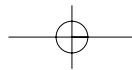




NOAH Enterprise
2004 review





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Spend time with those you wouldn't normally and a whole new side of life becomes clearer.

I had the privilege of being invited behind the scenes of one of Luton's busiest charities for homeless, excluded and lonely people. I met those who work there, spend time there and volunteer there and discovered just why we need places like NOAH Enterprise in our community.

This is a journey through the day-to-day lives of some remarkable people. I have changed the names of the individuals, but not their stories.

This report is written following a two day visit by Dave Redfern.

Vision

NOAH Enterprise is a charity which seeks, out of Christian conviction, to help the most disadvantaged in the local community. Particularly, it is concerned with providing a practical, empowering and caring service to homeless, marginalised and socially excluded people.

Mission

We will do this through

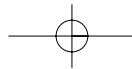
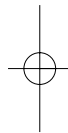
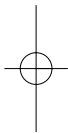
- our welfare service by providing food, clothing, medical and psychiatric care, and specific advice on accessing accommodation and benefits
- running training courses in basic life skills and employable crafts
- providing the opportunity for our people to gain work experience.

Values

In doing all of this we recognise and respect the fundamental dignity and worth of every individual, and wish to support them in improving their life quality.

We will work gladly with other agencies to achieve this.

YAMAHA





Noah the history

In 1987 the Luton and Dunstable Irish Care and Advice Association was founded by Sister Eileen O'Mahony working mainly with young Irish immigrants.

In 1989 the association registered as a charity and changed its name to Luton Irish Advice Bureau.

But there was a greater need within the community and a growing homeless problem in Luton. After convincing the committee, a day centre was opened and the name changed in 1993 to the Luton Day Centre for Homeless People. Those helped were no longer just Irish immigrants, but a much wider cross section of the community. The centre still catered for those in most need and the range of people it was able to

help included those suffering from alcohol dependency, drug and other substance misuse, physical and mental abuse and others generally socially excluded through isolation.

70 People a day visit the day centre, and that opened the door to a new venture. In 1994 training courses started and by 1996 a special centre was needed to house all the training activities. Then a furniture project was born, Furniture Link providing secondhand furniture and work experience opportunities. No longer was this simply a homeless day centre and so the name changed to NOAH - New Opportunities and Horizons

NOAH now operates across Luton from three sites.



Noah the plan

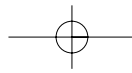
Holistic: Looking at the whole system rather than just concentrating on individual components. The overall sum can be greater than a simple totalling of the individual parts, because the 'system' adds something extra.

If you had to come up with a plan to help people who were not just socially excluded, but at rock bottom, where would you start?

NOAH begins by providing the very basics; food, healthcare and clothing. But the welfare centre means so much more to those who visit. It is a place of safety and provides people with the chance to sort out their housing needs and it offers a structure to peoples' days. It is a place

where, in time, people feel they belong; it is their club and a place to find friendship.

Soon, people who visit the centre begin to place their trust in the staff and volunteers, and also show a desire to grow. For this reason, NOAH has developed a range of training and employment opportunities and finally a way that those who entered the door when they were at rock bottom can start to give something back.



Noah welfare

19,000 lunches

5,000 breakfasts

1,000 medicals

11,000 items of clothing changed hands

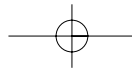
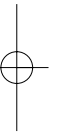
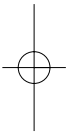
9,000 appointments with benefits and resettlement advice

