



**Nov/Dec 2009**

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# AYLESBURY & DISTRICT VOLUNTARY GROUP NEWSLETTER

As I write this newsletter the glorious colours of autumn are all around us and already the days are beginning to feel chilly. By the time you read this, the clocks will have changed and we are really going to feel like those long dark months are with us. Never mind—there is still Christmas to look forward to! If you are ordering cards or goods from the Diabetes UK Christmas collection please quote **Media Code S29014** and we will get a percentage of what you spend back for the group.

## **October event—Cancer & Bio-detection Dogs**

If you were unable to get to this meeting, you missed a very interesting and informative evening. Claire Guest, one of the founders of this charity, came with her dog, Tangle and spoke to us about the formation of the charity and its work. Their aim is to train specialist dogs to detect the odour of human diseases, including cancer and diabetes. Their work in training dogs to identify the odour of bladder cancer in urine samples has been achieving particularly good results and they hope that this may eventually enable scientists to develop an early cancer detection system in the form of an electronic nose, which would allow the early diagnosis of cancer quickly and simply in a non invasive manner.

The charity is now also working to train dogs to become sensitive to high or low glucose levels in people with diabetes. They have several trained dogs who are now regularly alerting their owners to changes in their blood glucose and have made a huge difference to the quality of life for these people. They have several more puppies in training. They are also training Medical Assistance Dogs to detect and alert to other potentially fatal conditions. As they are a relatively new charity they are having some difficulty in attracting funding. Individuals can sponsor a puppy in training for as little as £36 per year. If you would like more information about the work of these dogs, or to sponsor a puppy please contact Claire Guest on 01296 655888 or look at their website [www.cancerdogs.co.uk](http://www.cancerdogs.co.uk).

## **Collectors required**

We have three events approaching where we are in need of people to help us with collections. The first is the collection at Tesco Stores, Tring Road, Aylesbury on **Friday 4th December**. We already have some names on the rota but if you are able to help out at any time please ring Ken Parker on 01296 486269. The second is the following day on **Saturday 5th December** when we have been allocated a stall at the Wendover Charity Fair on the Manor Waste (outside Budgens). The fair runs from 9am till 1pm and we will be selling Christmas cards and cook books and handing out free information about diabetes. Finally, we have once again been approached by the Rotary Club to help with the Christmas Carol float on **Friday 18th December**. This is in the Parton Road, Aylesbury area and we would be happy to see as many people as possibly can helping us to collect on that evening. Although the collection that is made is for the Rotary Club they have always given us a sizeable donation during the year. You do need to be quite fit to keep up with the float but as one of last year's collectors said "It's a lovely feeling to see all the children looking out of their windows and waving—it really put me in the Christmas spirit." Please ring Ken if you can help or meet at Parton Road shops at 6pm.

### Diabetes UK Volunteering Conference 2009

On the weekend of 10/11th October my husband and I attended the Volunteering Conference to represent the Aylesbury and District Volunteer Group. It was held this year in Manchester at the Ramada Hotel. At the opening ceremony the Chair of the Board of Trustees for Diabetes UK, Sir George Alberti stressed that volunteers were at the heart of all of the work done by Diabetes UK.

During the conference the delegates were given a preview of the new campaign which was to launch on 19th October called GET SERIOUS. This is a national campaign underlining the seriousness of diabetes. It is important that as many people as possible sign up to show strength in numbers so that we can indicate how serious we are at putting diabetes at the top of everyone's agenda. Everyone is asked to sign up whether or not they have diabetes. It can be done through their website and all you have to do is leave your name. Go to [www.diabetes.org.uk/GetSerious](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/GetSerious). If you can't do it yourself then ask someone who knows about computers to do it for you. The site also invites supporters to pledge to do something for diabetes. There are suggestions on the website but you can do whatever you like no matter how big or small. Look out for the get serious advertisements and posters and join with a host of celebrities and MPs who are already supporting the campaign. Please sign up now and ask all your families and friends to do it too. It will only take one minute of your time to do something serious. At the end of the first day, Richard Lane OBE, President of Diabetes UK read out some of the pledges that had been made by people at the conference, including his own which was not to have any more cooked breakfasts, starting after breakfast the following morning!

At the evening dinner the Volunteer Achievement Awards were presented and on Sunday there was a question and answer session with the Chief Executive and Trustees. This was followed by news of the latest research and the plans for 2010 and beyond. The five year plan from Diabetes UK is to work alongside the volunteer groups to deliver good quality care for all, help individuals develop a healthy lifestyle and to continue to fund research for a better life for everyone with diabetes.

The weekend gave us an opportunity to meet and talk to people from other volunteer groups all around the UK and to compare notes with them on things they have done. It is interesting that nearly all groups are experiencing some common problems i.e. a drop in membership as older people die and reduced numbers at meetings. This seems unusual as the number of people with diabetes is increasing but it was encouraging to meet with them and share their views. The overall theme that the voluntary groups are important and should be recognised as such was repeated often over the weekend by the Trustees and Chief Executive. They recognise that this may mean huge changes for the organisation, but the first of their new priorities (good quality care for all with diabetes) will be delivered mostly through the volunteers. Watch this space for further news.

### Welcome

We are pleased to welcome Mr D & Mrs J Berridge from Chesham. They have been attending recent meetings and we look forward to seeing them in the future. Please make them welcome.

