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Media Release

“Remembering Together” those who have died during the Covid-19 pandemic

People across Bath and North East Somerset and Wiltshire whose loved ones have died during the coronavirus pandemic are being invited to join an online community service of remembrance.

The Community Remembering Together Service will be broadcast **on Wednesday 24 March at 7pm** via the Bath Abbey YouTube channel and will be available here

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSTBxSCyS70_S_ZiPd-DANA

The event is organised jointly by the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, Dorothy House Hospice Care, Bath Abbey, SWALLOW Charity and Bath and North East Somerset Council.

RUH Lead Chaplain, the Reverend Narinder Tegally, said: “The service is intended to bring together those within the local community, who follow a professed faith or no faith, to remember all those who have died across Bath and North East Somerset, Wiltshire and Somerset at the RUH, at Dorothy House, in our local care homes and at home since the virus first arrived last year.

“As places of worship are currently closed for communal acts of devotion, the service will be pre-recorded and offered online. Not only is this an opportunity for people to remember those who have died during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is also a way for the wider community to be together, to grieve together and support all in the local community who have had their lives significantly changed by it.”

The Community Remembering Together Service will include:

- An address by The Rt Revd Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton
- Personal stories from two bereaved families
- Reading from Wayne De Leeuw, CEO of Dorothy House Hospice Care

- Prayers, readings and poetry offered from different faith traditions and none.
- During this service, people will be invited to light a candle at home
- Music by the RUH musician in residence, and Christchurch and Bath Abbey Choirs
- Closing words from Cara Charles Barks MBE, CEO of the RUH Bath
- Song by SWALLOW - South West Action for Learning and Living Our Way Supporting people with learning disabilities

This time of remembrance will offer a central act of devotion and remembrance for all. It will focus upon the lighting of candles as a sign of hope and renewal as well as a time of celebrating the lives of those who have died and also giving thanks for all who have cared for them.

The Rt Revd Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton, said:

“This time last year we’d only just heard of Covid-19. Now, a year on, it’s totally turned our lives upside down, taking away so many things we’d previously taken for granted, but above all, taking away many people who are dear to us and our communities. It’s been made so much more difficult by us not being able to have proper funeral services. So many people have not been able to gather together with family and friends to say goodbye as they would have wished. Our hope is that the Remembering Together Service will provide some of that solace and sharing in loss that is part of bereavement.”

Imam Dr Mohammed Gamal Abdelnour, Imam of Bath Mosque, said:

“Offering condolences and sharing in grief with the family and friends of the deceased are considered valued acts of charity in Islam. However, coronavirus has largely changed the way we grieve, the way we honour the demise of our loved ones, and also the way we express our condolences. All these manifestations doubled our grief and added salt to our wounds. Believing in God’s ultimate mercy and mysterious wisdom, I pray that the Remembering Together Service will help heal our griefs and revitalize the sense of togetherness that we have missed since the virus began Amin.”

Bath MP Wera Hobhouse said:

“The pandemic has been a great challenge in our lives, and this is especially true for those who have lost loved ones. In addition to this, I know that many in our community are missing the chance to worship communally and draw comfort from being together. I am pleased to welcome news of this event, which will help to bring peace and comfort to those who have suffered the most.”

Cllr Dine Romero, Leader of Bath & North East Somerset Council, said:

“As we approach the first anniversary since the first death from coronavirus in the UK, it’s only fitting that we should come together to remember those we have lost. Anyone who have been affected by the devastating effects of this terrible virus should join us and light a candle and remember loved ones. This is an anniversary that no-one wanted, but if we

keep working together and doing the right things, we will drive the numbers down and get through these dark times.”

Ends

Note to editors

For more information please contact the Revd Narinder Tegally, Lead Chaplain, Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust. Tel: 01225 824039 or email narinder.tegally@nhs.net

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.

The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust has opened the purpose-built RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre and is now working towards the new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk

Chair:
Alison Ryan

Chief Executive:
Cara Charles-Barks

