



**Jan /Feb 2012**

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# AYLESBURY & DISTRICT VOLUNTARY GROUP NEWSLETTER

Firstly I would like to wish you all a very Happy and healthy New Year and secondly, I must apologise for the late arrival of this newsletter. This was due to family commitments and the loss of two very dear friends. For some of us it is the beginning of new resolutions, but it is also for some a time of loss.

## **November & December Meetings**

In November Dr Sudesna Chatterjee, Consultant diabetologist at Stoke Mandeville Hospital gave us a talk entitled "Diabetes Melitus: A Journey through the Ages" First she spoke of "The Dark Ages" where very little was known about the condition and anyone suffering from it was likely to die within 2-3 years. She then spoke of "the Middle Ages" which she felt were between 1921 and 2011. In 1921, Fredrick Banting's research in Canada led to the discovery of insulin which, in the 1930s made it easier for people with diabetes to stabilise their blood glucose level with the development of the first long-acting insulin. It had also been established that there was a distinction between type 1 and type 2 diabetes. The 1950s was another significant decade with the first oral medications for diabetes becoming available after the introduction of sulphonylureas and later biguanides.. Since then diabetes care has continued to improve, through the 70s when mixed insulins were created and on into the 90s with the introduction of rapid acting insulin, allowing injection before or after a meal. Insulin pumps were also made available to more people as they became more efficient. The Millennium decade also saw more improvements to the quality of insulins available. Inhaled insulin was also developed but was withdrawn after only a short period of use. The National Service Framework for diabetes was launched in England laying down the standards of care that needed to be achieved for people with diabetes. (Similar frameworks were also launched in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) Dr Chatterjee stressed the need for people with diabetes to eat a healthy diet, to increase their activity levels and to take the correct medications. New drugs are still being discovered such as the introduction of Byetta, now used when tablets begin to stop working as effectively. There are many education courses now provided for patients including, INSIGHT for Type 1, DAFNE, DESMOND, and Community education for Type 2. She hoped that 2012 onwards would be "The Golden Ages"; where although the incidence of diabetes is spreading throughout the world, much more research is being done. Currently research is taking place on gene therapy, stem cell treatment, as well as other avenues that might one day provide a cure. In the meantime, prevention is the best route and this should be done as early as possible. This may of course mean that more dieticians, exercise therapists etc would be needed for education and support. Her advise was that we should use our resources wisely. Stem -cell therapy is still along way off and transplants are not always possible because of the lack of donors and the unpleasant side effects from anti rejection drugs. There has been more use of the external pancreas - "the closed loop" and research continues with these and other ideas.

Doctor Chaterjee was thanked for her interesting talk and the meeting closed with coffee.



Supporting local people with Diabetes and raising funds for Diabetic research—Charity No.215199  
Secretary: David Robbins, 1 Dunsmore Ride, Monks Risborough, HP27 9JT

The December meeting took the form of our usual social Christmas gathering. David and Diana Robbins had prepared an interesting quiz for us and there was an excellent raffle. Sandwiches, wine and nibbles had been laid on and everyone had a pleasant evening. About thirty people attended, due in some part to the reasonable weather.

### Stores Collections

At the beginning of December 2011 we had two days of collections outside the Tesco Stores at Tring Road, Aylesbury. We managed to fill all the time slots on the first day with ten people giving up their time to collect, with only seven people being able to collect on the second day. However, a magnificent total of £559.78 was collected altogether. Our thanks to all those who gave up their time to collect and to all the people who stopped to put something in the tin whether it was the few pennies left from buying their lunch from the students at the Grammar and High Schools, to the notes put in by people whose close families had been affected by Diabetes - we thank you all. Every penny makes a difference.

We have another two day collection organised - this time at the Tesco stores in Leighton Buzzard. We would particularly like to hear from you if you live in the Leighton Buzzard area (and we know there are a few of you!). If we are unable to find people to fill these slots we will have to give up doing the collections outside stores as the number of people who volunteer for them seems to have dwindled considerably. The collection is on **Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th January 2012**. Please consider helping us out, and ring Ken Parker as soon as possible on 01296 486269. Come on, we could do with your help!

