

Medway Asthma Self-Help Annual Report 2020–2021



Registered charity number: 1058749

Medway Asthma Self-Help (MASH)

Established twenty-five years ago, MASH aims to support people and families affected by asthma through the provision of support and information relating to the causes of asthma and its effective treatment, and by raising awareness of asthma in the general community of Medway.

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Acknowledgements

MASH is very fortunate to be supported by many people and organisations this year. A number of them are acknowledged below.

Cllr Clive Johnson	Coop Local Community Fund	Nucleus Arts
Dr Martin Farebrother	Coop Stores throughout Medway and in particular:	Radio Sunlight
Judith Pender	Canterbury Street	RG Hills Charitable Trust
Prof John Dickinson	Gillingham Rd	Roko Health Club
Maggie Cane	Medway City Estate	Sewing Together
Julie Millett	Hempstead	Spensley's Pharmacy, Twydall
Bridget Nightingale	East Medway University of the Third Age (U3A)	St Augustine's Gillingham
Diana Smith	easyfundraising®	Tesco Bags COVID Fund
Carole Coulthard	ExperienceDays.co.uk	Tesco Extra Gillingham
Fiona Pender	Faversham Golf Club	The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
Michael Turner	Gillingham Football Club	The Colyer Fergusson Trust
Julie Critcher	Gillingham Street Angels	The Fenn Bell Inn
Wendy Palmer	GK Union	Conservation Project
Sean Hanna	Greggs	The Gulbenkian
Asha Saroy	Healthwatch Medway	The Halpern Charitable Trust
Laura Wren	Holland and Barrett	The Mason Mile
Nicki Giorgini	Gillingham	The Mount Trust
T Balderston	Hempstead Valley	The National Lottery (TNL) Community Fund
VG Deamer Smith	Hospital Radio Medway	The Net Magazine
Chris Harvey	In Kind Direct	The Paramount Foundation
Chris and Christine Rogers	It's The Biz, Medway	Universal Stores, Lower Stoke
Dorte Gilry	Kent Community Foundation (KCF)	University of Kent
Heather Henry	KM Charity Team	University of Kent School of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Cllr Sijuwade Adeoye	Medway CCG	Upper Gillingham
Cllr Nick Bowler	Medway Community Healthcare	Conservative Club
Cllr Hazel Brown	Medway Corporate Giving Fund	Watling Street Post Office
Cllr Gary Etheridge	Medway Council	wHoo Cares
Cllr Harinder Mahil	Medway Foodbank	
Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Messenger	
Cllr Dan McDonald	Medway Park	
Cllr Chrissy Stamp	Medway Pride	
Cllr John Williams	Medway Pride Radio	
A Better Medway	Medway Voluntary Action	
AMAT, Medway	Mid Kent College	
Amazon Smile	Neighbourly	
ASDA Chatham		
Bedfont Scientific Ltd		
British Lung Foundation		
Canva		
CAF Covid Emergency Fund		

Chairperson's Report

As I write this Chair's report for MASH's AGM, we are coming to terms with the sad news of the death of Nick Bowler. Nick was our Chair of Trustees for over ten years. He was absolutely committed to the work of our charity and passionate about the vital work that we do for Medway's community. He was in poor health for a number of years with a lung condition and was on the waiting list for a lung transplant. His death will leave a huge void in Medway, for the community he represented in Rochester as a Medway councillor and in the lives of all who knew him. Our thoughts are with Sandra, his partner, his family, his many friends and his colleagues.

I wrote last year that the year had been strange for us all. I think that description can be applied for the past year too. We hope that you and your family, friends and colleagues have stayed safe and well. Thanks to the hard work of Angela, MASH's coordinator, and Julie, our specialist asthma nurse, we have not only been able to maintain our services but have been able to start to resume our vital work in the real world. We have restarted our outreach services, giving much-needed information and support to our communities. We also have plans to restart our face-to-face clinics in the near future. This is a positive move, though we would like to keep some online working where that is beneficial.

