Digital Skills.

Each topic is delivered over a 3 week period, giving participants time to fully engage and achieve their goals, and uptake has been positive. During all of these sessions we have been able share up to date Health and Wellbeing information and to support individuals to download useful apps, and signposted to relevant Web Pages and information providers.

These sessions will be continuing for as long as required with the hope of returning to face to face delivery in a Covid-Secure environment when possible.

Alongside these sessions we run regular Zoom support sessions, remembering our strap line: **'Physically distanced; Socially connected'**

- Monday Mood Boosters - Emotional Support
- Chill out Tuesday - Social Support
- Maggie's Poetry Moments - Poetry for Wellbeing
- Art for All - Art for Wellbeing

"I am glad to be able to still help other people over zoom and be able to talk to them so that they know they have got someone there if they have any problems."

We have also delivered individual digital skills sessions, led by our volunteer Jon.

"During this Covid I got very stressed, I felt Covid was taking over me I feel you are now bringing me back. Now I've got all you on the HG Team, I attend the Poetry, Art and music sessions. You have given me the confidence to share my words and memories. You HG, have been there for me and I want to say thank you, you have reinvigorated me"

"Felt like going into big black hole"

"We have enjoyed the zoom meetings in the situation at present and doing the Art session also the Poetry has given me confidence back many thanks. To everyone at the BJJF, thanks"



Beth Johnson  
FOUNDATION

*A future for all ages*

## Healthy Generations

*Physically distanced; Socially connected*



**We are delighted to offer our Free  
Positive Aging and Wellbeing sessions, delivered  
over Zoom, for people aged 50+ living in  
Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire**

**Digital Skills for Health and Wellbeing**  
Embracing technology and staying safe online

**Art and Wellbeing**  
Digital drawing and photo collage

**Emotional Wellbeing**  
Ways to look after your mental health

**Physical Wellbeing**  
Promoting a healthier lifestyle

**Diet and Nutrition**  
Looking at the benefits of healthy balanced diet

**Open for booking now! Come to one, or come to all!**

We can offer you Tech support to help you get onto  
Zoom prior to the sessions and will be there to  
Support you throughout each session.

To find out more and book your place  
please contact Jane Snape on:

**☎ 07930 321841**

**✉ [jane.snape@bjf.org.uk](mailto:jane.snape@bjf.org.uk)**

The Beth Johnson Foundation, Parkfield House, 64 Princes Road, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7JL  
Tel: 01782 844036 Registered Charity No: 1122401 Company No: 6454378

We were also able to arrange themed sessions around specific health topics by joint work; previously with Arthritis in Action, with Healthy Generations and Patient Information Education and Resource Centre (PIER) sessions around Arthritis self-management starting soon.

Our Telephone Lifestyle support calls have continued. Giving one to one support over the telephone to members of the community with no access to digital technology, help with online researching, general conversation, and signposting.

Healthy Generations has its own media presence on Facebook with regular posts and contributions, with permission, from zoom group members. Following on from our successful **[Covid 19 Survival Cook Book & Other Stories](#)** we are now in the process of drafting another booklet '***Creative Reflections; Life during Covid***' a collection of poems, short stories and artwork produced by our members.





Beth Johnson  
FOUNDATION

*A future for all ages*

# Healthy Generations

*Physically distanced; Socially connected*



Patient Information Education  
and Resource Centre

HAYWOOD  
HOSPITAL

## NEW 2021 Online Health, Wellbeing & Self-Management Workshops for people living with Arthritis and related conditions

The Healthy Generations Team are working in partnership with the Patient Information Education and Resource Centre (PIER) at Haywood Hospital. **From March 2021, FREE Zoom workshops** about self-managing a range of conditions (including online resources) will be available for people aged 50+.

If you have access to the internet via a smartphone, computer or tablet, we can help! Join **June Brammar, Project Manager, Rheumatology on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 10.30-11.30am** to find out more... We will then be holding monthly workshops, starting with Bone Health in April 2021.

To find out more and book your place  
please contact Jane Snape on:

**07930 321841**

✉ [jane.snape@bjf.org.uk](mailto:jane.snape@bjf.org.uk)

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We continue to 'meet' with other organisations, networks and with members of the community, sharing the Health And Wellbeing benefits of Positive Ageing and promoting the benefits of digital technology in this changing and engaging world.

