

Poignant loneliness film released by The Silver Line in time for Christmas

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The distress of loneliness has been captured in a film entitled "The Anniversary" released by The Silver Line charity this week to highlight the nation's loneliness epidemic amongst older people.

The film has been produced for the charity by film director, Phil Beastall, whose short film, 'Love is a Gift', went viral online last Christmas. Last year, The Silver Line's Director of Income, Nina Gopal, was one of the many people who was moved by Beastall's film and the power of its message. She contacted him to ask if he would produce a film for the charity and he agreed.

The Silver Line film shows a lady alone in her home recalling an anniversary gift brought for her by her husband. She then sits at a desk from which she removes a framed photograph of her husband and then a photograph album dedicated to their wedding anniversaries. At midnight she lights a candle and then looks through the album, ending at an empty page headed '50th anniversary – Renewing our vows'. She speaks the only words of the film through her tears: "Happy Anniversary my darling."

Speaking about her initial conversation with the film director, Gopal said, "After crying my way through Phil's film I thought that we should approach him to create a film for us and he agreed which was fantastic.

"Our brief was to create a film that portrayed loneliness and what it's like to miss someone so much that it hurts and get across the sense of loss. I have to say that he's done a great job – it's hard to hold back the tears when I watch it."

The release of the film in the run up to Christmas has been timed to maximise its fundraising potential with the charity hoping to bring in much-needed donations.

The Silver Line Founder, Dame Esther Rantzen, has spoken about loneliness on the release of the film, "I always remember the Queen's quote when she went to New York to commemorate those lost in 9/11. She said 'Grief is the price we pay for love'. Loneliness is also often the price we pay for loss. Loss sometimes of sight, or hearing, or a job, but very often, as in my case, and in this film, the loss of a loving partner.

"I find this film so moving that it brings tears to my eyes, because I speak to so many Silver Line callers who think about their lost loved ones every day, and for whom Christmas is the loneliest time of their year."

Speaking about the commission, Beastall said, "I love the challenge of making a film that speaks to people despite there being very little said – in the case of Silver Line's film it's four words.

"The film is all about this lady's story and how she came to be lighting a candle on her wedding anniversary. Sad though it is, we needed to convey the sense of despair some people are experiencing.

"The Silver Line is there to listen to these people and through the film I know they will raise funds and awareness of the charity too."

The Silver Line is dedicated to providing support for older people living with loneliness and social isolation. Its helpline has received in excess of 2.5 million calls since it was established in 2013 and close to 1,500 people per day reach out to the helpline.

Just £10 pays for two calls from a lonely older person to The Silver Line. You can donate £10 right now by texting ALONE to 70660 (standard network charges apply). Donations can also be made via the charity's website www.thesilverline.org.uk/donate.

Link to the film

<https://youtu.be/sDRkLxI7NCc>

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Editors notes:

About The Silver Line

The Silver Line (0800 4 70 80 90) is the only free, national, confidential helpline open every day and night, offering information, friendship and advice to older people.

The cost of calls to the helpline, and The Silver Line's other friendship services, are paid for by the donations it receives.

68% of callers contact the helpline because they are lonely or isolated, 90% live alone, and 54% say they have no one else to speak to.

Last month The Silver Line joined forces with Age UK, becoming a subsidiary of Age UK.

There are thought to be around 1.2 million chronically lonely older people across the UK. That number is set to rise to 2 million by 2026.

More details on The Silver Line website: www.thesilverline.org.uk