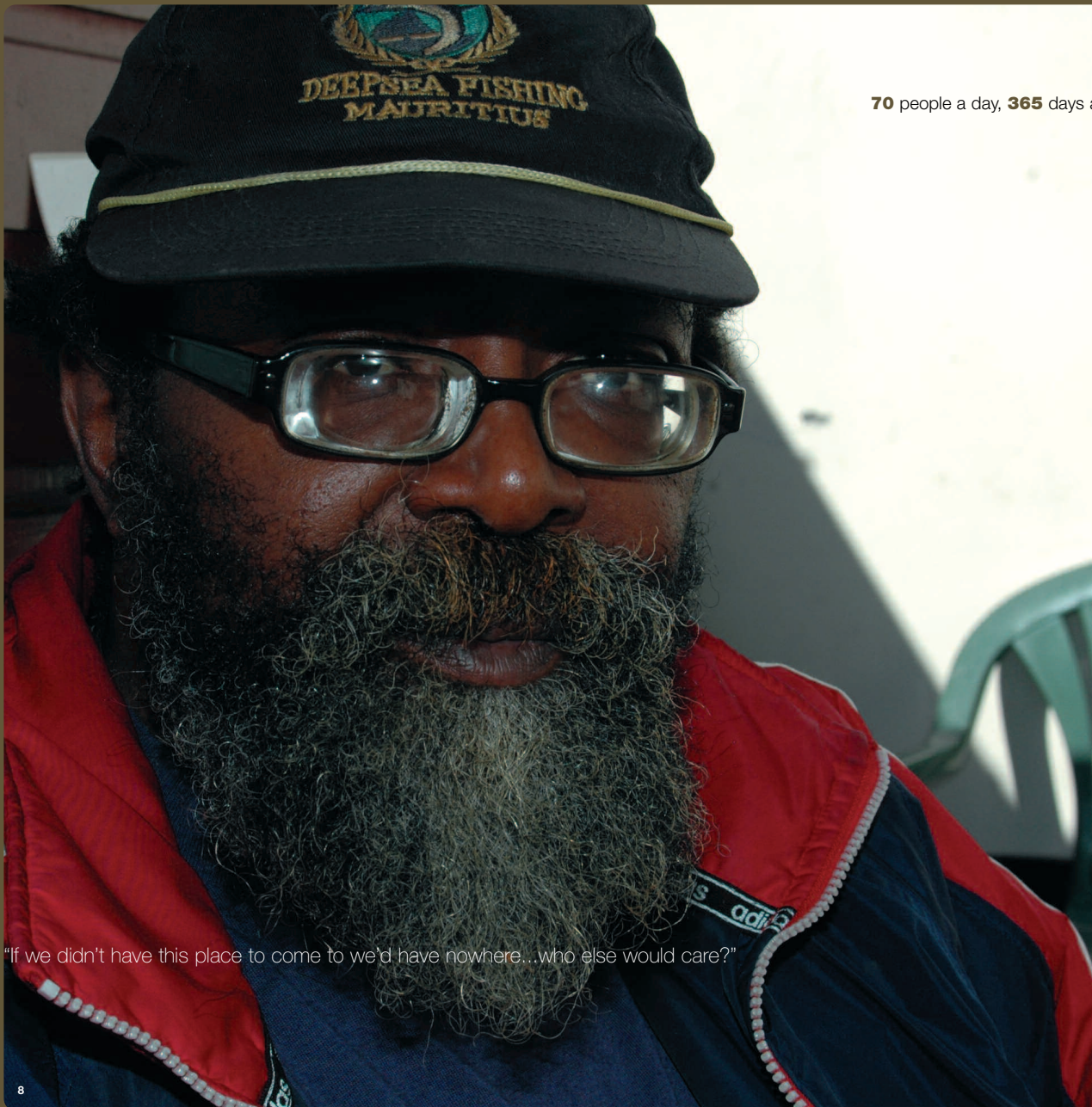
200 volunteers gave 10,000 hours

Open 365 days a year

8.15 - 15.45 weekdays

13.00 - 14.30 weekends





"If we didn't have this place to come to we'd have nowhere...who else would care?"

Noah welfare

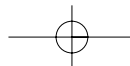
70 people a day, 365 days a year. Sister Bridie Dowd runs the Day Centre with a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. She introduces me to people in the day room and there is an air of respect for her and all the staff. In fact I have to say, it's all very much calmer than I expected. A couple are playing dominos on the table, someone is catching up on their sleep and all around the room people are engaged in conversation.