**Jane Snape Project Co-ordinator – Healthy Generations Project**

[Visit Healthy Generations on the BJF Website](#)

## Reflections from an Intern

I've been interning with Healthy Generations for several months now, and the one thing that's struck me more than anything else has been the kindness and wisdom of the community the Foundation has built there. From telling each other riddles to looking after my health when I got an infection, talking to the staff and attendees has been a highlight of my week since I started. The smiles and laughs never fail to cheer me up, and the inventiveness of the staff in always finding new activities and new ways to connect and introduce people is really pioneering stuff. COVID has not made anyone's life easier, and it could easily have shut the project down for good. But the people behind it are made of stronger things than that and are emerging from the crisis in better shape than ever, a key pillar of support for people who need them the most.

**Michael Bradshaw - (Intern with Healthy Generations, Student of Keele University)**

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## Dementia Advocacy

We recently heard the sad news that Vera Ivers had passed away. Vera's death gives us the opportunity to reflect on the wonderful work she did in the late 1980's and the huge impact it had on advocacy. Vera in the 80's was CEO of the Beth Johnson Foundation and was one of five pioneers of advocacy in the late 80's. Without Vera's influence we question, if the Beth Johnson Foundation would be providing dementia advocacy.

During her time at BJF Vera had noted that there was no advocacy provision in the UK. She spoke to other likeminded people and she introduced the Citizen advocacy model of advocacy to the Beth Johnson Foundation which was replicated by other UK organisations. In 1994 Vera wrote the book Citizen Advocacy that continues to be referred to by many advocates. Whilst providing Citizen advocacy it was noted how people living with dementia had no voice and how the Citizen advocacy model of advocacy would be similar model of advocacy needed in providing dementia advocacy.

In 1998 the dementia advocacy project was piloted and those involved agreed that using the Citizen advocacy model was at the core of providing dementia advocacy. Citizen advocacy is based on using volunteers matching them to clients who have similar interests and the volunteer normally having a long-term relationship with the person they are supporting enabling them to fully support the person. The Dementia advocacy project at BJF, although not working with volunteers, does primarily involve the dementia advocate having a lengthy involvement with clients supported by the project. An evaluation of the pilot project in 2001 highlighted the average length of time the dementia advocate is involved with a client is 4 months and 3 weeks, although it is often longer.

During the pilot of the 3-year funded project in 1998 the average number of referrals was 35 a year. The project currently supports over 200 individual cases a year clearly showing how the project has grown over the years. We are, in no doubt we are indebted to Vera Ivers for putting the Beth Johnson Foundation dementia advocacy on the map.



Reflecting on the dementia advocacy project highlights not only how far the project has grown but how it is valued and acknowledged demonstrated by the ongoing funding for the project since 2001. Possibly due to the vision of Vera Ivers who recognised the need to ensure that people have a voice no matter their circumstances.

Looking at how far the dementia advocacy project has grown is illustrated by the photo below showing a member of the peer support group the Dementia advocacy project facilitates who has dementia giving a talk to at an event we held to promote the Bookmark developed by the group.

### Betty Machin, Dementia Advocacy Manager



John Tinsley a member of the group giving a talk to an audience consisting of Health and social professionals (before Covid social distancing) John said, **“Being supported by BJF has given me confidence I have never had before thank you”.**

[Visit Dementia Advocacy on the BJF Website](#)

## Looking Forward to Looking Back.

As the government announces a pathway there appears to be a lift in spirits as the end is in sight for us all. As an advocate, I am looking forward to being sat face to face with clients, offering the service we long to do, as we reminisce how we adjusted so quickly to work under such strange circumstances. I am *looking forward to looking back* and remembering those times where we arranged zoom meetings daily, using face time and video calls to interact with each other instead of a meeting with coffee. Our BJJ peer support group has somewhat benefitted from this virtual experience, going from meeting once a month to meeting weekly, we had our first Zoom meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2020 and it was all go from there! Having never physically meeting most of these peer support group members and colleagues it is good to remember the efforts we have gone to, to be connected despite social distancing. Reflecting on starting a new role just before the pandemic hit, it gave me a little taster of what a rewarding job dementia advocacy can be, and I'm eager to return safety to a new normality and *looking forward to looking back* and seeing how far we have come, together.