Another notable feature of 2021 is that it is MASH's twenty-fifth anniversary. It is a real tribute to all those who have worked so hard over the years, from the original trustees – including Judith, who is still our current treasurer – Bridget and Julie, our asthma nurses from the start, and all our past and current volunteers and staff members, that we are still going strong. We marked this special year with our MASH 25 Challenge.

At last year's AGM, we decided to apply to become a CIO. The work on that has taken some time and we hope our application will soon be approved. I will report at this year's AGM on some of the issues that were raised last year.

I pay tribute to our trustees, John, our Vice-Chair, Judith, our Treasurer, Martin and Maggie, who have continued to meet fortnightly throughout the past year. Regular meetings have been vital to ensure that we are all kept up-to-date and we can make the decisions we need to promptly. The next few years will continue to be uncertain and potentially difficult for small charities and we will continue to work hard to ensure MASH benefits Medway as it has done for so many years. That work is only possible because of our trustees giving so freely of their time and expertise.

On that note, our former Vice-Chair, Martin, is stepping down as a trustee at the AGM. Martin has been a trustee for a number of years, has contributed enormously to our work, both with his meticulous and detailed approach to our business, and his medical knowledge as a former respiratory specialist. We all thank Martin for his work with MASH and wish him well for the future.

I am honoured to be Chair of Trustees of MASH which is a great charity supporting the people of Medway.

Clive Johnson
Chair of Trustees

Could you be a MASH trustee?

We are seeking to expand and strengthen our trustee board to help us to continue to support people and families affected by asthma in Medway.

We are looking to expand the board with a range of skills and experience, including (but not limited to):

- People with asthma
- People who care for or work with people with asthma
- Human resources experience
- Accountancy experience
- Media experience



If you could give a few hours each month to support your local asthma charity, then please get in touch to discuss: medwayasthmaselfhelp@btconnect.com or call 01634 855844.

**Support
Medway Asthma Self
Help Group**

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Raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online.

Over **4,000** shops and sites will donate!



In Memory of Nick Bowler



Nick Bowler, former
MASH Chair of Trustees

It is with great sadness that we learnt of the death of our long-time supporter, Cllr Nick Bowler. Nick first supported MASH in 2003–4 when he chose us as one of his Mayor’s Charities during his time as Mayor of Medway. Subsequently, he attended our AGM and became Chairman of trustees, a post that he held for over ten years. In Nick's words, when he stood down as chair due to health reasons:

‘Who can believe 14 years have passed since I came to a meeting of this excellent charity while I was Mayor. Within a few months, I became Chair, thought maybe I’d do a couple of years. ... I’m sure MASH will continue for many years and I will always be a supporter.’

Nick always enthusiastically supported our efforts to help people with asthma, and their families and carers. He always kept order at our regular quiz nights and enjoyed our online events in 2020. He will be missed and remembered by the trustees, past and present employees, and all his friends at MASH:

Asha Saroy, former MASH Chair of Trustees wrote: ‘A great guy who supported [MASH], who supported me like anything to take over as Chair of MASH after him. A man who spoke his mind, with a great voice on Planning at [Medway Council]. Sending sincere condolences to his friends and family.’

Bridget Nightingale, former MASH Chair of Trustees wrote: ‘Very grateful for all the support and encouragement Nick gave to MASH for some years and to me personally. He will be greatly missed.’

Clive Johnson, MASH’s current Chair of Trustees said: ‘Nick was a great friend and a passionate advocate... His death is a tragedy because he had so much more to give.’