"I've had it bad, but you look around you and see someone who has had it worse," Peter tells me. He's an alcoholic who admits he hasn't got it together. "I see the guys sleeping in the Park, I think they've stopped feeling anything. Certainly they are unaware of where they are." Peter goes on to tell me that he's had 35 addresses in the past 20 years. Why? "When I was little I was bullied at school. I'd come home and the back door was locked because my Mum was suicidal, she'd have her head in the oven. I just used to crawl under some shelter, anywhere to get out of the rain and wait. It just never got any better."

I ask about the centre. "Somehow we all get here. If we didn't have this place to come to we'd have nowhere. Where else can you get breakfast for 40p, lunch for 70p. Where else are they open to you every day of the year and who else would care?"

The welfare centre is more than just a canteen. Huddled around a small courtyard is a collection of makeshift buildings, portacabins, and prefabs. There's a medical centre in one portacabin where GPs, nurses and chiropodists get to help people who otherwise would not access healthcare of any sort. On Mondays the mobile dentist parks up. Next door is the workshop, for painting, music and creative arts. There's a clothes store and laundry, and back past the canteen are showers and a day room. In small offices off to the side people wait for help in finding accommodation.

The GP has just seen his last patient and has 5 minutes free. I go and ask why it is so important for him to come here. "This group mainly don't have a GP. They've been struck off the list because they have lost their homes. If we didn't come here they wouldn't get the help they so badly need. Our role is to pick up the pieces and start to register them. The biggest problem we deal with is alcoholism, but with time and patience we have seen some dramatic changes. We start just treating the symptoms and then, in time, someone will start to consider their situation and can start rehab." So why does he come back each week. "Professionally, I was asked to help by another doctor in my surgery and have just kept coming. This is an area of medicine you don't normally see and it interests me. Most of all it is a friendly place."



Noah resettlement & outreach



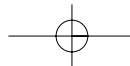
Back in the courtyard I see Jimmy who I'd chatted to in the canteen earlier. "I've been homeless for 10 months then Tina found me a flat last week." (Tina runs the resettlement programme and always has a queue at her door!) Jimmy is visibly excited and proud as he shows me his front door key. I asked about how he had become homeless in the first place. Jimmy had a flat on an estate but the door was broken down and some people started to use his flat for taking drugs. When the door was replaced they just broke it down again and he had no control of the situation. He just felt he had no option and walked away from his home.

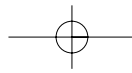
There were many other difficult stories of the past, but that's just the background as to why people come to NOAH Enterprise. Once here a different picture emerges. There is hope and although the situations are desperate they are not hopeless. This is a charity that believes in second chances and third chances and fourth... They just won't give up and have created an atmosphere of support, companionship and understanding.

Part of the work is what is called 'Outreach'. In a back room I met up with Ruth and Pippa, two of the outreach workers, to find out about their work. Tony, the third member of the team, is out

on a visit. "Our role is to visit people who are struggling in their own homes and to be their lifeline." It turns out this includes everything from helping people to plan their bills and arranging to see a doctor, through to very basic hygiene! These are people whose social and family networks have been shattered, quite often through alcohol, drugs and misunderstanding, but shutting a door so you don't see the problem solves nothing. I think of the start of Star Trek - to boldly go... and that's exactly what the outreach team do. They will work with someone on a one-to-one basis until they can stand on their own. They tell me of a lady they have seen recently who was referred as agoraphobic and alcoholic, afraid to go out. But no one had actually sat down talked and listened to her. By spending some time it soon became apparent that she was severely short sighted, a pair of glasses and some care and soon she was up and about! I am struck by the care, compassion and sheer determination of these two. They don't just go the extra mile, that would be too easy. The person you or I may walk past in the park, lying on the ground unconscious, covered in excrement, is the person they will pick up and drive to the centre, clean them up and give them a hot meal.

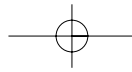
This is a charity that believes in second chances and third chances and fourth... They just won't give up and have created an atmosphere of support, companionship and understanding.