### Laura Higgins, Dementia Advocate



## Lianne Burton - Reflections and Looking Forward...

The pandemic has hit us all as individuals, be it our work, home life, overall wellbeing to name but a few. Most of us have had to settle into new ways of living and working and adapt to these changes fast. These changes have presented us with new and unforeseen challenges and difficulties, some rocking the boat when it comes to both our physical and mental health.

Mental wellbeing has been a big part of my role since I started and although not initially the reason for some referrals, it has become a big part of the support needed by my patients through these difficult times. From people struggling with isolation from family and friends to dealing with bereavements away from the comfort of others, all has meant an increase in the number of people struggling with their mental wellbeing.

For me in my role and out, finding the ability to 'pause' for a moment and step outside of life can help with gaining an idea of what may help (as hard as it may be). This can be the starting point of finding our 'ok' and hopefully our 'good' again.

Looking at what can be changed and what can't be changed, focusing on the 'can be changed' and putting a 'plan of action' in place is an important part of my role. Although not always obvious there are always things no matter how small they seem that can help us find our 'ok' again. Be it finding beauty and joy in the simplest of things, getting out, opening our minds up to change, finding new passions or capturing the moments when we do feel good and noting them down to refer back to on a no so good day.

Supporting others or supporting ourselves - the key is 'hope' – if we have hope we can start to see a way forward, once this door is open finding our 'ok', our 'good', our 'happiness' feels much more achievable.

With the news of restrictions being lifted, having the ability to make choices such as spending time with family and friends, planning activities or (with my work hat on) connecting people to each other face to face again, community activities/groups re opening etc all will help us re balance our wellbeing.



Finding the things that help us maintain positive wellbeing both physically and mentally gives us the ability to live happier healthier lives, as a Social Prescriber it is my job to be the helping hand to others in finding these things and ensuring they become the norm moving forward.

Happy Spring everyone.

**Lianne Burton, Social Prescriber  
Link Worker**

A quote from one of the people I have supported recently... 'I feel like I have hope for the for the first time in a very long time '

# Patient Education and Resource Centre (PIER)

Due to Covid 19 restrictions and lockdowns, The Patient Information Education & Resource Centre (PIER) at Haywood Hospital has been closed to visitors since March 2020.

The PIER, based within the outpatients' area of the Haywood Hospital is normally open on weekdays and is staffed by a team of 16 volunteers who provide information and signposting to patients, their families, and carers with access to information on arthritis and related conditions.



Immediate priorities following lockdown were to make sure the volunteers were fully informed of the situation regarding the PIER closure and establishing a way of keeping in touch.

As patients could no longer utilise the PIER, the line of enquiry has been picked up by practitioners/clinicians who have passed on any enquiries and signposting to myself during lockdown.

Regular communication with volunteers through a newsletter and emails has kept the team spirit alive and although the volunteers look forward to the time when they can come into the hospital, they have remained positive and keen to engage in the planning of projects for later in 2021 and beyond.

## Reflection



I have been reflecting lately on how our patient facing projects have successfully adapted/changed the way they deliver sessions for our patients. Our Tai Chi and Qigong activity sessions, normally held at the Haywood Hospital and in community settings, have transferred to online, utilising Zoom and YouTube facilities.

Another of our partners, Rachael Lines from Frontline Dance would normally deliver gentle activity sessions on the wards with patients as well as holding an open session in the gym on Wednesday afternoons. Rachael has also come up with alternative ways to work. Rachael has started an online 'At Home Programme' which runs until the end of March 2021. The details are here:

<https://mailchi.mp/9d50e9d80788/letsstayconnected-5201967?e=e54eff582d>

All sessions are fully inclusive and accessible so everyone can join in together. The Wednesday session 2:30-3:30pm are similar to what Rachael used to do at the Haywood gym.



## Forget me Knot Project

It seems an age ago (2016) that Rachael delivered a different series of sessions at the hospital called 'Forget me Knot'. Based around art in healthcare settings, Forget me Knot is an integrated dance, storytelling and live performance project.

