



THE
FISHERMEN'S
MISSION

Summer 2020

network

The Newsletter of The Fishermen's Mission

Caring through the **crisis**

*“I am so relieved the
Fishermen's Mission
was there for me”*

Providing a lifeline of welfare and support to fishermen and their families

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Throughout our near 140-year history the Fishermen's Mission has supported fishermen and their families across calm and stormy seas. We are uniquely placed to bring emergency help, sound advice and to be a listening ear for fishermen in need. As the effects of coronavirus continue to be felt worldwide, our presence as a trusted friend in UK fishing ports and harbours remains essential.

Winter 2020 saw a succession of violent storms which prevented fishermen going out to sea. This has been swiftly followed by the coronavirus. Markets collapsed in the Far East and Europe and prices for any fish landed fell dramatically as demand ceased overnight.

The response to the crisis from the Fishermen's Mission remains crystal clear as Ali Godfrey, Director of Business Development, tells fishermen:

"If you need us, get in touch. If you need someone to talk to, give us a call. If you know of any active or retired fishermen or their families who are struggling, send them our way."

Ali Godfrey continues,

"Working alongside the Seafarers' Advice and Information Line (SAIL) and our maritime partners we can signpost fishermen to get the best possible support. Often fishing families get in touch just to talk things through and we are always available for them."



Sandy Garvock at Peterhead gets to work on some 'pressing' matters



CREDIT: SEAFISH

Plenty of enforced time to mend the nets

The Fishermen's Mission also keeps a close watch on retired fishermen and their dependants. Andy Malcolm, Fundraising Manager for the East of England, explains:

"For many of our more senior beneficiaries the coronavirus presents challenges of self-isolation and anxiety. We have pulled together across the whole charity, making many phone calls to check all is well, offering practical help and reassurance. Simply chatting to a retired fisherman who is lonely makes a world of difference to their day."

Fishermen's Mission staff have been adjusting to working from home. Our recent investment in new technology ensured a smooth

transition, guaranteeing uninterrupted care for fishermen. Even so, some staff needed to be creative in their new office environments. Peterhead Superintendent Sandy Garvock has fashioned a desk from an Ironing board.

Sandy comments:

"I always wondered what that 'foldy up thing' stored under the stairs was! Now I know it's a portable Fishermen's Mission workstation, meaning business as usual in Peterhead!"



Fishermen's Mission East Team Zoom catch up

The coronavirus will impact our lives for months to come and there could well be unforeseen problems for fishermen to face. In these uncertain times it's reassuring to know the Fishermen's Mission remains the vital port of call for fishermen and their families in need.





Dear Friends,

I write to you today at such an extraordinary time for all of us. I hope you and your loved ones are well and healthy as we all come to terms with how life has changed through coronavirus.

Our Summer Network magazine features stories of how harsh winter storms, and then the coronavirus, has taken its toll on the fishing industry and how we have responded. You will read how we have helped fishing families across the UK, from Shetland in the north to Brixham in the south. It has been an exceptionally busy time, and our staff across the whole charity have responded magnificently in giving their all in caring for our fishermen.

One of the strengths of our work is the way we interact with our maritime partners in getting the best possible support for our fishermen and their families. This has never been truer than in times of crisis like these. Working together with trusted friends is both essential and a privilege.

I am so thankful to each and every one of you – for the support of our Fishermen's Mission family that allows our vital work to continue. We need you more than ever now. With many fundraising streams temporarily halted and the demand for our services stretched, your support has never been more important. Our fishing families are facing real hardship, not only now but long into the future. With you standing alongside us we can always be there for them. Together we can bring hope in such dark days.

Thank you for your keen interest in our work and for being part of our Fishermen's Mission family. You really do make a difference to those who need you the most.

Wishing you good health and warmest wishes,

Alison Godfrey

Director of Business Development

To donate now visit

www.fishermensmission.org.uk/summer

**Or speak to us on 0800 6341020
to make a card donation.**

**Please be assured that we are able to process
your gifts as normal. Thank you.**

Never Socially Distant

Being at the heart of UK fishing communities is a real strength of the Fishermen's Mission. Our work is based on building trusted relationships through face to face meetings on the quayside, on fishing vessels and through home visits.

In Brixham, Superintendent Helen Lovell speaks of how things have suddenly changed but also stayed the same:

"It's really tough that lockdown and social distancing means we can't be there in person when dealing with fishermen, but we are not, and never will be socially distant! Today I called a fisherman on the first anniversary of his brother's suicide. It was so important to chat with him and I am hopeful the call eased his pain on such a difficult day.



CREDIT: SEAFISH

Boats tied up at Brixham Harbour

We are very much aware of the human cost of the coronavirus. It was really sad that the recent funeral of an ex-Brixham fisherman could not happen as normal with the cortège being driven past the fish quay, but our close links with the family involved means our care continues undiminished, albeit remotely."

Helen also helps by advising callers to the Brixham Fishermen's Mission where to go for support both locally and nationally, assisting directly in emergencies, referring fishing families to foodbanks and by promoting local fish sales from smaller boats. Supported by staff across the Fishermen's Mission, another of Helen's key tasks is to check all is well with both current and retired fishermen and their families by phone, ensuring nobody in need is left to struggle alone.

