



**CONTACT
THE ELDERLY**

IMPACT REPORT

2015-16

**COMBATTING LONELINESS AMONGST
ISOLATED OLDER PEOPLE**





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In 1965 Contact the Elderly's Founder, Trevor Lyttleton MBE, identified loneliness as a key issue affecting older people and together with friends he established the simple solution of monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties. Over 50 years later and with the support of almost 9,000 volunteers throughout England, Scotland and Wales, the need for Contact the Elderly's simple hand of friendship has never been greater.

As a volunteer myself, I know just how rewarding the tea parties are for everyone involved. The care and dedication of all our volunteers brings the much needed element of human contact and friendship back into the lives of the older people we help, while the guests get to mark an event into an otherwise empty or sparse calendar. In many cases friendships are formed that go far beyond the monthly tea parties and our guests also report improvements in health as a direct result of joining our service.

Over the last few years, Contact the Elderly has seen substantial growth in our income, presence and service delivery. This is a testament to how our profile has grown and the great support our work receives from our network, corporate organisations and the general public. Alongside these successes, there is the challenge of an increasingly ageing society and the growing need for our service to reach ever more communities across the UK.

2015 marked Contact the Elderly's 50th Golden Jubilee Anniversary, and was a year of successful partnerships and campaigns, including with Bisto on the Spare Chair Sunday campaign, publicised across national radio and television, resulting in over 1,700 new volunteers joining our work.

We looked carefully at our challenges and planned our activity accordingly. With the huge increase in awareness, we move our focus from the Volunteer to the Older Guest as we set out to invite the most isolated older people out to afternoon tea, establishing many more groups wherever there was a demand for our service.

On behalf of all who work for Contact the Elderly, I am very pleased to introduce the Impact Report, showcasing our ongoing commitment to ending loneliness and social isolation amongst older people.

Christian Grobel, Chairman

A Silent Epidemic: Why Our Work Is Needed



As people grow older, they can become invisible in society. Issues such as illness, reduced mobility or bereavement can significantly affect their ability to leave home, socialise and feel part of the community. A lack of family nearby, dissolving care services and the disappearance of community spaces can exacerbate this.

The detrimental effects of loneliness on both mental and physical health have been well-documented. Depression, anxiety and a lack of confidence are just some of the health problems that plague lonely and socially isolated people. This was further highlighted through our own research, revealing that 76% of Contact the Elderly guests find Sundays to be the loneliest day of the week.

Older people who are still able to get out and buy a local newspaper, or call to ask for help, can self-refer to the service. However, our main challenge is reaching the older people who are not able to do this. The hidden million that have little to no human interaction and spend weeks upon weeks within their four walls, usually with the television as their only company. Many are simply unaware that our service exists or lack the confidence to make the first step and ask for help.



A Silent Epidemic: Why Our Work Is Needed 🍵🍶🍵

We work closely with healthcare professionals who can directly refer their older patients to our service. Our service has been proven to be an effective form of social prescribing, simultaneously relieving pressure on the healthcare sector and helping older people to re-engage with their community. 55% of Contact the Elderly guests say their general health and wellbeing has improved since attending our tea parties.

Why We Are Needed:

- Our service is completely free. This means anyone, regardless of their economic situation, can come along to afternoon tea
- Our tea parties always take place on Sundays. This is when many other services and organisations do not operate
- Door-to-door transport is provided. This is essential for older people who struggle with reduced mobility and cannot navigate public transport
- Regularity of the group. The same people meet each month, meaning a sense of regularity which allows friendships to blossom

“ Contact the Elderly is a superb organisation from every angle: it gets you out of the house, it gives you the opportunity to meet new people and for people like me, living on their own, it's so important. ”

Gladys, 82



We currently help 5,000 older people across the UK, but we know this is just the tip of the iceberg. We are committed to expanding our reach and helping those older people who would benefit from our service.