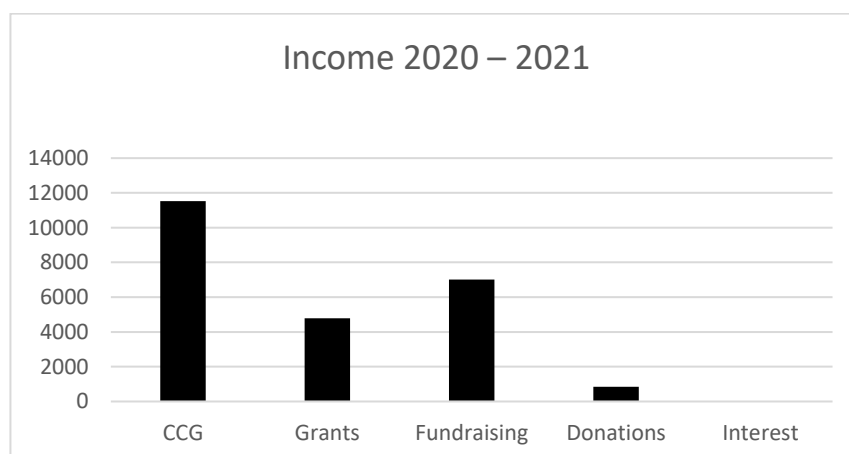
Thank you for everything you did for MASH, Nick. Your commitment and infectious enthusiasm for the charity and its work have ensured that we continue to support people and families affected by asthma in Medway. You will be missed.

Judith Pender
MASH Trustee & Treasurer

Treasurer's Report 2020–2021

At the end of September 2021, MASH has £49,250 in available funds; £48,122 was carried over from last year, which means that in 2020-2021 a slight surplus was accrued. Of the funds available, £5,041 is held in reserve and £8,629 is restricted funds to complete projects held over from before the pandemic.

The total income for 2020–2021 was £24,183. The sources of income are shown in the table below. MASH is grateful for continuing support from the CCG who contributed the largest proportion of income this year. Fundraising had to be rethought because there was no opportunity for face-to-face meetings. However, our supporters, volunteers and trustees rose to the challenge with online quizzes, sponsored events and auctions taking place over the year. Funds were also obtained from Medway Councillors remembering us in their Ward Fund allocations, plus grants as documented in the full accounts.

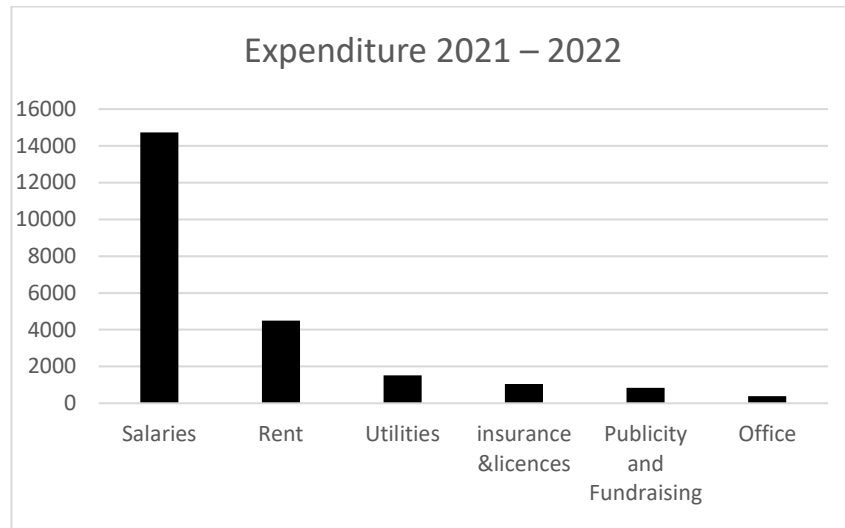


We continue to get donations from individuals who arrange to pay us a small monthly contribution or give us a one-off amount. Included in the fundraising is also money raised by supporters remembering us when they shop online, using either:

- Give as you Live (www.giveasyoulive.com),
- easyfundraising (<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/medwayasthma/>)
- Amazon Smile (<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1058749-0>)

Interest on the savings accounts was negligible this year.

This year MASH had a total expenditure of £23,055. The way in which the money was spent is detailed in the table below and in the accounts. The main expenses of salaries and items related to the MASH premises reflect the continuation of staff working to provide a service by telephone and to maintain the premises until MASH can reopen fully.



This short report is supported by more detail in the accounts.

I would like to thank all the individuals who have continued to support MASH and especially to the independent examiner, Mr C. Harvey, for all the help he has given towards the preparation of the accounts and the advice he has given.

Judith Pender
MASH Treasurer

We are grateful to the following organisations who have supported our work with grants.