Helen comments:

"The coronavirus has temporarily changed our method of working but not our method of caring - always there, always ready to listen, always ready to do the best for our fishing communities."



Helen Lovell and Albert, both are now working remotely!

Thank you for standing with us in these extraordinary times. Your gifts and prayers really do make a difference and each one is deeply appreciated.

A Praying Mission

Every Monday morning Fishermen's Mission staff start the week with a time of prayer. This has been particularly important as the coronavirus has unfolded. We pray for our fishermen and their families, for our supporters, for those working in the NHS and frontline services, for our Government and for our Fishermen's Mission family.

Thank you for your prayers for our work at this time.

*'Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done'.
Philippians 4v6*

The coronavirus has had a devastating effect on the fishermen of south east Scotland. With the collapse of the European shellfish market most boats are tied up with no income for the foreseeable future. The Fishermen's Mission at Eyemouth has seen an unprecedented rise in the number of fishermen requesting support.

In the Eye of the **Storm**

Robert, a fisherman from Port Seton, tells us how the coronavirus has affected his family: "We just about survived through a harsh winter but now the coronavirus has hit us hard. With no catch to sell, I could not support my wife and our two wee girls. My family circumstances and working arrangements meant I was not eligible for either Universal Credit or assistance from the Scottish Government Hardship Fund. It's never easy to ask for help but I'm just so relieved that the Fishermen's Mission was there for me with a listening ear, clear and practical guidance, and access to funding for times such as



Robert and girls



Claire McIntosh in a pre-coronavirus huddle



Photo © Kim Traynor (cc-by-sa/2.0)

Boats at Port Seton Harbour

these. It means the electricity and gas stay connected and there is food in the fridge."

Fishermen's Mission Eyemouth Superintendent Claire McIntosh tells us how help was found:

"On Robert's behalf I approached some of our maritime partners, the Sailors' Children's Society, the Royal Merchant Navy Education Fund and the Seafarers' Hospital Society and applied for grants. I also tapped into local sources of emergency funding. This family would be facing an extremely bleak time just trying to survive, but through their own initiative and our expert help they have hope of getting through the crisis."

Claire goes on to outline how the coronavirus has impacted her work in Eyemouth and the surrounding ports:

"My workload has increased 300% with 25-30 new cases in a short time period. For the whole of 2019 I accessed grants worth £12,000 but in the first 3 weeks of the lockdown £16,000 of emergency funding has been sourced. It's been emotionally and physically draining, with long hours in the 'home' office and many phone calls made. Our response exemplifies how the Fishermen's Mission works, caring deeply for our fishermen through building professional relationships based on trust for everyone who comes to us for support."

Robert from Port Seton can only face the future with confidence because of the support you give to the Fishermen's Mission. Please make a donation today to ensure we can be there for other fishing families in crisis.

Comfort in Extraordinary Times

Shetland Senior Superintendent Aubrey Jamieson serves a community with hundreds of active and retired fishermen and a huge culture of seafaring. Inevitably Aubrey is regularly invited to conduct funerals. These are often attended by several hundred people keen to pay their respects. Here Aubrey tells us how things have changed:

“The spread of the coronavirus and the resulting lockdown measures have affected every area of life - even how we bury our dead.

Recently I travelled to the island of Whalsay to preside at the service of a retired fisherman and his wife who died the same weekend following a happy marriage stretching 69 years. Over the years I had been in Robbie and Jackie’s house many times. I first met Jackie ten years ago in hospital and later had contact with the couple when their eldest son Robert, a whitefish skipper, sadly died very unexpectedly. They were two lovely people, a joy to visit, and always appreciative of our support. I called again recently as their health was declining and now it was my sad but honoured duty to lay them to rest.

Only essential inter-island travel is permitted during lockdown, and you must remain in your car whilst onboard the ferry. On arrival we follow the hearse to the cemetery. Today there is no church service, no crowds of people and just seven family

members present. The coffins are lowered by four pallbearers instead of the usual eight to maintain social distancing rules.

We stand apart around the grave and I lead a service of prayers, bible readings and a short tribute to the couple. It must be brief as, at 60 degrees north in March, the weather is not always kind.

Afterwards, you cannot comfort anyone with a handshake or share a cup of tea. Instead we chat briefly at the gate, the family express their appreciation, and we get into our cars and leave for the ferry journey home. It’s all a bit surreal.