Loneliness Replaced With Friendship



"I feel uplifted after going to a tea party on a Sunday afternoon. I've met new people and made new friends. It's just amazing how the volunteers welcome four or five older people into their homes as their friends. It's a marvellous feeling and I definitely recommend it to other people in my situation."

Such words from **Irene, 92**, are the biggest testament to how important the work of Contact the Elderly is. Every month, after the cake is all eaten and the tea has been drunk, volunteers are often told just how much the afternoon has meant to the older people they take home. These sentiments are reinforced by our research, which shows that the positive effects of the tea parties are profoundly felt by all our beneficiaries.

95%

say they now have something to look forward to

55%

of guests said that their wellbeing has improved since joining us

85%

say what they enjoy most about the tea parties is the company

90%

made friends with volunteers, 81% making friends with other guests

77%

say they feel happier and 73% feel less lonely

63%

say they feel part of the community

On average throughout 2015-16, at least 4 older people contacted us every day wanting to join one of our groups.

"I've never had anything given to me in my life and I can't believe how kind people have been to me since I've been part of Contact the Elderly. It's absolutely marvellous. It's a wonderful organisation." **John, 85**

"When you get to my age, all you do is look back at the life you had, but Contact the Elderly has given me something to look forward to, something to live for." **Joan, 88**

"My wife has died now and I've been on my own for five years. I was very active until recently when I had a stroke. Being able to join the Contact the Elderly group is wonderful. It makes such a change, being picked up and brought out for tea which was absolutely beautiful." **Walter, 93**



Conversation, Companionship And A Cuppa



The setting of a tea party is integral to Contact the Elderly. A cup of tea and a slice of cake with a group of friends can provide such a vital sense of community and belonging for thousands of older people.

Contact the Elderly is consistently told by our beneficiaries that what they miss the most is regular company, the chance to get out of the house once a month and a friendly phone call to check up on them from time to time.

Since 1965, Contact the Elderly has inspired communities to come together and invite local older people to their homes once a month. The friendly conversations that take place around tea tables across the country every month represent the community cohesion that Contact the Elderly is striving to achieve. The jovial atmosphere of the gatherings is palpable and very often people can scarcely believe the transformations they see in the physical and mental well-being of the older guests who come to tea.



81% of Contact the Elderly guests have made friends with other guests with 90% having made friends with their volunteers.



THE SETTING
**OF A TEA
PARTY**
IS INTEGRAL TO
CONTACT THE
ELDERLY

A Caring Community



It is not only the older guests who benefit from our tea parties, our volunteers also notice a real difference in their own wellbeing. Contact the Elderly volunteers regularly see older people who are initially anxious, lonely and isolated become happier, emotive and more talkative when they join together with their local group.

Volunteers are an essential part of Contact the Elderly, without them our service simply would not exist. They offer so much more than comfortable venues, car journeys and plates of food. They are the people who show our beneficiaries that there is a community that cares about them. They listen to their stories and words of wisdom, they remember important dates like birthdays as well as acting as surrogate families to those who have none.

We are consistently impressed by how our volunteers go above and beyond for our beneficiaries. They take time out of their lives to visit poorly guests in hospital, phone them during the week for a chat and check they are not alone over difficult times such as Christmas. These small but meaningful gestures show that the friendships formed around a table are just the beginning of the companionship that Contact the Elderly creates.

