

FISH VOLUNTEER CENTRE



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Registered Charity
No. 286318

From the New FISH Chairman

I am greatly honoured to be the new Chairman of the Fish Volunteer Centre. FISH is a fantastic charity with the most hard working and dedicated group of volunteers. I just hope I can do them justice and get somewhere near the magnificent job that Clive Mills has done over the last 3 years.

The service we run is needed more and more, with the decline in public services and increasing age of the population.

The bus trips combat isolation almost as much as does our (fairly new) befriending service which has grown faster than we expected.

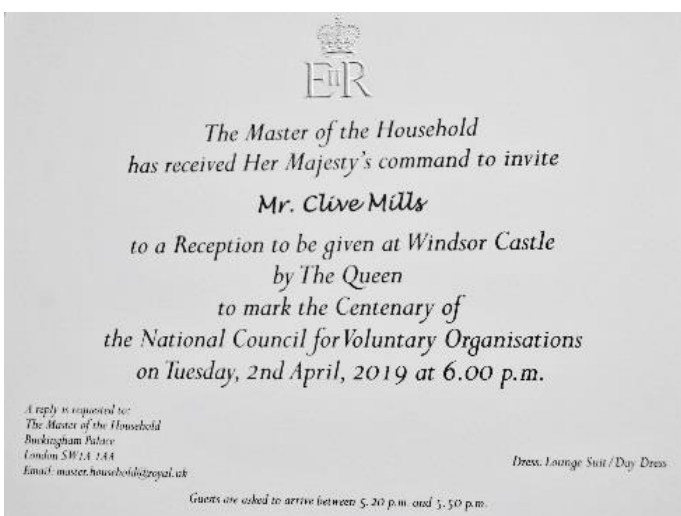
We are still doing as many driving trips to medical appointments etc, as ever and are always pleased to welcome new drivers as well as anyone who feels they can help with befriending or as an office volunteer.

Richard McQuillan
Chairman



What a Privilege!

On April 2nd this year the FISH Volunteer Centre Chairman Clive Mills was invited, on behalf of the charity, to attend a reception by Royal Command to be held at Windsor Castle by the Queen to mark the centenary of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. Our charity was nominated as one of 200 charities nationwide to be represented.



Clive mentioned that after arriving for a champagne and canape reception in the State Apartments all those present were introduced to the Queen by name and then taken into St. George's Hall where other members of the Royal Family were present including the Princess Royal, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and several ladies in waiting.

Clive had an opportunity to speak to the Princess Royal who was most interested in the work of FISH.

Our Charity is very much recognised for its work both in supporting and transporting our clients and Clive mentioned that it was a great privilege to

meet the Queen and speak about the great Team of volunteers that we are so lucky to have in our community.

Support and Transport for the Community

Fish Volunteer Centre Craft Fair

This year the FISH Volunteer Centre decided to try a new approach to their annual fundraising event.

Last year it was agreed at a management meeting to hold a Craft Fair. In addition to a change of event it was decided to hold the fair at Peppard War Memorial Hall also to move the date to the spring.

The planning began last August with searching other events for likely stall holders. With the help of a team of volunteers, all who help with FISH, things started to fall into place. A new style advertising campaign using local media such as Facebook and Nextdoor Digest plus some very striking posters sponsored by local Estate Agents Davis Tate certainly raised awareness of the event.

March 30th dawned bright and sunny and the team were at the hall bright and early to set up tables, help stall holders find their tables and prepare the food ready for what they hoped would be a stream of visitors. The FISH bus was ready to run a shuttle service from Sonning Common and all was set to go.

There was a large range of interesting crafts on display plus a raffle and tombola and the ever-popular bacon butties, always served up at FISH fundraising event. Children at Peppard Primary School had drawn pictures of what old age looked like and the Rev. James Stickings judged the winners after declaring the Craft Fair open.

The day was a great success for visitors and stall holders alike raising over £1100 for FISH, also attracting many new visitors who now know about the work that FISH does in the local community.

An event such as this can only happen with a team of enthusiastic, hardworking people and the FISH Volunteers certainly deserve a big thank you for making it such a success.