Noah furniture link

'Some people call this meaningful occupation. We call it living'





Noah furniture link

What happens once someone is back up on their feet? Most have been long term unemployed, and although on the road to recovery, I doubt that too many employers would have the time for them. NOAH Enterprise has come up with another answer. Down the road is a large warehouse with the NOAH Enterprise logo shining out. It's called Furniture Link. In a nutshell, they started by taking donated furniture and re-selling it. Now it's a thriving business that has branched out into also selling cheap new beds, recycled white goods, clearing offices and hotels that are to be refurbished. It's staffed by people who started off at the day-centre! That responsibility has helped

many get back to feeling confident enough to go on to paid employment. But whilst they work at Furniture Link on a voluntary basis, don't get the wrong idea. I can think of many businesses that are crying out for people with the dedication and care of this workforce.

Andy and Benny put down a sofa they are moving to chat to me. They are rightly proud of the fact that they have been working here for many years. "We take the new guys under our wing, show them the ropes. It's important they behave well. We go into peoples homes to remove furniture – you have to have respect. Sometimes we have to take our shoes off at the front door!" Today they

have to arrange 8 collections and 5 deliveries around town. Wardrobes, cabinets, beds and bookcases wait in the loading bay for one of the two vans to return. I also met a lady who was helping out as a volunteer, not someone from the welfare centre, but a customer who came to Furniture Link regularly to make purchases. She told me how she had just lost her partner and had donated items back to Furniture Link and asked if she could be of any other help. For her, the fact that she can come and volunteer is helping her in a painful time of her life. It's just another way that NOAH Enterprise is influencing and becoming an important part of this community.

In the office, Denise is busily arranging the logistics of the business. She is long-term unemployed and gaining new skills through the New Deal programme.

Mick, one of the staff team of three, remembers the time when Furniture Link started in one of the sheds behind the welfare centre. They soon outgrew that home and after a series of moves they now have two thriving floors of a warehouse, each the size of a football pitch! Mick is yet another person who came to volunteer 10 years ago for a month and couldn't leave.



Noah training

My final stop is at the shop and training centre a couple of miles away. Mary is making furniture to order in the workshop. She came here three years ago as a single mum who felt stuck at home and liked the idea of learning woodwork skills. "I loved the place the moment I walked in. I initially signed up for [NVQ] level 1, but stayed on and got levels 2 and 3. After that I was offered a job, I did up the shop and now am making pine furniture to order."

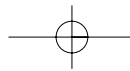
Mary's workshop has a huge window onto the high street. It reminds me of a recent trip to Morocco where you could stand and watch the craftsmen at work. "People stop and watch, then knock on the window or come round the back and ask if I can make this or that." She's currently building a welsh dresser to order; drawers with dovetail joints, built to fit exactly into the customer's kitchen. "I recently was asked to make a teak dining table out of old lab worktops from a school. I only finished it last week - it was beautiful."

Luke is helping Mary out. "I was kicked out of school" I can hardly believe this guy could cause trouble but he assures me he deserved it! "But here I love it. It's hands on and I'm now working for my level 3. The reason this is different is that I am treated with respect but, more than that, if I have a problem I know I can share it with people

who are concerned. I have a purpose here." So much so that he's volunteering through what would normally be his summer holidays.

In the main workshop 20 people are in week one of NVQ level 1 in woodworking. The first task is a mortice and tenon joint. The students range in age from 15 to 84. There is an overwhelming atmosphere of contentment and deep concentration. This is a place where people want to be - where they are choosing to learn and engage and the results speak for themselves. When I come back three days later the numbers have grown. I ask Paul Robson, the manager of both the training and Furniture Link, about the popularity of the course. "The pass rates are, on average, over 90% across OCN and NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3, and the retention rate is around 80%." These statistics are more than double, almost triple the national average. We go upstairs to see further training rooms for basic skills, furniture restoration and basic food hygiene.

