

## **Report to the BCC Chairman and Committee on the use made of their July Grant of € 2000 by the British Charitable Fund, Paris.**

### 1. Basis for the Grant

The grant was made with the objective of funding efforts by BCC member associations to assist British Nationals with problems arising from the Brexit effect on their rights, and their need to register in France, or from serious, life-changing issues such as loss of a partner, serious illness or a change in circumstances due to the Covid virus.

### 2. Confirmation of the BCF activity, through its French association, as presented in its application

With the majority of its beneficiaries based in the rural areas of France, we are glad to advise that the direct incidence of the Covid virus on the health of these beneficiaries has been rare. We have no knowledge of any of them losing their partner or a loved one. The most extreme Covid linked case we have been helping is a person whose social life and source of income (musical performances) were destroyed by the virus, and who caught it herself, with long-term health complications. Otherwise, it is primarily by the elimination of casual work linked to events, exhibitions, visitable buildings or gardening for aging clients, that the Covid effect has been felt. In the three months August to October, the association BCF in France has spent over € 74K on supporting the least fortunate in our community, working side by side with the Consular structure in a number of recent cases. Part of that sum is helping to compensate for losses of income. It is worth noting that over a third of all the cases we support have been affected significantly by illnesses other than Covid.

Since the Brexit decision, the welfare trustees of the association have been actively explaining to beneficiaries the effect it has on their situations, and the obligation they would have to register with the French authorities. Now that the registration process is in execution, they have been referring them to the French government registration website and feeding back to the Consulate any problems encountered. The most difficult situations seem to concern those who have no access to the internet at home.

### 3. Appreciation expressed by our Beneficiaries

Mobility is essential to the beneficiaries who live far from commercial centres. For an aging couple, faced with the need to replace a car, BCF support was: "wonderful indeed". For a husband, looking after his wife who is suffering from progressive dementia, "Your help has meant an enormous amount to my wife and myself at this incredibly difficult time in our lives". From a couple, who can normally just make ends meet but who needed help to buy a tank of fuel to get through the winter: "Thank you and all at BCF for your contribution towards our heating needs this winter .... We will be able ... to purchase all our fuel needs for next year." (The trustee concerned had advised them how to budget for those costs.) From a lady who, having lost her husband this summer, and being forced by the Covid restrictions to be alone at his funeral, lost her mother in the UK weeks later, and was for the same reason unable to attend her mother's funeral: " I will never forget the kindness and caring from you all."

From a mother, nursing her husband whose cardiac weakness is likely to be terminal, trying to maintain the morale of her 15-year old son and to manage a household on pension and allowance income totalling less than € 800/month, when she had heard that the BCF would handle a worrying outstanding bill: "Oh my goodness, thank you. I am overjoyed." At an earlier date, with reference to the BCF trustee handling her case: "(the trustee) has been an absolute blessing to me, my husband and son. ... As a family, we are in the best position we can be in our current circumstances, and mostly it is due to you and your team for helping me find a balance and financial stability. Many, many thanks". Finally, from a man whose long-term sickness, and a severe divorce, have left him with no savings and a daily battle to meet his bills, on receipt of a grant: "Oh my God, thank you all so much. That hole is less deep. I think I can breathe again."

### 4. Our gratitude

The Welfare team of BCF in France spends long hours to help those in need; of them, many struggle to face the complexity of their environment. All are under great pressure, often from both weak health and fragile finances. The grant from the BCC has allowed the BCF to meet some of their needs; it is deeply appreciated. The generosity of the British Community in France is essential to the continuation of the BCF's activity.