Picture below- Members of the Forget me Knot Project at the Haywood Hospital. To see a Vimeo clip of the project click below.

<https://www.staffordshirearts.co.uk/documentary-about-frontline-dance-forget-me-knot-project/>

We hope to recommence all our wonderful interactive projects, with all our partners, as soon as we can.

Personally, I cannot wait to get back to working with the amazing PIER volunteers. They have taken ownership of the facility in such a positive way and I know from our regular communications that they are raring to go when we reopen fully in the summer helping to make the lives of arthritis patients and their carers more manageable.



## June Brammar, Project Manager

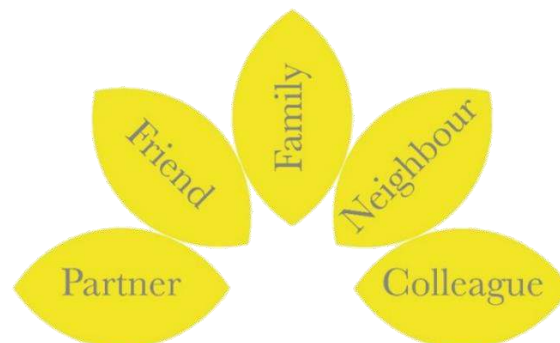




## Online Events Programme

Linking Generations NI will be hosting 3 free webinars via Zoom throughout the week, open to attendees from across the UK and worldwide, so why not sign up and join the conversation, wherever you are!

- **Intergenerational Approaches to Age-Friendly:** *Tuesday 9th March, 10.30am – 12pm*
  - This webinar will highlight the applicability and impact of Intergenerational approaches to building Age-Friendly Communities in NI and beyond. Join us to hear from Age-Friendly practitioners, their successes with Intergenerational approaches and an opportunity for discussion.
  - [Click here to book your free place](#)
- **Intergenerational Approaches within Education:** *Thursday 11th March, 10.30am – 12pm*
  - This webinar will explore the educational outcomes of Intergenerational work in schools and colleges, including an overview of recent research, stories from educators and an opportunity for discussion.
  - [Click here to book your free place](#)
- **Growing Your Care Home Connections:** *Friday 12th March, 10.30am – 12pm*
  - This webinar will highlight some successful examples of intergenerational connections with care homes. Join LGNI, Royal Voluntary Service and Food for Life Get Togethers to explore how you can grow your care home connections.
  - [Click here to book your free place](#)



## The Journey Ahead

Our planet has been affected by a terrible global pandemic which left our society with tragic consequences both on peoples' health and life and devastating economic difficulties. Taking into consideration the various events experienced by the human race in the last hundred years (i.e. the two world wars, holocaust, Spanish Pandemic, etc.), it seems that humanity survived those circumstances and never lost the joy of living.

The good news is that the United Kingdom has administered more covid-19 vaccine first doses per 100 people than any other nation of comparable population size. This world beating performance brings some hope for some degree of easing restrictions and moving into a better future.

However, the economic consequences will be much more difficult to resolve. According to a poll of more than 90 leading economists (Financial Times), it will take at least 18 months for the UK economy to return to its pre-pandemic size and its recovery will lag behind that of its peers. "The UK will be among the last, if not the last, of the high-income economies to regain its pre-pandemic size," said Adam Posen, president of the Peterson Institute for International Economics and a former member of the Bank of England's monetary policy committee. The UK recovery would be held back by lasting rise in unemployment, weak business investment and the effects of Brexit.

This unpleasant forecast should be recognised by UK charities in general and BJF in particular. This is a crucial time for a proper analysis of the situation and planning for the future. The scope of areas crying for help is vast, and this is our opportunity to demonstrate our unique added value.

BJF has successfully managed to adjust the way of delivering our professional services during the last few difficult months. Our task now is to use our talent and dedication in planning the ways in which we can address some of the challenges facing us in the next few years. As we know, we will never get back to the same normality, we will find ourselves in a new normality. That would be the case for BJF.

**I am sure that together (the staff, volunteers and the Board) we shall rise to the challenges.**

**Professor Ziv Amir, Chair – Beth Johnson Foundation**



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## Take Care and Keep Yourself and Everyone Safe

### Beth Johnson Foundation

Parkfield House, 64 Princes Road, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7JL

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