Clive Mills

Committee Member

More than just a Tea Party

It must be nearly five years ago that we started having monthly 'Tea Parties' in Sonning Common Village Hall. Well, it has grown bigger and better over this time and now the numbers attending average 60 people. Of course, it is not all about the excellent sandwiches, cakes and other delicacies that our wonderful volunteers make.

There is the entertainment which is different every time and full of surprises. A free raffle with half a dozen prizes. Starting soon, there will be an information stall on 'help in the community' showing how to access special services for the elderly and infirm.

But, best of all, it is a great way to meet old friends and to make new ones. There is no charge for all this, but 'donations in the bucket' are welcome. If you would like a lift in our minibus (it has a disabled access lift) or by a volunteer's car then let the office know in good time on 0118 972 3986.

So do join us on the second Monday of every month from 2pm to 4'ish.

Look forward to seeing you.

Fred Nickson

Tea Party Volunteer



Another Successful Year

A well-attended FISH Annual General Meeting was held on 5 June at Christ The King Hall in Sedgewell Road, Sonning Common. Fifty people arrived around noon to enjoy a light buffet lunch expertly provided by Shelly Ambler.

Clive Mills the retiring chairman gave an excellent report on the activities of the past year highlighting the ever-increasing demands on our services in the community. Looking towards the coming year Clive indicated that new premises were on the shopping list.

Geoff Ward, the Treasurer now retiring after 5 years, gave the financial report. The finances are in a good position and there is funding available to replace the minibus. John Pearman, the Bus Manager, gave a report on the popularity of the various trips and outings, and the demand looks set to increase. John is currently researching options for a vehicle to replace the current FISH bus which is now nearly 6 years old.

During elections to the committee Linda Collison was confirmed as the new Treasurer and Richard McQuillan as the new Chairman.

The meeting concluded with Ann Butler-Smith the founder of the FISH Volunteer Centre giving a short presentation on how it all started some 40 years ago! Anne's talk is reproduced on page 5 of this Newsletter.

Do You Spend a Lot of Time at Home on Your Own?

If you think it might be a nice idea to have a friendly, regular visitor do get in touch with us through the FISH office. Summertime might be fine but you may not be looking forward to shorter, duller days ahead in the coming months. A bit of company might make all the difference to how you feel.

You could live alone or be a couple who don't get out much; either way a FISH Home Visitor could bring a positive change to your life. All our visitors are volunteers who are police checked and carefully matched with clients and many successful friendships have been formed between them and those they get to know.



If you think this is something you might like to consider and talk about further just contact the FISH office and one of us will contact you to arrange to come and see you at home.

If you go ahead with getting to know a visitor there is no obligation to continue with contact if you decide you no longer want it. We check back with the client and the visitor that all is well after the first few visits and remain available to both sides for support throughout.

Just contact the FISH office on 0118 9723986 and we will be pleased to make contact with you.

Sue Nickson and Judy Mihajlovic
Home Visiting Coordinators

**WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A LEGACY
WHERE THERE'S A LEGACY THERE'S A CHARITY
WHERE THERE'S A CHARITY THERE'S
THE FISH VOLUNTEER CENTRE
*Please remember FISH in your Will***

A Big Thank you

Much goes on in our charity which just happens and is done in a quiet and efficient way by our volunteers.

Our retiring secretary Chris Harding is just one of those people.

Chris lived for many years in Cirencester and was a detective in the police force. She then lived for a short spell in Woodcote before settling in Sonning Common some 45 years ago.

Chris has been involved with FISH for twelve plus years and became our committee secretary some 10 years ago. She has done a superb job producing accurate and informative minutes - no mean task.

Chris will remain as a Trustee and we will value her contributions to the decisions that are made.

We all wish her every happiness in her work for our great Charity.

Clive Mills

Committee Member



Message in Your Purse (or wallet or pocket)



This could be a little life saver!

Your essential information including details of health and medication, doctor and emergency information.

It folds to the size of a bank card.

If you have an accident or fall ill whilst out and about it has all the information that the emergency services need.

Free of charge, available from the FISH Office or at the Tea Parties.

THE TWO ESSENTIALS

To run a successful charity there are two things that are essential, volunteers and money to pay the bills. We are very fortunate that we have so many wonderful volunteers doing a great job, you will meet some of them as drivers or home visitors and others are in the 'office'. But of course we always need more volunteers – and one of them could be YOU.