As I leave I pop into the charity shop below, bustling with customers. I realise that this is a charity that makes a real impact, it is community based and has great ambitions. This shop and the Furniture Link store both make a profit. That money goes straight back into the work of helping the most disadvantaged in the community



Noah the future



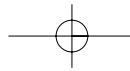
Is it surprising that some people are cautious about this work and the clients? Not when we live in an age when we are so busy that when I ask friends how they are they say, "I'm tired" or "I'm so busy". Not having time leads to having to make quick decisions, quick judgements that don't allow us time to understand or see beneath an outer façade. The façade of NOAH Enterprise isn't pretty. Some of the clientele can be difficult and argumentative. The buildings are, to be polite, tired, to be blunt, well past their sell by date. But open the door and you find a hive of activity – something happening around every corner and stories of hope and change. This is a charity that we need in our community because they have the time to deal with situations that you or I can't deal with.

Over the road from the shop and training centre is a disused car park. NOAH Enterprise is ambitious and has plans for it, to be a beacon of hope and change. Jim O'Connor is the Chief Executive of NOAH Enterprise and wants a building where the work can expand, where the environment is designed to help people change. "If you brought all of the activities under one roof and could also offer accommodation, you would

have a truly holistic service. We have a great partnership with Luton Borough Council and they have offered us this land. Our challenge is to raise the funds for the building."

Jim is a determined, compassionate man with a vision. "We see people others talk about helping but have trouble accessing. The thing that attracts our partners to our work is that this group that many say are hard to reach, come here out of choice. Whether it's the local NHS Trust, the PCT or training providers like Dunstable College, they all know that NOAH Enterprise gives them access to a group they want and need to reach. The next 18 months will be challenging; every day can be challenging but isn't that usually the case when striving for something that is so very worthwhile and valuable. And it is so encouraging to have committed and capable staff and volunteers, and the active, positive support of local statutory and other voluntary agencies. We do not walk the road alone."

This is a charity that we need in our community because they have the time to deal with situations that you or I can't deal with.





A letter from one of the clients

Dear NOAH

Since I went into hospital (not for the first time) due to alcohol abuse, my life has changed. When I was in hospital, Ruth, Tony and Pippa came and visited me and changed my views on the future. I was going nowhere and alcohol seemed the answer, but now thanks to NOAH things seem too good to be true at times... without the drink and with regular talks with Pippa and Mary my negativity to life has turned around and although I'm living day to day I know with all your help I feel more assured.

You are like a second family, one that doesn't judge me. Without you I could be dead now and although it's taken time everything seems to be coming together. Tina's helping get my housing and income support sorted out. Everything comes to those who wait, and she's spent hours sorting it out when others would have given up. We are all good at something but finding what it is is difficult.

Pippa is also like a big sister to look up to. Normally I just ignore what people say but this is different because it's not like school when you were just told. We sit down and discuss certain

options that I could take and then it's my choice... always knowing if I do make the wrong choice she'll back me up and we can talk... 24/7 within reason.

When I first came to NOAH it was like going into a different country, not knowing what to expect. Fear of meeting new people but you meet new friends and discuss problems and without knowing we help each other out. I knew where the day centre was before and like most people, thought it's where you just get food. However, there are various things to do like music lessons, computer courses, discussion meetings... but unless you come to NOAH you wouldn't know about what NOAH offers. The general public thinks it's a horrible place where drunks and alcoholics go, but they couldn't be more wrong. As it says N.O.A.H. - New Opportunities and Horizons. It's here for everyone and should be acclaimed not despised by the outsiders looking in.

Thanks for everything.

G J.