In partnership with
**THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
 COMMUNITY FUND**



Volunteering with MASH

MASH volunteers are an essential part of our charity. They support our clinics, outreach, fundraising events, and help us in the office. If you could spare MASH a few hours – every now and then, or even every week – then please get in touch.

If you have an outreach or fundraising idea then we would also love to hear from you.

We are pleased to be part of the Medway Time Credits scheme, which allows volunteers to earn Time Credits for their time contributed to MASH. These can then be spent on accessing activities across a national network, as well as within Medway.

You can email us on medwayasthmaselfhelp@btconnect.com or call us on 01634 855844 to find out more.

Could you help keep MASH afloat?

Could you make a small monthly donation? If you feel you are able to help, no matter how modestly, please let us know.

You can email us on medwayasthmaselfhelp@btconnect.com, call us on 01634 855844, pick up a form from reception at the Medway Asthma Centre at 131 Watling Street, or you can visit our website for more information www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk.

Thank you!

Are you shopping online?

You can help Medway Asthma Self-Help raise free funds when you shop online via the easyfundraising website/app or when using Amazon at smile.amazon.co.uk

Please support us at no cost to you and get a donation from thousands of retailers direct to us by registering your support at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/medwayasthma/
www.smile.amazon.co.uk

Fancy doing a sponsored event?

We would love to hear from anyone who might be interested in taking part in some challenge/sponsored events including walks, runs, swims, cycling, abseils, team-based assault courses, dragon boat racing. Please contact us for more details.

Thank You

Clinic Report 2021

Since last year's clinic report, we have continued to conduct asthma clinics by telephone. Whilst, we had hoped to have been back seeing patients face to face by now, the logistics of getting adequate ventilation into the clinic room at the MASH building has proved challenging, both in cost and practical terms, and has meant this hasn't yet been possible. We do, however, have plans to start clinics at Medway Park Sports Centre very soon and we thank Prof. John Dickinson, the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences at The University of Kent and Medway Park in making that possible. Hopefully it won't be too long before we can return to clinics at our MASH building too.

Despite all the difficulties of the past year, our telephone asthma clinics have remained extremely busy with clinics being at capacity most weeks. With the extra pressures on GPs and local asthma services, we have been able to continue to help clients in all aspects of asthma care, advising health professionals and supporting clients, and in self-management of asthma.

Surprisingly, even without being able to use diagnostics tools such as spirometry, FeNO testing and airborne allergy testing, we have been able to continue to diagnose and monitor asthma through the use of peak flow meters at home, and the probability of asthma and the trial of treatments.

Interestingly, a few weeks back I spoke to a client who reminded me that I had spoken to them nearly twenty years before in an asthma clinic at MASH. They told me that I had picked up on a problem they had been having with using their inhaler but, following some advice and showing the correct inhaler technique, they had subsequently had good asthma control ever since. This example shows how it is often the simple advice that can make to the all difference between good and bad asthma control.

Julie Millest
Asthma Nurse



Are you using your reliever inhaler (usually blue) three or more times a week?

It's a sign that your asthma is not under control – you should book an asthma review.



Call 01634 855844 or email medwayasthmaselfhelp@btconnect.com
www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk/contact-us/

Clinic Feedback

What our clients have to say this year...

I have been struggling with my breathing for several months. ... I was very upset and scared by the time I rang MASH. But I immediately felt like I was in safe hands. ... I'm so grateful, not just for her professionalism and expertise, but the comforting reassurance that we would get there.

I was overwhelmed by the help and support I received from MASH.

Swift, extremely efficient and professional. Extremely knowledgeable and understanding. Such a relief to be in the hands of someone who was calm, reassuring and knew what they were talking about.

I felt listened to and really supported.

I now rarely use my (blue) reliever inhaler.

I'm not in a blind panic as before, I know I can count on sound advice and that makes a huge difference in how I view things. I just feel so much more in control, rather than feeling like I am floundering! Grateful thanks.

Really happy with the help and advice we received for my son. We now have an asthma plan and know triggers. Julie was really kind and caring and went out of her way to help me.