98%

of volunteers say the tea parties reduce the isolation of older guests

97%

of volunteers believe it makes the older guests in the group happier

85%

of our volunteers see a higher level of self-esteem in the guests

84%

started volunteering because they wanted to help lonely, older people

“It's fantastic to see the older guests connecting with each other. You can tell that these parties mean so much to them all and it's something they clearly look forward to.” **Hannah - Driver**



A Caring Community



“I have wanted to volunteer for a long time but I struggled to find something that wasn't too time intensive. Since the Contact the Elderly tea parties only take place once a month, it's perfect for me as it's not too much of a time commitment. The older people love telling us stories from their youth; it's a real honour to be in the company of people who have done so much in their lives. We are all going to get older and it's nice to know that Contact the Elderly is there, looking out for us and our loved ones. I think that's why the charity's work resonates with so many people.” **Tracey - Driver**

“I coordinate a group in Croydon, ensuring older people in the local community have the chance to get out once in a while, make new friends and are treated to a lovely spread of food.” **Grethe - Group Coordinator and Host**

“You do get a warm feeling from doing something that's worthwhile and it's not onerous - if you have a house, a kettle and a teapot, you can easily make people feel welcome. I like to think that after the older guests have been out on a Sunday and get home, the companionship from the afternoon gets them through the time in the weeks ahead when they may not have visitors.” **Ian - Host**

“Thirty years ago I was a volunteer driver with Contact the Elderly and for the last twenty-five years a host. The summer afternoon tea party at our house in Surrey is an amazing event supported by my children, friends and neighbours where we enjoy the experience as much as our elderly guests do. These guys have got some amazing stories and they need to be shared and the only way to do that is to support Contact the Elderly.” **Michael - Host**

Tea With The GP

People starved of company can often be found making repeat trips to GP surgeries, with no particular problem needing treatment, but purely because they yearn for someone to talk to and an appointment to fill up some of their day.

Research* reveals that the health cost of loneliness is equivalent to some £12,000 per person over 15 years, which illustrates how the extra demand on doctors and GP services can add up.

In the light of this issue, Contact the Elderly developed our GP initiative. By partnering with GP surgeries and local volunteers, waiting rooms are transformed into venues for afternoon tea parties. Doctors and nurses can identify which older people would benefit from some company and personally invite them along to the tea party. This is a mutually beneficial model which helps reduce strain on surgeries, stops doctors writing unnecessary prescriptions and reduces the number of people seeking medical help purely for loneliness. It also helps Contact the Elderly directly identify the older people most in need of our service by working with health care professionals in communities across the UK.

Contact the Elderly currently has four GP groups, with the first of these having been launched in July 2014. There is strong potential for this to be rolled out across the UK and sustained to the benefit of GP surgeries and older people.

“Due to the growing problem of social isolation, older people get depressed and feel very lonely, but this group has had a great impact on their health and well-being. For some of my patients it is the only event on their calendar other than hospital appointments.

The tea parties have directly helped in combatting social isolation in a profound way. This has had a great impact on the older people. The statements from our older patients have shown how important these groups are in our society.”

Dr Murugesh Velayudham, Storrsdale Medical Centre

Care England has identified this initiative as an effective way to tackle social isolation and prevent lonely older patients visiting their GP unnecessarily. We have also enjoyed support from healthcare publications supporting the innovative nature of this initiative.

*7 Fulton, Lauren and Jupp, Ben (2015).

Investing to tackle loneliness: a discussion paper,

Social Finance. www.socialfinance.org.uk/investing-to-tackleloneliness-a-discussion-paper/

More Than Just A Tea Party



GUESTS



76%

Find Sundays a particularly lonely day



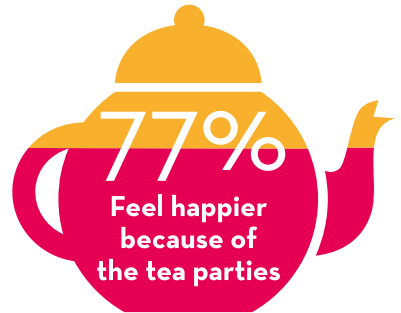
95%

Say they have something to look forward to



85%

Enjoy meals much more when eating in company



81%

Have made friends with other guests



90%

Have made friends with their volunteers

85%

Say that the most important part is the company

0800 716543

info@contact-the-elderly.org.uk
www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk



VOLUNTEERS



92%

Feel that they are really **giving something back**



84%

Say their motivation is to help lonely, older people



97%

Agree that the tea parties **make the guests happier**



89%

Feel happier as a result of being involved

Say that the tea parties **boost self-esteem of guests**



77%

Have made friends with the older guests in their group

85%



98%

Feel the tea parties reduce the isolation of guests



Making Loneliness A Shared Problem



Our new “Be Our Guest” campaign will directly address one of our biggest challenges to identify the older people most in need of our service, as well as to remove the stigma of admitting to being lonely. Through our new “Be Our Guest” resources we urge community action from the general public, encouraging everyone to look out for their older neighbours. We drew upon results from our nationwide survey, which revealed that while one-third of people have noticed a lonely older person in their community and been concerned, 40% did not feel confident that they know how they could help. Furthermore, 66% believe loneliness is a problem in their town.

We have designed brand new resources, highlighting the warm welcome of our tea parties as well as their fun and friendly atmosphere. We have moved away from focusing on the language of loneliness and isolation, feeling that this can be too daunting for potential new guests, especially those struggling to admit they feel lonely. Instead, we chose to more accurately portray the true nature of our tea parties

**CONTACT
THE ELDERLY**

Be Our Guest!

Do you live alone and find it difficult to get out and about?

If so, a change of scenery and regular afternoons of conversation and laughter with friends of all ages could be just what you need.

Company, conversation and a cuppa

Contact the Elderly arrange local afternoon tea parties for people aged 75 or over across England, Scotland and Wales.

One Sunday afternoon a month, each group meets for tea, cake and company. Our hosts take it in turns to welcome you into their home for a couple of hours, and our drivers accompany you to the tea party and make sure you get home safely. This service is free – all you have to bring is yourself!

If you would like to talk to someone about coming along please call our Freephone number 0800 716 543

Alternatively you can visit our website www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk or email us at guest@contact-the-elderly.org.uk

**CONTACT
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Making Loneliness A Shared Problem



For any organisation to reach their 50th anniversary is a significant accomplishment and for Contact the Elderly to have been actively tackling loneliness amongst older people for over 50 years was certainly cause to celebrate! Under the famous dome of St Paul's Cathedral in London, Contact the Elderly was joined by over 1,000 supporters to enjoy an evening of classical music from the London Choral Sinfonia, conducted by Michael Waldron. Speeches were made by Contact the Elderly president Lady Jasmine Cavendish and actress Maureen Lipman. After the concert, a gala dinner took place in the crypt to raise funds for our work.

Spare Chair Sunday was a major partnership with food manufacturer Bisto, supporting our aim of combatting the loneliness felt by millions of older people across the UK. The concept complimented our service by encouraging people to offer a spare place at their Sunday lunch table to an older person who would otherwise be eating alone. Joint research undertaken with Bisto revealed that amongst the general public, a third of people over the age of 70 eat alone every day while one in seven agreed that Sunday was the loneliest day of the week. Over 1,700 people volunteered with us either by hosting a Spare Chair Sunday lunch or becoming a regular tea party volunteer. Over 200 Sunday lunches were organised and 385 older people have been connected with volunteers in their area.

TV Presenter Rachel Riley helped us launch Spare Chair Sunday.





Filling Up The Teapot

Contact the Elderly's income has increased significantly over the last two years with five main areas of growth.

1. **Securing Big Lottery and Charities Aid Foundation funding**
2. **Increase in Corporate Sponsorship**
3. **Increase in Trust and Foundation income**
4. **Increase in Legacy income**
5. **Individual giving**

Contact the Elderly plans to extend its service **delivery to 10,000 older guests by 2021**. This will be achieved by expansion of our work in existing areas, particularly in isolation hot-spots and where our waiting lists show the need for our groups. **However, to achieve this we need your support.**



Volunteering Opportunities

We are always looking to recruit volunteers to help launch new Contact the Elderly groups and sustain existing ones. You can become a volunteer driver, tea party host or group coordinator, all of which are rewarding roles that can fit in around a busy lifestyle. You can also play a vital role in your community spreading the word about our work, encouraging local fundraising opportunities and looking out for new older guests and volunteers for groups.