Raising funds is never easy to pay the running costs, but maybe you can help by donating unwanted gold, jewellery, watches and silver items etc. We can sell or auction them to raise funds to help us do even more in the community. Just take items to the Fish Volunteer Centre office or ask us to collect.

The Beginning of FISH - 40 years ago

It all started when my husband, who was the Rector at All Saints Church Peppard, told me of some very lonely people he had been visiting in the Parish. 'I know', he said 'Couldn't you set up one of your "Thingies" in the area!'

Well, I thought it was a challenge and I had done it before. So I talked to our Churchwardens who wanted to be involved and we set about doing some research. We talked to the doctors at the Surgery in Sonning Common, all the churches, the Police and small charities in the local area, all of whom were very enthusiastic. We needed to find money, volunteers and coordinators to man the telephones, so a lot of footwork was involved. Eventually, after a couple of months we were able to set up a steering committee and decided to go for a Good Neighbourhood Scheme format to begin with. This would mean running it from someone's home as opposed to actually having a centre.



Through the Surgery we located two lovely ladies who were semi housebound and delighted to be asked to man the telephones in their homes with a list of some volunteers that we had gathered. It seems quite ridiculous nowadays, but back then there were no background checks on individuals volunteering. We were given donations from all the churches, the Surgery's Community Fund, local businesses and even a small grant from Sonning Common Parish Council. I was also lucky enough to know of a grant giving organisation in Berkshire who gave us a healthy start up grant. Amazingly two small charities ran jumble sales to enhance the finance.

We then distributed postcards explaining the scheme through every door in the designated area, which was that of the Surgery in Sonning common, so quite a wide area. The Scouts and Guides delivered them all! And then we were off! In those days transport didn't seem to be the biggest need, but we helped in other ways. For example: A widowed gentleman living in quite an isolated lane never saw anyone. We found a young man who would play chess with him twice a week. For a young mum who had broken her leg and whose husband was working abroad, we found a volunteer who took her two children to school every day, and other neighbours took her shopping etc.

The Scheme grew rapidly, so when after the first year one of our ladies sadly became too ill to carry on, we decided to become a Volunteer Centre. Now, with such an organisation the ideal base would be in the middle of Sonning Common Village where people could walk in. So, we were over the moon when we were offered the room in Sonning Common Village Hall and grabbed it with both hands!

We then had to recruit two new coordinators. Caroline Oldridge and Sue Fulford-Dobson were our very competent helpers who set the pace for those to follow.

In the next few years I was able to initiate five other Volunteer Centres in Berkshire, only three of which are still working. However, they never grew into the wonderful organisation that our FISH has become over the years, and that has been due to the care and ongoing commitment of all those individuals who have helped it grow into the incredible organisation that it is today.

Ann Butler-Smith
Founder of FISH

Team Proudlock

Liam Proudlock will be running the Henley 10k on Sunday 13 October with his 25 year-old son Billy and sister Niki. Billy's girlfriend Kat is also joining in the fun! Liam is proud to be raising money for FISH, which his mother,



Anne uses for essential shopping trips and medical appointments. See below on how you can donate and help raise money for FISH.

Liam is a local lad, who attended schools in Sonning Common. He will be 56 years old when the 10k run starts in October. He and his wife Tracey, have two sons, Billy 25 and Tom 23 and run their own business in designing/construction management.



Team Proudlock will run for almost 14 miles around the wonderful countryside of Henley on Thames and along the river Thames. Liam's mother (or "Mam" from her Hartlepool connections) will be celebrating her 80th birthday this summer and uses the FISH bus as her only transport.

The FISH Volunteer Centre is extremely grateful to Liam, Niki, Billy and Kat for their generosity of time and effort to help support other people, not only mum Anne with transportation.



PLEASE SUPPORT LIAM & HIS AMAZING FAMILY

By a direct bank transfer of your donation to:

Sort Code: 09 01 29

Account Number: 16346927

Please use the Reference: TEAM PROUDLOCK

All monies donated will go directly to support

The FISH Volunteer Centre

Support and Transport in the Community

Many thanks