Noah financial statements

Summarised accounts for the year ended 31 March 2004
Statement of financial activities for the year ending 31 March 2004

	2004	2003
	£	£
Incoming resources		
Donations & grants	388,845	344,887
Legacies	9,780	10,000
Shop and Day Centre takings	158,824	73,768
Other income	3,662	3,717
Activities for generating funds	-	3,196
Interest received	2,778	1,857
Total incoming resources	563,889	437,425
Resources expended		
Costs of generating funds	9,810	23,082
Costs of activities in furtherance of charity's objects		
Welfare facilities	265,886	200,498
Training facilities	51,908	57,995
Work experience	132,180	78,908
	449,974	337,401
Resources expended on:		
Management and administration	25,824	24,995
Total resources expended	485,608	385,478
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	78,281	51,947
Transfer between funds	-	-
Net movement in funds	78,281	51,947
Funds at 1 April 2003	136,643	84,696
Resources available at 31 March 2004	214,924	136,643
Balance sheet 31 March 2004		
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	40,739	70,309
Current assets		
Stocks	7,515	-
Debtors	10,364	31,914
Cash at bank and in hand	196,738	66,692
	214,617	98,606
Creditors: amount falling due within one year	40,432	32,272
Net current assets	174,185	66,334
	214,924	136,643
Funds		
Unrestricted funds	155,394	61,732
Restricted funds	59,530	74,911
	214,924	136,643

Auditors' statement to the Council of Management of NOAH Enterprise.

We have examined the financial statements set out on this page. Respective responsibilities of the Council of Management of NOAH Enterprise. You are responsible for the preparation of the summarised financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised statements' consistency with the full financial statements, on which we reported to you on 27 October 2004.

Basis of opinion
We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain

whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion
In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2004 and its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year ended, and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985.

MACINTYRE HUDSON Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
27 October 2004

How you can help

Donations

You can make a donation at any time by calling 01582 728416. Alternatively use the donation form in this report. If you pay UK Tax your gift can be worth so much more. Simply tick the gift aid box and we can reclaim the tax you have already paid making a donation of, for example, £100 worth £126 to us.

Volunteering

The time and effort people contribute through volunteering at NOAH ENTERPRISE is invaluable to the running of the charity. If you are interested in becoming involved in this way please contact Janet on 01582 728416 and she will be delighted to send out further information.

Gifts of furniture, clothes, food etc

Businesses and individuals alike support our work through gifts in kind. We are always looking for good quality new and second-hand clothes, good quality furniture, white goods, unperishable food, towels, blankets and toiletries.

Legacies

If you are thinking of writing or changing your will, we have a simple leaflet that outlines some basic facts to assist you.

Events

Perhaps you belong to a group that could carry out an event on our behalf? If you would like ideas or want to let us know of an event you are running to raise money for the charity please do not hesitate to contact Stella on 01582 728416. She would be delighted to hear from you.

What our supporters say:

Luton tPCT

We have a long association with NOAH, a charity we are delighted to support. They care for those who have fallen through every net, and do it in a caring and constructive way, not only by providing food and clothing, but also education and work experience.

Luton Borough Council

NOAH has a unique approach to combining training, welfare and work opportunities to provide positive support and help some of the most disadvantaged people in the community.

Community NHS Trust

NOAH is a key provider of an important part of the Social Service programme in Luton. They reach people whom we cannot, and help them to become contributors to the local community.



Our thoughts and prayers are with those who passed away in 2003 and 2004

Bob Smiley - January 2003
 Pat Foley - February 2003
 Dave Bannard - March 2004
 John Neal - March 2004

William Hair - May 2003
 Jane Wilson - September 2004
 Mary Dingley - October 2003

May they rest in peace

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who supported us in so many ways last year. You helped us to help more people than ever before. We hope you can continue and you are always welcome down to the centre, Furniture Link and in our store in High Town.



“DON’T JUDGE, RATHER UNDERSTAND”



**NOAH
ENTERPRISE**

www.noahenterprise.org

NOAH Enterprise 141 Park Street, Luton LU1 3HG Telephone: 01582 728416 Fax 01582 486757
Training Services 11-15 High Town, Luton LU2 0BW Telephone: 01582 736751 Fax 01582 877024
Furniture Link Telephone: 01582 484001

Reg No: 3248392 Charity Registration No: 1059672

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