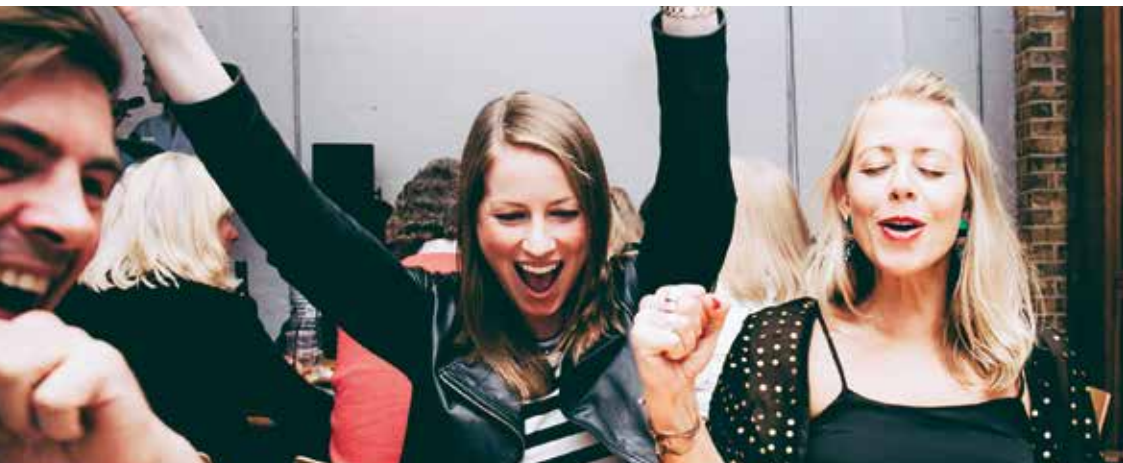
Financial Support

It costs just over £5,000 to develop, launch and support a new Contact the Elderly group in its first year. We recognise the importance of establishing them in a way that means they can run effectively for years. In order to expand and maintain our existing groups, we rely on the amazing generosity of the public, corporate businesses, trusts, foundations and grants.

Trusts, Foundations And Grants

These are a vital source of income for us. In particular, their support enables us to maintain and strengthen our network of volunteers.

Filling Up The Teapot



Individuals

There are many ways you can support us:

- Take part in our regular fundraising events
- Host a fundraising event within your community
- Donate your old car
- Leave a gift in your will
- Become a Friend of Contact the Elderly and give a donation on a regular basis
- Introduce Contact the Elderly to your company or club
- Ask your employee to match fund what you raise



Filling Up The Teapot

Corporate Support

We offer a dedicated service and an individual approach to all our corporate partners, ensuring that we build mutually beneficial relationships that enable companies to promote Corporate Social Responsibility to employees, stakeholders and prospective customers.

Opportunities for support can include:

- **Charity of the Year**
- **Volunteering**
- **Fundraising events**
- **Sponsorship**
- **Payroll giving**
- **Brand Partnership**

“Peters & Peters are honoured to be supporting Contact the Elderly. We felt that we should offer our support to a smaller organisation so that, as well as raising funds, we might assist in raising their profile more generally. Their work seemed to provide a simple, yet uplifting solution to a problem that can have such devastating effects on an older person. We were left in no doubt that this was the cause for us; tea and company, what could be better!”

Trish, Business Development Director, Peters & Peters

“Contact the Elderly provide an essential service for connecting older people with younger people. These commitments only take a little time and cost relatively very little and I urge more organisations to support Contact the Elderly. Equally importantly it is fun because the elderly have some amazing stories and I always look forward to my conversations with them.”