The following morning, I learn of the sudden passing of another retired fisherman from the same village – someone I know well. Next week I will be doing this all again,

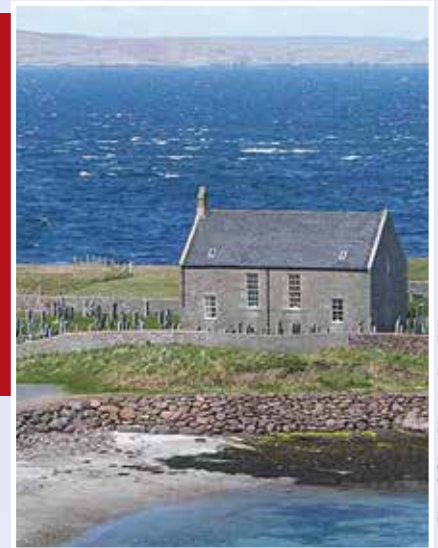


Photo © Oliver Dixon (cc-by-sa/2.0)

Whalsay Kirk

trying as best I can, to bring comfort and support to families undergoing bereavement in these unprecedented times.”

Days like these exemplify the compassionate care of the Fishermen’s Mission in our fishing communities. Please support our work to ensure Aubrey can continue to serve those who are hurting.

Sailing to Whalsay in happier times



Parcels of Kindness

Showing someone they are thought of can make a huge difference to their week. Fishermen's Mission Lowestoft Senior Superintendent Tim Jenkins joined with new and existing SeaFit partners to deliver 380 Parcels of Kindness to active and retired fishermen in lockdown. Tim comments:

"We delivered Parcels of Kindness to show that although we are not out and about, our fishermen are not forgotten. The parcels contained a range of healthy fruit and vegetables plus a few treats. It was a mammoth task covering Norfolk and Suffolk but has been very well received. One couple were overwhelmed to receive their parcel after five weeks of isolation."



Tim Jenkins and Albert from the Fishermen's Mission join Sue Jay MBE in delivering Parcels of Kindness



Sue Jay MBE filling Parcels of Kindness

The Fishermen's Mission and Seafarers' Hospital Society jointly run the SeaFit programme providing health and wellbeing services to fishermen and their families. Carol Elliott, SeaFit Programme Delivery Manager, tells us how teamwork made the initiative possible:

"Parcels of Kindness was a joint project between SeaFit and the Eastern Seafish Training Association,

but several others, including the FishWell project were key to its success. We secured funding from Seafarers UK and MTCIC. Invaluable help came from Sue Jay MBE at MTCIC and Honiston & Sapiston Village Hall in Suffolk who acted as our distribution hub. We also had wonderful volunteers assisting throughout."

Daisy & Luna say Thank You!

"We are so thankful for the help we have received from the maritime charities during this difficult time. A hard winter followed by the coronavirus has been really tough on fishermen and their families. If it wasn't for Karen and Paula at the Troon Fishermen's Mission things could have been very different."

The words of Paul, skipper of a prawn trawler in Troon. Paul lives with his wife, Hayley, and their two daughters, Daisy & Luna, who wanted to say a special thank you to the Royal Merchant Navy Education Foundation for supplying a new laptop to help with home schooling.

Paul said:

"We received the laptop in the post today! I had to contact John Lewis to find out where it had come from! The girls are over the moon!"

Fishing on the west coast of Scotland has been brought to its knees. Paula Daly and Karen Burston at the Troon Fishermen's Mission have accessed support from the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, Seafarers' Hospital Society and the Sailors' Children's Society to provide immediate help for our fishing families who are surviving on very little waiting for state benefits to arrive.



A big 'Thank You' from Daisy & Luna

Something to look forward to...

We are going up in the world! The Fishermen's Mission charity shop in Helston, Cornwall, is getting bigger and better! Thanks to our wonderful supporters and team of amazing volunteers, the Fishermen's Mission Helston charity shop has been a roaring success,



Mel King with the keys to the door

and there is exciting news on the horizon.

Mel King, our charity shop manager tells us what's happening:

"We're moving but staying! We will still be in the heart of Helston, in one of the main shopping areas, but are moving to premises with a much larger retail floor, vastly improved storage areas and great office space for the South West team."

Mel and her volunteers are currently renovating the three-storey building which will also provide a community hub for active and retired fishermen to access Fishermen's Mission services.



Mel King gets rocking and rolling!

Mel King comments:

"The transformation is hard work but will be very worthwhile. We are just so excited that this new shop is coming together, and we can't wait to open our doors very soon!"

How you can help us

Make a donation

We receive no government funding or lottery support so every single donation makes a real difference to us. You can make a donation by calling **FREephone 0800 6341020** or donate online at www.fishermensmission.org.uk or post a cheque to our address shown below. **For every £1 we generate we spend 88p on our services.**

Become a volunteer

We are always grateful for the help given to us by our dedicated volunteers. If you can spare a few hours each month do get in touch **FREephone 0800 6341020** or email enquiries@fishermensmission.org.uk

Remember us in your Will

Everyone wants to ensure that friends and family are well provided for if you are writing or updating your Will. However, just a small gift to the Fishermen's Mission can make all the difference to our work and ensure that your help continues. If you would like a legacy leaflet call **FREephone 0800 6341020** or email: SophieDavies@fishermensmission.org.uk

How to contact us:

Telephone us: 01489 566910

Freephone: 0800 6341020

Email us: enquiries@fishermensmission.org.uk

Write to us:

The Fishermen's Mission, Mather House,
4400 Parkway, Solent Business Park,
Whiteley, Hampshire. PO15 7FJ



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