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Follow the Stars

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None of us could have imagined as we welcomed in the New Year 2020 what lay ahead of the world. The shutting down of vast swathes of the global economy to slow the transmission of the Covid-19 virus has been necessary to contain the numbers of critically ill patients requiring hospitalisation, but we are acutely aware of the devastating impact this has had on so many businesses and livelihoods which cannot function from a home office or spare bedroom. The lasting damage to businesses in hospitality, leisure, hairdressing, High Street retail, sport, and so the list grows, is shocking and a cause for real concern. But less well understood is the equally drastic impact on what we call the Third Sector – the UK's charity sector.

Most of us have associations with a range of national and local charities and understand from personal engagement just how important these organisations are across the whole gamut of medical research, education, social care, rehabilitation, sport, culture and so many interconnected stitches in the fabric of our society. You might be surprised to discover that there are about 168,000 charities in England and Wales alone. Charities employ some 827,000 people, which is approximately 2.7% of the UK workforce, and are estimated to add £15 billion to the UK economy annually. Around 75% of UK charities have an annual income of less than £100,000. These statistics are from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NVCO) and 'The Value of the Charity Sector' 2019 published by the Charity Commission and Frontier Economics.

The immediate impact for charities on fund raising of the restrictions on their usual cycle of events has yet to be measured, but it is undoubtedly devastating, and many will not be able to sustain their activities and outreach. An economy recovering from recession, and with a high level of unemployment and uncertainty, will continue to challenge the charity sector for years to come, and at a time when the need is greatest. At Tacit, we consider that the strength and viability of the voluntary sector is no less a consideration than the recovery of businesses and the creation of new employment opportunities.

This year, Tacit has directed its charitable giving to the Macmillan Cancer Support. 2020 has been a very challenging one for all charities that rely on regular fund-raising to keep their work going. Macmillan has suffered a potential loss of £100 million this year as so many of its regular supporters have been unable to participate in the popular sporting events, coffee mornings, and musical shows, for example, that would ordinarily be part of the charity's vital fund-raising efforts.

In this unusual year, the usual Oxford based Celebration of Christmas concert held in Christ Church Cathedral cannot, for obvious reasons, go ahead. In its place the organisers decided early in the year to take a bold and innovative approach to create an exciting and original online event, combining some beautiful and traditional music with readings from a dazzling array of national celebrities including Joanna Lumley, Benjamin Zephaniah and Alexander Armstrong. Macmillan has now adopted Follow the Stars as its National fund-raising event for the Christmas period. The Oxford supporters of Macmillan hope to raise £52,000 which would pay the salary of a Macmillan Nurse for a year.

The event will go live on 11th December at 8pm and we hope that many of you might take the opportunity to enjoy this special performance and that it will bring cheer to you, your family, and friends. Follow the Stars will be available online for 30 days after this date, and if you are inclined to support Macmillan there will be a donation link on the screen.

To give you a flavour of the creative energy that has gone into this event, we have attached the magnificent poster illustrated by Korky Paul, the well-known illustrator based in Oxford, particularly famous for the Winnie the Witch books. Here is the link to the event, which we hope many of you will enjoy.

www.macmillan.org.uk/followthestars

With our best wishes to all our clients and your families.

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