Michael Collins, Chairman, Goldcrest Land Plc

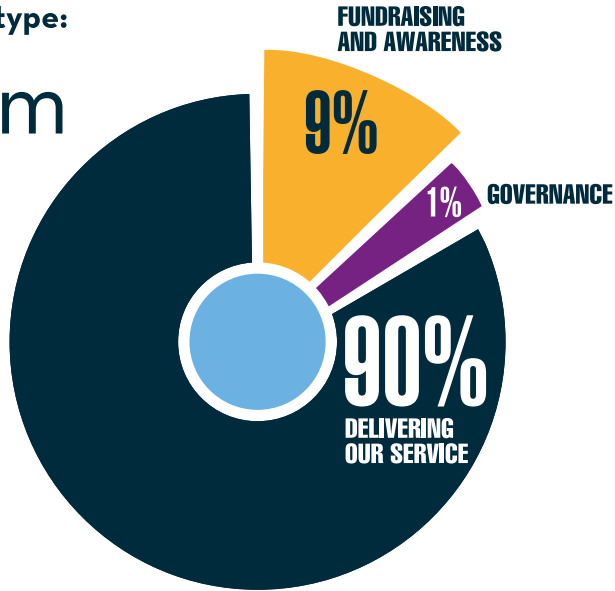
Contact the Elderly would like to thank our corporate supporters including: **JTI, Waitrose, Shawbrook Bank, Sackers, ISS Facility Services, BlueBay Asset Management, T. Rowe Price, We Are Tea, PRP, Savoo, Barnett Waddingham, Peters & Peters, Bridgepoint and Goldcrest Land Plc.**

For more information on fundraising or to discuss ways you might support us, please contact a member of our Fundraising Team on **0800 716543** or email **info@contact-the-elderly.org.uk**



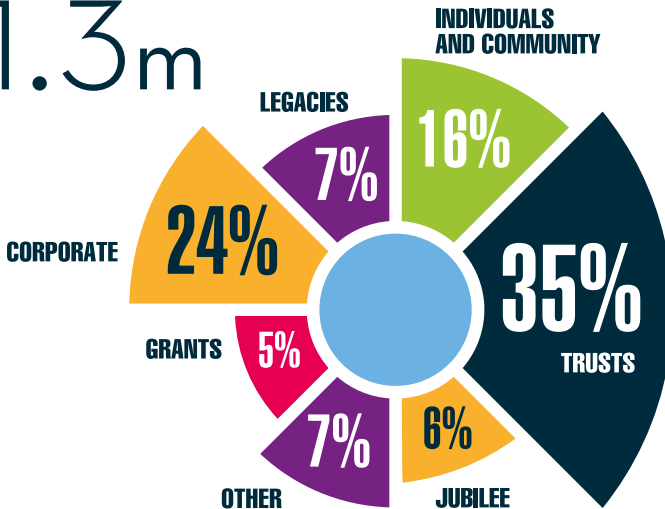
Expenditure by type:

£1.3m



Income by source:

£1.3m



A National Charity With A Local Touch



We pride ourselves on being a national charity with roots in local communities across England, Scotland and Wales. Being active in 630 communities across the UK, we are launching new groups at a rate of two per week.

Throughout the South of England, we were very proud to launch 25 new groups in the financial year, increasing our total number of tea party groups. We also achieved significant growth in the Eastern Counties, launching 10 new groups in this area, many of which were in areas where Contact the Elderly previously had no presence. This was also a very productive year for partnerships: we continued our partnership with the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Westminster with three groups run by volunteers in local parishes all thriving and preparing to launch 3 more a few months later. The Mayor of Hounslow, a Greater London Borough, chose us as one of his charities to support during his year in office. At the end of his year in office, he presented us with a very generous donation of £6,000 which will enable us to consolidate our work in the borough and continue developing more groups in this region. **Katy Szita, Head of Service - London and South England**