Very assuring and helpful.

MASH is an amazing resource and I would recommend it to anyone suffering from asthma.

I thought I was pretty good, but my asthma is much better now.

Coordinator's Report

MASH is now 25! What an amazing achievement! Yet, despite our celebrations, it has been another year of restrictions and changes, not only for MASH and its work but for everyone, including those with asthma. MASH has continued to work hard to support its community throughout these changes, signposting to the information that people needed regarding concerns about asthma and covid, vaccines and more, and continuing with telephone advice appointments with our asthma nurse, Julie. Exactly what MASH was set up to do!

We have also continued to offer support online, including Zoom coffee mornings with parents via schools and an online pamper evening. More recently, this summer, we have begun to get back out into the community with our asthma outreach stand. It was so nice to be chatting to people face-to-face again at the events that we attended, including The Mason Mile's Summer Extravaganza, The Sticks and Stones Festival, and Medway Fun Palace and its subsequent exhibition. Deano, our mascot, also finally made a post-lockdown reappearance at the Medway Mile this summer, showing a lot of cheeky attitude and getting into a fight with a large cigarette!



Maggie, MASH trustee, at outreach.



Our cheeky Deano, MASH's mascot, at the Medway Mile.

Not being able to be out and about in the community has also made it difficult to reach certain demographics in Medway that need our support. After all, not everyone has online access or wants to use social media. A particular focus this past year has been ensuring that we are using other methods of contact. For instance, writing articles for newsletters and continuing to produce our own. We are very grateful to Medway Council and the Halpern Charitable Foundation for helping us reach over 15,000 of Medway's vulnerable households with their Nucleus Social magazines (<https://www.nucleusarts.com/nucleus-social-magazine>). In addition, we now have new adverts on many local community radio stations.

Fundraising events have continued to prove tricky face-to-face, but our monthly online quiz nights continued until the summer. We held our first online silent auction, with some amazing prizes kindly donated, and we had

some great support for our virtual MASH 25 challenge to celebrate our 25th birthday, including a series of 25 hairstyles from our very brave Chair of Trustees, Clive. You can see them all in the gallery on our website: <https://www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk/25th-birthday-2021/>.

MASH has also spent time this year asking Medway people with asthma what they need and how we can help them further. This led to a piece of work in collaboration with Healthwatch Medway, where Medway residents told us via online questionnaire and/or an online workshop how asthma affects them and what could be done to help them. These findings resulted in a report 'Focus on Asthma' that was published online in June: <https://www.healthwatchmedway.com/report/2021-09-13/how-does-asthma-impact-your-daily-life>.

By the time you read this report, we will have restarted face-to-face advice appointments with our asthma nurse, Julie. This will be only at Medway Park to begin with, whilst some refurbishments happen at our asthma centre. We are very grateful to the University of Kent for allowing us to use this space. We are also really grateful to Medway councillors who supported our work with donations from their Ward Funds this year. We have used this to purchase an air purifier which will form a large part of us being able to reopen our asthma centre safely.

To finish off, I am really excited to tell you that MASH has been selected to receive the Shaping Medway's Health Award 2021 at the upcoming A Better Medway Awards later this month, when it will also be officially announced. This is an important recognition of the work everyone involved in the last 25 years of MASH – our volunteers, trustees, staff and supporters, past and present – has done in helping the people of Medway who are affected by asthma to live symptom free, healthier and happier lives. Congratulations everyone!

Angela Stokes
Coordinator

Notes

Medway Asthma Centre



Medway Asthma Self-Help

Registered charity number: 1058749

131 Watling Street, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 2YY

☎ 01634 855844

✉ medwayasthmaselfhelp@btconnect.com

www.medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk

Facebook: @Medway.selfhelp

Twitter: @MedwayAsthma

Office Opening Times

Monday 9.00 am – 12.00 noon

Thursday 5.00 pm – 8.00 pm (telephone only)

Friday 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

Clinic Details

A 30-minute consultation with a specialist asthma nurse on Fridays, by appointment only.