We have not yet heard if we will be receiving any money from the Rotary Club following the Carol Float Collection in December. The collection went well and there were plenty of people helping, particular thanks to Susan Becker for rounding up such a large crowd of friends. Once again, it was partly due to the fact that the weather remained reasonable. Thank you to everyone who turned up to help. It was a lovely atmosphere and was enjoyed by all who took part.

### An apology from the Membership Secretary

Due to a formatting error some EMAIL renewal forms sent out with the October / November issue were unreadable. This it was caused by incompatibility between some different versions of Microsoft Word. This and future months renewal forms will be sent out in PDF format which will eliminate the problem. My apologies for any inconvenience caused.

### Donations to our Group.

We received several donations to the group in December. Firstly there was a donation of £50 received from K. Y. Green (Funeral Directors) in memory of the late Mr Antonio Romano He was not a member of the group but we thank his family for thinking of us at their time of loss. Another donation of £20 was received in memory of Mr Roy Harding who died at the end of October. A donation to the group was received from Lily Becker. Her neighbour had no use for his greenhouse and was going to dispose of it to the tip, but Lily was able to sell it to someone and received £50 which has been donated to the group. We thank Lilly for her efforts (both for us and for recycling!) and Peter and Julie Richards to whom the greenhouse belonged. They also have a collection box which was emptied raising a further £15. Our thanks again to them. The collection box which Steven Reece keeps in his workplace was also emptied and a further £6.47 was donated to group funds, Finally the collection box which my daughter, Lisa, keeps at her place of work was also emptied. As many of you may know I make cards in my spare time and Lisa keeps a box of these at work where staff members can buy them when they need one. I also undertake special orders for all occasions and the profit from these cards is also donated to our local group. This time we were able to donate £52.48 to the group. A donation of £55 was also given to us from Stewkley Methodist Church, for whom I organised a Quiz evening in December.

If anyone else would like to have a collection box in their house or place of work then please do not hesitate to get in touch. Any collection boxes can be returned to us and another one will be issued if required. This is a very easy way for us to collect extra monies for our group. Please consider having a small box (suitable for your own house or a small office) or a larger collection tin, more suited to businesses. If you know of anyone who would like one, please let us know.

## Donations to Diabetes UK

In December the committee discussed several research projects that we might support with our final donation of the year. From a short list of thirteen projects it was decided that we would support two projects by sending £3000 to each. The first of these is at Imperial College, London and is led by Professor Guy Rutter, Dr Gabriela da Silva Xavier and Dr Isabelle LeClerc. The professor has shown that islet cells rely on two proteins called AMPK and PASK to release glucagon in response to low blood glucose levels. He now aims to determine how these proteins contribute to this process, which may help in developing treatments to improve the body's ability to avoid hypos in Type I diabetes and control the overproduction of glucagon in Type 2 diabetes. The project runs until June 2014.

The second project which we have adopted is based at the University of Oxford and takes the form of a five year RD Lawrence Fellowship. It is led by Dr Lisa Heather, Professor Kieran Clarke and Professor Peter Ratcliffe. In diabetes, researchers believe that lower levels of the protein HIF make it harder for the heart cells to function during a heart attack. Dr Heather will investigate whether drugs that reactivate HIF can protect the heart. The project runs until Oct 2016.

Since sending the money to these two projects we have received a letter and certificate of thanks from Diabetes UK, stating that we were the best fundraising group in the South East of England. This brings the total money donated to Diabetes UK in 2011 for research projects and Careline to £16000. I am sure that all of you will agree that this has been a wonderful effort. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed towards that total, whether it has been organising an event and donating the proceeds, standing outside a supermarket with a collecting box, helping out at a fete or fair in the summer, taking part in an event or a raffle or even donating an extra pound with your membership. We couldn't have achieved this without you so thanks to every one of you. Please don't stop - we would like to make our total even bigger next year.....and we need your help!

## Sponsored Walks

This year's enjoyable group walks, with their major aim of fundraising either by sponsorship or individual donations will take place in the Stewkley area with its beautiful rolling unspoilt English countryside. Both walks will start and finish at the Methodist Church Hall, 103 High Street South, Stewkley LU70HU. There is parking available in the rear church car park for about 24 cars and also parking in nearby residential streets. There is a limited bus service to the village. Toilets and changing facilities are available within the Church Hall. Refreshments will be served to all participants at the end of the walks. Each walk will be led by an experienced walk leader and will follow established footpaths, bridleways and quiet country lanes. Please wear sensible clothing and footwear as there may be some muddy patches and awkward stiles to negotiate. It is essential to bring a drink and some food items with you. The walks are geared to the slowest member of the party, so do not worry, you will not get left behind.