In Scotland, we have seen fantastic growth and lots of support from corporate and charitable organisations, welcoming three new members of staff. Baillie Gifford was our major supporter throughout 2016, providing volunteer and guest events as well as raising an incredible £40,000. We partnered with The Big Lunch to raise awareness of the importance of social eating and enjoyed support from MPs and MSPs, who lodged parliamentary motions to recognise and congratulate our work. We thanked some of our long-standing volunteers who were recognised for 40 years of commitment and were thrilled to win The Herald Society award for “Best Older People’s Project 2016”. **Morna O’May, Head of Service - Scotland**

Across North and Central England and Wales, we helped kick off the Golden Jubilee year with the first event held in Liverpool, attended by local groups and Liverpool Hope University. We were also pleased to see the continuing success of the very first GP group, which started in 2014 and is still going strong to this day. Volunteers and older guests were filmed and interviewed for The National Care Conference by ITN broadcaster Sue Saville. Welcoming a new member to the team, we were able to work in areas in the North East we had not previously reached. In December 2015, we were part of the Yorkshire Post campaign against Loneliness and Isolation. Two of our volunteers along with two guests were invited to Downing Street in London. 94-year-old Dora enjoyed dancing with Kevin, one of the professional dancers from BBC’s Strictly Come Dancing! **Mary Robinson, Head of Service - North & Central England and Wales**





Across 2015/16 we have seen wonderful growth in our numbers and many more partnerships developing, all while maintaining the simplicity of our service delivery and keeping older people at the very heart of what we do. I am extremely proud to see the number of volunteers and older guests growing at a steady pace and I am excited for what the future holds as we enter the next phase of our growth in a very strong position.

Contact the Elderly is unique: we are a national organisation that is also fully integrated into local communities. We have the benefit of having direct contact with our beneficiaries every month which helps us to have an acute understanding of their needs.

As we look forward, it is tempting to focus on the bleaker picture the future seems to hold. The news agenda about and discussion around older people very often focuses on faults in adult social care, cuts to funding, care homes closing and older people spending their last years of their life alone at home with nobody to keep them company. However, Contact the Elderly continues to be recognised as an effective and sustainable solution to ending the epidemic of loneliness and social isolation. We are expanding steadily and fulfilling our aim of identifying the loneliest and most isolated older people across the UK and taking them out to tea. As we have grown over the past few years, we have not lost the local touch which makes us so unique. We have championed older people and inspired thousands of people to take action and give back to their community.

As we move forward, our key aims are to double our service delivery, including the number of guests we take out to tea, by 2021 and to be recognised as a champion of the cause of loneliness amongst isolated older people. The most poignant quotes are the ones that come from our beneficiaries themselves, revealing the extent to which a cup of tea and a caring smile can truly make a difference. This quote comes from **Freda, 83**, from Bristol and it serves as a reminder of how important our work remains. "I'm so glad I got in touch with Contact the Elderly. The social contact the tea parties bring has made a big difference to my life. Being around people again has made me feel like my old self."