### Thank you!

It is customary for me to thank those that have helped us out during the year. Thanks again to Driftgate who print the newsletter, without cost, for us each month. We are indebted to them for their on-going support. Thanks also to Basil & Joan who put all the newsletters in envelopes and who arrange distribution; and everyone who delivers the magazine free of charge for us. On behalf of all the members I would like to thank the committee for their continued enthusiasm and support, even when the outlook has seemed bleak. I hope they will all continue to give of their time and effort for a cause that they believe in. Thank you to all of you, the members, without whom there would be no group. It is very easy these days to cut back but, we have again been surprised and encouraged by the generosity of many of your donations when renewing your membership. Your comments and support for the newsletter have also been personal motivation for me. Thank you to those who have told us about events that we might attend –please keep it up. **\*Please see note on back page\***

## **Future Plans for the Group**

Over the last few months the Committee have been discussing at length what the future plans for the group should be. At the moment we have quite an active committee who are able to promote the club and its message in the Aylesbury area. However, we are all getting older and although we recognise that there is no-one on the committee in the younger age group (25-40) we do understand that at this age it is probably not something that interests them. (It was interesting to hear the same thing being said at the Volunteering Conference by many other groups.)

One of the things which we discussed was our monthly meetings. Attendance at these is falling and we have the added problem of having to find somewhere to hold the meetings. As a result we have decided to hold less meetings during the year but would urge all members to try to attend at least one meeting during the year. If you have any transport problems, please contact a member of the committee and we will try to help.

We will not be printing separate copies of the programme this year but the proposed plan is detailed below. Any changes will be shown on the website and in the latest newsletter.

### **Programme 2010**

January	No meeting
February 4th	AGM followed by a talk from LifeScan - an update on blood monitoring.
March	No meeting
April 1st	Talk by Dr Anna Gloyn from the Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism on her research work. (We donated £3000 to the centre last year.)
May 15th	Sponsored Walk—this year starting from Quainton Village Hall. There will be a 5 and a 10 mile walk. More details to follow.
June 12th	Town Centre Collection and Charity Stall as part of National Diabetes Week.
July 8th	Barbeque at the Guides Centre, Ellesborough commencing at 7pm.
August	No meeting
September 2nd	Talk by Frank Moxon (one of the Trustees of Diabetes UK) "Our Achievements and Plans for the Future."
October 23rd	Charity Stall in the Market Place, Aylesbury.
November 4th	Talk "What Care to Expect" by member of South East Office of Diabetes UK
December 2nd	Christmas Social.

Are you on Facebook? Do you Twitter? To many of you this will mean absolutely nothing, but show it to your children and they will immediately understand. We would be interested in hearing from anyone who could help us set up a page on Facebook or Twitter where young people with diabetes could join a "virtual" local group. If you think you could help us with this or would like to comment on any aspect of the programme or the group please get in touch with John or me. Our details are on the front page .We are always open to new ideas anywhere within our area. Throughout the year the committee will continue to meet to explore ways to promote and expand the group. Once again, if you would like to have any input into this please contact us. We will continue to attend fetes, fairs etc at a local level. If you know of any that we could attend please tell us about them. This is one way that everyone can help and encourage the group.

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.

## **Future Events**

**Saturday 24th October**—Charity Stall in the Market Square, Aylesbury. We will have lots of free leaflets available to give out to the general public and will once again be trying to attract new members. The Christmas Cards will be on sale at a reduced price (£2 per pack) and there will be Diabetes goodies for sale. We hope that you will pop across to support us if you are in town that day and tell your friends about us too. If you are able to help out on the stall, even for half an hour, please get in touch with Ken Parker who is making up a rota. It is much better to contact him to arrange a time than to just turn up on the day as we can end up with too many people behind the stall which tends to put the public off approaching us.

**Thursday 5th November**— Talk by Roy Collis on The Friends of Stoke Mandeville Hospital. This will be at 8pm at Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville.

**Friday 4th December**— Collection at Tesco Stores, Tring Road, Aylesbury. Ken has started a rota for this event but please get in touch with him if you would like to help out. It always gives a good feeling when you help out with a stores collection but particularly at Christmas time.

**Saturday 6th December**—Stall at Wendover Charity Market 9am-1pm. Please come and buy Christmas cards from us if you are shopping in Wendover. (Only £2 per pack) We will be on the Manor Waste (outside Budgens) and we will have lots of literature about diabetes available free. *\*Latest news– Cards reduced to £1 per pack\**

**Thursday 10th December**—Our Christmas social meeting will be held at The Community Centre, Eskdale Road, Stoke Mandeville beginning at 8pm. This is usually a good meeting where you have chance to chat with other members. We usually have a Christmas buffet with wine. There is always huge raffle and a last chance to buy Christmas cards—unless we have run out by then! David and Diana usually organise a light hearted quiz and everyone has a good time. Please try to join us. If you are elderly and don't like to drive please get in touch with a member of the committee and we will try to arrange for someone from the group to pick you up. Please do try to come, especially if you are not always able to get to other meetings—sometimes it is nice for us to be able to put a face to a name.

**Friday 18th December** –Christmas Carol Float with Rotary Club. Please meet at Parton Road shops at 6pm. Lots of volunteers needed.

**Thursday 4th February 2010**— Our AGM to be held at The Community Centre, Eskdale Road, Stoke Mandeville. The Committee all resign at the end of each year but can be re-elected. Please use the form below to nominate anyone who would like to serve on the committee (they must give their consent). You are free to nominate anyone and all nominations must be seconded by another member. Please give, or send all nominations to the Secretary,

**We apologise for the late delivery of this newsletter. Driftgate Press, who printed it for us have gone into liquidation. We have photo-copied this edition and are currently looking at other options for future editions. If you think you can help us in any way, please get in touch.**

### **Nomination form for Aylesbury and District Voluntary Group Committee for 2010**

I (name)..... being a member of the Aylesbury branch nominate .....  
.....to serve on the Branch Committee.

I (print name) .....am willing to serve on the Branch Committee. ....  
(Signature)

I (print name).....second the nomination. ....  
(Signature)