**10 MILE WALK.** (Starting at 10.00am - Taking approx 4hours 30 minutes) A really agreeable walk over the rolling open landscape which symbolises this part of Bucks. The walk encompasses the villages of Hoggston, Swanbourne and Drayton Parslow where in places it seems that time has stood still. Look out for all the old farm names that indicate the level of agriculture that was once here. At the end of the walk there is a chance to see some of the old buildings that characterise this part of Stewkley High Street. The walk will be led by John Cottrell.

**5 MILE WALK** (Starting at 10.30am - Taking approx 2hours 30 minutes) A mainly flat walk but with some rising land to give superb distant views of the open countryside around the area. Small woods and pleasant streams compliment the walk and there will be a chance to see the strange monument that marks the centre of where the third London Airport would have been built if common sense had not prevailed! This walk will be led by Mike Roe.

You do not have to be a member of the group to take part in the walk. We welcome all friends and relatives. All we ask is that you obtain sponsorship for the walk, or make an individual donation on the day. Sponsorship forms are available from Ken Parker or Basil Broom or can be downloaded from the website. Thanks to Mike Roe for planning the walks.

**IMPORTANT - For catering purposes please let Ken Parker know if you intend to join one of our walks**

## Future Events

### Programme for 2012

- Wed 18th & Thurs 19th Jan** - Collection outside Tesco Stores, Leighton Buzzard. **Volunteers urgently needed.**
- Thursday 2nd Feb** - AGM followed by cheese & wine. Stoke Mandeville Community Centre, Eskdale Rd at 8pm
- Saturday 31st March**- Charity Stall in Market Square (date to be confirmed)
- Saturday 21st April** - Quiz Night at Fairford Leys Community Centre, Aylesbury (see note below)
- Saturday 12th May** - Sponsored Walks starting from Stewkley Methodist Church Hall. Starts 10.00am See article p3.
- Saturday 9th June**- Charity Stall and Town Centre Collection. National Diabetes Week ( to be confirmed)
- Thursday 19th July** - Annual Barbeque at The Guide Centre, Ellesborough. (Date to be confirmed)
- Monday 27th August** - Winslow Show. We hope to have a stall here. (to be confirmed)
- Thursday 6th Sept** - Talk by Edwin Rye on "Winter Flowering Plants"
- Thursday 4th October** - Talk by Cyril Blunden
- Thursday 8th November** - Talk by representative from Nikon Biostation IM Project
- Thursday 6th December** - Christmas Social at Stoke Mandeville Community Centre

## Quiz Night.

Tickets for the next quiz night are now on sale. There has been no increase in price since last year and they are £10 per person including supper. Teams may consist of up to 10 people per team. If you are unable to make up a complete team, please let us know and we will put you with another group. A hot fish and chip supper will be available half way through the evening (alternatives eg vegetarian also available). Please feel free to bring your own liquid refreshments. Our last quiz evening was extremely successful and we had to turn people away as we completely sold out. We have acquired larger premises this time, but please don't leave it too late to get your tickets. They are available from Maria Parker (486269) or Pat Housego (613876).

## Last Minute Reminder.

Please don't forget that our AGM will be held on Thursday 2nd February. We will be reviewing the last year as a whole and highlighting those things which have been successful and looking again at those areas where we might do better. There are some big changes ahead coming from Diabetes UK and we will let you know about these as soon as we have any further information. If you would like to be nominated for the committee, or know anyone who would like to become involved then please let one of the current committee know. A new committee will be elected at the meeting, so now is your chance. It is often good to get new faces on the committee as it brings a different perspective to the group. We know that some members of the committee will be standing down this year and we would like to see some new faces to replace them. Although the committee members are still keen that the group continues to move forward - we can't do it on our own! Please think about joining us now. The meeting will be followed by cheese and wine and all are welcome to attend.

Our thanks are due once again to the good people at Cartridge World, Parton Road, Aylesbury; who regularly subsidise the printing of this newsletter.



This newsletter may also be downloaded from our website [www.dukad.org.uk](http://www.dukad.org.uk) where you will find other information about the group and about diabetes, along with links to other relevant websites.