Mary Rance, Chief Executive

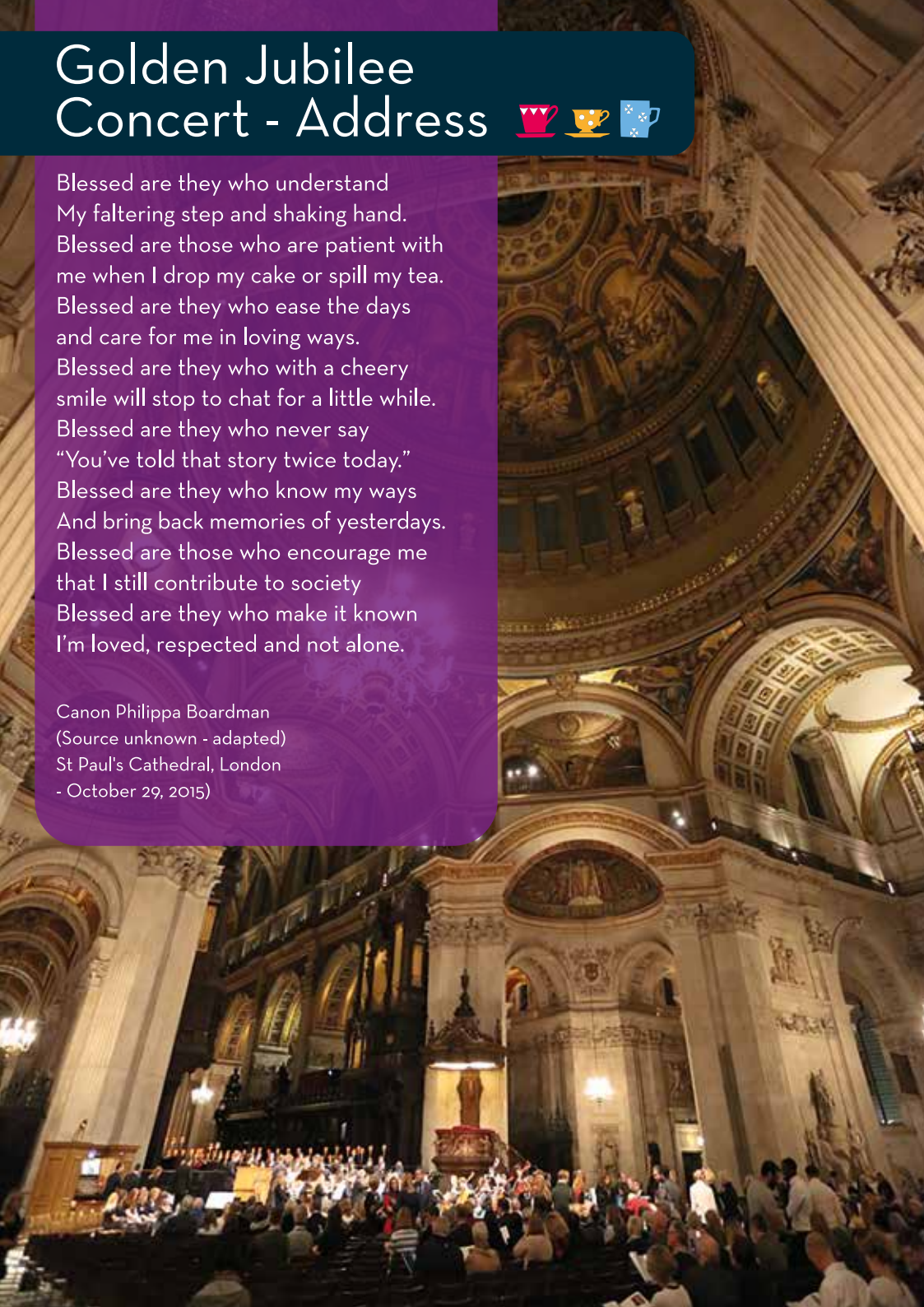


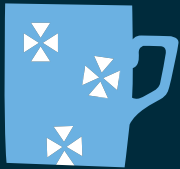
Golden Jubilee Concert - Address



Blessed are they who understand
My faltering step and shaking hand.
Blessed are those who are patient with
me when I drop my cake or spill my tea.
Blessed are they who ease the days
and care for me in loving ways.
Blessed are they who with a cheery
smile will stop to chat for a little while.
Blessed are they who never say
“You’ve told that story twice today.”
Blessed are they who know my ways
And bring back memories of yesterdays.
Blessed are those who encourage me
that I still contribute to society
Blessed are they who make it known
I’m loved, respected and not alone.

Canon Philippa Boardman
(Source unknown - adapted)
St Paul's Cathedral, London
- October 29, 2015)





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Registered charity number:
1146149 in England and Wales
SC039377 in Scotland

